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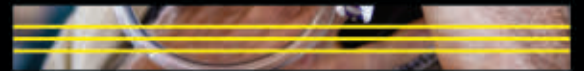


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LET'S BURN SOME FUEL

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Jimmy Clark heads to victory at the '65 Indy 500 in his gorgeous Lotus 38. Painting: Doug Garrison



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Alastair Staley/LAT



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LAT archive



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Drew Gibson/LAT

“It was close to 1,000 days from when I left karting to when I got another drive, so I studied to be a bank clerk”

TOM KRISTENSEN



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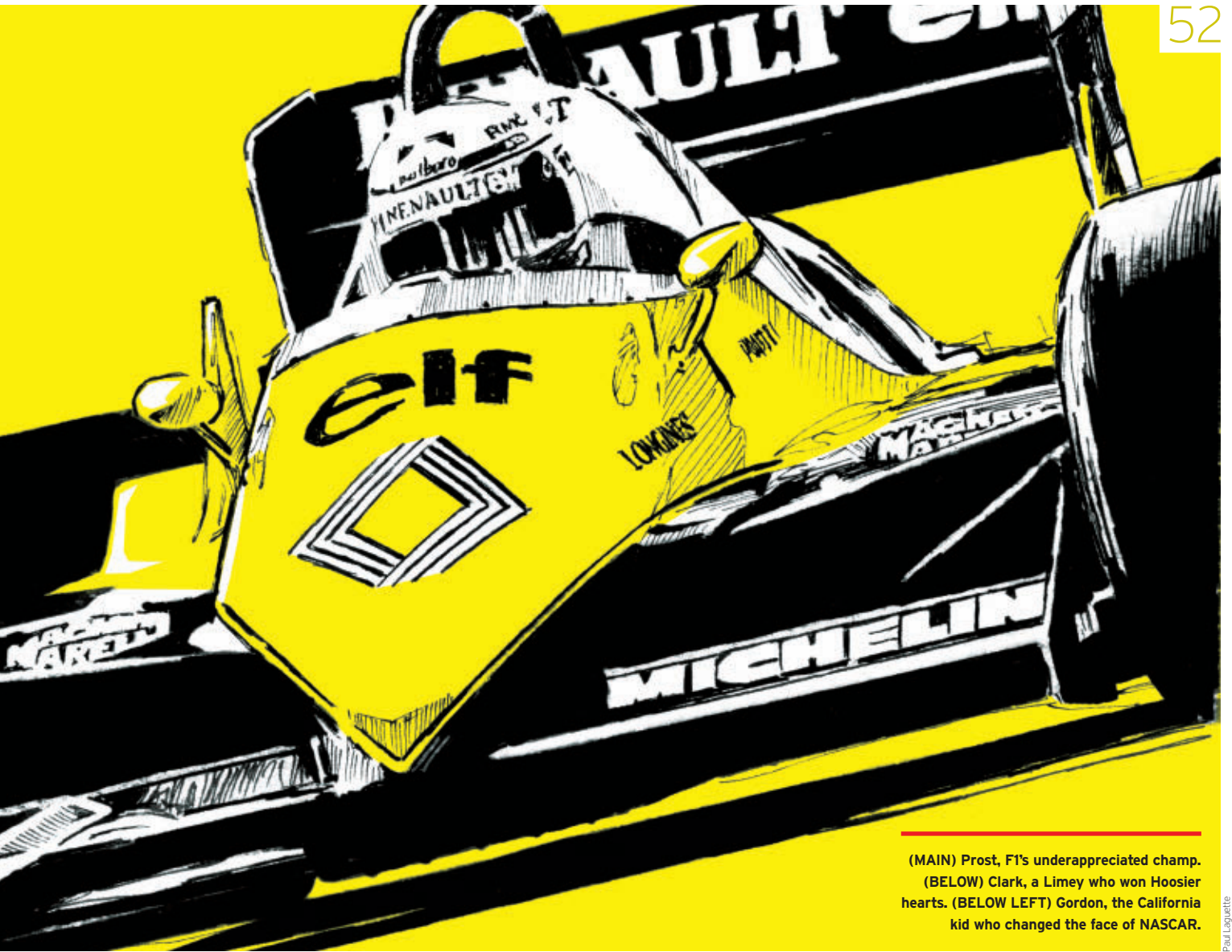
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(MAIN) Prost, F1's underappreciated champ.
 (BELOW) Clark, a Limey who won Hoosier hearts.
 (BELOW LEFT) Gordon, the California kid who changed the face of NASCAR.

Paul Laquette



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Nigel Kinrade/NXP



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LAT archive

R FREEZE FRAME

It takes more than the guy behind the wheel to pull off a great F1 debut. Toro Rosso's Carlos Sainz Jr. stops for new rubber on his way to ninth in the Australian Grand Prix.

WHERE Albert Park, Melbourne, Australia

WHEN 03/15/15

PHOTOGRAPHER Mark Thompson/Getty Images





R FREEZE FRAME

Showcasing the WRC Rally Mexico is something of an annual indulgence for *RACER*. This time, Nasser Al-Attiyah's WRC2 Ford Fiesta shares the billing with the scenery.

WHERE Leon, Mexico

WHEN 03/07/15

PHOTOGRAPHER Jaanus Ree/Red Bull





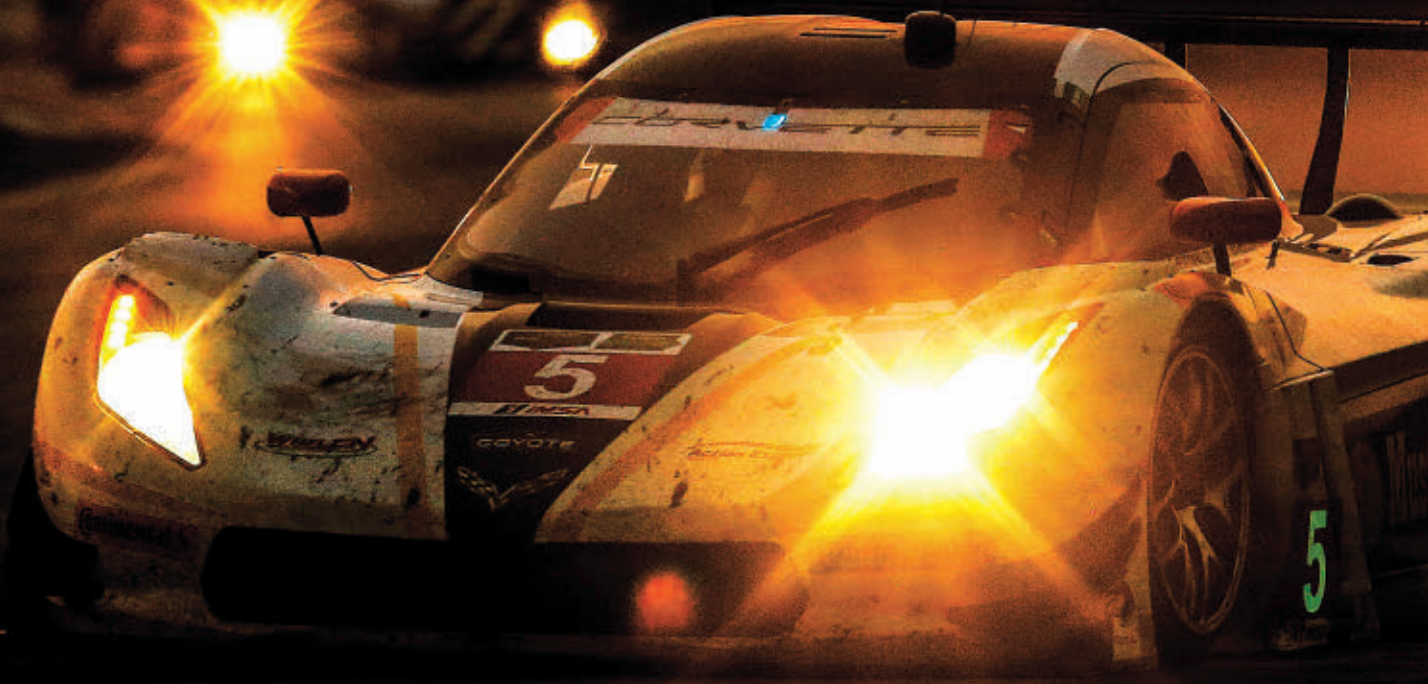
R FREEZE FRAME

We're always suckers for sunset shots, but this one of the Action Express Corvette DP on its way to winning the 12 Hours of Sebring takes it to a whole new level.

WHERE Sebring International Raceway, Fla.

WHEN 03/21/15

PHOTOGRAPHER Michael Levitt/LAT





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David Malsher
 EDITOR

"Prost had a well-formed ego, but he had too much class to show it. His quiet charisma is as effortless as his driving appeared to be"

There was one moment on his first visit to the Racing Capital of the World - a fact-finding mission in October 1962 - when Jimmy Clark's pride got the better of him. He was not impressed at having to take Indianapolis Motor Speedway's compulsory Rookie Test. A driver used to the perils of piloting a motorized cigar tube around Spa-Francorchamps and the Nurburgring was understandably peeved at having to build up to his IMS v-max at steady 10mph intervals.

But Clark did as bid, and astonished official observers by (a) hitting the enforced speed limits exactly, and (b) throwing a completely unadapted 1.5-liter, 186hp Formula 1 Lotus 25 around the Speedway at an average of 143mph - just 7mph off Parnell Jones' pole time from that year's "500." It wouldn't be the last time Jimmy's precision and speed at the Brickyard would impress onlookers - even Indy's legends.

One racer who set out to emulate Clark's driving style was a young Alain Prost, who'd recently turned 13 when Jimmy was killed. Now 60, it's time to pay tribute to an F1 ace who was easy to overlook in his era and is often forgotten about today. Perhaps Prost didn't spend enough time seeking publicity or acclaim. Sure, he had a well-formed ego



- all top racers do - but he had too much class to show it. Alain's quiet charisma is as effortless as his driving appeared to be.

NASCAR's equivalent would surely be Jeff Gordon, whose first full season in Cup coincided with Prost's last year racing F1 and who, like Alain, is a four-time champ. It's strange to reflect on the fact that Jeff's last series title came in 2001, especially as he's won 34 races in the 13 seasons since then! But more important than his 92 total wins is how he helped changed the profile of NASCAR in this country.

As car No. 24's most famous ace heads towards his career sunset, so *RACER* enters its 24th year bathing in the reflected glory of some of motorsport's biggest heroes. We trust you'll enjoy our anniversary issue. ■
editor@racer.com

CONTRIBUTOR



Robin Miller watched all of Jimmy Clark's Indy 500s and saw him score the first ever rear-engined Indy car win in '63 at Milwaukee. Robin was the only man for our cover story.

STORYBOARD



We asked Doug Garrison to paint our cover of Clark's Lotus 38 because such an elegant car deserves Doug's elegant style. See more at DougGarrison.com, where you'll also find this image of Corvette No. 3 that conquered GTLM at Daytona and Sebring.



1970

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Red Bull design genius Adrian Newey was more prominent than expected at the Australia opener, despite the team's post-race complaints that F1's restrictive rules were driving him away. He just can't resist a challenge - and 2015 looks like a big one.



All the latest Formula 1 news at **RACER.com**

FIRST AMONG UNEQUALS

Ferrari was happy to be best of the rest Down Under, although Mercedes' margin was daunting to all

> The good news for Ferrari was that the promise shown in winter testing looks real: The Scuderia was the second-best Formula 1 team on merit at the season-opening Australian Grand Prix, where Sebastian Vettel finished third behind the Mercedes duo of Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg. The bad news for Ferrari - and everyone else - was that the margin between the sport's best team and its rivals looked as big as ever. Ferrari, at least, was focusing on the positive. "I believe that, in the race, we are not far from Mercedes," declared

Kimi Raikkonen, who was on course to finish at least fifth before a problem caused by damage from a cross-threaded wheelnut. "But we have to improve in qualifying as Mercedes is ahead of us by some margin." The ominous size of that margin prompted Red Bull Racing - whose sole starter Daniel Ricciardo finished a lapped sixth, after Daniil Kvyat's car faltered on the pre-grid lap - to renew the call it sounded last year for the FIA to step in with performance equalization measures.



THEY'LL BE BACK... Well, guest podium interviewer Arnold Schwarzenegger only *might* be, but you can take it to the bank for Lewis Hamilton and Mercedes after their crushing showing in Melbourne.

Marussia's rebirth as Manor was postponed by software glitches that kept the team's cars from turning a wheel in Australia - although cynics suggested they'd merely turned up to ensure prize money eligibility. More data will point the way...



Sam Bozham/LAT

FOLLOWING FORM

After dominating the first year of F1's new turbo formula, Mercedes moved the goalposts again for the start of the second. Lewis Hamilton had only his teammate to worry about in a field reduced to 15 cars before the lights went out.



Charles Coates/LAT

12 MONTHS LATER...

As you'd expect, the new breed of F1 cars have picked up pace since their '14 Aussie debut, but aren't setting records just yet.

FASTEST QUAL. LAP (AUS)

2014: **1m30.774s***

2015: **1m26.327s**

Percentage improvement:



FASTEST RACE LAP (AUS)

2014: **1m32.478s**

2015: **1m30.945s**

Percentage improvement:



* Time was set by Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo in Q1. Subsequent showers and a slick track slowed the usually quicker Q2 and Q3.

Sebastian Vettel appears to have picked the right year to strap into a Ferrari rather than a Red Bull, but adding to his win record will require another significant step forward from the Italian team.

"When we were winning - and we were never winning with the advantage they [Mercedes] have - I remember double diffusers were banned, exhausts were moved, flexible bodywork was prohibited, engine mapping mid-season was changed," argued Red Bull team boss Christian Horner. "The FIA, within the rules, have an equalization mechanism; I think it's something that perhaps they need to look at."

Team advisor Helmut Marko upped the ante by threatening that Red Bull could quit F1, claiming that the current

regulations "will kill the sport." Not surprisingly, Mercedes boss Toto Wolff dismissed all this as posturing.

"If you come into Formula 1 and try to perform at the highest level, but equalization is what you need after the first race...that's not how we have done things in the past," said Wolff. "I just think you get your head down, work hard and sort it out."

Yet with alarm bells ringing over F1's declining audience worldwide, this surely won't be the last push of the panic button if the status quo holds.



Andy Hone/LAT

Eclipsed by his team's legal drama until race day, Felipe Nasr made a dynamic debut for Sauber.

MONEYBALL BOUNCES

Have cash, will race...or not, if it's a Sauber deal

> The shaky finances of F1's smaller teams were illustrated in new ways in Melbourne, where Sauber got tangled in its complex contractual deals.

After losing rounds in Swiss and Australian courts, Sauber narrowly escaped having its cars impounded. Rookie Felipe Nasr then redeemed the team

The Swiss team - which also dallied with IndyCar veteran Simona de Silvestro, before abruptly dropping her last fall - drifted into 2015



Andy Hone/LAT

with three contracted race drivers for its two cars. The odd man out - Giedo van der Garde - took legal action to enforce his right to race.

with a spectacular charge to fifth.

Meanwhile, Toro Rosso's all-rookie team also showed strongly, with Max Verstappen (INSET)

looking set for points before a mechanical failure. At least the teen's backing is solid - unless his patron Red Bull makes good on its F1 quit threat...



Sam Bozham/LAT

McLaren-Honda was slowest in Australia, but did make the finish in Button's hands. How steep will the growth curve be?

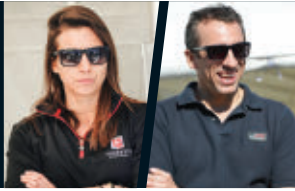
LAST BUT NOT LEAST

Little to shout about yet, but McLaren talks big

> After a dismal pre-season that included a still-mysterious concussing shunt for new star Fernando Alonso, McLaren's Honda-powered cars appeared hopeless in Australia. But after surprising himself by finishing,

Jenson Button was looking far beyond the back row.

"We need someone to challenge Mercedes. I really think this is the team that can do that," he said. "You will see big progress from us this year."



Andretti Autosport has expressed interest in running as many as five IndyCar entries this year, and has plenty of prospects. Simona de Silvestro got the nod for the St. Petersburg opener, and Justin Wilson waits in the wings.

KIT AND CABOODLE

IndyCar's aero kits offer more to see on track as well as the timing charts

> After their long gestation, IndyCar's aero kits faced high expectations from teams and impatient fans. While reaction was mixed about their curlicue aesthetics, the ultimate arbiter – the stopwatch – provided positive feedback.

Following an initial shakedown at NOLA, the kit-cars made their public debut at Barber Motorsport Park's "Spring Training" sessions in March and

immediately brought an increase in pace – and physical demands on the drivers – from the increased downforce provided by the new aero pieces.

"Man, my neck is really sore from the (strain of) braking. There's going to be some drivers with really thick necks after this season!" declared Penske's Will Power after setting the pace in Barber's two days of tests.

Some 21 drivers dipped below the 2014 pole time, with Chevy runners sweeping the top six. But Honda teams, too, expressed confidence in their kits. "We're a couple tenths behind and you're never sure if it's the aero kit or the engine," said Schmidt Peterson Motorsports' James Hinchcliffe, "but we're all trying to learn the characteristics of something brand-new."

That alone is something to celebrate.

Will Power narrowly missed Barber lap record in his first test with Chevy's kit.



CHRIS OWENS

NEW PIECES, BRIGHTER PROSPECTS

A frustrating couple of seasons with his father's team had Graham Rahal itching for a fresh start in IndyCar, and the new aero kit paradigm may provide it. Rahal was quickest of the Honda runners in initial testing, offering hope that he and others outside the sport's "Big 3" teams may have a bigger chance this year.

SCOTT R. LEPAGE/LAT



SCOTT R. LEPAGE/LAT

QUICK CONFETTI FOR COLETTI

> Pre-season IndyCar aero kit testing brought the surprisingly consistent sight of the No. 4 near the top of the charts. That would be KV Racing's Stefano Coletti. The GP2 veteran ended third overall at Barber Motorsport Park, quieting dismissive talk of another European ride-buyer.

In fact, Monaco native Coletti has been a frontrunner in F1's understudy series for years. With fellow GP2 veteran Luca Filippi also poised to shine this year as the designated road course ringer for Ed

ANDREW FERRARO/GP2



FAST, NO TWO WAYS ABOUT IT
.....
Coletti scored eight wins over four seasons in GP2 cars, with one coming on the streets of his native Monaco.

Carpenter (replacing WEC-bound Mike Conway, another GP2 alum), it appears that the prep school for grand prix drivers is just as valuable for an IndyCar future – if not more so, given the increasingly harsh financial demands of F1 teams.

"It's another Dallara [like the GP2 car] with more power and heavier, but I like it," said Coletti of the Chevy aero-kitted DW12. "I wanted to stay in single-seaters and figured I didn't have enough money for Formula 1." F1's loss, IndyCar's gain?

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- take cover
- take control



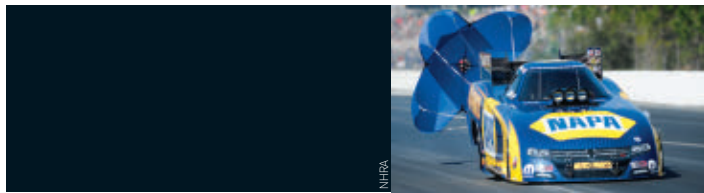
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At Gainesville, Ron Capps took the slippery new Dodge Charger R/T body to its third win in as many Funny Car starts. "We won a lot of races with the old Charger but this new one is like night and day," enthused Capps.



The intensity that has driven Kurt Busch throughout his career remained undimmed by his drawn-out legal battle.

PICKING UP WHERE HE LEFT OFF
 Underscoring his claim that he didn't lose focus during his suspension, Kurt Busch was an immediate force on his return to racing. At Phoenix, Busch chased teammate and pacesetter Kevin Harvick for much of the race, then finished fifth. "There were a few times I was determined enough to overdrive it," admitted Busch. "We got a little bit too loose...and I ran out of tools in the car to charge on that final restart." He'd made his point, though.

TAMING THE MONSTER

Out the other side of a career-threatening legal case, Kurt Busch looks ahead

> The most difficult period yet of Kurt Busch's stormy career ended when NASCAR lifted his suspension ahead of the fourth round of the Sprint Cup season at Phoenix. It had been imposed after a Kent County (Delaware) Court approved ex-girlfriend Patricia Driscoll's request for a no-contact order against Busch, amid allegations that he had assaulted her last September at Dover. The suspension was lifted following confirmation that Busch would not face criminal charges over the incident.

NASCAR also waived the requirement that drivers complete all races in order to be eligible for the Chase - opening the door to the playoff series for Busch, who missed three races during his suspension.

While adamant that he had done nothing wrong, Busch agreed to complete a reinstatement program that included

"I KNOW THE TRUTH AND THAT I NEVER DID ANY OF THE THINGS I WAS ACCUSED OF. IT WAS A COMPLETE FABRICATION"
KURT BUSCH

mandatory behavioral assessment sessions and the recommendations of a behavioral healthcare expert.

"I understand why NASCAR needed to take the action that it did," Busch said. "I've gone through this with confidence knowing that I know the truth and that I never did any of the things that I was accused of. It was a complete fabrication.

"I never lost that confidence and that drive," he added, "and so it's a humbling experience, but it's made me more focused and determined."



Harvick's getting more than used to this duty after Sprint Cup races.

FREAKY FAST OUT OF THE STARTING GATE

> When Kevin Harvick surged decisively to the NASCAR Sprint Cup title late last year, it was hard to see how he could become any more dominant a player...but thus far in 2015, it looks like that might merely have been a warm-up act.

The Stewart-Haas Chevy driver scored back-to-back overpowering wins in Las Vegas and Phoenix - leading 224 of 312 laps at the latter - living up to the "Freaky Fast!" slogan on his Jimmy John's Sandwiches-backed car in those races.



PLENTY TO BE HAPPY ABOUT
 Harvick's seven straight top-2 finishes matched a record last managed by Richard Petty in 1975.

In the case of Phoenix it was hardly a surprise, being his fifth win in the last six Cup races at the track. However, it built on a record of steady performances that included seven consecutive finishes of either first or second dating back to last season. Even to the unflappable champ himself, this amazingly consistent run of speed was extraordinary.

"It's almost scary," he said. "You don't want to talk about it too much because you want to keep it going."



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Chris Tedesco/BMW North America

Commemorating its victory at Sebring in 1975 that showed America what the letters BMW stood for, the company's works Z4s raced at the 12 Hours 40 years on with a livery emulating that classic 3.0 CSL.



Sebring testing showed that the additional power from the uprated hybrid system accentuated the AWD strengths of the R18.

Marshall Pruett

CHARGE AND COUNTER-CHARGE

Audi ups the hybrid ante at Le Mans with its four-megajoule jewel

> However much racing traditionalists may grumble about hybrid tech displacing their beloved cubic inches, electric enhancement continues to generate all the buzz in the LMP1-H class of the FIA World Endurance Championship and its signature race, the 24 Hours of Le Mans. At the introduction of its heavily revised 2015-spec R18 e-tron quattro, Audi announced that its cars will run in the four megajoule hybrid sub-class this year.

The German manufacturer has hit its target of moving up one step from the 2MJ class in which it ran last year

through development of its existing hybrid concept. That means the latest R18, which is built around the same monocoque as last year's car, has a single front-axle kinetic energy-recovery system and a flywheel mechanical battery to store the retrieved energy.

The single electric motor-generator unit at the front is rated at in excess of 200kW (the equivalent of nearly 270hp), whereas last year's had a potential power output of 170kW. According to Andre Lotterer, who tested the new car at Sebring, the extra boost is significant.

"You can really feel the benefit of the all-wheel drive now, especially at somewhere like Sebring," he said. "Out of Turn 17, the rear of the car used to step out over the bumps; now you floor it, the car jumps and off you go."

Still, there can be risks in relying on cutting-edge tech. Nissan announced its front-engined GT-R LM NISMO would skip the WEC rounds at Silverstone and Spa for more testing. That will make Le Mans the public debut of Ben Bowlby's roadster, which had already earned the double-edged compliment of "brave" from rivals.



Nissan

OUT OF THE FRYING PAN...
Eager to forget his lamentable stint with the Marussia F1 team, Max Chilton joined Nissan's LMP1 squad just in time to see its debut postponed.



Jaanus Reed/Reed Bull

BACKSTROKE FOR RALLY SAFETY

> A bizarre incident during Rally Mexico focused attention on safety standards for World Rally Championship stages. Ott Tänak's Ford Fiesta slid off course and into a lake after damaging its suspension in a previous corner, forcing the Estonian and co-driver Raigo Molder to swim for it.

Fortunately neither man was injured and the car - once rescued from the drink and dried out heroically by its crew - even restarted the next day, but residual water in the engine coil thwarted the comeback.



NO, REALLY, IT'S IN A LAKE...
Tänak's explanatory call to M-Sport boss Malcolm Wilson after his Mexican cliff-dive must have been tough.

Tanak suggested the FIA bring in an expert like recently retired co-driver Jarmo Lehtinen to pre-run WRC stages and point out such potential dangers.

"There are plenty more places like this and Jarmo is the guy who has the most experience of us - he should be the guy who the FIA is listening to," Tanak said.

WRC manager and former driver Michele Mouton's curt response? "We have been driving this stage for a lot of years without any problem..."



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TOKEN EFFORTS

With Formula 1's power unit manufacturers allowed only limited year-on-year changes, weaknesses in a package are difficult to fix. It's a situation that's already causing friction.

WORDS Adam Cooper | **MAIN IMAGE** Frederic Le Floc'h/DPPI

Pre-2014, Formula 1 engines had more or less dropped off the radar as a topic for discussion or complaint. Development was basically frozen on the 2.4-liter V8s, the gap between the most- and least-powerful wasn't worth picking a fight over, and the status quo was defined by aero prowess.

But everything changed when the turbo-hybrid V6s we have to call "power units" came in last year. Now the talk was of little else but engines, which is exactly what the manufacturers wanted as they tried to justify their investment in the sport, but mostly the wrong sort of talk.

Unfortunately the remarkable technology that Mercedes, Renault and Ferrari employed was obscured by debates about noise (or lack of), whether F1 should be pursuing a formula based on fuel economy, and if the relative performance of the three engines played too great a role - the *defining* role, in fact - in determining who was competitive, and who wasn't.

It's the latter debate that rumbles on into 2015, to the point where Red Bull Racing didn't just throw underperforming engine supplier, Renault, under the bus

after the season-opening Australian Grand Prix, but demanded that the FIA peg back the performance of Mercedes-Benz for doing too good a job.

There have been other eras when engines had a great influence, but what makes this one different is the limited scope that a manufacturer has to dig itself out of a hole.

All three power units were homologated as of Feb. 28, 2014, and thereafter they couldn't be changed. Some updates were allowed by the FIA for reliability reasons, and a manufacturer could fine-tune areas such as fuel and software. But the basic hardware could not be upgraded.

The off-season was crucial because the FIA framed the new rules with a token system that allowed for a gradually decreasing package of updates between seasons. The power unit is divided up into 66 carefully weighted tokens. The manufacturers could "spend" 32 tokens this past winter, another 25 prior to the 2016 season, 20 before '17, and 15 before '18.

The problem faced by Renault and Ferrari was that some of the changes they wanted to make required a long lead time, and they wouldn't be able to design, test and homologate their upgrades before the first race of 2015. In the case of Renault there was the specific issue of Red Bull adding R&D support, along with consultant Mario Illien. That input would take time to filter through. Thus they began pushing for updates to be allowed during the season.

Then it emerged that the FIA had dropped the ball. Although everyone knew the original intention, the governing >



Sam Bondham/LAT

(MAIN) Visually, Renault's turbo-hybrid V6 Formula 1 engine is a jewel. As things stand, its performance doesn't match its looks. Will the Mercedes-powered teams (LEFT) drive off into the sunset in 2015? Red Bull Racing says yes...



Red Bull's "B team," Toro Rosso, had its share of power unit-related problems during winter testing (BELOW), but seemed to avoid the issues experienced by Red Bull Racing's RB11 in Australia. Not so, says RBR team boss Christian Horner... "They are struggling the same amount. It's just having a more dramatic effect on our car," he opined.



ANDY COWELL
Despite enjoying a major performance advantage in 2014, Mercedes' F1 engine boss says its spate of winter tweaks was to not lose any momentum in '15.



body had forgotten to actually specify Feb. 28, 2015 as the homologation date for this year's upgrades. It thus agreed that any of the 32 tokens not spent before that date could be used up later in the year. So, post-Feb. 28, Renault was left with 12 of the 32 tokens to spend during the season, Ferrari 10, and Mercedes just seven. Newcomer Honda got the average of the remaining tokens, meaning it has nine to spend in its so-far fraught debut season. It may seem odd that the marque with the strongest power unit used the most tokens in the off-season, but that's because it doesn't have many significant long-lead items in the wings, unlike Renault and Ferrari. Instead, Mercedes' tokens were mostly used in fine-tuning a concept it knows works extremely well, with the focus on optimizing reliability as the number of power units allowed per car drops from five to just four for the 2015 season. "Our development approach and focus was on getting to Melbourne with the

best performing hardware that we believe will survive five Grands Prix distances," says the company's F1 engine wizard, boss Andy Cowell. "And then we'll reflect. "What we didn't want to do was to think, 'Maybe there's an opportunity to delay some of the performance upgrades?' When the timing window moves backward, there's always the risk that you slow down." One of the challenges is that, with only four power units allowed, any in-season updates have to be introduced within that schedule, i.e., after teams have put the maximum possible mileage on the old spec bits, which can then be "retired" rather than cycled back and used later in the year. This will also mean that there will be weekends where Driver A has a newer engine spec than Driver B. If those drivers happen to be Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg, we are likely to hear all about it... From the outside there's a widespread perception that the updates might not make much of a difference to the status

quo, but that's not something Cowell necessarily agrees with, especially when the value of certain parts is taken into account. "If you look at the table, combustion is down as just three tokens, for example," he says. "For combustion you can change cylinder head, pistons, valves, fuel injectors. And then all the associated parts can still fit inside the three tokens." So, spent wisely, could those 12 tokens

THE ENGINE MENU

Elements in the power unit are each assigned a number of tokens. Manufacturers can choose to spend their allotted annual amount on whichever combination they choose. For 2015, each had 32 tokens to play with.

	Weight
Stroke height, bank stagger.	2
Valve position relative to legality volume, after core.	3
Restricted to subsequent modifications.	2
Parts defining combustion.	
Intake, Combustion chamber, Valves geometry, Sector nozzle, coils, spark plug	3
Exhaust: Valves position.	
Exhaust: Valves position. (Excludes axial displacement)	2
Position and Geometry. Exhaust and Inlet. (Excludes turn function inside the head.)	2
Intake. Geometry except lift profile. Includes turn to camshaft. Exhaust and Inlet.	1
Exhaust. Position and Geometry. (Excludes dampers)	2
Exhaust: Contact with engine oil covers...	1
Exhaust: Rotating journal diameter.	



(ABOVE and BELOW) Mercedes used 25 of 32 available tokens on its engine during the winter. (BELOW LEFT) Honda is the great unknown; Ferrari's engine is the big improver.

Steve Etherington/LAT

F1'S NEW NOSE JOB

COSMETIC SURGERY

Last year's F1 car launches resembled a parade of ugly ducklings as one new contender after the other displayed an ungainly appendage at the front. Fortunately this year, tweaks to the rules have ensured that the "class of 2015" is far more presentable in public.

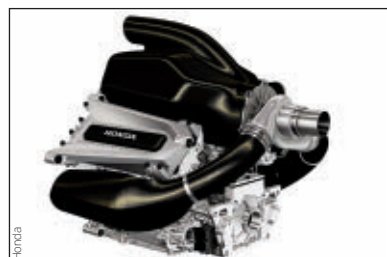
"We saw a variety of noses out there last year, some of them more ugly than others," says Paddy Lowe of Mercedes. "Thankfully that's in the past. I think we had a pretty good looking nose, as it happens! We still do, but it's lower. That's had an effect on performance, it's one of the big setbacks that we had to overcome during the winter in the aerodynamic domain."

Lowe says that, despite the focus on aesthetics, the teams were more concerned about the new rules impacting performance: "Any aerodynamic change at the front has a big influence on the whole car, because clearly it creates the flow field behind it that influences every other component. It was a bigger change than it may have seemed."

"The regulations at first appear quite innocuous," agrees Pat Symonds of Williams. "But actually there's a lot of work there."

Passing the 2015 front crash test was not the work of the moment, which resulted in some initial nose designs being compromised aerodynamically for the sake of passing the impact requirements. As the season progresses, and teams experiment with a more optimized aero/crash test solution, expect some cars to appear with shorter noses than those seen in the early races, if they can pass the test.

The 2015 noses are aesthetically "less challenged" than last year's, and teams may experiment as the season progresses.



Honda

And then came the suggested solution: let's not wait for Renault to improve, let's peg back the guys in the Mercedes camp.

"The FIA, within the rules, has an equalization mechanism; I think it's something that perhaps they need to look at," he noted. "Take nothing away from Mercedes, it's done a super job. They have a good car, a fantastic engine and two very good drivers. The problem is the gap is so big that you end up with three-tier racing, and that is not healthy for F1."

As someone who's been touted as a possible replacement for Bernie Ecclestone, Horner knows the politics of F1. Perhaps his call for performance parity measures is a throwback to former FIA president Max Mosley's *modus operandi* of suggesting extreme solutions, so that the one he wanted didn't sound so extreme in comparison. Perhaps his real agenda is an engine unfreeze. Or even just more tokens. Regardless, it's hard to see Renault fully extricating itself from the mess it's in with 12 tokens and the season in full swing.

With the noise from RBR overpowering any more considered debate at the moment, it will be interesting to see how the coming weeks play out. If you admire F1 for its resistance to parity measures, Mercedes domination is just another cycle, so deal with it. But for those who worry about TV figures and the specter of a manufacturer quitting, could Horner's call for action prove too hard to resist? ■



Gern Dunczer/LAT

CHRISTIAN HORNER

The Red Bull Racing team principal points to the FIA's ban on blown diffusers and crackdown on flexible bodywork as past precedents for performance equalization. The counter argument is that those were simply gray areas in the rules being closed down.

burning a hole in Renault's pocket prove more effective than many have assumed?

That could depend on how big a hole you're digging yourself out of. And according to Red Bull Racing team principal Christian Horner, its engine partner, Renault, starts in a deeper one than in 2014, having seemingly gone backward over the winter, not forward. Certainly, Daniel Ricciardo's lapped sixth-place finish in Australia doesn't shout progress, but Horner's reaction to Renault's performance level, and his calls for parity measures to be put in place, seemed premature.

"It's important that we regroup with Renault and try to offer our support where we can, because obviously they're in a bit of a mess at the moment," said Horner, sounding not very supportive at all. "With any problem, you have to understand what it is in order to address it. It's frustrating that we are effectively further back than where we were in Abu Dhabi, in both power and drivability."



Benedict Redgrave/Red Bull



READY FOR LAUNCH

Preparation is key in defending a Verizon IndyCar Series championship and in enhancing the fan experience with the latest INDYCAR 15 app.

Nobody ever won a Verizon IndyCar Series championship just by turning up at the season-opener and hoping everything is going to be OK. In racing, standing still is losing, which is why the successful race teams push even harder during the off-season, focusing on anything and everything to make an even better racecar.

The same goes for Verizon as it takes the IndyCar fan experience to the next level with its INDYCAR 15 app. It's about recognizing areas it can enhance and improve, and new technologies it can introduce to best serve race fans.

"We're looking at our app as fans and as series partners," says Jim McVey, director of content marketing at Verizon Wireless. "We always ask ourselves what we can do technically to make a better fan experience.



DAVE FAUSTINO
 Joined Team Penske in 2010 as race engineer for Will Power, who he's worked with at two previous teams. The partnership delivered Power's first IndyCar title in 2014.

"One of the reasons why we're involved in IndyCar is we're all about technology and we want to be partners with an entity on the cutting edge of racing. The teams never stop improving, and neither do we."

Dave Faustino, race engineer for 2014 Verizon IndyCar Series champion Will Power at Team Penske, observes: "One of the biggest misconceptions about IndyCar teams is that between seasons we're more relaxed. Honestly, the working days are probably longer in the off-season, 11 or 12 hours a day, and that's all driven by the lists of items we've accumulated during the year. Things to help us put better cars on track."

For Verizon, any changes to its app must always enhance the fan experience, so introducing new ideas and new technology is always looked at from that context.

"We work longer hours in the off-season, driven by lists of things to help us put better cars on the track"

DAVE FAUSTINO, TEAM PENSKE

"The fanbase approaches the sport from three main angles," says McVey. "Number one: at the track, immersed in the sound and spectacle; number two: at home, watching it on TV, where the app can provide the second stream for further, deeper insight; and number three: between races, where fans want the latest news. The app has to deliver on all three of those, so we're constantly adding ideas to a list of things and weighing



PHILIP ANDRZEJCZAK



Ernie Masche/LAT



Ernie Masche/LAT



Scott Rupp/PAge/LAT

Defending Verizon IndyCar Series champs Will Power (BELOW) and Team Penske put in vast amounts of preparation at the race shop and (MAIN) in testing before the season even begins.



Chris Owens

each one up in order to prioritize.”

That has parallels with Faustino’s way of working: recognize areas to improve, then plan and prioritize for the ones which will make the biggest gains.

“All the engineers at Penske make lists, as do the drivers, throughout the year,” he says. “Some will be logistical improvements to make us more efficient - ways to test the car better, or to better use facilities such as wind tunnels, shaker rigs and simulations.”

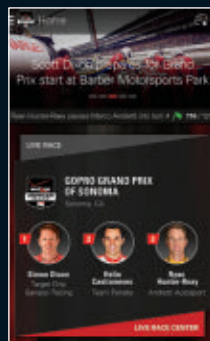
But as well as the self-analysis, there are the practicalities to complete.

“Our cars get stripped down to nothing in winter - even the tubs get stripped,” says Faustino. “Everything is refurbished, repaired and reset. Most of our R&D is done in winter, because once we’re on the road, we all become super-saturated >

INDYCAR 15 APP

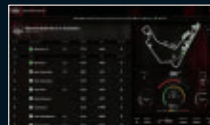
GO INSIDE THE RACE

Jim McVey, Verizon’s director of content marketing, guides us through just some of the features that make the INDYCAR 15 app a must-have for fans of the Verizon IndyCar Series.



IMPROVED USER INTERFACE

Cleaned up presentation in terms of layout and more intuitive menu system and sections to keep the app easier and quicker to use for first-timers, while still supplying all the information demanded by hardcore race fans.



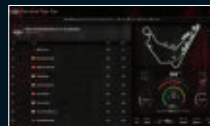
LEADERBOARD...

...with 2D “marching ants” showing track position. The app’s most used features.



DRIVER CAM

Fantastic for fans at the track, and a great secondary experience if you’re watching a race on TV. Driver telemetry is a fascinating additional element. You’ll see footage from the same cameras on TV, but with this you can ride along for the whole race with a driver of your choice.



POINTS AS THEY RUN

Live championship standings to keep you aware of the implications of every pass or incident.



For more on the features (exclusive and basic) available on the INDYCAR 15 app and to view compatible devices, go to verizonwireless.com/indycar



Ernie Masche/LAT



Ernie Masche/LAT



Ernie Masche/LAT



Philip Abbott/LAT

“The app is user-friendly for first-timers, but it has the sophistication to serve IndyCar’s hardcore fans”

JIM McVEY, VERIZON

with session-to-session, day-to-day stuff.”

For a Verizon IndyCar Series team, one of the challenges is the diversity of tracks the series races on, from superspeedways, to short ovals, to natural terrain road courses and unforgiving street tracks.

Verizon faces a similar challenge in designing an app that’s just as inclusive and entertaining for a casual fan as it is for a hardcore devotee. It’s a balancing act, but one that the app design team enjoys.

“If you throw too much hi-tech stuff at an emerging fanbase, it could alienate them,” says McVey, “yet at the same time, we must balance that with the fact that we have the ability and facilities to serve the hardcore fans who want to know what revs that car is running, how late into the corner that driver is going to brake. So we keep the app user-friendly and simple to

understand for first-timers, but also with the sophistication to serve core fans.”

After the heavy winter workload, McVey says that “enhancements go on throughout the year. INDYCAR 15 has already launched, but more functionality is added once the season starts. The process to make it even better is a never-ending one.”

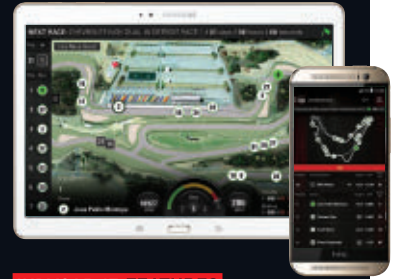
Faustino concurs with that approach as he gears up for an intense 2015 season.

“However long we think the off-season is, we always head to the first race having not ticked all the boxes on our master list. That’s because the deeper you dive into the data, the more you find ways to improve.”

That’s exactly the same ethos that triggered Verizon into making improvements for the INDYCAR 15 app that include a real-time championship points table - “conveying that these races build to a championship climax” - as well as the ability to watch a whole race from a driver’s perspective.

“It’s a great app,” agrees Faustino, “but it’s a pity that at the exact time Will and I could use it most - by watching our main rivals in real time - we’re focusing on what we’re doing in order to perform our best for Verizon Team Penske!” ■

(TOP) Pit stop drills could prove crucial when it comes to real racing. (ABOVE LEFT) Juan Pablo Montoya checks data during pre-season testing at Barber Motorsports Park.



INDYCAR 15 FEATURES

DON'T MISS A THING

Every lap. Every angle. Every moment matters with INDYCAR 15, the official 2015 Verizon IndyCar Series mobile application powered by Verizon.

The INDYCAR 15 App has redefined how fans watch racing. With an array of features that take the fan experience to the next level, it’s the pinnacle of mobile technology.

Race fans are in the driver’s seat with INDYCAR 15, as they take control of the information flow by selecting their favorite driver or team.

The app also offers live streaming in-car camera feeds and radio broadcast. Combined with extras like real-time leader boards with 2D marching ants and car telemetry, individual driver-pit crew communications during races, podcasts, driver Twitter feeds, news and alerts, and track layouts, the INDYCAR 15 app has evolved to become essential to IndyCar fans.

You can download INDYCAR 15 at Google play or Apple’s App Store.



INDYCAR 15



Find out more on the INDYCAR 15 app at verizonwireless.com/indycar

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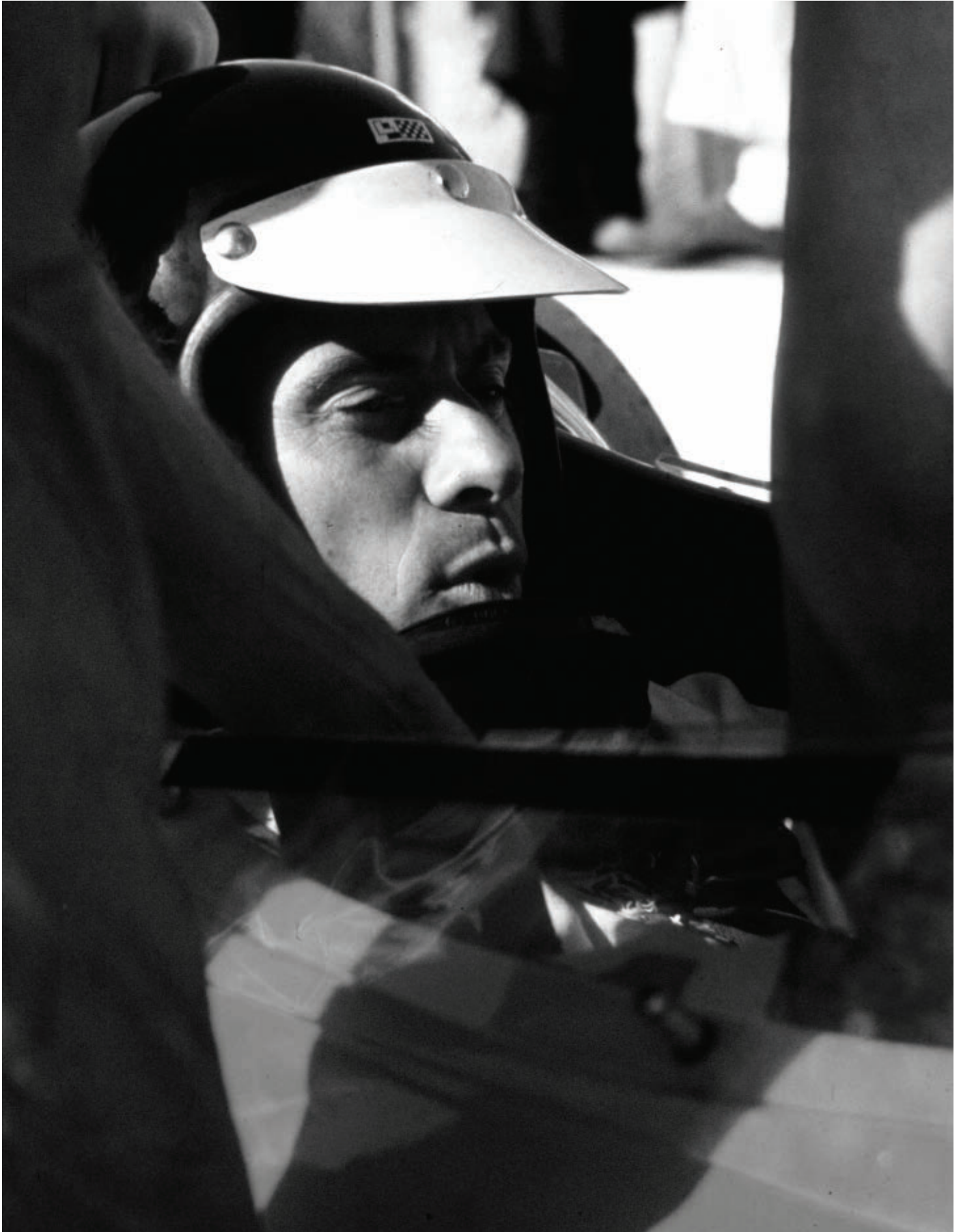
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GREAT SCOT

It's fifty years since Jim Clark's Lotus dominated the 49th Indianapolis 500-Mile Race. It was the zenith of a whirlwind ride for the Scot and mentor Colin Chapman at the Brickyard.

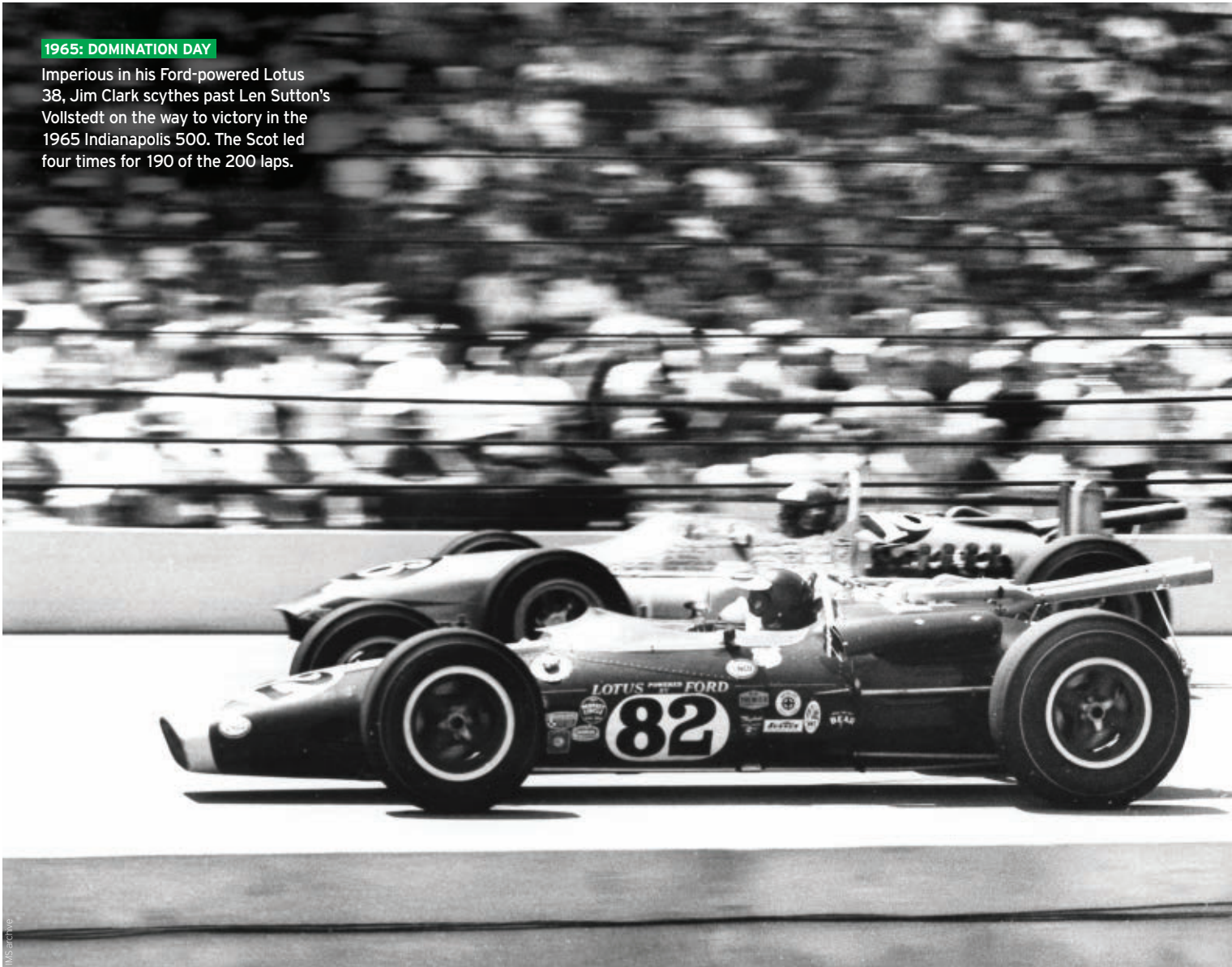
WORDS Robin Miller | MAIN IMAGE Dave Friedman/LAT



Scenes from '65... (ABOVE, left to right) F1 and Indy royalty: Jim Clark has the legs of A.J. Foyt and eventual runner-up Parnelli Jones; Clark appears overcome in Victory Circle; the morning after, with Colin Chapman and the Team Lotus crew.

1965: DOMINATION DAY

Imperious in his Ford-powered Lotus 38, Jim Clark scythes past Len Sutton's Vollstedt on the way to victory in the 1965 Indianapolis 500. The Scot led four times for 190 of the 200 laps.



A wispy little sheep farmer with a flimsy car painted green and its engine in the wrong place. Jim Clark and his Lotus-Ford were hardly imposing figures when they unloaded at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway for the first time in 1963.

The Indianapolis 500 was the richest, deadliest and most prestigious motor race in the world, and had a reputation for sending drivers back home, into retirement or to the morgue.

It required muscles, balls, focus and unwavering confidence to horse around a roadster for four hours, and was certainly no place for "gentlemen racers." So the slight-built, introverted Scotsman hardly drew any second looks, let alone concern, from the USAC brigade in Gasoline Alley.

"I didn't give those Formula 1 guys a lot of respect and neither did A.J.,"



declares Parnelli Jones, who along with A.J. Foyt ruled USAC racing in the 1960s. "We were the rough, backyard bullies and they were those polite road racers with funny accents who thought they were better than everyone else.

"But he was a nice guy and he caught on to oval racing pretty quick," he adds. "I was impressed because he was a helluva talent."

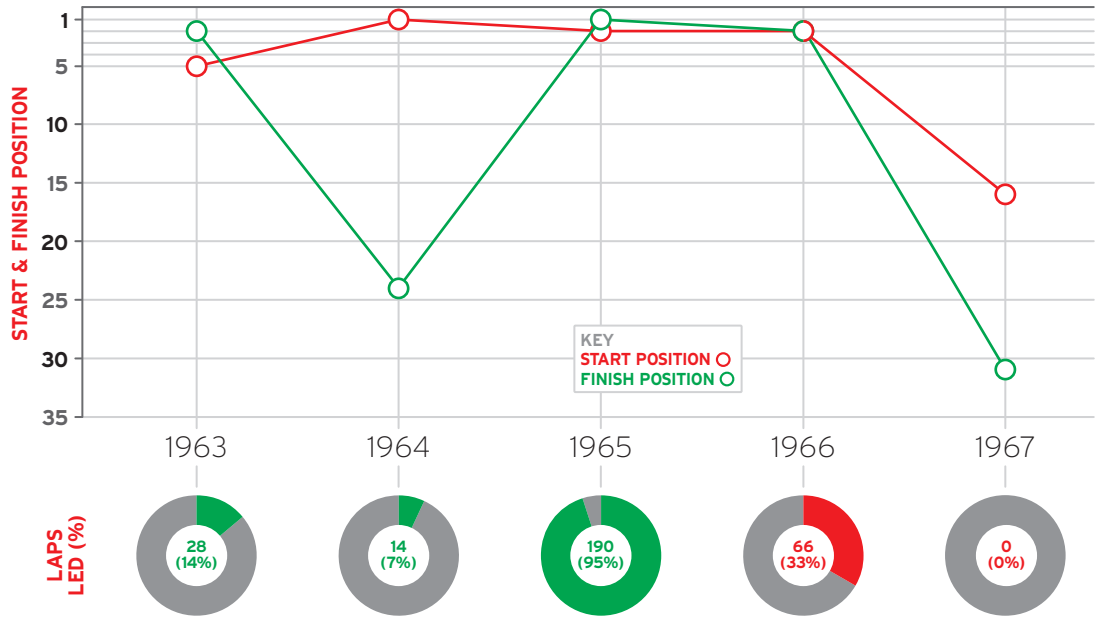
Fifty years ago, Clark put his stamp on the history books by demoralizing the competition and leading 190 of the 200 laps on the way to capturing the 1965 Indy 500. It was his lone win in five starts from 1963-'67 yet, with just a little extra nudge from the racing gods, he could easily have been a two- or even three-time winner at the Brickyard.

But it wasn't just that dominating drive in '65 that makes the quiet Scot so



JIM CLARK IN THE INDIANAPOLIS 500

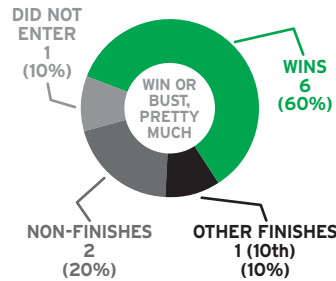
One win, two second places and two forgettable race days doesn't come close to telling the story of Clark's five Indianapolis 500 starts. Should he have won his 1963 debut? Did he win the '66 race? Throw in the '64 pole, the 298 laps led, and his impact on Indy culture and the Scottish farmer truly was a force of nature.



MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE DAY JOB...

By missing the Monaco GP, round two of the '65 World Championship, to concentrate on Indy, it was like Clark was giving his F1 opposition a lap head-start. They wished... In the end, the Scot wrapped up his second title with three of the 10 races still to run.

1965 F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP



Clark led from start (ABOVE) to finish in the French Grand Prix at Clermont-Ferrand. It was the second of five consecutive wins in the immediate aftermath of his '65 Indy 500 win.

(LEFT) Colin Chapman converses with Clark during practice in 1965. The chemistry between them in Formula 1 transferred seamlessly to Indy. (RIGHT) Clark and Lotus picked up \$166,621 for the '65 win - stratospheric money compared with F1's meager payouts...



“We were the rough, backyard bullies and they were those polite road racers with funny accents”

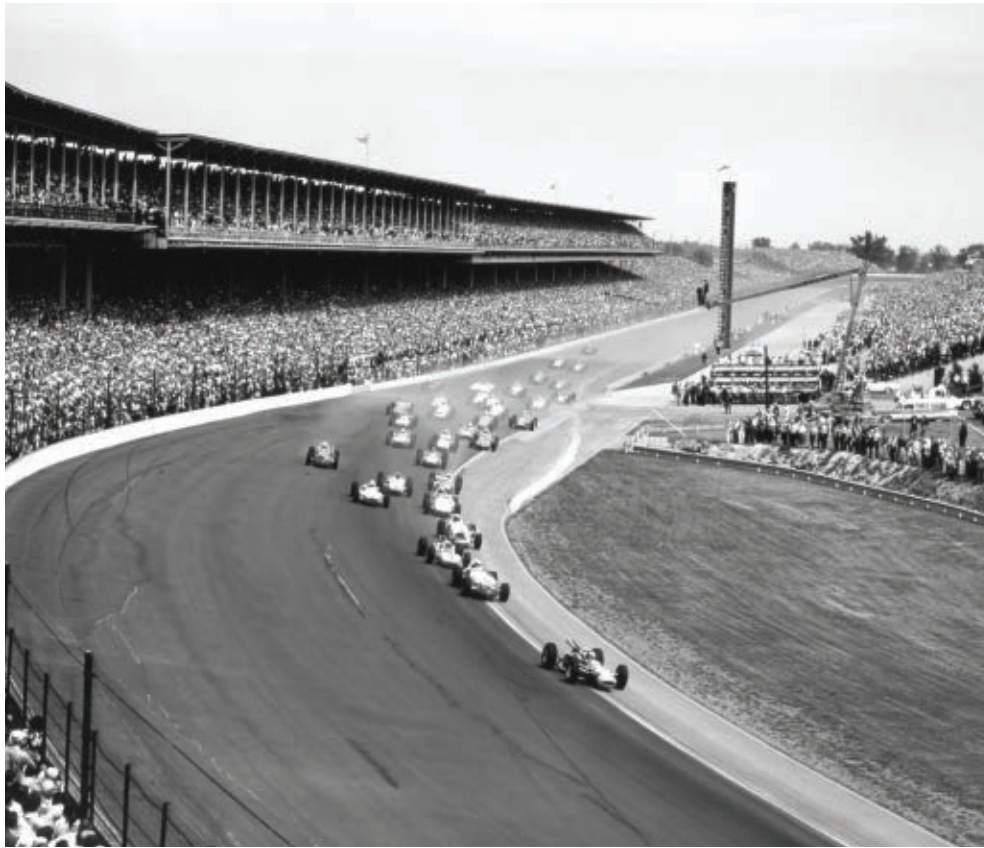
PARNELLI JONES

- revered five decades later.
- It was his adaptability to big speeds and concrete walls.*
- It was his respectful attitude towards Indy and the competition.*
- It was his ability to handle the ragged edge, lap after lap after lap.*
- It was the changing philosophy he helped introduce to U.S. racing.*
- It was his classy demeanor, both on and off the race track.*
- It was everything.*

“Clark was a nice guy, he wasn't cocky like Graham Hill or (Jackie) Stewart,” says Foyt, whose disdain for English engineers is racing folklore. “He drove hard, but clean, and I had a lot of respect for him because he raced at Milwaukee and Trenton, too. He also drove a terrible stock car at Rockingham and I took my hat off to him.

“I guess we were rivals but, like I said, I liked the guy and I wasn't real fond of the Brits in general.”

In what became the line of demarcation in American motorsports, Clark was the face of the rear-engine revolution and the overthrower of the status quo in open-wheel racing. His profile was on the rise in 1962 as he scored three grand prix victories for Chapman before testing his F1 Lotus at IMS in October. He would make his Indy >



1964: INDY BARES ITS TEETH

Just in case Clark thought Indy wasn't so hard, following a near-win in his 1963 debut, the track bit back in '64. He started on the pole (LEFT), but a vibration from chunking tires collapsed his Lotus 34's spindly suspension on lap 47. Thankfully, Clark was able to stop without hitting anything solid.



500 debut in '63 - the same season he earned the first of his two Formula 1 World Championship titles.

"Well, he was willing to do it," recalls Dan Gurney of his friend, teammate and rival's decision to go with Lotus to Indy that May. "I think no matter who you are, the first time you go there it's a pretty daunting situation. You have to be damned determined. Initially, he wasn't

"He wasn't worried about protecting his reputation. If he drove a car that wasn't good, he made it look good"

DAN GURNEY

sure, and it took a while for him to get dialed in. But he loved to race and he wasn't worried about protecting his reputation. If he drove a car that wasn't very good, he made it look good anyway."

Jackie Stewart, still three years away from his own sensational Indy 500 debut, was sharing a London apartment with his soon-to-be-rival and marveled at Clark's swift adaption to the Speedway's sustained high speeds, left-hand turns and those unforgiving cement walls.

"I think Jim's style - smooth, clean and gentle - was a good fit for Indianapolis,"



says the three-time World Champion, who came within 10 laps of winning Indy as a rookie in 1966. "And because he was in a rear-engined car, that familiarity helped him a little, but ovals were an entirely different style of racing. He laid the groundwork for us other F1 guys going to Indy, showed it could be done. Yet we all still knew we were going over there as amateurs with a big learning curve."

The 1963 race was soaked in controversy as a result of spilled oil from Parnelli's cracked tank and the almost-black flag that would have elevated

Clark into victory lane as a rookie.

"I was a couple mph faster than he was all day, and he really wasn't a thorn in my side," recalls Jones, who led 167 laps to Clark's 28. "I made three pit stops to his one and the Lotus wasn't in the same ballpark in the race but, of course, there was the big controversy after the race about me leaking that oil.

"I had no idea that they were thinking about black flagging me. My oil tank had cracked in the middle and I about spun because the oil poured onto my left rear tire. But it stopped after a while, and I still had quite a bit at the end of the race. The track was greasy all day, but with two laps to go I ran my fastest lap of the race, so how bad could it have been?"

"Clark came up after the race and congratulated me," he adds, "and I thought that was very classy."

Still, Gurney figures the lack of a black flag was a geographical decision...

"The Americans didn't want to see some Limey come over here and win the race," chuckles the eighth-place finisher in '63, "and I imagine if it had been in England, the decision would have gone the other way."

In 1964, Clark broke the Speedway record in winning the pole, but only made 47 laps before being sidelined with left-rear suspension failure on his Lotus 34 caused by the vibration from a >

(LEFT) The British Invasion... Airplane stairs, flashbulbs and a couple of smiling celebrities come to conquer America. The Beatles? The Stones? No, it's Chapman and Clark.

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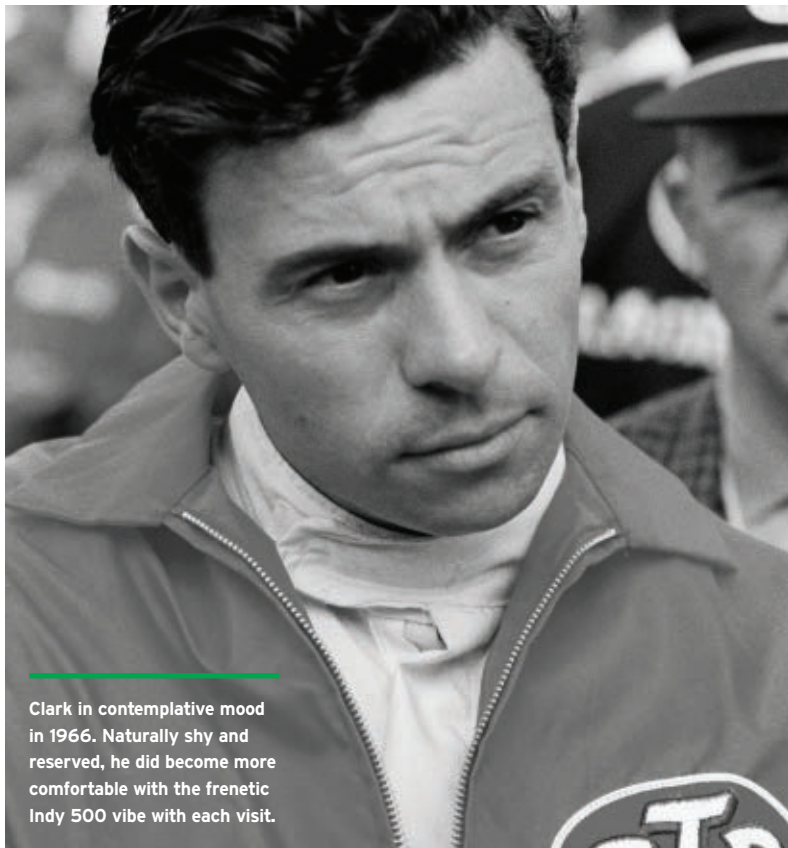


Congratulations to the Kia Racing Team for winning the prestigious Pirelli World Challenge Manufacturers' Championship last year. The first-place finish capped off an impressive 2014 season that included five race wins, thirteen podium appearances, and more leading miles than any other manufacturer. The victory is also a testament to the capability of the turbocharged Optima and to the outstanding quality, dependability, and performance found in every Kia vehicle. Keep an eye out for the Optimas as the Kia Racing Team competes for the 2015 title.

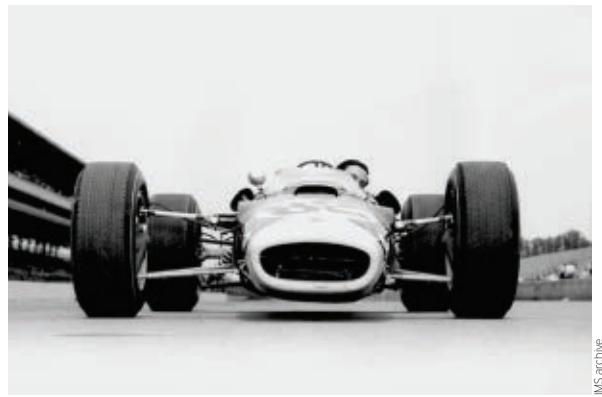


world-challenge.com | facebook.com/kiaracing | kia.com/motorsports

*The Optima GDI (EX, SX & Limited and certain LX trims only) is assembled in the United States from U.S. and globally-sourced parts. Competition GTS-class turbocharged Optima shown.



Clark in contemplative mood in 1966. Naturally shy and reserved, he did become more comfortable with the frenetic Indy 500 vibe with each visit.



IMS archive



LAT archive



IMS archive



IMS archive

chunking tire. On lap 100, teammate Gurney was withdrawn as a precaution.

A year on, the revolution was full bore, with even Foyt and Jones joining the march to the rear. But there was no Welcome Wagon anymore for Team Lotus.

"The only way to say it is that there was a lot of effort made to throw us out," says Bob Sparshott, a fabricating whiz who worked for Chapman in '65, but would surface again in 1980 after building Johnny Rutherford's Indy-winning Chaparral 2K for Jim Hall. "USAC made us re-make the suspension and wheels, and it was very difficult to keep going because there were only a couple of us. It was a very interesting month."

But Clark wasn't going to let such trivial matters divert him from his task. In fact, he wasn't going to let anything divert him, even pulling out of the Monaco GP to concentrate on Indy.

"I said over the P.A. that I brought the track record back to the USA and got a huge ovation from the fans"

A.J. FOYT

In qualifying, he set another track record in his new Lotus 38, only to have Foyt better it in the '64 Lotus he'd acquired from Ford. "I said over the P.A. system that I brought the track record back to the USA and got a huge ovation from the fans," says Foyt with a chuckle. "Clark came over and shook my hand and I thought that was pretty damn nice."

In the '65 race, nobody had anything for Clark and he made it look effortless, something Gurney is quick to expound on.

"People always said he was so smooth, but Jimmy ran it on the ragged edge and

extracted the maximum out of the car," says the only driver Clark feared, according to Jim's father. "Jimmy was an edge man, his tail was out a lot of the time. He wasn't so calculating; he was more the hell-bent-for-election kind of guy. And if you were a spectator, you wouldn't take your eyes off him."

Despite the fact he'd galvanized Gasoline Alley and it was all about the "Yanks vs. The Brits" now, Clark's victory was met with respectful adoration.

"He was shy, polite and a little uncomfortable with the fame," says British-born IMS historian Donald Davidson, who befriended Clark in 1964. "And he was always amazed how popular he was during May. He thought the Americans would be hostile toward him, but they never were. They adored him."

Not a surprise, according to Stewart. "Jim was still a Scottish border farmer and he was always a quiet, modest, very dignified man," he says. "His demeanor was different from A.J., Rufus [Parnelli], McCluskey, and those great characters like Jim Hurtubise. I think the American drivers and fans respected him for what he did and how he conducted himself."

All eyes were on the '65 winner and F1 king the following May, but it turned out to be a month of enormous frustration.

"In 1966 the Indy car was cobbled >

(ABOVE) Two studies of Clark's 1965 Indy 500-winning Lotus 38 - a car as effective as it was stunning. (FAR LEFT) Clark puts on a brave face after qualifying 16th for the 1967 Indy 500. (LEFT) His willingness to take on the challenge of Indy blazed a trail for other F1 drivers, such as Jackie Stewart.



Colin Chapman's take on a turbine, the wedge-shaped Lotus 56 (RIGHT), with Andy Granatelli's version during Indy testing, spring 1968. Jim Clark (in car) was excited by the 56's potential, but didn't live to race it.

LOTUS AT THE BRICKYARD

CHAPMAN'S SEVEN-YEAR ITCH

In typical whirlwind fashion, Colin Chapman came, saw and conquered at the Brickyard, then abruptly left.

In the seven years that he competed at the Indianapolis 500, Colin Chapman created cutting edge cars that changed the face of the race and how American open-wheel teams thought about power-to-weight ratio, pit stops, charging into a corner and going fast on an oval.

All thanks to Daniel Sexton Gurney.

Gurney, the only American to ever drive his own creation to an F1 victory (the 1967 Eagle), flew Chapman to the 1962 Indy 500 to get the lay of the land before convincing Ford to build them an engine for 1963.

"I could see at that time that Colin was the raciest designer and the cleverest, and he was willing to create a car with a better chance of winning than the rest of 'em," says Gurney, who teamed with Jimmy Clark and Lotus at Indy in 1963 and '64.

From the first Lotus 29 that Clark raced to second place in '63, followed by his pole-winning Lotus 34 in '64, came '65's stunning Lotus 38 - a full monocoque car with a special off-set layout designed by Len Terry and Chapman.

"He fancied Indianapolis because it was

so open and so ripe for the taking," says Bob Dance, one of Chapman's best mechanics throughout the '60s and '70s.

Following his Indy runaway in '65, Clark finished second in '66 with a modified Lotus 38, but struggled mightily with it in '67. For '68, he'd have raced the radical, 4-wheel-



IT PAYS WELL, COLIN...

Having convinced Colin Chapman (left) to race at Indy, Dan Gurney tests for Lotus in spring 1963. Jim Clark (right) was second on his Indy debut, with Gurney seventh.

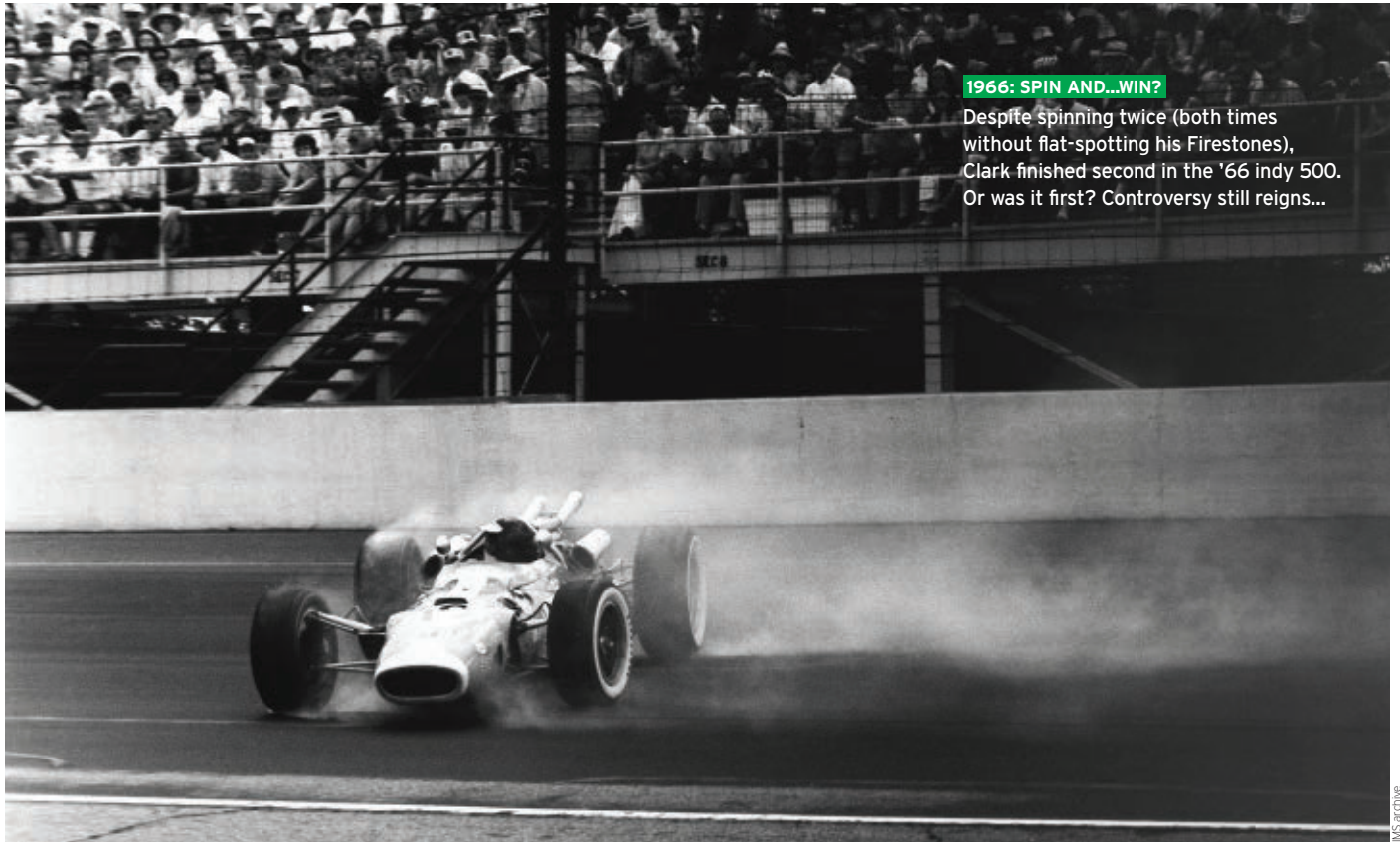
drive, turbine-powered, wedge Lotus 56 at that year's "500," having been enthused by its potential in a test at the Speedway, but was killed in a Formula 2 race just weeks before Opening Day at the Brickyard.

Mario Andretti began May of '69 in Chapman's modified Lotus 56, the 64, but totaled the car and suffered flash burns on his face in a big accident in practice.

"Colin was always looking for the advantage, and we had one that month because our cornering speeds were so much greater," says Andretti, who went on to win that race in a backup Hawk chassis. "But he was designing the car for F1 loads, and the uprights failed because it was so weak. Had it held up, I think it would have been a cakewalk."

And that was that. Following Mario's accident, Chapman withdrew his remaining entries, departed IMS and never returned.

"He loved Indy, but he said he'd never come back without his own engine," recalled former Lotus mechanic Eamon "Chalkie" Fullalove. "And he left before Cosworth developed its Indy engine, which would have been a perfect match."



1966: SPIN AND...WIN?

Despite spinning twice (both times without flat-spotting his Firestones), Clark finished second in the '66 indy 500. Or was it first? Controversy still reigns...

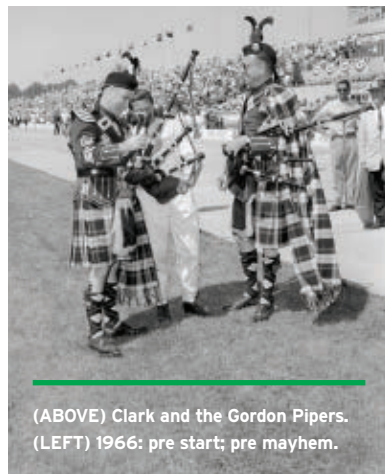


“Clark did win the [1966] race. There’s no doubt in my mind, and he thought so as well”

ALAN MCCALL

together because we spent all our time on the H-16 Lotus,” recalls Alan McCall, a lead mechanic for Clark in F1 and Indy. “It was the previous year’s Indy car and BRM was supposed to make us the motors, but they never turned up. I remember Al Unser jumped in the second car and thought it was wonderful, but Jimmy kept complaining. He kept changing the car, but he was struggling and needed to pick up the pace.

“One night Chapman sat us in a circle and put Jimmy in a chair in the middle. He said: ‘All of these boys are giving their



(ABOVE) Clark and the Gordon Pipers. (LEFT) 1966: pre start; pre mayhem.

best, what about you, James?’ Jimmy got redder and redder, but never said a word. He was livid. But he got with the program and qualified second quick.”

The ‘66 “500” started badly and ended in confusion. A 15-car pileup as the 33 starters charged to the green flag took out Foyt and Gurney. After the restart, Clark had his hands full with Lloyd Ruby, Jackie Stewart and his own ill-handling Lotus.

“Jimmy spun twice in the race, but caught both of ‘em and didn’t stop either time for tires because there were no flat spots,” says McCall.

Ruby led for 68 laps, but his engine seized up and that put rookie Stewart in front from laps 151-190, before his car lost oil pressure. That supposedly left Graham Hill in first place, where he stayed for the final 10 circuits, although it’s been widely disputed that the wrong driver’s face is on the Borg-Warner Trophy.

“Graham Hill got lapped and then un-lapped himself, but there’s no way he beat Jimmy,” continues McCall. “We ran down to victory lane and when we got there Graham was already in the box. We were pissed because we had the official RAC scorer in our pit and USAC had a little old lady, and our lap charts clearly showed we finished ahead of Graham.

“Clark did win the race. There’s no doubt in my mind, and he thought so as well.”

For 1967, what turned out to be Clark’s last Indy 500 was easily his worst.

“It was the same car from 1966, we never got to tire test, the engines kept blowing up, and the changes we made didn’t work,” says Eamon “Chalkie” Fullalove, the wing commander of Indy cars for 30 years, whose initial Indy appearance in ‘67 came as a wrench with Team Lotus. “All the other teams had caught up and we were behind the 8-Ball. Never got the car working to Jim’s liking. He qualified 16th and burned a piston early in the race to end a miserable month.” >

RESPECT FOR CLARK, DISDAIN FOR F1

In five years of racing against Jimmy Clark at the Indy 500, A.J. Foyt’s take on the quiet Scot moved from disdain, to respect, to affection. But his stance on Formula 1 never shifted. That remained disdain...

“I had a chance a couple times to drive in Formula 1,” he says. “I was never that interested, because I never cared to wear a necktie each time I went to eat breakfast. I’m a Texas boy and I just loved racing in the Indy cars and sprint cars.”





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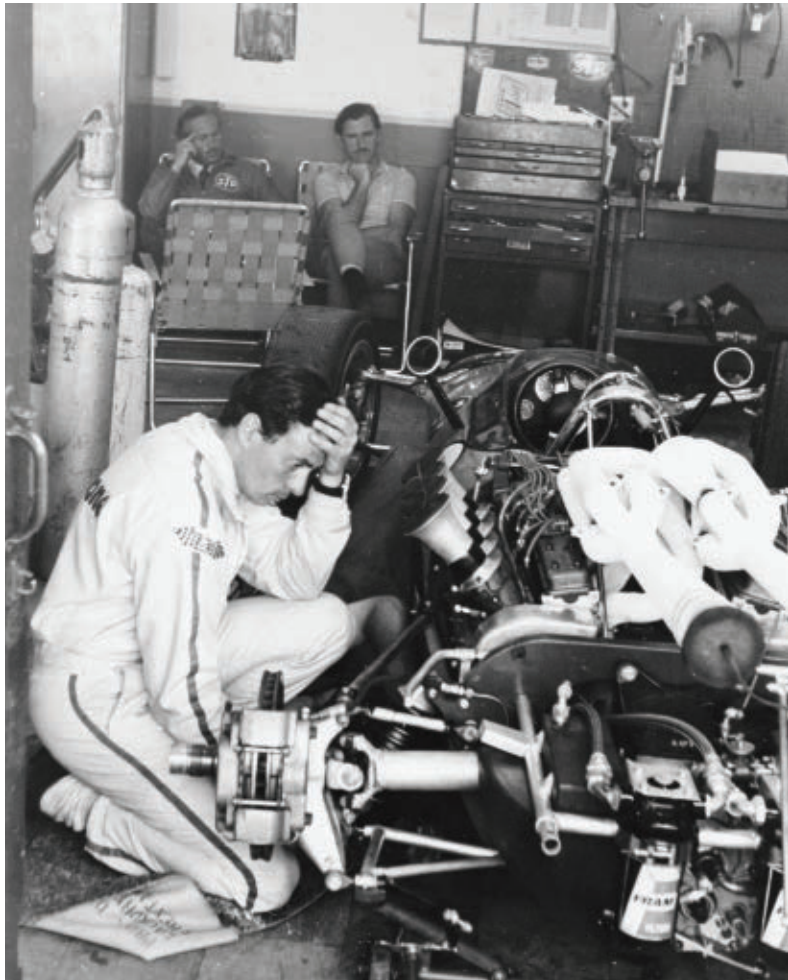
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Of course, Clark was ticketed for the Andy Granatelli/Chapman collaboration on the turbine-powered, wedge chassis Lotus 56 in 1968. He'd tested the car in the spring and was enthused by its potential, but lost his life in a Formula 2 race at Hockenheim, Germany, just a month before Indy opened for practice.

Still, it surprised some that he'd kept coming back to the Speedway.

"He kept coming back for money," states McCall. "I don't think he necessarily liked it, but he liked the money. And Chapman never paid Jimmy proper money. I think he got 7,000 quid [\$19,000] for winning the World Championship in 1965, so he could make five or six times that amount by winning Indianapolis.

"It wasn't that Chapman was mean," he adds. "The money just wasn't there. We were always struggling financially."

Stewart agrees, to a point.

"No question there was a lot more money to be made at Indianapolis than in F1 back then," he says. "When I got my offer to come drive for John Mecom, Jimmy encouraged me. He said it was quite a challenge, but that I would enjoy

"Jim came to Indy in a modest way, with no idea of how to race there and made an immediate impact"

JACKIE STEWART

it. I did and I think he did as well."

When asked if he thought Clark enjoyed racing at Indy, Gurney ponders a moment.

"That's a hard question to answer," he says. "He was very proud of having won it and it ended up being a priceless arrow in his quiver. But there's an element there - and I don't care if you were A.J., Parnelli or Mario - the morning of the race and you're looking in the mirror saying to yourself, 'I wonder if I'm going to be able to do this forever.' That element existed in those days."

Looking back, the mechanics still have awe in their voices when talking about Clark.

"Jim's feel was incredible and he was so sensitive to what was going with the chassis," says McCall. "You didn't have to give him a good car, just a car that would repeat itself. I worked with 75 racecar drivers and there was nobody like him."

Sparshott simply states: "We had the right man in the cockpit," while Fullalove adds: "There was nobody better, ever."

Asked to rank Clark at Indy, Jones reponds: "He's right there at the top. With Foyt, Sachs, Ward, Herk and Branson. He was as natural a racer as I've ever been around and had all the talent in the world. He didn't grow up on ovals like me and Foyt, but he sure was a quick learner."

Stewart still speaks of his old friend with reverence, which is how Clark always approached the Indianapolis 500.

"He treated it like any other race; he went there to win it," says JYS. "But he had great respect for the track and the American drivers and always thought he was lucky to be there.

"Jim came to Indy in a modest way, with no idea of how to race there and made an immediate impact. And what people loved about him was that, win or lose, he was always the same Jim Clark. There was never any bitterness about 1963 or '66, just a great deal of satisfaction and humility from winning in '65.

"He was very special, and his legacy at Indy will be that he's forever remembered." ■

(ABOVE LEFT) It's 1967, and a frustrated Clark ponders his underperforming Lotus 38 as a resigned Colin Chapman and Graham Hill look on. (TOP) Clark got a glimpse of the turbine Lotus 56's potential in a spring test, but was killed before he got the chance to race it. (ABOVE) Chatting with a bohemian-looking Stirling Moss.

(MAIN) The 2011 Goodwood Festival of Speed wasn't a place for Dario Franchitti to push the Lotus 38, but he did revel in the sound of its four-cam Ford engine. In '10, he also drove the car at the Brickyard.



FRANCHITTI ON CLARK

IN JIMMY'S WHEEL TRACKS

Three-time Indy 500 champ Dario Franchitti's respect for Clark makes winning at the Brickyard extra special.

I honestly struggle to come up with a proper answer regarding why Jim Clark is my No. 1 hero. Jackie Stewart is a hero, too - as a driver, he was one of the best ever, and as a person, a mentor and a friend, he has no competition in that regard. But I'd say he's also partly responsible for why Jim will always be my man, and why there's a Jim Clark room in my house.

Jackie is someone I know, someone I get to see, and he's always there at the end of a phone, and long may that continue. Whereas Jim died five years before I was born. He comes from a time when there weren't a lot of TV cameras around, and there aren't loads of TV interviews with him, so there's more of a fascination and, I guess, a mystique.

It started off because he was a Scottish driver, and everyone I grew up around would speak of him in these awed tones - including Jackie. Now, Jackie's a guy who's not intimidated by anyone, very sure of himself, but when he talks of Jim, there's always a kind of awe in his voice. So if Jackie Stewart's impressed...

And the more I delved into it, read about



Franchitti has had the privilege of driving Jimmy Clark's Indy-winning Lotus 38 at Goodwood in 2011 and '13 (ABOVE).



FINDING THE FACE

The morning after winning his first Indy 500 in 2007, a reflective Dario Franchitti lingers on the likeness of his hero, 1965 winner Jimmy Clark, on the Borg-Warner Trophy.

Jimmy and learned about him from people who knew him, the more I realized that, 'Wow, damn, he really did live up to the hype that's been built up over all these years.' And so my fascination grew.

When I first came to America, the political situation in the sport meant it didn't cross my mind I'd ever race in the Indy 500. And when I first did, in 2002, it seemed such a stretch to imagine myself ever winning it!

I missed the race in '03 because I had a broken back, so I was hanging around and hearing from fans about how much they loved Jim. Then, in '04, I qualified on the front row, and in '05 - the 40th anniversary of Jim's win - Jackie was there and I really wanted to win that one. My brother Marino had even put a little sticker on the back of my helmet with a Scottish flag and "JC '65" on it. But Dan Wheldon won - did a brilliant job - and I wondered if it'd ever happen for me.

Then when it did in 2007, it really dawned on me that I'd finally done it. That first win - and I know this might sound weird - meant more to me that I'd finally achieved something that my ultimate hero had done...

WHEN NASCAR ACES CHOSE 500 OVER 600

Four drivers have attempted racing's Memorial Day Weekend double of the Indianapolis 500 and Coke 600 in Charlotte, N.C. - John Andretti, Robby Gordon, Tony Stewart and, only last year, Kurt Busch. But there was a time when certain NASCAR regulars would choose racing at Indy over Charlotte. Most impressive was Donnie Allison, who finished the Indy 500 fourth in 1970 and sixth in '71. Brother Bobby was also a strong



performer, as were Cale Yarborough (ABOVE) and LeeRoy Yarborough (BELOW). Cale saw a 20mph leap in speed from his debut in '66 to his final attempt in '72, which featured his best finish of 10th. LeeRoy failed to finish all three of his attempts at Indy, but showed great pace to start eighth in '69, ahead of such stars as Lloyd Ruby, Dan Gurney and Gary Bettenhausen, as well as a future Indy 500 winner, Johnny Rutherford.



MARIO ANDRETTI DOING IT ALL

Back in 1965, when Jimmy Clark stated how impressed he'd been by Indy 500 rookie Mario Andretti, Colin Chapman told the Italian-born American to call him whenever he decided to try Formula 1. It was inevitable that eventually this would prove too much for Andretti to resist.

Thereafter, many of Mario's career decisions were made with the purpose of making him a better road course driver. While NASCAR's Daytona 500, which he won in 1967 (RIGHT), was a bit of lucrative fun, his time spent testing and racing the Ford GT40 was valuable preparation for the European scene. Mario credits fellow Ford ace Bruce McLaren as teaching him the art of driving hairpins and slow turns. Together, they scored the first of Mario's three 12 Hours of Sebring wins in 1967.

MARIO'S STOCK ANSWER

There was nothing lucky about Mario Andretti's victory in the '67 Daytona 500. He beat his teammate, '65 "500" winner Fred Lorenzen, in a straight fight.



The following year, Andretti felt ready to accept Chapman's offer of a drive in a Lotus 49 for the Italian Grand Prix. Mario was quickest in Friday practice, but he (and fellow U.S. interloper Bobby Unser) flew back to Indy to take part in the Hoosier Hundred on Saturday, and FIA rules forbade F1 drivers from taking part in another race within 24 hours of a grand prix. Thus he and Unser's Italian adventure ended early.

However, come the fall, another chance to race Chapman's third Lotus came Mario's way for the U.S. Grand Prix at Watkins Glen, and he beat '68 F1 title protagonists Jackie Stewart and Graham Hill to pole position. Those two Brits had shone at Indy, sure, but that day Mario gave them a taste of their own medicine, and proved he could go on to be a Formula 1 star.

A.J. FOYT

RIGHT BACK ATCHA

It wasn't just one-way traffic *into* Indy in the '60s and early '70s. The Brickyard's biggest name raided NASCAR and Le Mans.

Listing A.J. Foyt's achievements in Indy car racing is a long enough task in itself. Driving in the Indianapolis 500 for 35 consecutive years, he won the world's biggest race twice in front-engined roadsters and twice in rear-engined cars, to become the first of only three four-time winners. He holds the record for number of Indy car race wins (67), he's second in the all-time pole-winners' list (53) and he added six Indy car (USAC National) titles to his 1960 USAC Sprint Car championship.

But it's when he stepped outside his racing specialty that the breadth of Foyt's ability became quite jaw-dropping. He famously won the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1967 with Dan Gurney and the Ford GT40 MkIV, but also added two Daytona 24 Hours (1983 and '85) and a Sebring 12 Hours to his list of sports car achievements. That latter victory also came in 1985 in a Porsche 962 shared with Bob Wollek, and was the last professional win of A.J.'s career.

Foyt was the second Indy car ace to conquer the Daytona 500, his win coming in 1972 (LEFT). But he achieved six other NASCAR Cup wins between 1964 and '72, and he also scored nine poles. In fact,

stock car racing seemed to come pretty easy to Foyt. He won USAC's Stock Car championship in '68, '78 and '79, scoring a total of 41 wins, and also won the IROC Series in both 1976 and '77.

A.J.'s 50 wins in USAC Sprint, Midget and Dirt Champ Cars were supplemented by back-to-back victories in the Australian Speedcar Grand Prix (Aussie sprint cars).

In short, whether he was racing open-wheel, closed-wheel, open- or closed cockpit, paved or dirt track, Foyt proved he could and likely would master it.



AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

The 1967 24 Hours of Le Mans win for Ford, Holman-Moody and A.J. Foyt/Dan Gurney remains the only all-American win in the history of the French classic.

GRAHAM HILL ENGLAND'S FIRST

Graham Hill, 1962 and '68 Formula 1 World Champion, won the Indianapolis 500 as a rookie, driving a John Mecom Lola engineered by the mighty George Bignotti. There remains some dispute as to whether Jimmy Clark actually achieved two "500" wins in a row - there was confusion among lap-scorers in '66 - but when Clark mentioned this in Victory Lane, Hill's simple reply was, "No way, mate, I drank the milk!"

Hill qualified second in the Lotus 56 turbine in '68, alongside teammate and polesitter Joe Leonard, but an abortive run in '69 in the Lotus 64 was his and Lotus's last attempt at Indy.

(FAR LEFT) Foyt's Daytona 500 win in 1972 was even more dominant than Mario Andretti's in '67. A.J. qualified second and led 167 of the 200 laps in his Wood Brothers' Mercury.



The '66 Indy winner Hill with '66 polesitter Andretti. Mario's day would come...once.

AND DON'T FORGET...

STEWART - NEARLY MAN

Before he became F1 World Champion for the first time, Jackie Stewart could have been an Indianapolis 500 winner. As Mecom teammate to Graham Hill in a Lola-Ford, JYS was leading the 1966 "500" in the closing stages when diving oil pressure caused his DNF.

As a frustrated George Bignotti remembered it, "Jackie was trying hard to lap Graham, who responded, trying *not* to be lapped, so they were going faster and faster. I was frantically signaling them to slow down, but they were teammates in Formula 1 as well, so there was a pride issue. Anyway, I knew something would let go, and it did..."

The March 701 was no one's favorite car, but Mario Andretti used one to finish on the podium in only his seventh F1 start, the 1970 Spanish GP held at Jarama.



Jackie Stewart surveys the Indianapolis Motor Speedway from the outside of Turn 2.

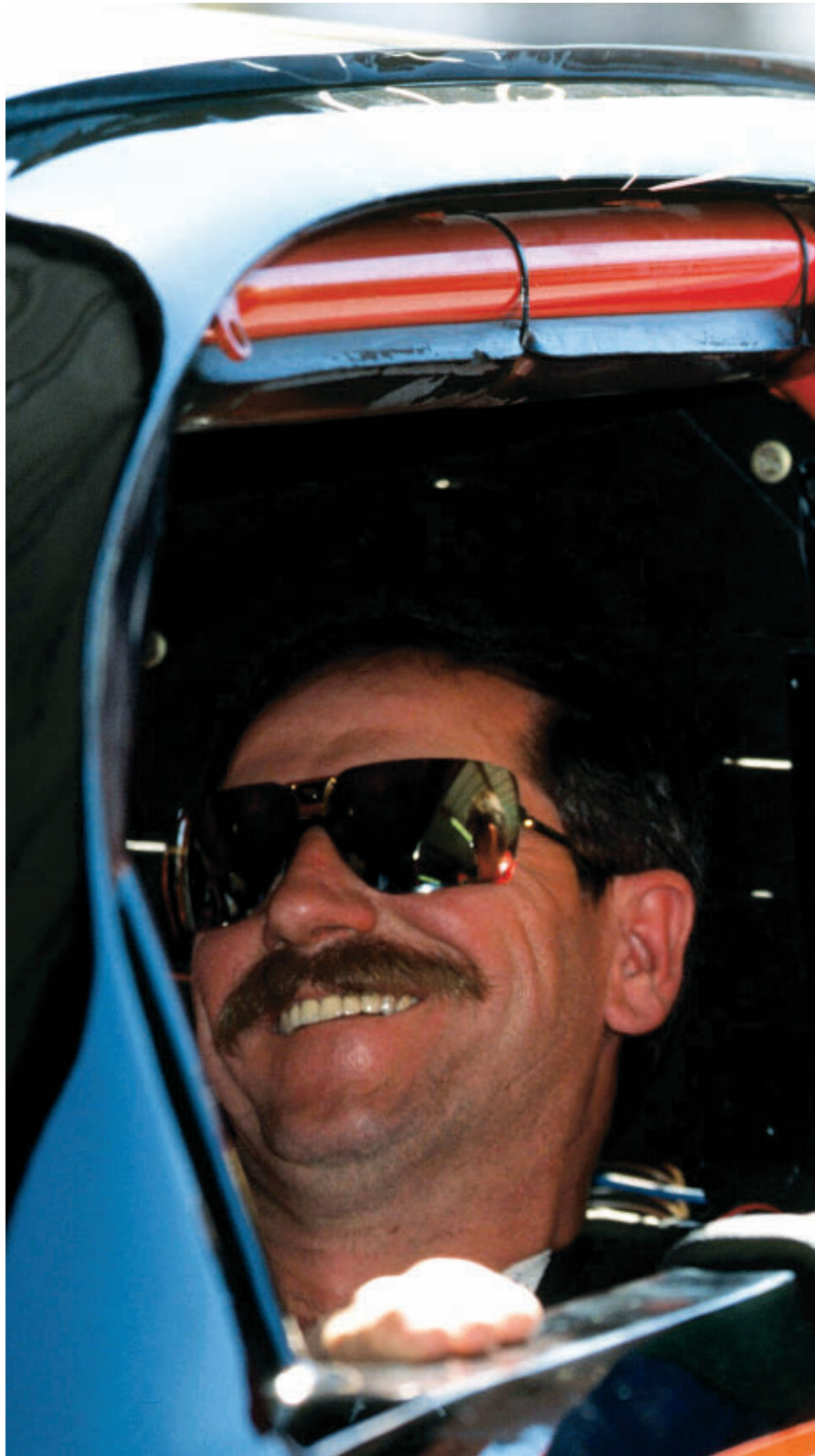
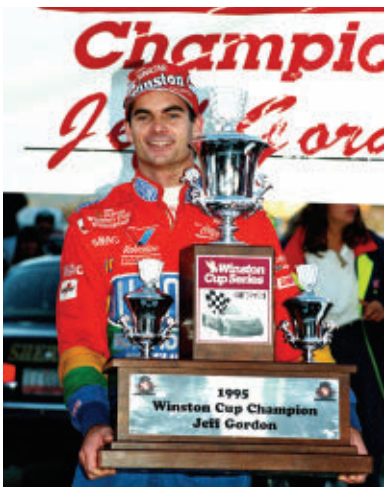


WONDER BOY

Jeff Gordon has four NASCAR Sprint Cup titles and more than 90 race victories to his name, but he's been much more than just a winning machine. He reshaped people's perceptions of the sport itself.

| WORDS Tom Jensen

| MAIN IMAGE Nigel Kinrade Photography



TWENTY YEARS AGO...

...Jeff Gordon narrowly beat seven-time NASCAR Cup champion Dale Earnhardt to the 1995 crown. Now Jeff is the "grizzled" vet of the Sprint Cup scene.

NASCAR in the '90s was about established great Dale Earnhardt versus a precocious upstart, Jeff Gordon. Fans were perplexed when rivalry and mutual respect became friendship.





Wonder Boy and Ironhead go head to head at Talladega in 2000. Tragically, that would be the last full season in which they could enjoy their unlikely friendship and thrilling rivalry.

When Jeff Gordon steps away from the cockpit of the iconic No. 24 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet at the end of the 2015 season, he will leave behind a tremendous legacy that includes - so far - four NASCAR Sprint Cup Series championships, third place on NASCAR's all-time win list, three Daytona 500 and five Brickyard 400 victories, and a résumé that makes him a lock for first-ballot status in the NASCAR Hall of Fame.

But what makes Gordon's career so remarkable is that he completely redefined the paradigm of how young racers make it to stock car racing's highest level. Gordon truly was a game changer in every sense of the phrase.

In the years before Gordon, drivers who grew up racing open-wheel sprint cars or midgets on the West Coast or in the Midwest invariably gravitated toward Indianapolis. Drivers who wanted to race

NASCAR, on the other hand, came up through a rigid caste system: Drive for a couple of years in the old Busch Grand National Series, then sign on with a backmarker Cup team for a year or two, then a mediocre Cup team for a couple of years. If you kept your nose clean and didn't wreck too many cars, maybe you'd wind up with a frontline team. *Maybe*. Oh, and it was pretty much a given that you had to be from the South.

Then along came Gordon, who grew up in Northern California, then Indiana, racing open-wheel cars. He was just 22 years old when he began his NASCAR Cup rookie season in 1993.

Yes, Gordon tore up a lot of racecars early on, but the combination of the driver and svengali crew chief Ray Evernham proved magical, with Gordon winning his first championship in 1995, just his third full-time Cup season, and then two more



Nigel Kinrade

BLUE OVALS?
Jeff Gordon is now synonymous with Chevrolet, but in the secondary Busch Series he raced Bill Davis Racing Fords. He finished fourth in points in 1992, with three wins and a record 11 poles.

in 1997-'98. In the monkey-see, monkey-do world of NASCAR, that was all team rival owners needed to know.

Gordon's rapid success "changed the whole perception of how you looked at a driver," says California native and reigning Sprint Cup champion Kevin Harvick. "Everybody wanted older, experienced guys at that point who wouldn't tear up the cars. Then the next thing you know, everyone was looking for the next wave of talent to be like Jeff. So it changed the way that the sport worked."

"He [Gordon] opened the door for Tony Stewart, and Stewart opened the door further for myself, Kasey Kahne, Ricky Stenhouse," adds fellow Californian and Hendrick Motorsports teammate Jimmie Johnson. "Right now, NASCAR has more drivers from California than from any other state - that's wild! And I think Jeff is responsible for that trend happening."



Nigel Kinrade

Nigel Kinrade

“If you look at the leap [Earnhardt’s] career took... a lot of that, in my opinion, had to do with Jeff Gordon”

KEVIN HARVICK

Timing also worked to Gordon’s advantage. His first two seasons were the late, great Dale Earnhardt’s final two championship campaigns (taking him to a Richard Petty-tying seven). NASCAR, like professional wrestling, flourishes when there are clear-cut rivalries, and Earnhardt-Gordon was perfect: The Intimidator vs. Wonder Boy. The Man in Black vs. the Rainbow Warriors. Worldly-wise, blue-collar veteran from a North Carolina mill town vs. an upstart from Northern California’s wine country. It was a marketing executive’s dream, and both

drivers knew to capitalize on it.

“The traditional fans followed Dale, and Jeff brought in new people as the sport was growing,” says Hendrick Motorsports general manager Doug Duchardt. “For them, here was this new guy coming along who was articulate and could perform on the track, and had just a little different appeal than Dale Sr.”

“Earnhardt was a huge part of the sport,” says Harvick. “But at the end of the ’90s, 2000, up until 2001, if you look at the leap that his career took - his wealth and sponsors and the things that he had - a lot of that, in my opinion, had to do with Jeff Gordon.”

The dirty little secret was that while each man delighted in beating the other, off the track they became fast friends and business partners, based largely on the admiration that they had for each other.

Dale Earnhardt Jr. met Gordon during >

EARLY MILESTONES

1992



QUIET ARRIVAL

Jeff’s Cup debut in Atlanta’s Hooters 500 was overshadowed by the title battle and also by the fact it was Richard Petty’s career finale. In hindsight, maybe a torch was being passed.

1994



THE BREAKTHROUGH

After seven top-five finishes in his first full season, the dam cracked for Gordon in ’94 at Charlotte, with victory in the Coke 600.

1994



TWO NEW ERAS

After winning on Memorial Day, Jeff won at Indianapolis Motor Speedway two months later, taking the inaugural Brickyard 400 - his first of five.

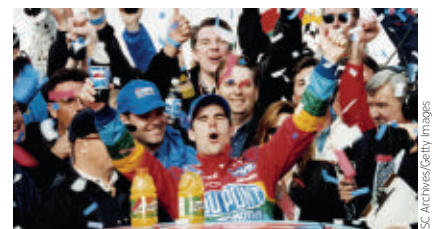
1995



DESTINY COMES CALLING

Seven wins and 17 top-five finishes helped Gordon to take Hendrick’s No. 24 Chevy to the first of four NASCAR Cup championships.

1997



DAYTONA DELIVERY

The first of three Daytona 500 wins was the perfect start to a ’97 season in which Wonder Boy snared 10 wins and his second Cup title. Somehow he was even more dominant in ’98.

ISC Archives/Getty Images



TWENTY-FOUR SEASONS AND COUNTING

Maybe it's because, back in 1975, a 26-year-old Rick Hendrick became the youngest Chevrolet dealer in America that he can recognize a prodigy when he sees one. But from the moment he brought Jeff Gordon onboard Hendrick Motorsports in late 1992, they've looked set for life.

"Rick is the ultimate leader, the ultimate business man and an all-around great person," says Gordon. "He's built an organization second to none."



his '93 rookie Cup season. And right then the elder Earnhardt told his son about this Californian upstart.

"Dad walked over and saw me and introduced me to Jeff," Dale Earnhardt Jr. recalls, "and he told me that Jeff was going to be really good, had a ton of talent, something along those lines. That was interesting, because Dad was such a fierce competitor and rarely paid compliments to any of the drivers that he raced against."

Earnhardt Sr. died in a crash on the final lap of the 2001 Daytona 500, leaving stock car racing without its talisman and Gordon without his friend and sparring partner.

"The interesting thing was how close their friendship was growing behind the scenes and the mutual respect they had for each other," says Duchardt. "It would have been fascinating to see how that would have grown as things moved on."

So why did Gordon enjoy so much success at such a young age, earning the respect of a guy like Earnhardt Sr. in the process? For one thing, he started racing quarter-midgets when he was just five years old, and when he reached the ripe old age of 13, he was racing 750hp sprint cars on dirt against the likes of Steve Kinser and Dave Blaney. By the time Gordon made it to NASCAR, he was already a battle-hardened, seasoned veteran.



(LEFT, ABOVE LEFT) Leading a Hendrick 1-2-3 at Daytona in '97 triggered a show of support for absent Rick Hendrick, who was receiving treatment for leukemia. **(FAR LEFT)** With Ray Evernham.

"Dad told me Jeff was going to be really good. Dad was such a fierce competitor, he rarely paid compliments"

DALE EARNHARDT JR.

"Jeff is very, very smart," says Evernham. "And that's from running a gazillion laps from the time he was five years old. He was always way, way more experienced than his age."

Evernham also believes Gordon's fearsome will to win is something most outsiders don't understand or appreciate.

"Truly, truly - I don't care if it's for a million dollars or for one dollar - it's the winning and losing that has always driven him," Evernham says. "The million-dollar wins, I'm sure he's happy about those. But he will race you just as hard in a go-kart

as he will when he's racing in the Daytona 500, and that's just part of his makeup. That, to me, is what makes the great ones. It's not about money with him, it's all about winning and losing."

Of course, having natural talent helps, too.

"Some people are just biologically better than others, it's as simple as that, right?" says Evernham. "They can process information faster, they can do things faster. They have faster reflexes. That's just a proven biological fact."

Adds Duchardt: "I think there are people who are born with the gift, and then there are people who are born with the gift who work at their craft. It applies to any sport. Jeff's ability to understand how to manage a race, understand how conditions will change through a race, understand how those things are going to play out and what he can do to help is what separates him from other drivers." >

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Nigel Kinrade

And Duchardt notes that as Gordon has aged, he's actually gotten more involved with the team, not less. "What I'm impressed with is how committed he is to continue getting better, and the amount of time he spends with his team during the week," he says. "It's probably not something he did with Ray so much, but he's doing it now with Alan [Gustafson, crew chief] and his team.



Scott LePage/LAT

(ABOVE) Hendrick's "Rainbow Warriors" crew turned the Gordon-Evernam dynamic into a trypitch. (LEFT) Still got it. JG after his fifth Brickyard 400 victory last year.

"Our sport isn't going to necessarily suffer from it, but it's just not going to be the same. He's Jeff Gordon"

JIMMIE JOHNSON

And I see the interest he takes in the technical side of what we do, sitting in on some of our meetings as we talk about our future development, for example."

As for Gordon, knowing that this is his final season at the wheel has allowed him to relax in ways he couldn't before.

"I've got this huge mindset advantage right now, knowing that this is the last time," he says. "Get all you can get out of it, enjoy it, and go to the next one. That's not a mindset I've ever been able to have and enjoy before. It's always been, 'Oh, my gosh, you know, if this doesn't all go

perfect...I've got to wait until next year.' I don't have to wait until next year. It's just now. Take advantage of it, enjoy it."

One thing is for certain: the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series will change without Jeff Gordon in the field next year.

"When someone of his caliber isn't on the track, it definitely is going to have a big effect," says Jimmie Johnson, Gordon's teammate since 2001 and a six-time Cup champion. "This series is going to be different without him there. For 23 years he's been such a force on the track. Our sport isn't going to necessarily suffer from it, but it's just not going to be the same. He's Jeff Gordon."

Adds Gordon's boss, Rick Hendrick: "The effect of walking into the garage area in 2016 and not seeing the 24 car with Jeff Gordon's name on it will be a traumatic experience for me."

For Rick and for countless others. ■

SO MUCH LEFT TO DO

NOT RETIRED, PER SE

Although Jeff Gordon will quit racing full time after 2015, he won't lack for things to occupy his time. As the four-time NASCAR Sprint Cup champ put it earlier this year, "Retirement means you go off to a beach, or sit in a rocking chair on the front porch and drink your coffee and pet your dog. That's not me. I plan on working."

Gordon is an equity partner in Hendrick Motorsports, and team owner Rick Hendrick intends to keep him busy on sponsor relationships and helping Gordon's successor, Chase Elliott, transition into Sprint Cup.

Says Hendrick: "Where I know he can help us a lot is as a spokesman in marketing, working with sponsors, coaching Chase on how to avoid the pitfalls of a young star. The world of social media and the way our sponsors want content, the way our dealerships use him and all the social stuff we're doing - he can be a big part of all that."

Expect Gordon to also spend more time on his philanthropic efforts. The Jeff Gordon Children's Foundation, has so far raised more than \$15m in the fight against pediatric cancer.

Should he choose to pursue it, Jeff will also have the option of working in TV. And he really does want to spend more time with his family as well.

"Yeah, I'm a little sad that there's going to soon be a day when I step out of the racecar and it will be for the last time," Gordon admits. "But I knew that day was going to come, and I think this is the right time."



Jennifer Cozart/LAT

He'll be plenty busy when he quits racing, but for now, the 2015-spec Jeff Gordon is concentrating on a final tilt at a fifth Cup.

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CO-STARRING **NIKI LAUDA** AND **NIGEL MANSELL**



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He won four Formula 1 World Championships in just nine seasons, and could so easily have won a couple more. And yet Alain Prost never captured the imagination of the public at large, even in his home country of France. Perhaps that was a reflection of the calculated way he went racing, a style that would earn him the nickname "The Professor." Yet at the start of his F1 career, he was at least as well known for being just flat-out fast.

Joining McLaren in 1980, the reigning European Formula 3 Champion surprised with a sixth-place finish on his debut and stunned by following that up with fifth place in his second start. However, the team was struggling in the ground-effects era and, those results aside, it was to be a difficult year for Prost. There were a couple more points finishes, but component failures led to crashes, led to injuries, led to missed races, and his relationship with McLaren understandably soured.

Still, the potential was obvious, as his teammate of the time, the decade-older F1 veteran John Watson recalls.

"Alain had a good feel for small setup changes - things like springs, dampers," he says, "and the team was looking for answers in those areas."

Toward the end of the season Ron



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(ABOVE LEFT) Alain Prost's first GP win came on home turf in France, 1981. (LEFT) His '80 rookie season at McLaren wasn't a happy one, but his return in '84 (ABOVE) was to be a triumph.

Dennis joined McLaren after a merger with his new Project Four outfit, and brought ace designer John Barnard with him. But Prost's unhappiness with erstwhile team boss Teddy Mayer was compounded by a suspension failure at the season finale in Watkins Glen. With the works Renault team in need of a replacement for Jean-Pierre Jabouille, who'd been injured in a crash at Montreal, Prost gratefully headed "home" for '81.

Alain stayed with the highly politicized Renault team for three seasons, scoring a total of nine wins and coming close to the '83 World Championship before being thwarted by a late surge from Brabham's Nelson Piquet. But disputes with team management, exacerbated by a personal falling out with team boss Gerard Larrousse, saw Prost dumped onto the driver market

at year's end. He was quickly snapped up by Dennis for a return to McLaren, replacing a stunned Watson, who'd not yet signed a deal for '84.

The combination of Barnard's chassis and its TAG Porsche turbo engine proved dominant, and the season turned into a fascinating fight between Prost and his teammate, the already legendary two-time World Champion Niki Lauda. Prost was

"Niki said to me, 'When it comes to that one big lap in qualifying, he can always do me by half a second'"

JOHN BARNARD

immediately and invariably faster in qualifying, but Lauda was often just as quick on race days, and usually brought home a good helping of points.

Barnard recalls: "I remember Niki saying to me, 'I can't understand this guy. When it comes to that one big lap in qualifying, he can always do me by half a second. I've got to figure out why.' But I don't think he ever figured it out, other than conceding that Alain was just bloody quick! So Niki started to focus more on his races." >

QUICKER THAN NIKI

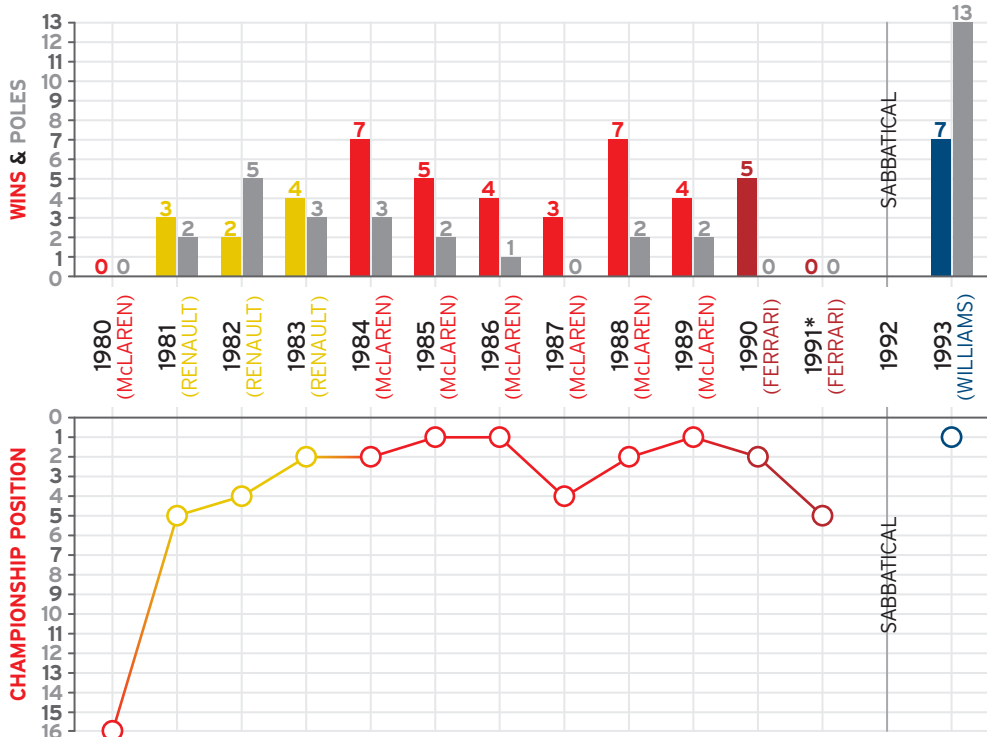
Prost was beaten to the championship by Lauda in '84, but Alain demolished Niki the following year to earn his first F1 title. However, here at Zandvoort, Holland, in '85, Lauda (1) would prevail for the final time. He retired at the end of the year.



LAT archive

CONSISTENTLY EXCELLENT: ALAIN PROST'S F1 RECORD

Prost was always quick, but what's apparent from the stats is that he drove for teams that put less stock in qualifying and focused on race day setups. You'd have to argue, it paid off massively.



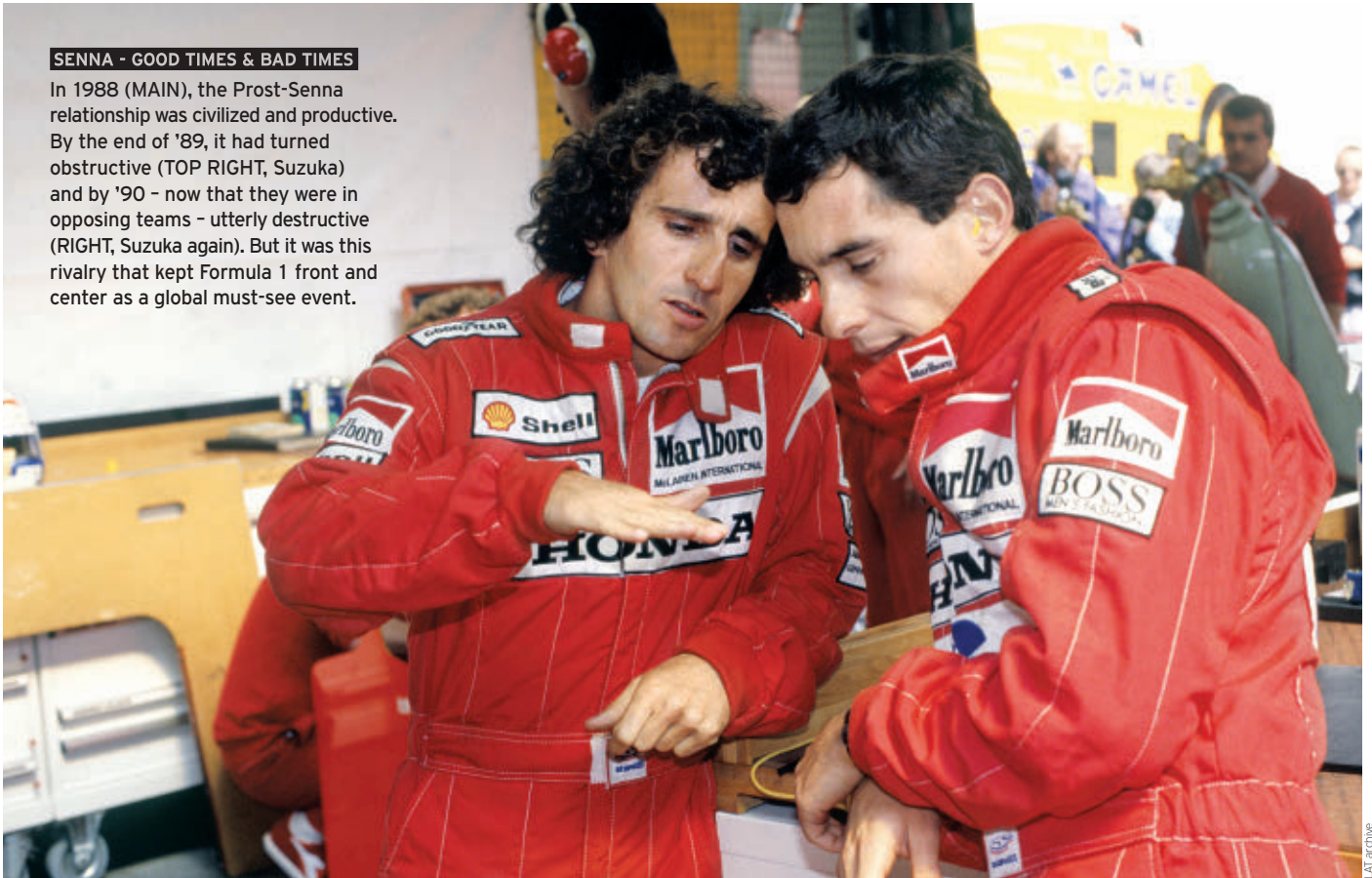
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Two things to note. One is the irony that a guy who didn't focus on qualifying scored 13 poles (the gray bars) in his final F1 season! The other is that, of the three times when Prost scored seven wins in a season, only one of them - 1993 (ABOVE) - resulted in a World Championship title.

** Didn't complete the season - he was fired with one race still to run. One bad car, one mediocre car, but he still managed to finish fifth.*

SENNA - GOOD TIMES & BAD TIMES

In 1988 (MAIN), the Prost-Senna relationship was civilized and productive. By the end of '89, it had turned obstructive (TOP RIGHT, Suzuka) and by '90 - now that they were in opposing teams - utterly destructive (RIGHT, Suzuka again). But it was this rivalry that kept Formula 1 front and center as a global must-see event.



LAT archive

Prost won seven GPs to Lauda's five, but the Austrian did just enough to take the '84 title by half a point. However, in '85, the pace gap between them stretched. Lauda endured a lot of bad luck, fell out with Dennis, and ultimately decided to retire at season's end. Meanwhile, despite strong competition from Ferrari, Williams and Lotus, Prost won five races (a sixth was lost because his car was underweight at Imola) and he became France's first, and so far only, F1 World Champion. He'd also established himself as The Man at McLaren.

"Alain wasn't overtly tough," says Watson. "You see some drivers elbowing everyone and everybody out of the way. I think he won people over because he was outstanding in a racecar, a very nice guy who enjoyed life, and a serious player."

In 1986, the TAG Porsche engines in their third season were neither as powerful, nor fuel efficient as the Hondas powering the Williams cars of Nelson Piquet and Nigel Mansell. However, Prost earned four wins, scored well elsewhere, and kept himself in the title hunt right down to the finale in Adelaide. When Mansell retired with a spectacular tire failure and Piquet made a precautionary pit stop, Prost surprised even himself by winning the race and becoming the first F1 driver to

successfully defend his title since Jack Brabham a quarter century earlier. It was one of those rare occasions in F1 history when the title fell to a driver equipped with a car that was less than the best. Barnard has a simple explanation for that.

"Alain was always thinking about the

endgame, and he was brilliant on tires," he says. "The others would race off in the first 10 laps as he smoothly drove around in fourth or fifth. They'd all wreck their tires, and about halfway through the race, he'd be in front, disappearing into the distance. All because he had a superb feeling for



LAT archive

In 1982, no driver won more than two GPs, but Prost (leading here) and René Arnoux often dominated before their Renault RE30Bs broke down. (RIGHT) Williams duo Nelson Piquet and Nigel Mansell pose with Prost before the '86 title showdown in Australia.



LAT archive



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“They’d all wreck their tires and about halfway through the race, Alain would be in front and disappearing...”

JOHN BARNARD



LAT archive

his tires and car, knowing when he could push, knowing when he shouldn't."

Nevertheless, even Prost could do little about the Williams-Hondas in '87, despite three wins that edged him past Jackie Stewart's record for career F1 victories. But at Monza that year, McLaren confirmed it was switching to Honda power for 1988, and that Ayrton Senna would be coming on board - not just with Prost's blessing, but at his insistence.

"I told Ron, if we wanted to be the best,

we needed to take the best, the strongest, the guy who's the future," says Prost. "That was Ayrton. It would have been easier for me to take Nelson Piquet, but..."

It was the start of an extraordinary chapter in Prost's career. He was 32 and at the top of his game, but he soon realized his new teammate was not only fast, but also a relentless worker. And, like most top drivers, Senna was adept at building strong relationships with a team's key players.

The MP4/4 of 1988 was so good that Prost and Senna completely dominated, winning all but one of the races and making the title battle an in-house affair between the Frenchman and the Brazilian, who in three seasons at Lotus had nailed 16 pole positions, but claimed only six wins.

Prost won seven GPs in '88, finished second to Senna seven times, and ended with more points than Ayrton. However, a strange scoring system that counted only a driver's best 11 results meant Senna's eight wins gave him the advantage in the championship battle and he clinched the crown with one race to go. The fact that Prost took only two poles to Senna's 13 confirmed Senna had a clear edge on qualifying pace, but on race pace they were evenly matched unless it rained, when Senna had the measure of everyone. >

FIRST YOU MUST BEAT YOUR TEAMMATE...

...and didn't Prost do well on that? Aside from his debut season, where he missed races, and '84, when he lost out by half a point, none of his teammates outscored him...even when the point system ultimately worked against him, as it did in '88.

1980 (McLAREN)	5 6	JOHN WATSON
1981 (RENAULT)	43 11	RENÉ ARNOUX
1982 (RENAULT)	34 28	RENÉ ARNOUX
1983 (RENAULT)	57 22	EDDIE CHEEVER
1984 (McLAREN)	71.5 72	NIKI LAUDA
1985* (McLAREN)	76 (73) 14	NIKI LAUDA
1986* (McLAREN)	74 (72) 22	KEKE ROSBERG
1987 (McLAREN)	46 30	STEFAN JOHANSSON
1988* (McLAREN)	105 (87) 94 (90)	AYRTON SENNA
1989* (McLAREN)	81 (76) 60	AYRTON SENNA
1990* (FERRARI)	73 (71) 37	NIGEL MANSELL
1991** (FERRARI)	34 21	JEAN ALESI
1992	(SABBATICAL)	
1993 (WILLIAMS)	99 69	DAMON HILL



LAT archive

The talent pool... In '84, John Barnard designed the McLaren MP4/2 TAG-Porsche for Niki Lauda and Alain Prost; they won 75 percent of the races with it.

* Drivers could only count their best 11 scores from (usually) 16 races. Senna's 8-7 edge in wins was the deciding factor in the 1988 title.

** Prost didn't complete the season. At Suzuka, he compared his car to a truck, and was fired. Gianni Morbidelli subbed for him in the finale.



WINNING ON HOME SOIL

Prost's record in the French Grand Prix was amazing. He won at Dijon in 1981, Paul Ricard in '83, '88, '89 and '90 (ABOVE, for Ferrari), and Magny-Cours in '93.

60 YEARS OLD, BUT CAN'T QUIT THE SPORT

Alain Prost hasn't entirely rid himself of the racing bug, or even the team manager bug! After Prost GP folded in 2002, he raced in the '03 Andros Trophy ice racing series, finishing second to Yvan Muller. As well as being a serious cyclist and an official ambassador for Renault, Prost is involved with the e.Dams-Renault Formula E team, with son Nicolas driving.



LAT archive

Charles Coates/LAT



(LEFT TO RIGHT) Winning the British GP in '89; first GP win for Ferrari was the 40th of his career; elegant 643 came mid-'91 after failure of 642. It was better, but still not a winner.

LAT archive

The following year, however, Senna gained the upper hand politically within the team and Prost's head dropped. "Psychology plays a huge part in driving," says Prost, "so, for example, seeing an engine crate arriving from Honda with 'Special to Senna' on it... What does that mean? Is he getting better engines? For me, there was a huge difference in the feeling in the team between '88 and '89." On pace, Senna dominated again in '89, but a couple of errors and some unreliability for the Brazilian allowed Prost four wins and a healthy points lead late on. The infamous clash at the chicane in Suzuka eliminated Prost, whereas Senna carried on to win. However, his exclusion for bypassing the chicane handed a third title to Prost. Alain's decision to quit McLaren after losing his alpha-male status was inevitable. After

"Seeing an engine crate arriving from Honda with 'Special to Senna' on it... What does that mean?"

ALAIN PROST

six seasons, and three championships, it was hard to say *au revoir*, but he says he has no regrets allowing Senna into "his" team. "Yes, without Ayrton maybe I would have two, three, four more championships," he reflects. "Would my life have been easier without him? Probably. But we made history, raised F1 to a new level, and made a great story. I don't regret any of that." Switching to Ferrari was smart, given that the Italian V12s were making big steps in power while also becoming almost

Honda-reliable. And so the 1990 season *again* developed into a Prost vs. Senna battle which *again* was resolved at Suzuka. Ayrton drove into Alain at the first corner, guaranteeing himself the title. Nevertheless, it was a good year for Prost, who won five races and appeared to have built himself an ideal situation at Ferrari. Yet '91 was a disaster, with Prost landing just five top-three finishes. The red cars were uncompetitive, Alain stated it publicly, and he was fired before the final race. Contractually he was forced to sit out 1992, but returned with Williams-Renault in '93, causing new World Champion Nigel Mansell to head to Indy cars. Armed with the superb high-tech FW15C, Alain was hard to beat, although Senna tried hard in the now Ford-powered McLaren MP4/8. "Alain was a legend," says his final >



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DAMNED IF YOU DO...

As a three-time champion in the best car, Prost was in something of a no-win situation in 1993. If he won, it was the car, and if he didn't...

LAT archive



LAT archive



LAT archive

(FAR LEFT) Looking fresh after a year's sabbatical, Prost poses for cameras at 1993's Round 1. By Round 14, with a fourth title won (LEFT), Alain had decided to retire again, but this time for good.

teammate, Damon Hill. "He'd completely mastered the minimum-expenditure-of-energy method of driving, and was sublimely sensitive to making a car as fast as it could be. At Williams that was borne out in everything. They had to put smaller brakes on because he didn't use them enough, but somehow still slowed the car down..."

Prost won seven races on his canter to the title. But at the end of the year, with Senna on his way to Williams, Alain made a swift, but pragmatic decision and retired as a four-time World Champion.

"I wanted to race against Ayrton, I was happy to," says Prost, "but not in the same team, the same car. I knew how that situation would work out. Frank [Williams] said he was under pressure from Renault to take Ayrton, but that was a situation I could not allow myself to be in again, so..."

"I wanted to race against Ayrton, but not in the same team... I knew how that situation would work out"

ALAIN PROST

In 1994-'95, Prost tested for McLaren, amid rumors he'd return to racing, but it never happened. He eventually joined the team as an advisor, before getting involved with his own team (see sidebar).

That brief and disastrous episode should not, however, affect the reputation of Alain Prost, the driver. A four-time world champion whose tally of 51 grand prix wins is beaten only by Michael Schumacher's, he's surely carved his name in stone. It just seems that few remember it's there... ■

OUI, JE REGRETTE QUELQUE CHOSE

NOT SO PRAGMATIC...

In 1997, Alain Prost took over the Ligier team - for whom Olivier Panis had won the Monaco GP in '96 - as the figurehead for a group of French investors. The re-badged Prost GP had a competitive Mugen-powered package in its first season, and Panis earned two podiums before breaking his legs in Montreal, while his rookie replacement, Jarno Trulli, actually led in Austria.

That proved to be the high point, and over the next three years Prost GP slipped into decline. A factory move from Magny-Cours to Paris seemed like a good idea at the time, except the wind tunnel stayed at the original location, creating a divisive "them and us" mentality between the two sites.

Later, Prost's old pal John Barnard came in to focus on the mechanical side, while his B3 Technologies company made composite parts in the UK. That just added to the communication problems, and Barnard - who stresses he was just a consultant - was blamed by his French counterparts for the lack of success.

Meanwhile, a works engine deal with Peugeot promised much from 1998 onwards, but the relationship soured and ended in 2000, a year that saw drivers Jean Alesi and Nick Heidfeld fail to score a point. Having enjoyed free engines, Prost signed a three-year contract with Ferrari - at a cost of \$28m, \$30m and \$32m over its duration - figures that were simply not sustainable. After just one year of the deal, the team ran out of funds, and didn't make it into the 2002 season.



LAT archive

Prost's 1991 teammate Jean Alesi wasn't an obvious choice to help a struggling team find some technical direction in 2000-'01...



Ex-Graham Hill Lotus 56 turbine (LEFT) goes under Motostalgia's hammer on June 12 at IMS, as does race-winning Eagle of Wally Dallenbach (ABOVE). The SVRA's Brickyard Invitational (TOP) has already become a must-see event.

Ken Coles/Steve Shurck archive

AUCTION AND ACTION

Gentlemen, start your bidding! In its second year, the SVRA's Brickyard Vintage Racing Invitational will feature a Motostalgia auction of classics.

It's rare that the best things in life get better, but that's the only way to describe the news that the Sportscar Vintage Racing Association's Brickyard Vintage Racing Invitational will this year feature Motostalgia's exclusive collector car auction on June 12.

Motostalgia has been named the Official Auction Company of the SVRA, and Tony Parella, President and CEO of SVRA, is particularly pleased that this auction at Indianapolis Motor Speedway will add further value to an event that proved so popular in 2014.

"Working with Motostalgia Auction Company was the next logical step for SVRA, given our demographics and national footprint," he said. "Adding a car auction to the Brickyard Vintage Racing Invitational will make this an even more special event."

Antonio Brunet, founder and chairman of Motostalgia said: "With

the scale of SVRA's customer base - over 5,000 racing entrants for their events in 2015 - it was only natural to align with them to focus upon the vintage racecar community and offer high end collector cars for auction. As far as we can confirm, it's never been done at Indy before."

Up to 110 collector cars and vintage racecars are expected to cross the block Friday evening. And one of the stars already confirmed is the Lotus 56-3 Turbine in which Graham Hill started on the front row in 1968, alongside teammate and polesitter Joe Leonard. Hill's car was owned for many years by NASCAR icon Richard Petty and has recently had a ground-up restoration by Classic Team Lotus in the UK.

Another star car to bid on is a magnificent AAR Eagle-Offy from '73 in which Graham McRae won Indy 500 Rookie of the Year honors, before



Go to SVRA.com for news bulletins, event schedules, membership info and all regulation details.

Wally Dallenbach took it over to win at Milwaukee and Ontario.

However fabulous the cars you see in the auction, they couldn't overshadow the on-track action across June 11-14, which, almost unbelievably, showcases cars spanning 100 years of racing. The exciting array includes pristine examples of select pre-war machinery, classic sports cars, Formula 1 and Le Mans prototypes. Like last year, the storied 2.5-mile oval will be utilized with exhibition runs by a wide variety of cars, including several 1950s roadsters.

Also as per last year, the SVRA has announced the "Indy Legends Charity Pro-Am" race for which 33 former Indy 500 drivers have signed up. The Indy Legends Pro-Am is the crowning event of the Brickyard Invitational, but there is literally a festival of other activities. It is unmissable, so book your tickets now, and revel in our sport's history.

2015 SVRA SCHEDULE

APRIL 9-12	MIAMI HISTORICS Homestead-Miami Speedway, Fla.	JULY 9-12	PORTLAND VINTAGE RACING FESTIVAL Portland International Raceway, Ore.
APRIL 25-26	BRITISH EXTRAVAGANZA with VARA Buttonwillow Raceway Park, Calif.	JULY 23-26	GLENORA WINE CELLARS U.S. VINTAGE GRAND PRIX Watkins Glen International, N.Y.
MAY 14-17	LAKE FOREST SPORTSCARS SPRING VINTAGE FESTIVAL Road America, Elkhart Lake, Wis.	AUG. 20-23	POCONO VINTAGE FESTIVAL with INDYCAR Pocono Raceway, Pa.
MAY 28-31	SONOMA HISTORIC MOTORSPORTS FESTIVAL Sonoma Raceway, Calif.	SEPT. 18-20	CORONADO SPEED FESTIVAL with SAN DIEGO FLEET WEEK Naval Air Station North Island, Coronado, Calif.
JUNE 10-14	BRICKYARD VINTAGE RACING INVITATIONAL Indianapolis Motor Speedway, Ind.	SEPT. 24-27	HEACOCK CLASSIC GOLD CUP Virginia International Raceway, Va.
JUNE 19-21	SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA HISTORIC SPORTS CAR FESTIVAL Auto Club Speedway, Calif.	OCT. 8-11	MARDI GRAS IN OCTOBER with CVAR NOLA Motorsports Park, La.
JUNE 25-28	THE VINTAGE GRAND PRIX OF MID-OHIO Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, Ohio	NOV. 4-8	U.S. VINTAGE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP Circuit of The Americas, Texas

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LE PROFESSEUR'S OTHER TEAMMATES...

For many Formula 1 fans, Alain Prost's career is defined by the open warfare between himself and Ayrton Senna that hangs over the reputation of the four-time World Champion. Truth is, Prost had many tough teammates, and he beat all of them quite comprehensively.

1981-'82

RENÉ ARNOUX

In 1979 and '80, working-class hero René Arnoux was the darling of French F1 fans. Revered as a tough fighter, he captured hearts in a manner that his disciplined and thoughtful teammate Jean-Pierre Jabouille never did. But when Alain Prost replaced the injured J-PJ for '81, René took a long time to emerge from his compatriot's shadow.

In their first season together, Arnoux - believed to be one of the fastest drivers - outqualified Prost just five times, all on fast tracks such as the Österreichring and Monza. By year's end, Alain had his first three GP wins, René had added zero to the two he'd scored in 1980.

In '82, Arnoux recaptured his pace and mojo, going 7-9 in qualifying, and he and Prost - by now embittered rivals - scored two wins apiece.

Both drivers had their championship hopes deflated by the pathetic reliability record of the turbo Renaults over this period, but Arnoux lived on the ragged edge and was king of the unforced error, too, throwing away potential wins all by himself. Compared with a driver who was just as quick, but almost mistake-free, Arnoux invariably came off second-best.



Arnoux led Prost to a Renault 1-2 in the '82 French GP, much to Alain's chagrin.



1990

NIGEL MANSELL

Having had the measure of the quick but wild Gerhard Berger at Ferrari in 1989 (although Berger somehow emerged with a better qualifying record), and having become the tifosi's new hero, Nigel Mansell professed to welcoming *Le Professeur's* arrival for 1990. "There's only one person I feel I can learn from in the pit lane, and that person is Alain Prost," he said.

That sentiment didn't last long. Prost had four wins on the board by mid-'90, two of them (Britain and France) at the expense of Mansell's more fragile Ferrari 641. The San Marino Grand Prix was another that should have gone Nigel's way.

So frustrated was Mansell after his DNF at Silverstone, he announced he'd retire at the end of the year and also committed the driver's cardinal sin



ESTORIL ECSTASY

There weren't many consolation prizes for Mansell besides three pole positions, but he did nail a thrilling Portuguese GP ahead of Senna.

of retiring a healthy car in both the German and Belgian Grands Prix.

Other than that, Mansell continued to drive very well, although there were four tracks where Prost comfortably outpaced him - Spa, Monza, Jerez and Suzuka.

In terms of qualifying, it was 8-8, which is a credit to Mansell, because this was not the McLaren-era Prost who could rely on Honda power to put him on the front row, regardless of his deficit to Senna, but a fully fired-up champion. Plus, Alain was 57lbs lighter than Nigel in an era when driver weights weren't equalized by ballast.

Still, Mansell ended the year with barely half as many points as Prost, having scored just one win to Alain's five. In Nigel's defense, he suffered seven "real" DNFs to Prost's three.



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1984-'85 & 1986

NIKI LAUDA & KEKE ROSBERG

In 1984, Alain Prost led 345 laps to Niki Lauda's 168, scored seven wins to Lauda's five, had one fewer DNF, and outqualified him for all but one race. So how did the Frenchman lose the title?

Well, when Prost finished behind Lauda, it was usually the result of a mishap to the Frenchman, be it a poor pit stop, mechanical frailties, etc. The fact that four of Niki's wins came on days when Alain scored zero gives an indicator of the real balance of power, whatever the championship standings say.

In '85, Prost marginalized the reigning champion, who struggled for motivation and slipped further away from Prost's pace. He also got struck by an un-McLaren-like spate of reliability issues and he quit at the end of the year. He did, however, have fun beating Prost one last time at Zandvoort.

Lauda's successor, 1982 champion Keke Rosberg, was expected to give Prost a far harder time, yet the oversteering Finn was neutered by the understeering McLaren MP4/2C. John Barnard's design was now in its third year and, given its success over the previous two seasons, McLaren was unwilling to alter it to suit a newcomer. Rosberg also struggled at fuel saving, which had become essential in the war against the superior Williams-Hondas.

At Hockenheim, rear wings trimmed out for the enormous straights, Keke finally had the tail-happy car he wanted and he took the last pole position of his career. But that was the exception. Most weekends during 1986, he wasn't on the same level as Prost. Like Lauda, Rosberg retired at the end of the season.

DIFFERENT TASTE

Do not adjust your eyes. In deference to Marlboro's desire to promote its Lights brand, Rosberg ran this yellowish livery in the Portuguese Grand Prix in '86.

(FAR LEFT) Prost's arrival at McLaren put Lauda on the defensive, but Niki couldn't help liking Alain, and instead fell out majorly with team principal Ron Dennis.

1993

DAMON HILL

After two years as test driver for the Williams-Renault team, Damon Hill got the chance of a lifetime when Nigel Mansell quit F1 for CART Indy cars.

As a rookie teammate to Alain Prost, Hill was never going to mount a World Championship challenge, and several times Alain's method of doing just enough to prevail was flattering to Damon's performance. But there were also days when the introspective Brit genuinely appeared to be a match for the eventual World Champion, such as in qualifying in France and Portugal, where Hill took pole position, and in the races at Silverstone and Spa.



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Hill learned well from Prost, made few errors, and eventually made himself into a champ.

THE REST...

In 1980, F1 rookie Alain Prost triggered a confidence crisis in **John Watson** at McLaren. Although the Ulsterman did eventually respond well, their cars were hopeless. **Eddie Cheever** scored four podium finishes alongside Prost at Renault in '83, while **Stefan Johansson** took five top-threes at McLaren in '87 and finished sixth in the points standings, only two places behind Prost.

In '91, despite their mediocre Ferraris, Prost was able to swiftly dismantle the reputation of third-year driver **Jean Alesi** as being F1's "Next Big Thing," outqualifying his compatriot 12-4.



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Prost celebrates his "traditional" French GP win, with '83 teammate Cheever in third.



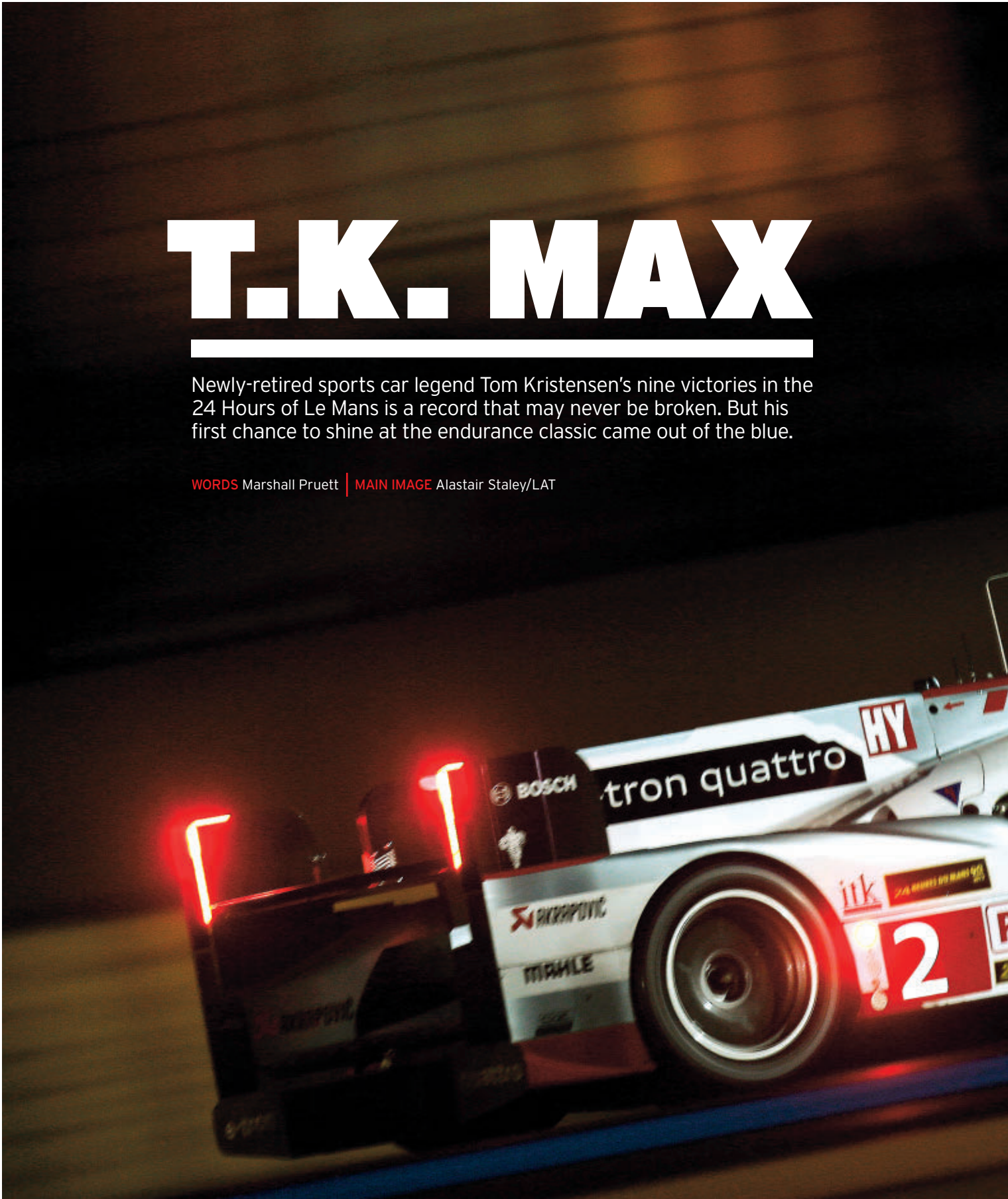
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In their final race together, in Australia, Mansell edged Prost in qualifying and blew him away on race day.

T.K. MAX

Newly-retired sports car legend Tom Kristensen's nine victories in the 24 Hours of Le Mans is a record that may never be broken. But his first chance to shine at the endurance classic came out of the blue.

WORDS Marshall Pruett | MAIN IMAGE Alastair Staley/LAT

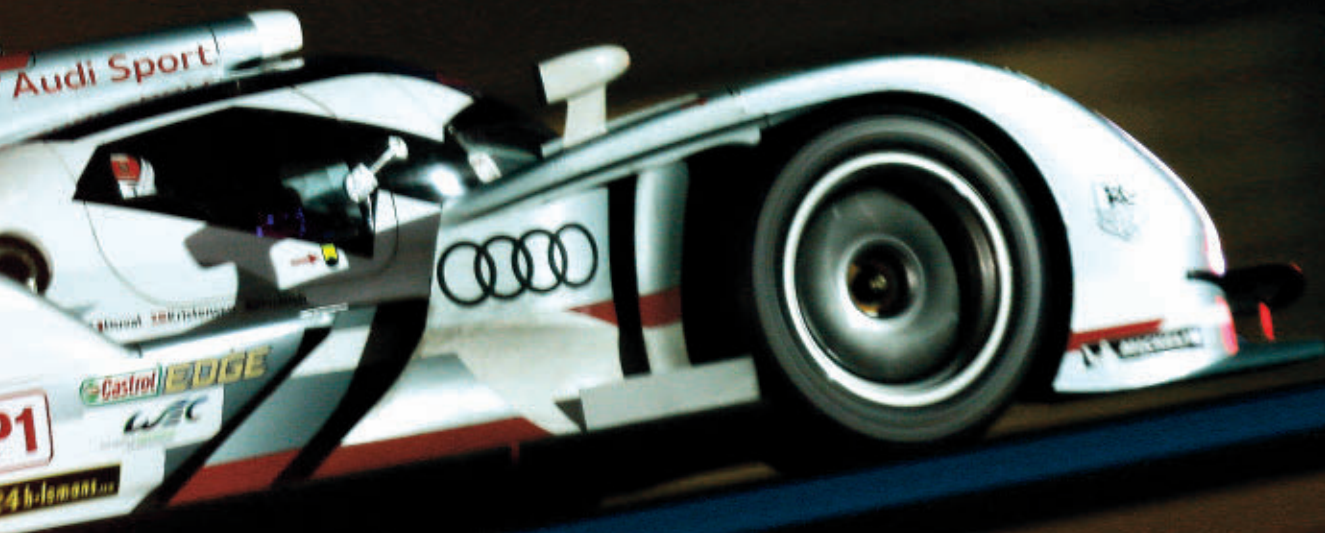




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THE KING OF LA SARTHE

Tom Kristensen's nine Le Mans wins shatter the previous record of six by Jacky Ickx. Next up on five are Derek Bell and two of TK's former Audi teammates, Frank Biela and Emanuele Pirro, with three of their victories coming alongside the Dane.





DENMARK IN THE HOUSE

They used to say Le Mans was a corner of England during the week of the 24 Hours. In recent years, the emphasis changed, with up to 30,000 Danes heading south. Here they help celebrate TK's 2004 win.

Richard Dore/LAT

Tom Kristensen was already a living legend when he climbed from his Audi R18 e-tron quattro for the final time in Sao Paulo last November. The smalltown boy from northern Denmark whose legacy would be his unassailable record at the 24 Hours of Le Mans - a staggering nine wins from 18 starts in the world's greatest endurance race - was calling it a day, retiring. But on his own terms - still relevant, still competitive, and still fast.

As the 47-year-old uncoiled himself from the cramped cockpit, his eyes bloodshot as decades of extreme pressure sought an emotional release, memories flooded in of a man and a body of work truly unrivaled in his field. Tom Kristensen, the hero of La Sarthe, the best of his generation, a worthy equal to Michael Schumacher or Valentino Rossi on the modern era's Mount Rushmore of motorsports. He came in as a curly-haired kid from Hobro and left as "Mr. Le Mans."

And to think that, but for several twists of fate, it almost never happened.

The son of Danish rallycross champion Carl-Erik Kristensen, "TK" demonstrated his vast potential at an early age, yet lacked sponsorship to move beyond karting. Stuck in limbo, young TK was losing valuable time and ground to his contemporaries.



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"It was close to 1,000 days from when I left karting to when I got another drive, so I studied to be a bank clerk"

TOM KRISTENSEN

"I was brought up in my father's gas station," Kristensen says of his humble roots. "I was second in the world championship in karting, won the Scandinavian championship, but nobody was looking to Denmark for drivers and no companies were helping, so everything stopped very quickly."

"It was close to 1,000 days from when I left karting to the time I found another drive, so I studied for those three years to become a bank clerk!" he laughs, pondering a life spent counting coins.

"A lot of people who I kartered against were going off to better things; I won that Scandinavian championship against Mika Hakkinen, but he was in the Marlboro sponsor pool and I wasn't. I lost three years to him because by the time I made it to Formula 3, he was already in Formula 1."

Persistence would eventually find Kristensen quitting his financial studies for a shot in German F3, and by the end of 1991, he'd earned his first significant title. But the celebrations were short lived as a funding shortfall meant he was left wondering what happened next.

Success in Germany did manage to open an unexpected door for 1992, and he packed his bags for Japan. In '93, he added the Japanese F3 title to his résumé, but offers to return to Europe hardly flooded in. What was meant to be a quick detour began to take on a more permanent feel.

Presented with paying rides in Japan's thriving F3, Formula 3000 and touring car scenes, Carl-Erik's blue-collar sensibilities connected on a profound level with Tom; he was simply trying to earn a living. A hero? A legend in waiting? Hardly. For a decent stretch during the 1990s, the great Tom Kristensen could be charitably described as a lost talent.

"At that time I was just thinking about

(LEFT) For Tom Kristensen, the call to join Joest's 1997 Le Mans lineup was a career lifeline. Little did he know that the resulting win would put him on the path to legend status.



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finding a full-time job in racing," he says. "I jumped at the chance to race in Japan with no second thought, and my time there proved very important. I drove for proper teams, and it helped to race in different disciplines: front-wheel drive, rear-wheel drive, powerful cars, slower cars, narrow tires, wide tires, whatever. Basically, every weekend was completely filled with racing."

Kristensen spent four years winning and earning in Japan, and by the end of 1995, his pace and tenacity could no longer be ignored in Europe, and International F3000 beckoned for '96. His first attempt to reach F1's feeder series had failed, and after a circuitous and humbling route that led him to Japan and back, he returned home a hardened professional.

A win and multiple podiums followed in two seasons of F3000, but with the top seats out of reach, reality began to set in.

By the time Le Mans entered Kristensen's field of view in 1997, his career was hurtling towards a fork in the road. At 29 years old, he found himself in an unenviable situation - the elder statesman of Europe's junior open-wheel racing scene. With his F1 dreams fading, Kristensen risked falling into the life of a journeyman driver, the full measure of his abilities hidden from the world.

Fate, however, was waiting to send TK >

(ABOVE) The evening sun lights up TK in practice for the 2001 24 Hours of Le Mans. Rain then dominated the race, and the 2,723 miles completed are the lowest of the Dane's nine victories.

NUMBER NINE DREAM

With nine wins from 18 starts in the 24 Hours of Le Mans, Tom Kristensen has posted the kind of numbers unlikely to be beaten in decades. Remarkably, he also added five other podium finishes, namely two seconds and three thirds.



Jeff Bloch/LAT

No. 1 1997
Co-drivers: Michele Alboreto/Stefan Johansson. Car: TWR Porsche WSC-95. Class: LMP. Team: Joest Racing. Laps completed: 361



Jeff Bloch/LAT

No. 2 2000
Co-drivers: Frank Biela/Emanuele Pirro. Car: Audi R8. Class: LMP900. Team: Audi Sport Team Joest. Laps completed: 368



LAT archive

No. 3 2001
Co-drivers: Frank Biela/Emanuele Pirro. Car: Audi R8. Class: LMP900. Team: Audi Sport Team Joest. Laps completed: 321



LAT archive

No. 4 2002
Co-drivers: Frank Biela/Emanuele Pirro. Car: Audi R8. Class: LMP900. Team: Audi Sport Team Joest. Laps completed: 375
● Audi Sport then takes a three-year sabbatical, leaving the stage to its privateer teams.



LAT archive

No. 5 2003
Co-drivers: Rinaldo Capello/Guy Smith. Car: Bentley Speed 8. Class: LMGP. Team: Team Bentley. Laps comp.: 377



Richard Dole/LAT

No. 7 2005
Co-drivers: JJ Lehto/Marco Werner. Car: Audi R8. Class: LMP1. Team: ADT Champion Racing. Laps completed: 370



Richard Dole/LAT

No. 6 2004
Co-drivers: Seiji Ara/Rinaldo Capello. Car: Audi R8. Class: LMP1. Team: Audi Sport Japan Team Goh. Laps completed: 379



Jeff Bloch/LAT

No. 8 2008
Co-drivers: Rinaldo Capello/Allan McNish. Car: Audi R10 TDI. Class: LMP1. Team: Audi Sport North America. Laps completed: 381.



No. 9 2013
Co-drivers: Allan McNish/Loic Duval. Car: Audi R18 e-tron quattro. Class: LMP1. Team: Audi Sport Team Joest. Laps completed: 348
● A year on, TK was second in his final Le Mans.



JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED...

Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich, the Austrian-born head of Audi Sport since 1993, was the catalyst for Audi's initial entry into the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1999. Since its first Le Mans win in 2000, Audi's won 13 of 15 races, beaten only by sister marque Bentley in '03 and Peugeot in '09. With that level of domination, the law of diminishing returns usually comes into play, but the introduction of diesel and hybrid technology has kept the storyline fresh.



on another long distance journey.

"Davy Jones was terribly injured in a crash in America in 1997," says Reinhold Joest, whose team had won the 24 Hours of Le Mans with Jones, Manuel Reuter and Alex Wurz in '96. "Tom's manager called and said, 'You have to take him, this is a very young, very fast guy.' I said, 'Fast is good, but does he have experience?'"

"He was fairly unknown," adds Audi Sport Team Joest managing director Ralf Juttner. "We were looking for a third driver, and desperately needed money, but Tom had none. It was back and forth between Mr. Joest and me for weeks. He'd say we need the money. I'd say yes, but if you take an old guy with money, we won't win."

In the end, the debate fell in Juttner's favor. The Le Mans rookie would get a shot. But what if Joest had won the argument?

"He was fighting for a gentleman driver, a guy named Jesus Pareja," Juttner says smiling, weighing his words carefully. "We're all very thankful about who was chosen..."

The choice of Kristensen over Pareja was immediately vindicated, the Dane gelling with Alboreto and Johansson as the trio delivered Joest a second consecutive victory in metronomic style.

"Everything is a little bit by luck or chance," says Juttner. "Tom's race in '97



"[Joest] was fighting for a guy named Jesus Pareja. We're all very thankful about who was chosen..."

RALF JUTTNER

went perfectly, and after winning in his first Le Mans, the factories pursued him immediately. It changed his life instantly."

Two years and two DNFs with BMW's Le Mans program prepared TK for the biggest opportunity of his life as the Joest-run Audi team came calling in 2000. Emboldened by his newfound stature, Kristensen swept into the burgeoning program like a force of nature.

"He was like a boy [in 1997]," says Joest, "but he had such power when he

started with Audi. Tom's power - his character - was very strong."

"In 2000, we met up at Sebring after Daytona for our first tests in the Audi," recalls Allan McNish. "I first met him in 1985, I think, but this was a very different Tom. His competitive nature was pure electricity. He wanted to be the fastest, no matter what. He let everyone know where he stood."

Paired with Frank Biela and Emanuele Pirro, Kristensen opened his account with Audi by delivering the iconic R8 its first Le Mans win. That began a string of six straight victories, his dominance impervious to changes in teammates, or changes in car (the '03 win came with Volkswagen-Audi-owned Bentley). His seventh win, in '05, surpassed the great Jacky Ickx's long-time record of six, but still there would be more.

Among Kristensen's defining attributes, his relentless commitment to improving every aspect of the team made an impact well beyond the cockpit, and is a major factor in his immense success at Le Mans.

"Tom would wake up every morning and think: I have to win, I have to win, I have to win," says McNish. "That's a big part of TK as a driver. But he brought that energy to the entire team, too. It became 'we have to win.' Every person he worked with felt that push, that enthusiasm from him." >

(ABOVE LEFT) Audi's quest for perfection is matched by its winningest driver's. (LEFT) The death of fellow Dane Allan Simonsen in the race and the recent passing of Tom's father made Kristensen's final win in 2013 a somber one.

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Jeff Boxham/LAT

OVER TO YOU, BENTLEY

Sending Bentley back to Le Mans for a three-year program, 2001-'03, was an inspired exercise in reinforcing its rich sporting heritage by the Volkswagen-Audi mothership. Best of the rest behind the R8s in years 1 and 2, it sealed the deal in '03 when the factory Audis took a conveniently timed sabbatical.



Engel/LAT



LAT archive

Audi's obsessive preparation standards and machine-like consistency were matched by a driver who loved to pore over every detail, sweat every contingency. It was a perfect and rare match - the most complete driver working for the most complete team.

Audi Sport boss Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich says TK viewed himself as a partner in every major decision, and while it's a trait shared by many greats, it can come at a price.

"Tom was very much convinced that his way was the one that makes the difference," Ullrich says with a slightly raised brow. "Tom has always been the guy who tried to steer the team, and this didn't always work without causing friction. But he always made it happen that, in the end, even the friction was a positive for the squad. It lifts every level."

The enigmatic Tom Kristensen was a team player, motivator, influencer, fearsome competitor and, above all, a damn fast driver. In a bigger picture take on Kristensen's career, his raw speed is often overlooked.

"First of all, no matter when he was in the car, he was always very fast," says Frank Biela. "He was also very, very strong at night. 'Tommy Boy' was a safe bet. Always fast, always focused, no mistakes and always at the edge, but not going over it. That was Tom."

"It could be pissing down or not a cloud in the sky, he always extracted everything without sacrificing the car"

ALLAN MCNISH

McNish notes another underappreciated attribute, but one that might hark back to his seasons spent in Japan, and the necessity to be quick in anything, any time.

"What made him such a great driver, but also what made him so good at Le Mans, is one and the same thing, and that's adaptability," says the Scot, who earned two of his three Le Mans wins with TK. "In the varying conditions at every Le Mans, Tom would shine. It could be pissing down rain or not a cloud in the sky, and he always extracted everything without sacrificing the car. Most drivers excel in certain situations. Tom mastered all of them."

Kristensen's final victory at Le Mans in 2013 will be remembered more for the sorrow surrounding the event than that record-extending ninth win. Fellow Dane Allan Simonsen was killed at Tertre Rouge just minutes into the race and, coupled with Carl-Erik's death three months prior, pain and anguish played on Tom's face

on the podium. Fighting back tears, he pointed to the sky in remembrance of his father and fallen countryman. It was a brief gesture that revealed the man behind the legend in a way rarely seen.

Unlike so many other legendary figures in racing, Kristensen's story isn't one of predestined fame and riches. His record at Le Mans is justly deserved, yet there's no simple formula to reveal. By blending his own indomitable drive with Audi's ruthless pursuit of perfection, he became the Danish heart within a German team.

He's handed the keys to a younger generation, but McNish believes the mark TK leaves upon Audi - and the sport as a whole - will be felt for generations.

"When you hang up your helmet, the world goes on and racing continues," says McNish. "But based on what Tom achieved, he's known outside the world of motorsports, yet he never even raced in Formula 1. That shows the status he's had. Not one F1 start, yet he's reached the highest heights.

"But as well as that, he's also helped lift Le Mans to what it's become today," he adds. "He was the story to follow for more than two decades. Tom put his soul, his being, into the Audi team. He's permeated the entire program and the whole of Le Mans. Damn right he's a legend." ■

(TOP) Audi says thank you at Kristensen's last race with the marque, last year's FIA WEC finale in Sao Paulo. (ABOVE) With a résumé like TK's, you're entitled to look a little bit smug every once in a while...

TK THE TEAM PLAYER

FORCE OF PERSONALITY

For Tom Kristensen, winning Le Mans meant getting the most out of his teammates, not just himself.

There was the public Tom Kristensen, always affable and willing to talk with fans and the media. But there was also the TK inside the Audi garage, the one whose force of personality and focus drove him to record-breaking feats at Le Mans and galvanized the teams around him.

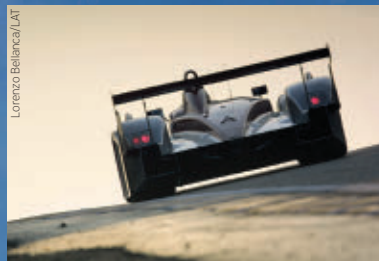
"I wouldn't say he was combative," says Audi Sport Team Joest managing director Ralf Juttner with a knowing grin, "but there was your way, Tom's way, and then however long it would take to accept Tom's way."

The Dane wasn't necessarily enforcing his will for personal gain or special treatment; he pushed his co-drivers to attain higher fitness levels; prodded engineers and strategists to consider new options; and steered other aspects of the team wherever he saw improvements to be made.

"He put his own interests below his teammates', if necessary, or below those of the whole team," Juttner adds. "This attitude has spread. I think this is something that is within the flesh and blood now at Audi Sport. Tom could be a hard team member, but in the right way. He only

considered what was best for the team."

Possibly the strongest bond forged between Audi teammates took place with TK and Allan McNish. Cut from the same cloth, pairing two pit vipers in the same prototype could have been a catastrophe, but the wee Scot says they quickly blended their charged personalities.



Lorenzo Bellanca/LAT

A WINNING ROSTER

Tom Kristensen shared his nine Le Mans wins with 11 other drivers. Statistically, the strongest lineup was with Frank Blela and Emanuele Pirro, with consecutive victories in 2000, '01 and '02 (ABOVE).

"It took us a little bit of time to settle in together because we were both very strong in our opinions," McNish admits. "It created some dramas at times, but Tom's opinions were driven by a desire to have success, and I'm the same way. We understood each other on a profound level."

The lighter side of Kristensen was also demonstrated throughout his career. Despite all the success he's earned, former teammate Stefan Johansson says the young lion he drove to victory with in 1997 still shines through today.

"After we won the race in 1997, Tom and I were sitting on our own, back at this cheap ass hotel in France, and we couldn't even get any food!" the Swede recalls. "We ended up with this nasty old ham and cheese sandwich. And we're sitting there after this amazing victory like, 'this is it?' We'd just won the 24 Hours of Le Mans and we're sitting here nibbling away at a crappy sandwich? We just looked at each other and kept laughing.

"He's obviously older now, but he's still that same guy that he always was, totally normal, with great wit and great humor."

Putting two guys as assertive as Tom Kristensen and Allan McNish in the same car shouldn't have worked, but it did. They won Le Mans twice together.

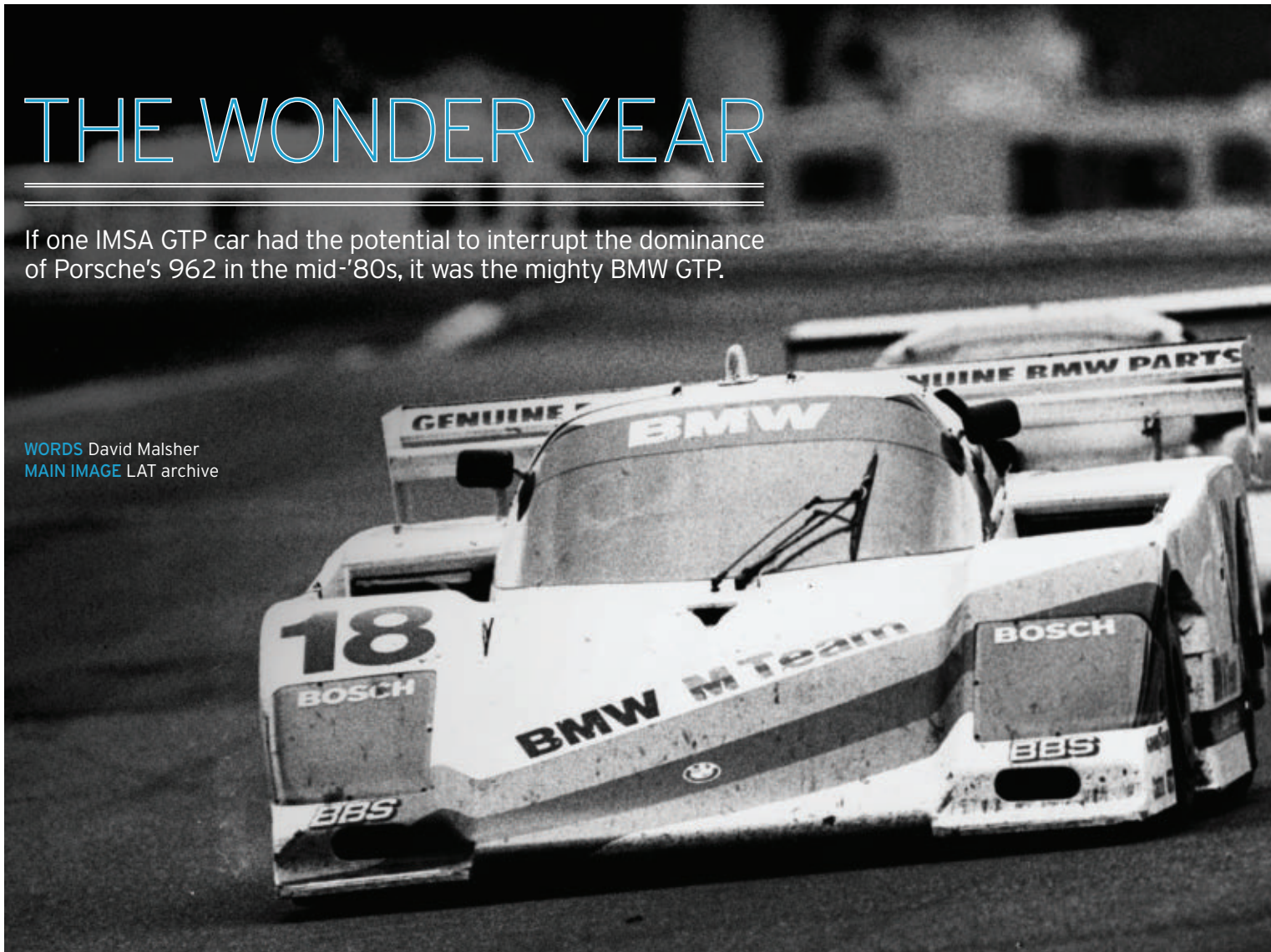


Malcolm Griffiths/LAT

THE WONDER YEAR

If one IMSA GTP car had the potential to interrupt the dominance of Porsche's 962 in the mid-'80s, it was the mighty BMW GTP.

WORDS David Malsher
 MAIN IMAGE LAT archive



In 1983, Nelson Piquet's Brabham-BMW BT52 earned Formula 1's first turbocharged World Championship. With continual development, the same 1.5-liter, four-cylinder M12/13 that powered that historic deed was pushing out an outrageous 1,300hp by '86.

By then, a different version of the engine was competing in North America. Nestled in the back of the spectacular BMW GTP, it raced in IMSA's Camel GT Championship against the Porsche 962, Jaguar XJR-7, Nissan ZX-T, Ford Probe and Corvette GTP.

BMW Motorsport in Munich supplied M12/13s to McLaren Engines in the U.S., where they became M12/14s, bored out to two liters and mounted longitudinally in BMW of North America's March 86G-based chassis.

"The two-liter version had a bit less horsepower than the F1 engine, but a lot more torque," remembers Steve Charsley, who'd worked on M12/13s at the Arrows and Brabham F1 teams, before becoming

chief mechanic for the No. 18 Davy Jones/John Andretti car from the middle of '86. "We had about 850-900hp in race trim. In qualifying, 1,100hp sounds about right..."

"But a lot of people think the BMW GTP was all about horsepower, and that's not true. The team had really done its homework and we had massive tunnels underneath the car that helped create 5,000lbs of downforce. A very impressed Al Holbert told me, 'Your guys are able to carry so much speed into corners and brake so late.'"

The GTP's toe-in-the-water debut was the 1985 IMSA finale at Daytona, and although it retired with a gearbox glitch, it had started on the front row. While the experienced David Hobbs set that qualifying time, it was 21-year-old Davy Jones who'd emerge as the BMW team's star in '86.

"The BMW GTP was far different than anything I'd driven," recalls Jones. "I was used to SuperVee, Formula 3, Atlantics -

I WAS THERE... DAVY JONES



“A four-cylinder engine with a big turbo meant a lot of lag, so it was work in progress to get the power more subtle and progressive. BMW of North America and McLaren Engines worked diligently on that, and also on improving the car's aerodynamics. I enjoyed all the testing and working

with those guys. And right from our first race with the '86 car, we felt we could match anyone on pace. Everyone at McLaren and BMW of North America were working to reach a goal and each race we felt the car improving.

“Road America and The Glen were great for our car - not many slow corners, so turbo lag wasn't an issue - and there'd never been anything wrong with our top-end power! And the medium- and high-speed turns leant themselves to our chassis. Obviously, my Road America shunt wasn't good, but we dominated at The Glen, so I did the classic thing of going from chump to champ in the space of two races!”



BMW



BMW

BMW GTP (1986)

It was a short, but spectacular marriage. BMW of North America and McLaren Engines combined a heavily modified March 86G with a BMW M12/14 engine and made a car to scare, and then beat, the cream of IMSA's GTP class.

nimble open-wheel cars. I'd never raced something large and powerful like the GTP."

That big step was well within his grasp though, says Charsley, who rates Jones as the fastest driver he ever worked with (from a list which includes F1 ace Gerhard Berger, no less). So the driver lineup was strong - Jones partnering with Andretti in the No. 18 and Hobbs with five-time F1 GP winner John Watson in the 19 - and the car was clearly very quick, but development of the chassis and engine was initially stymied in testing and on race weekends by typical new-car niggles. Engine harmonics caused parts to fail, while detached bodywork caused extra driver Bobby Rahal to crash at Sebring.

The cars were briefly withdrawn and solutions came swiftly. Returning at Watkins Glen mid-season, the BMWs ran reliably to fifth and sixth, followed by fourth at Portland, and fifth at Sonoma. But at Road America, Jones crashed on the second lap as he lost

downforce behind the leading Nissan. If that was a severe low, the next round, at Watkins Glen again, saw the highest of highs.

Jones set a sensational pole, a full second ahead of teammate Hobbs, who in turn was 0.8sec clear of anyone else. In the 500km (311 miles) race, the second BMW overheated at two-thirds distance, but Jones, Andretti, and then Jones again had enough pace to pull out a huge gap on their opposition, make an extra stop in the closing laps, then slice past two Porsches for the win. A great day...and yet bittersweet for Jones.

"Just as the program came together and we got that win, we learned it was all over," sighs Davy. "For 1987, the budget was reassigned. A real pity because everyone on that team was so good and the car had evolved into something really special."

"Yeah, the BMW GTP car was ready to do battle for '87," agrees Charsley, "and I think it could have been the car to beat." ■

"M" IS FOR MUSCLE

The mighty, 1.5-liter M12/13 engine had powered an F1 World Champion in 1983. In its two-liter, M12/14 form, it proved capable of contending for an IMSA GTP title, had it been given the chance.

MEANWHILE, IN MUNICH...

Over in Europe, the original M3 (E30) was developed in 1986 and began racing in '87. It would earn a total of 14 touring car titles and win the Nurburgring and Spa 24-hour races five and four times, respectively.

#HELLOFUTURE BMW M6 GT3

Soon, BMW will unleash the latest in an illustrious line of production-based racecars that stretches back to the 3.0 CSL that won the 12 Hours of Sebring 40 years ago. The forthcoming M6 GT3 will spearhead BMW's global racing efforts from 2016.

The car "incorporates all the experience we've gained in recent years on the endurance and GT racing circuits," says Jens Marquardt, BMW Motorsport Director. Sculpted in BMW's wind tunnel, the GT3 version of the M6 is powered by a 4.4-liter TwinPower Turbo production engine that punches out more than 500hp.

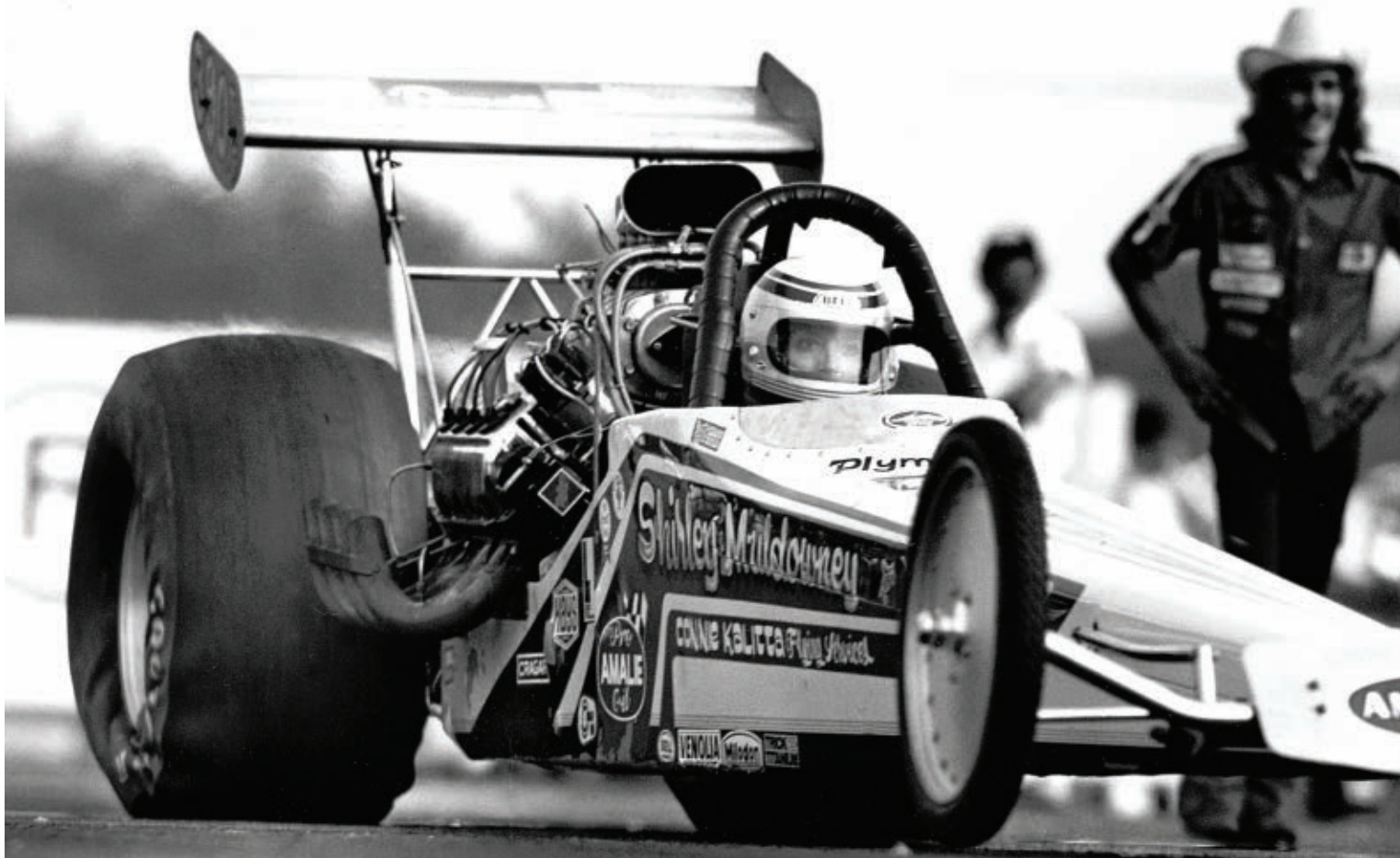
Given the endurance nature of most series where it will compete, BMW engineers placed a lot of emphasis on reliability and serviceability. BMW Motorsport starts taking orders soon, so start saving those pennies...



THE FIRST FOUR DECADES
BMW of North America is celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2015. Find out more about BMW Motorsport and what makes BMW the Ultimate Driving Machine at bmwusa.com



The Ultimate Driving Machine

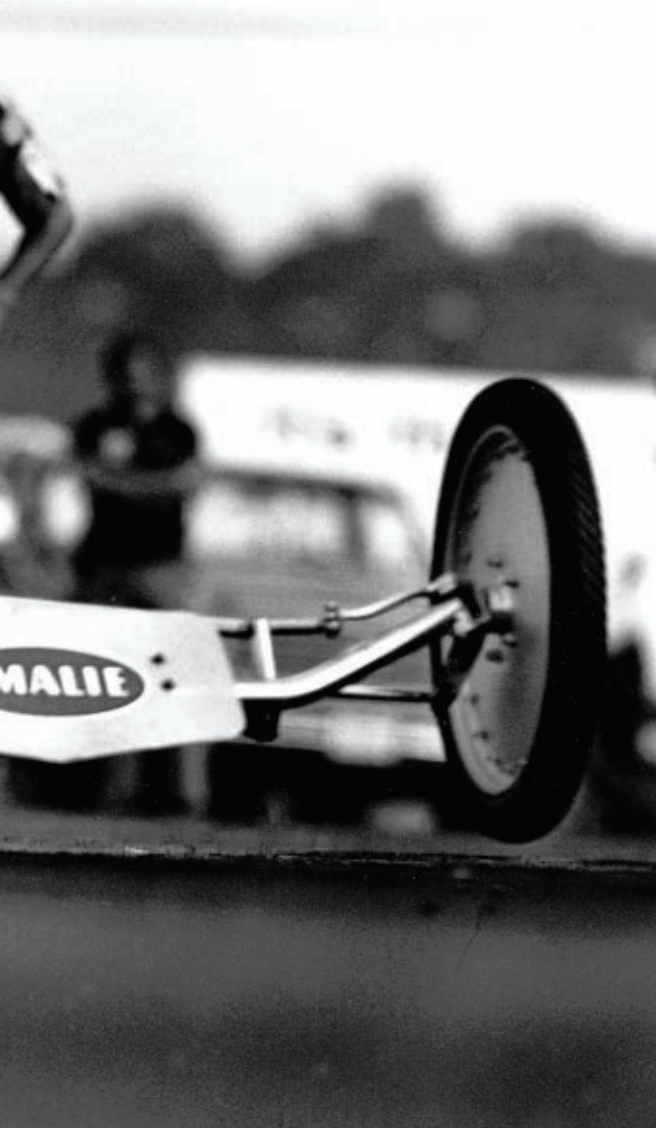


(MAIN) The breakthrough: Shirley Muldowney heads to her first NHRA Top Fuel win, Columbus, Ohio, 1975. (RIGHT) Muldowney was at the height of her powers in 1983. The following season, a huge crash in Montreal nearly ended everything.

Trailblazer

Today, it's normal to see women winning in NHRA drag racing. In the hairy-chested 1970s, Shirley Muldowney battled prejudice and adversity to become a true Top Fuel legend.

WORDS Todd Veney | MAIN IMAGE National Dragster archive



Nobody had it harder than Shirley Muldowney did, and nobody ever will.

Not just a winner, but a champion, and not just a champion but a three-time champ in the fastest class of them all, Top Fuel, she was - and is - tough. She had to be. As the first successful female driver in drag racing and by far the most prolific female in motorsports history, Muldowney withstood abuse today's drivers could never

"They made me the way I am. They created a monster, but it helped me in the end. It made me better"

SHIRLEY MULDOWNEY

comprehend. Taunts, boos, jeers, and countless crude, hateful remarks rained down on her for years - and that was just the fans. You should have heard the drivers.

"They were horrible to me,"

Muldowney says with the intensity that's defined her for decades. "It was ugly. Professional jealousy, if you ask me. They couldn't handle it. It never stopped me, though. I'd just put my head down and keep pushing forward, and if you got in my way, you'd get a bump on your head."

Voted the fifth-greatest driver in drag racing history, behind only "Big Daddy" Don Garlits, John Force, Don "the Snake" Prudhomme and Bob Glidden, Muldowney won three NHRA Top Fuel titles, and from 1977 to '82, her career was one landmark

achievement after another: first NHRA final (Columbus, '75), first win (Columbus, '76), first championship ('77), first repeat title ('80), first U.S. Nationals win ('82), and first three-time Top Fuel champ, also in '82.

By then, other drivers had no choice but to accept her. She wasn't just racing men, she was whupping them on a regular basis. "They made me the way I am," she says. "It must have been in there somewhere the whole time, but those guys really brought it out of this little 100lb female. They created a monster, but it helped me in the end. It made me better."

Muldowney's first major breakthrough came at the 1975 NHRA Springnationals, where she beat "Big Daddy" himself to reach her first TF final. Later that year >



National Dragster archive



The 1983 biopic *Heart Like a Wheel*, starring Bonnie Bedelia (BELOW) as Shirley Muldowney and Beau Bridges as Connie Kalitta, draws mixed reactions from Muldowney herself. Despite Bedelia's nomination for a Golden Globe Award for best actress in a motion picture, Muldowney's preference for the part would have been Jamie Lee Curtis, and she was far from enamored with Bedelia's apparent disdain for racing. "No, the movie did not capture my life very well at all," Muldowney told *Hot Rod* magazine in 2009. "But, more importantly, I thought it was very, very good for the sport."



20th Century Fox



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she made the final of the U.S. Nationals, the only 32-car race of the season, then won the '76 Springnationals to become the first professional female winner in NHRA history. "Next morning there were a bunch of water-filled prophylactics hanging from the door of my truck," she says. She can laugh about it now, but she doesn't forget. Shirley Muldowney never forgets. "I know who did it. Knew it that day."

Some drivers just couldn't accept getting their butt kicked by a girl. The pressure on them not to lose to Muldowney was enormous. "I know it was, because there were a few girl drivers I didn't want to lose to, either," she says. "They didn't have to go through what I had to go through. They never bought a drum of nitro, never peeled off their last hundred to buy some part. It was, 'You're a girl. Oh, you want to drive? Here - get in.' Not me. It was never like that for me - not in the beginning, not ever."

Muldowney got her first taste of competition as a 15-year-old girl in her hometown of Schenectady, N.Y. Her future husband, Jack Muldowney would pick her up from the restaurant she worked at in his '51 Mercury (she had to walk two miles to get there), only they didn't go back to her house. They went



National Dragster archive



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looking for a race. "Jack would pull up next to somebody at a stoplight," she says. "He'd be in the driver's seat, and I'd be right next to him. He'd dangle his arms out the window so they could tell he wasn't driving and work the gas and the clutch, and I'd shift and steer. He's the one who taught me how to drive."

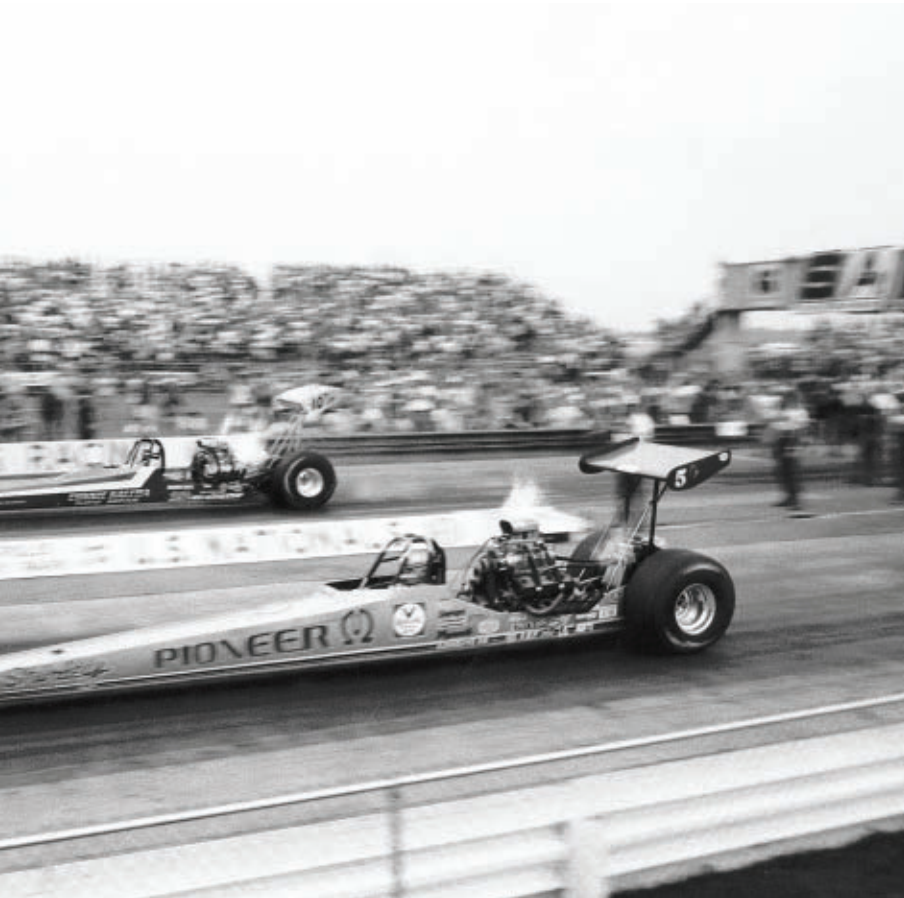
The ability clearly was there all along, from the twin-engine slingshots of the '60s to the dangerous Funny Cars of the early 1970s. Muldowney won immediately as a Funny Car driver at the 1971 IHRA Springnationals, and within two years, she was in a Top Fuel dragster. A year later she was a legitimate threat to win national

events and an absolute sensation on the match-race circuit, where she packed grandstands all across North America.

"Match racing kept me alive financially," she says. "I ran tracks you wouldn't believe, just to make sure I had enough money to get to the next national event. A rainout would destroy me, and I lived week to week, paycheck to paycheck, for years."

After her historic triumph at the 1976 Springnationals, she won the World Finals at Ontario that fall, topping former world champ Jerry Ruth, who always treated her as just another driver, in the final.

"Ruth was always good to me," she says. "Tommy Ivo, too. 'Jungle Jim'

**RESPECT EARNED**

Guys like “Big Daddy” Don Garlits (BELOW, with Muldowney in 1977) didn’t like to be beaten, period. But to lose to a woman was an especially hard pill to swallow in the testosterone-drenched ’70s. Over time, as Muldowney showed she could race with the best of them, animosity turned to respect, and later even friendship. Connie Kalitta knew Muldowney was good box office and would regularly match race her, but the intensity went to another level when they met in championship events. Most famous of their encounters? Shirley’s defeat of the Bounty Hunter at the “Big Go,” the ’82 U.S. Nationals Top Fuel final (LEFT).



“It was always behind my back, but it filtered back to me who the Shirley haters were”

SHIRLEY MULDOWNEY

[Liberman], Raymond Beadle, and especially Gary Beck were consummate gentlemen, always. They knew I had a handle on it. But some of those guys...you wouldn’t believe the things they’d say. Of course, they never came up to me and said it to my face. It was always behind my back, but it filtered back to me who the

Shirley haters were. Most of them were has-beens or never-weres anyway.”

1977 was a tough year for those guys. Muldowney got to the final round of the Springnationals for the third year in a row, won it, then won the next race in Englishtown, and the one after that, Montreal. By September the championship race was a joke, and she eventually won it in a landslide with almost 40 percent more points than second-place Pat Dakin.

1980 was even better. Muldowney opened the decade with one of the more satisfying victories of her career, beating Connie Kalitta - by then almost as big of a rival as Garlits - in the Winternationals

final. She scored again at the Springnationals and entered the last two races of the season with an outside shot at the championship. All she did was sweep them both to win it all.

After a solid 1981 season that included multiple NHRA event titles and the AHRA championship, Muldowney enjoyed the finest season of her career in ’82, when she made seven finals and won four, including the prestigious U.S. Nationals, where she trounced Kalitta in the final in the quickest race of all time, 5.57 to 5.66. (How much did that one mean to her? “iwonindy” is part of her email address to this day.)

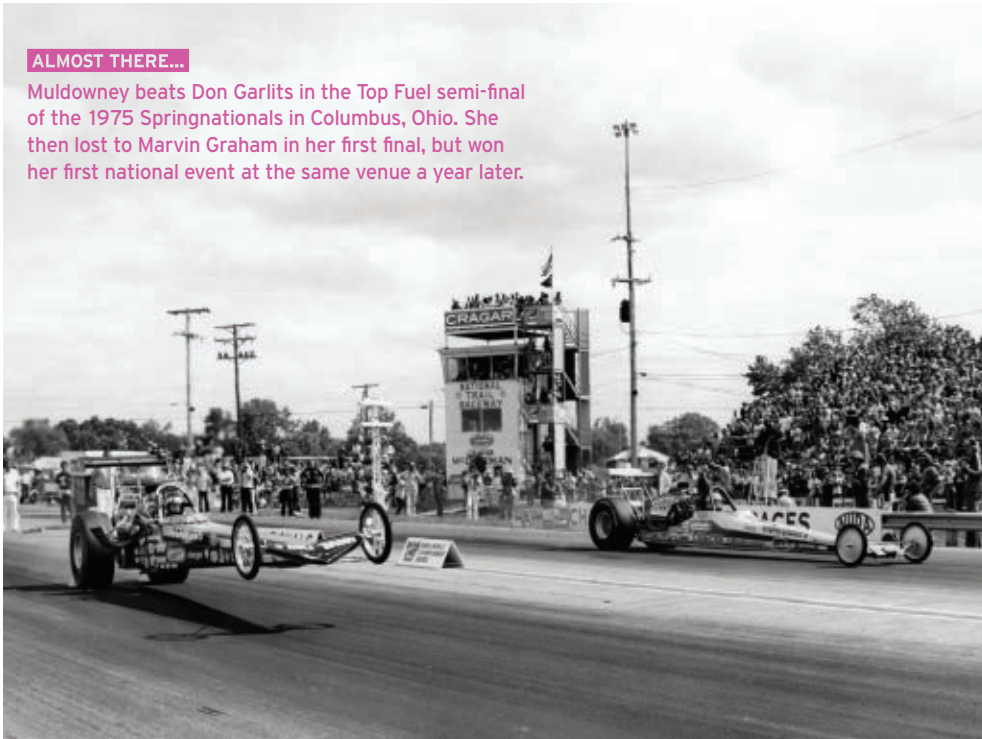
She opened and closed 1983 with wins at the Winternationals and World Finals, and then came ’84 and the qualifying run at Montreal that would change her life forever.

“I remember the whole thing,” she says. “I was in the left lane, just coming into the lights, and the tube started coming out of the left front tire. I watched it happen. It stayed whole and it wrapped around the spindle, tighter and tighter. I thought, ‘Do I take my hand off the wheel to go for the chutes?’ I finally did and got my hand right back on the wheel, but it snapped that wheel out of my hand and took my thumb >

(FROM FAR LEFT) Shirley Muldowney with her twin-engined Top Gas dragster in 1970; switching to nitro Funny Car in ’71, she raced against Connie Kalitta as the Bounty Hunter and the Bounty Huntress; NHRA founder Wally Parks congratulates Muldowney on her first Top Fuel event win in 1976; clinching her second Top Fuel championship at the 1980 NHRA Finals.

ALMOST THERE...

Muldowney beats Don Garlits in the Top Fuel semi-final of the 1975 Springnationals in Columbus, Ohio. She then lost to Marvin Graham in her first final, but won her first national event at the same venue a year later.



National Dragster archive



National Dragster archive



Mark Green/ENR

(FAR LEFT) All eyes on Shirley Muldowney as she returns in 1986 from career-threatening injuries. (LEFT) Muldowney remains an NHRA legend and a true drag racing pioneer.

off, and I knew it was over. The car turned right at a 90-degree angle - there was no guardrail past the finish line - went into a ditch, and disintegrated. I remember two really hard hits, then I was knocked out.

"When I woke up, I was 300ft from the impact point, and the engine was another 300ft from the car. I was on my side, with no car in front of me - everything was just gone. I figured I must have come out of it. They couldn't find me at first, and I remember hearing someone say, 'She's over here.' They tipped me right-side-up, and then the pain started. I'd rather die than ever feel anything like that again."

It took a year and a half for Muldowney to recover, and if not for Dr. Larry Conochie and Dr. Terry Trammell, she almost certainly would have lost a leg. But by the start of the 1986 season, she was back. "What else was I going to do?" she says. "Drag racing was all I ever knew."

Three years later, Muldowney earned one last major victory on a holeshot over Darrell Gwynn at Phoenix, and finished her NHRA career with 18 wins from her

"They tipped me right-side-up...then the pain started. I'd rather die than feel anything like that again"

SHIRLEY MULDOWNEY

25 final round appearances.

"I appreciated every win," she says. "I knew how hard they were to get, and every one was like a gift to me. I'll be 75 this year. Garlits is 80-something. Some fans don't even know who we are anymore - they weren't there - but so many of them over the years have been wonderful to me.

"You know what's funny? As I started to show some gray hair, people would come up to me, and you could tell that they had changed, that they finally appreciated what I did. 'I was wrong about you,' they'd say."

All they would've had to do is talk to the other drivers. Those guys may not have liked it, but they've known exactly who Shirley Muldowney is all along. They had to race her. ■

THE YEAR OF THE WOMAN

ERICA LEADS THE CHARGE

Why did it take more than 30 years for another woman to win a championship in an NHRA pro class (not including Pro Stock Bike, which doesn't run the full schedule) since the last of Shirley Muldowney's three titles in 1982?

"I'll tell you why," says a typically forthright Muldowney. "They weren't good enough. They didn't have the guts."

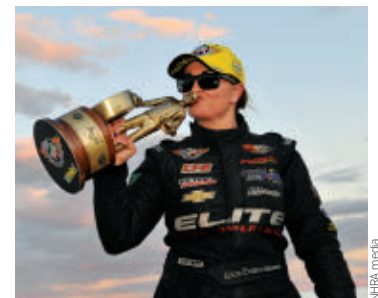
To her, only Erica Enders-Stevens, who won the 2014 Pro Stock title in a winner-takes-all final against Jason Line at the Pomona finale, truly does.

"I knew Erica was going to win the championship," she says. "I root for all women drivers, but for ability, style, smarts, she's got them all beat. No way was she going to let that championship get away from her. I never told her, because I really don't know her that well, but I *knew*. It was a given."

Last year, in what NHRA terms "The Year of the Woman," 14 wins went to female racers, who scored in every pro class except Top Fuel, where Brittany Force *just* missed with four runner-ups. Enders-Stevens led the way with six wins in seven finals, nailing it, time after time, in pressure situations.

Modern drivers may be better at dealing with women's success, but it seems that some "fans" still aren't.

"Some things they write on message boards - Erica's cross-eyed, her cheeks are too chubby, her butt's too fat - are just unbelievable, but I never let it get to me," Enders-Stevens says. "I learned that a long time ago. Those are the kind of people who couldn't drive a car to the water box without throwing up."



NHRA media

Erica Enders-Stevens (ABOVE) winning the 2014 NHRA Pro Stock title was never in doubt, according to Shirley Muldowney.

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GOING IT ALONE

As the only non-GT3 car in the hard-fought GT class, RealTime Racing's Acura TLX GT stands out from the crowd in Pirelli World Challenge.

WORDS & IMAGES Richard S. James

The RealTime Racing Acura TLX GT is not only the lone wolf in Pirelli World Challenge GT competition, it's also the last of a breed of purpose-built-for-PWC GT cars. When it's gone at the end of this year, so is the somewhat-traditional World Challenge formula in the top category.

For most of its 25-year history, the SCCA Pro Racing World Challenge recipe was simple - take a road car, strip the interior, make some performance and safety modifications, and go racing. It wasn't far removed from the original Trans-Am idea, with two or three classes for different types of cars. But then, more and more, auto manufacturers got involved in building ready-to-go racecars for sale to anybody who wanted to use them in competition.

First Porsche's GT3 Cup car was deemed a good fit for the GT class; then the Audi R8 LMS, with some tweaks, was allowed in. Finally, for the 2014 season, the class went to full GT3 spec in the top category. The international class for manufacturer-built, FIA-homologated cars featured similar speeds, and it's often cheaper for teams to buy a ready-built racecar rather than build it themselves.

As a result, PWC's GT grid is filled with - deep breath - McLarens, Lamborghinis, Ferraris, Aston Martins, Porsches, Bentleys, Nissan GT-Rs, Mercedes-Benz AMGs, BMW Z4 GTEs and Audi R8s. But even in 2014, there were multiple exceptions, namely the Cadillac CTS-V that Johnny O'Connell raced to the GT title and the Acura TLX GT that RealTime principal and seven-time PWC class champion Peter Cunningham debuted in Round 11 at Mid-Ohio. Cadillac now has its own GT3 car in the ATS-V.R, leaving the Acura as the last non-GT3 man standing.

"When we initially had the seed of what this program was going to be, we knew that the GT3 cars were likely coming." >

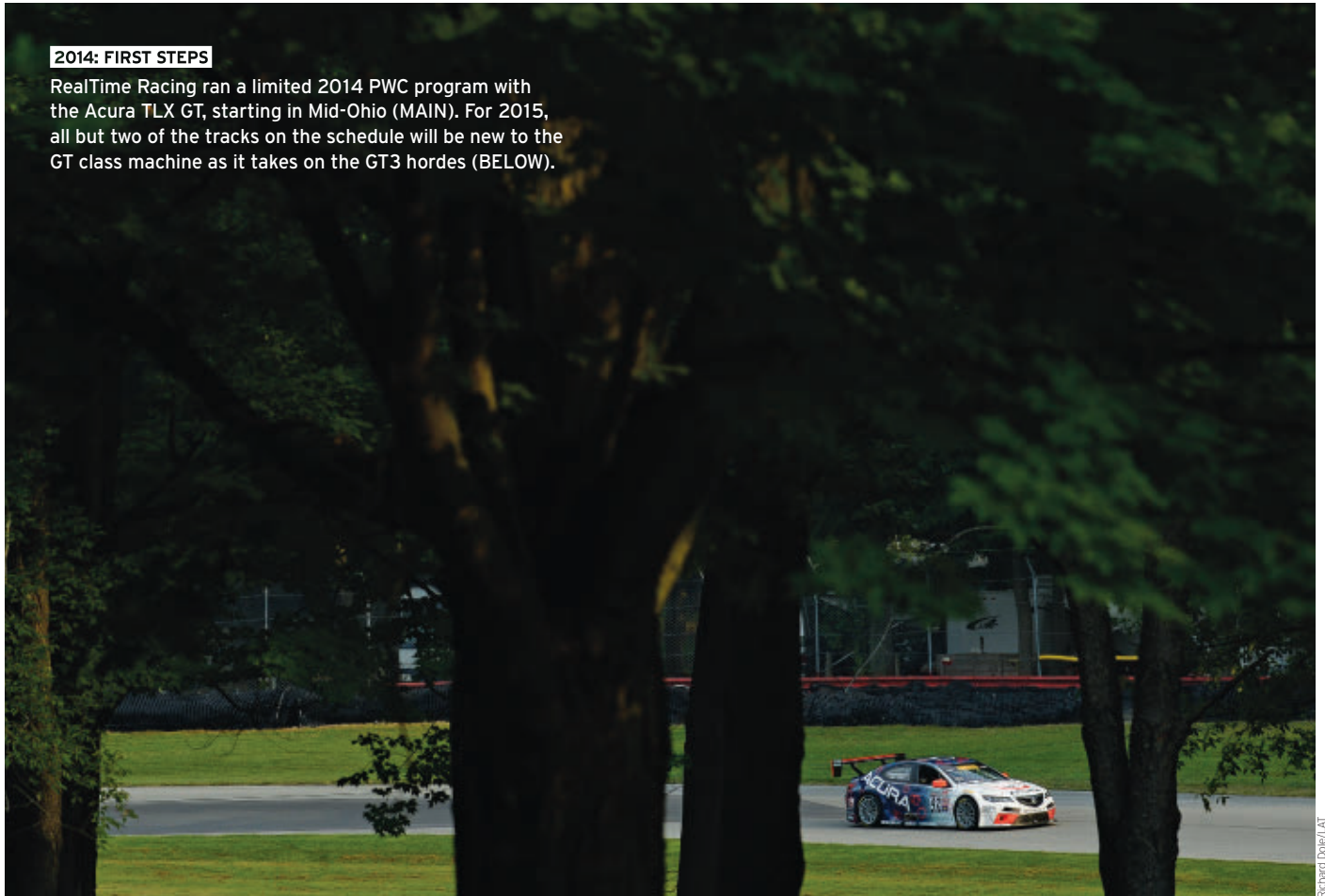




RealTime loves the rain... Ryan Eversley's charge from 25th to fifth at a soaking CoTA PWC season-opener showed the potential of the Acura TLX GT's all-wheel drive. Repeating that in the dry is a big goal for 2015.

2014: FIRST STEPS

RealTime Racing ran a limited 2014 PWC program with the Acura TLX GT, starting in Mid-Ohio (MAIN). For 2015, all but two of the tracks on the schedule will be new to the GT class machine as it takes on the GT3 hordes (BELOW).



Richard Dole/LAT

says Cunningham. "But we didn't know to what extent, and we thought there would still be some non-GT3 cars out there. Last year there were - the champions, Cadillac. But for us to now be the only non-GT3 program, that's going to be a little bit of a situation for the sanctioning body. Still, I think there's probably plenty the series can do to ensure all these GT cars are crossing the line in a big bunch, lap after lap, rather than having the disparity from the fast to the slow cars being what it is.

"Certainly we're going to be a target of that; but I think that ensuring parity between the GT3 cars themselves is an ongoing challenge for the series, too. We'll see how it shakes out, but we have a lot of faith in the technical department. [PWC director of competition] Marcus Haselgrove is a savvy guy, so he and his team will do a good job. But it's probably not all going to be rosy overnight; it's going to take some time."

Time, however, isn't on RealTime and Acura's side. According to PWC president and CEO, Scott Bove, "We gave them a two-year homologation. No other vehicle has a homologation for non-GT3 format; we're not approving any other GT cars for non-GT3 format, and when the Acura



LAT

PETER CUNNINGHAM
With a background in SCCA Solo and Club Racing, ice racing, SCCA Pro Rally and even Shellzone Sport Trucks, RealTime Racing founder Cunningham might just have the most eclectic résumé in Pirelli World Challenge.

expires its two-year commitment, there will be no more non-GT3 cars."

While Acura could, in theory, produce a GT3 TLX, it would have to be without the all-wheel drive of the current car. It's more likely, and even expected in racing circles, that it will build a GT3 version of its NSX supercar. So RealTime basically has a single year to make its case for the TLX.

"When Acura launched the all-new TLX last fall, we wanted to promote its enhanced performance and handling capabilities," says Mike Accavitti, senior vice president and general manager, Acura. "And there's no better way to showcase those improvements than by putting the model on a track and having it compete against the world's best luxury automobiles. With the TLX competing in the GT category of the growing and highly competitive Pirelli World Challenge, it's not only proving out our exclusive technology, but also enabling Acura to go head-to-head against our luxury competitors like Porsche, Ferrari and Audi."

But going up against GT3 cars based on pure-bred sporting machines is a challenge, even with the all-wheel drive and extensive modifications the TLX has undergone (such as moving the engine back so that the



Richard S. James

TLX GT is now a front-mid-engine car). And RealTime and its drivers know the size of the task they face. While the two cars in the hands of Cunningham and new shoe Ryan Eversley weren't the slowest cars in the GT field at the Circuit of The Americas season-opener in early March, they were definitely at the less-sharp end of the grid.

Hits in the first race of the weekend doubleheader put both cars on the DNF list, with Cunningham's TLX unrepairable at the track and out for the weekend.

However, there was hope that with rain forecast for the second race on Sunday, the only AWD car in the field would shine. And it did. Not only did Eversley slice through the field from 25th on the grid to fifth, but he set the second-fastest race lap, too, behind



Richard S. James

(LEFT) RealTime crew works on the direct-injection, twin-turbo V6-powered Acura TLX GT. (BELOW) New driver Ryan Eversley gets ready to go to work at the CoTA season-opener.



Richard S. James

only winner Kevin Estre in the K-PAX Racing McLaren 650S. Eversley, naturally, was enthused about the performance.

"The McLaren was able to go very quickly but, hey, we were right there with them," he says, "And the all-wheel drive was definitely a factor in that, as well as RealTime and HPD giving me the best Acura TLX that I've driven yet."

Eversley believes another wet race

"We're not a turnkey operation. We're starting from the ground up at every track we go to"

RYAN EVERSLEY

might just deliver a podium, but key to the season will be improving dry-weather performance. And as things stand, a podium earned on dry asphalt is a long way from where the team currently sits.

RealTime certainly knows how to build winning cars and has won championships at every level of PWC, from its first with the Honda Prelude, to the most recent GTS titles with the TSX. But Cunningham

says this is the team's biggest challenge yet, and even bigger than he first believed. Not that he's daunted by the task ahead.

"Along the way we suffered a couple of setbacks - many setbacks, but two in particular that delayed our strength and ability to field two cars," he says. "The good news is that we're here now, it's still a young program, and we've got two cars that are working pretty well. We know we can make them better, yet we feel like they're in a fairly good place already. It's going to be continuous small bites from here to go faster; but that's certainly our plan."

One of the challenges RealTime faces in achieving meaningful results in 2015 is a lack of data. The team only visited two of the tracks on the schedule with the TLX GT last year, while most of the rest of the field is returning to familiar venues with similar, if not identical, cars. Each track will bring new surprises for the team. It's a test that Eversley relishes as he not only races, but also helps develop the car.

"We're not a turnkey operation," he says. "We're starting from the ground up at every track we go to - we don't have data from past seasons. We don't have a factory to call; we *are* the factory." ■



Richard Dore/LAT

REALTIME RACING

A WINNING MACHINE

There's a reason RealTime Racing's newest driver, Ryan Eversley admits - much to team principal Peter Cunningham's irritation, it has to be said - to carrying around the team's photo in high school and watching them since he started following sports car racing as a kid. It is, hands down, the most successful team in Pirelli World Challenge history - the series' own take on a Hendrick, Penske or Ganassi.

The team first found success in the International Ice Racing Association in the late '80s, where Cunningham won a trio of titles. He followed that up with a pair of SCCA ProRally Championships before the team started its World Challenge campaign in the first year of the series, racing Honda Preludes to a couple of titles with Cunningham and Michael Galati.

In 1997, the team's long and successful association with Acura began, and the ensuing years brought a host of wins and championships (shared between Cunningham, Galati and Pierre Kleinubing) that made the Integra Type R the most successful car in Pirelli World Challenge history. Following that, Cunningham drove an NSX to a GT championship.

The ensuing years have seen the team campaign Acura RSXs and TSXs in Touring Car and the TSX in GTS, where it also won championships. Now, as the team looks back on a quarter-century of success in Pirelli World Challenge that includes 85 wins, 14 drivers' championships and the delivery of 14 manufacturers' titles to Acura and Honda, it's relishing its new challenge with the GT class TLX GT.



Philip Abbott/LAT

(TOP) RealTime gave the Integra Type R a fourth title in 2002. (ABOVE) V6-powered TSX brought GTS class success in 2012.

GODZILLA vs. THE WORLD

...as in, Pirelli World Challenge, where the Nissan GT-R NISMO GT3 gets the chance to see if it can flatten the opposition in North America's sprint-based GT fest.

WORDS & IMAGES Richard S. James



They call it Godzilla. It's rampaged over race tracks around the globe for four decades. This year alone, it's already won at the famed Bathurst 12 Hours in Australia and earned a podium at the Dubai 24 Hours. The Nissan GT-R is a legend in motorsports and now, finally, U.S. racing fans get to see it attempt the same thing in all its full, fire-breathing glory on North American territory.

Pirelli World Challenge's GT class is, however, a slightly different form of motorsports than the endurance racing the GT-R NISMO GT3 was originally designed for. Its 50-minute sprints with standing starts put an alternate twist on the competition side of things, but that hasn't prevented an incredibly large and diverse array of GT3 machinery from joining the series.

In the 2015 PWC season-opener at the Circuit of The Americas, only two of the

near-40 car GT/GTA field weren't GT3 spec (those being the all-wheel-drive Acura TLX GTs, see page 80). Fact is, GT3 in PWC GT is now the norm, not the trend.

And based on their performance against more established brands in the highly-competitive series, the pair of GT-Rs fielded by Always Evolving, with technical support by AIM Autosport and James Davison and Bryan Heitkotter >



BRYAN HEITKOTTER

Laid off from his job, Heitkotter entered the GT Academy just to see if he could catch a break. After beating 53,000 other online entries, he certainly did...

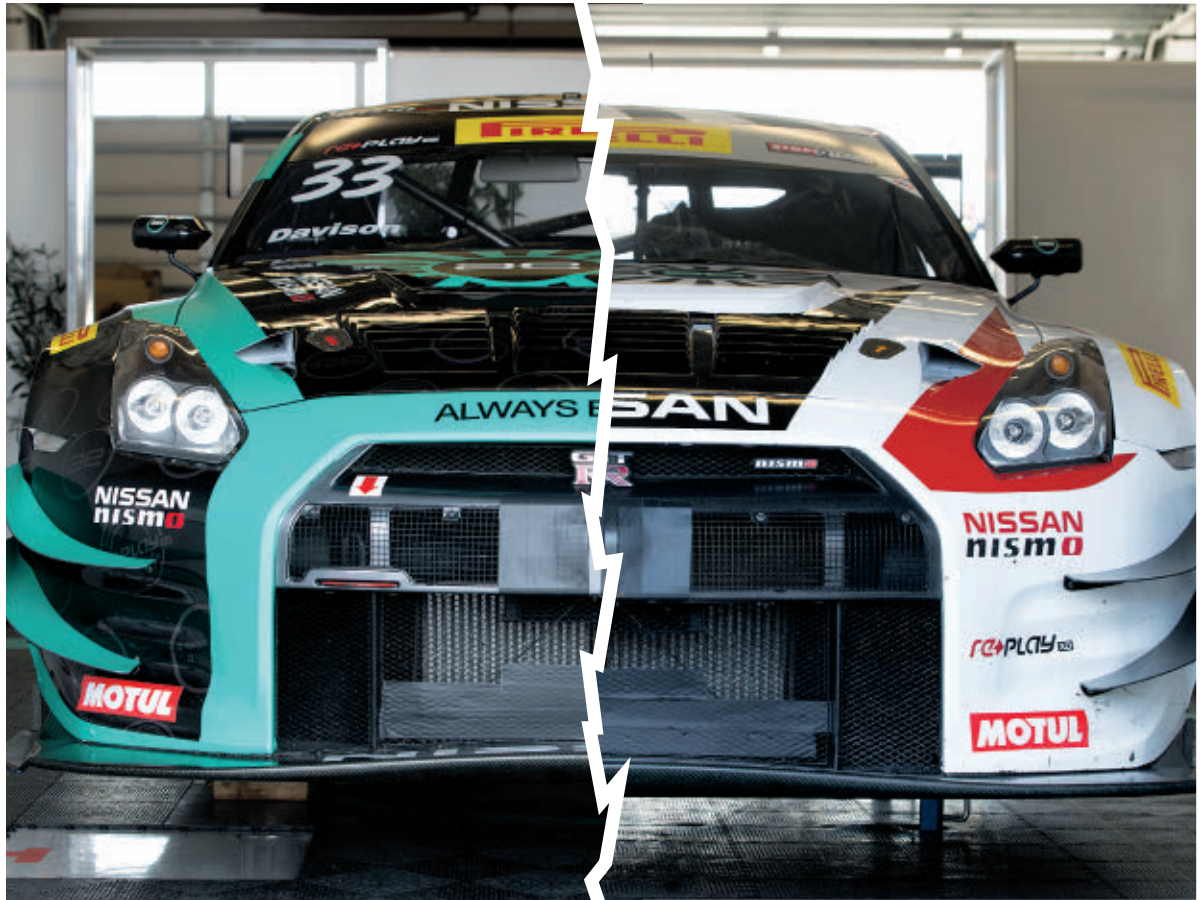


James Davison ran in the top five for much of the Nissan GT-R's Pirelli World Challenge debut at CoTA, and knows development of the potent machine's braking and traction will take it to the next level of competitiveness.



JAMES DAVISON: AUSSIE ON THE FAST TRACK

Melbourne, Australia-born James Davison has mostly raced in the U.S. since 2005, when he ran a season of Formula BMW. Two seasons in Indy Lights in 2008-'09 didn't lead to a full-time IndyCar ride, but his career is taking off now. Last year, he scored five straight poles for TRC-AMR in the TUDOR Championship's GT Daytona class and raced in his first Indianapolis 500 for Always Evolving, finishing 16th.



(MAIN) A split personality? Nope. The Nissan GT-R GT3 is a muscled, fire-breathing monster, regardless of the paintwork. James Davison takes the green machine; Bryan Heitkotter gets the NISMO white scheme. **(RIGHT)** Both cars were in the mix at CoTA's PWC opener.

handling the driving duties, are off to a good start so far, with much more to come.

"When I took on responsibility for motorsports, I knew that for GT-R fans from around the United States, there was no question that this car had to come here and represent the brand and, more importantly, the whole sports car logic at Nissan," says Rick Kulach, Nissan North America motorsports manager. "My dream was to get a team that would have the capabilities to properly represent the manufacturer and put it out front.

"We worked on this for quite a while, and I realized there's a lot of common ground between [Always Evolving president] Erik Davis and our interests and what we're trying to accomplish. He represented a good opportunity for us, so we managed to put a deal together.

"But we knew we needed additional technical support, because the level of the car was above what they could provide. We talked with a number of teams, but I'm very happy that we ended up with AIM Autosport out of Toronto. They certainly have the credentials after winning a number of championships in different series. There's such a powerful presence of calmness around them; it's reassuring to walk in there and have everyone organized



"For GT-R fans from around the United States, there was no question that this car had to come here"

RICK KULACH

and focused on what they're doing."

There have been GT-Rs in PWC before; but they were built to the outgoing specifications, not the current GT3 formula, and never achieved their potential. The 2015 PWC cars are built by JRM Group in the UK, as are all GT-R NISMO GT3s built to the FIA-approved blueprint. And with Always Evolving, AIM Autosport, Davison in the GT class and Nissan GT Academy graduate Heitkotter in the GTA division for amateur drivers, the

firepower seems to be in place to live up to the Godzilla image. In the CoTA opener, Heitkotter was the top qualifier in GTA for the first race in fifth overall, and Davison just missed out on a top-five finish.

"Straight out of the gate, we're already knocking on the door of the top five," says Australian Davison, whose résumé (see sidebar, left) marks him out as a serious player. "I ran fifth at CoTA for 95 percent of the race, but just lost it with a lap to go and ended up sixth. We're competitive, but to get to the top step of the podium, we've got a bit of testing and learning to do."

Davis says the step they need to take to get to the top is a "medium" one. "We're not as good under braking and on traction just yet," he notes. "But the high-speed aero and terminal velocity are very good."

Heitkotter concurs: "The faster the corners, the better we are." That bodes well for some tracks, but as they work to get their traction issues under control, the street circuits could be a struggle in the interim. Both drivers, though, say they have full confidence in Always Evolving and AIM Autosport to get the car where it needs to be for them to work their magic.

For Nissan, however, it's not always about results on the track. Every manufacturer wants to win, of course, >



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April 17-19
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Long Beach, CA
GT/GTA/GT Cup

April 24-26
Barber Motorsports Park
Birmingham, AL
GT/GTA/GT Cup/GTS

May 15-17
Canadian Tire Motorsport Park
Bowmanville, Ontario, Canada
All Classes

May 29-31
Detroit Grand Prix
Detroit, MI
GT/GTA

June 26-28
Road America
Elkhart Lake, WI
All Classes

July 31-Aug. 2
Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course
Lexington, OH
GT/GTA/GT Cup/GTS

Aug. 13-15
Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course
Lexington, OH
TC/TCA/TCB

Aug. 21-23
Miller Motorsports Park
Tooele, UT
All Classes

Aug. 28-30
Sonoma Raceway
Sonoma, CA
GT/GTA/GT Cup/GTS

Sept. 11-13
Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca
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and Nissan wants its product proven on track against Audis, Ferraris, Lamborghinis and Porsches. But it also needs to connect with consumers in order to spread the message. Most of those consumers aren't buying GT-Rs; they're buying 370Zs, Altimas and Jukes. So it's about communicating the brand's ideals, rather than just showing what this particular car can do.

"We're interested in a brand relationship that has the vehicles, the manufacturer and our accomplishments on the race track represented way beyond the fans in the stands or Monday morning newspapers," explains Kulach. "With their ties to other companies like Replay XD cameras, Always Evolving has the potential

and the capabilities to do live streaming of races. You'll be able to sit there with your smartphone and tune into Bryan Heitkotter's car, viewing the track as he's going around, seeing what Bryan is seeing. You can't obtain that from most pure racing programs and it allows our fans to be involved, even in remote locations."

That strategy is also part of the reason for racing in PWC. For now it's the only North American series using off-the-shelf GT3 machinery. Soon it won't be, but the format fits what Nissan is trying to achieve.

"I'm very much in favor of the sprint format," Kulach says. "I like endurance races, too, but for a fan this is 50 minutes of pure adrenaline. I think the format matches what fans are looking at right now."

"I'm very much in favor of the sprint format. For a fan this is 50 minutes of pure adrenaline"

RICK KULACH

The GT-R's success in international endurance racing suggests that Nissan will achieve strong results in PWC but, as Davison notes, there are some short-term kinks to work out before it hits max Godzilla mode and becomes a full-on, competition-eating machine in the short races. In brand strategy, though, the GT-R in Pirelli World Challenge is already on a rampage. ■

(ABOVE) There's no reset button when you're racing for real, but Bryan Heitkotter has made a remarkable transition from *Gran Turismo* to the race track, culminating in a 2015 season racing the Nissan GT-R NISMO GT3 in Pirelli World Challenge's GTA class (LEFT).



NISSAN GT ACADEMY

FROM COUCH TO LE MANS

Sim racing has long been a useful tool for new and experienced racers alike. But until the advent of the Nissan GT Academy, the question of whether a good virtual racer could switch to real racing with any success was unanswered.

For the unaware, the answer's yes. In 2011, Bryan Heitkotter became the first U.S. graduate of the GT Academy, which began in Europe in '08. The program produced by Nissan and PlayStation starts with an online gaming qualification process, then brings together the best *Gran Turismo* players for a live National Finals, before the winners are sent to "Race Camp" at Silverstone in the UK.

"For me it was the best thing that



could have come along, because I didn't have the traditional resources to go racing," says Heitkotter. "I think that,

as simulated racing becomes more realistic, we'll see more drivers come from that side of it and get into racing."

Heitkotter, beginning his first season in Pirelli World Challenge GTA with a Nissan GT-R GT3, is compelling proof that the program works. So are Lucas Ordonez and Jann Mardenborough, who'll drive the Nissan GT-R LM NISMO LMP1 car at Le Mans and have already been on the LMP2 podium in the 24 Hours.

"I think Nissan and PlayStation were a little bit ahead of the curve on all of this," says Heitkotter. "They did it first and they've really proved the validity of the program."



Silverstone "Race Camp" (ABOVE) is where the transition from virtual to reality begins for the GT Academy finalists (TOP).



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READY TO RUMBLE

The dirt brawlers in the Lucas Oil Off Road Racing Series have different approaches to a successful season.

WORDS & IMAGES Richard S. James

No war was ever won by just winging it. No boxing match was ever won without preparation and a plan of attack. And, certainly, no one has ever stood atop a race podium on pure luck alone – although having a bunch of it never hurt anyone.

Short course off-road racing as practiced in the Lucas Oil Off Road Racing Series may sometimes look chaotic and improvised (which is great for fans of this action-packed championship). But in practice, the drivers have tested every line. They've seen how well they can hold their truck down low and discovered how it handles the fluff up top. They've observed other races to see where the holes develop and where the blue groove is going to form. In short, they've prepared for the race, and go into it with a game plan.

"I've rearranged my entire pre-race routine," says Rodrigo Ampudia, driver of

the No. 36 Lucas Oil/Papas & Beer/Monster Energy Ford in Pro 2. "I go into the lounge in the semi half an hour before the race, put some music on, lock the door, and I'll just be going over the race, going over my lines, and really focusing on what my ideal lap is. Once I come out, it's game time. No more distractions, no more joking around; I'm 100-percent focused on the race."

If pre-planning is necessary for each race, it's certainly critical for the season as a whole. Yes, the primary goal is to be fast and win. But there has to be strategy for that, and a method to achieving it.

Ampudia and Carl Renezeder were coming from two very different places going into the 2015 Lucas Oil Off Road Racing Series season opener at Lake Elsinore Motorsports Park. Both are longtime competitors in the series and in short course. But Ampudia has a single



Pro 2 win to his credit, back in 2010. He's hungry for wins and championships and has worked hard in the off-season toward his goal. He brought out a new truck in late 2014 and spent the off-season working to make sure it's perfect.

Renezeder, on the other hand, is a multiple champ in both Pro 4 and Pro 2 in his Lucas Oil/General Tire machines. He's used to winning and often makes it look easy. That's what makes a season like last year so tough. In Pro 4, he didn't score a single victory, something that hasn't happened in the series since its inception in 2009. Coming off a nine-win championship season in '13, that was a hard blow. Most of his problems came down to the front drivetrain, components that had previously been reliable.

Two starting points, but one destination: a championship. The routes to get there



may run parallel, cross each other, and perhaps neither will reach their ultimate destination in 2015. But neither starts the journey without a course plotted on a map.

"We went through the entire truck, checking and re-checking everything," says Ampudia. "We're really happy with where the truck and team are right now. We've kind of dug ourselves out of the hole that we were in the last couple of

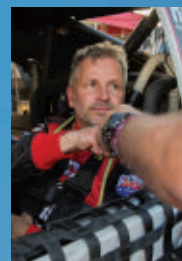
seasons. We're really motivated."

It's not just the truck that Ampudia has been working on, either. Two weeks before the opener, he ran a half-marathon.

"I've been trying to keep my health up and stay in shape," he says. "I'm karting to polish my driving skills. I've been working with Troy Adams as my driving coach."

These are the steps Ampudia is taking to win his first title. But Renezeder knows how to win championships and, perhaps more importantly, seen how to lose them.

"You go back and look at our season last year, and our trucks were extremely competitive," he says. "We set the pole and fast lap several times. We were always right there, speed wise. We just had a bad run in the Pro 4 where we couldn't keep our front end alive. So, for us, reliability is number one. We've always got to find performance, because everybody is >



(MAIN) Rodrigo Ampudia and his crew head into the season ready for the fight and armed with their new Pro 2 truck (LEFT). Multiple champ Carl Renezeder (ABOVE) is "hypertocused" after a disappointing 2014.



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showing up with something more, but the most important thing is reliability.

"Our approach each season should be the same procedurally, mechanically and in our focus, but I would have to say that we're definitely hyperfocused this year because of coming off such a bad year. Maybe we came in a little bit...I wouldn't say less prepared, but maybe a little overconfident with our systems."

"I'd have to say that we're definitely hyperfocused this year because of coming off such a bad year"

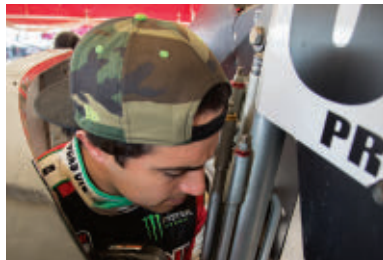
CARL RENEZEDER

Fast and reliable equipment and a driver who's fit and focused are building blocks for success. From there, though, the approach to the season can ultimately lead to success or something less.

Ampudia says he likes to attack every race 100 percent. But he also thinks about things such as the three events in 2015 that will be at Lake Elsinore - that's five points races - so pre-season testing there takes on special significance. He's also considered how to deal with the ebbs and flows of the season.

"You can't lose your head," he says. "It's happened to me before. If you do end up having a not-so-successful weekend, move forward and stick with your game plan. Stay in the top five, have clean races. Don't make mistakes and really focus."

For Renezeder, the strategy changes



Carl Renezeder's preps for 2015 were rewarded with a win in Pro 4 (ABOVE) and a second in Pro 2 at the Lake Elsinore season-starter. (LEFT) Rodrigo Ampudia works on his Pro 2.

depending on the competition and whatever else is going on. He may even have a different approach for each class.

"There have been seasons where I wanted to set the pace for qualifying and for the race," he says. "There are others where I wanted to be smart, not push the truck as hard, go for podiums and, if wins come, they come. But it kind of depends on what's happening with the other racers."

But whatever the plan going in, the strategy can change as the season unfolds. Are there enough checks in the win column? Is the points tally sufficient to relax a little, or is it time to attack to build it up and catch a competitor?

"It really depends on where you're at, what the others are doing, where you are in the season and points-wise, and how confident you are with how your trucks are working," Renezeder says. "Really it comes down to only the last couple of weekends where you're really paying attention to the final outcome on the points. Sure, you're always thinking a little bit about it in the back of your head, but I don't like to look out too far ahead. I like to stay focused on what I'm doing in the moment." ■

CROSSING BORDERS

FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE LUCAS OIL OFF ROAD RACING SERIES HEADS SOUTH TO MEXICO

Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico, knows its off-road racing. As the traditional start, and often finish, of the legendary SCORE Baja 1000 off-road race - not to mention the Baja 500 - Ensenada's residents are familiar with off-road trucks and racers. As it happens, many of those desert racers also compete in short course in the Lucas Oil Off Road Racing Series, such as reigning Baja 1000 champ Rob MacCachren, who races in both Pro 4 and Pro 2.

Ensenada is also the hometown of Pro 2 racer Rodrigo Ampudia, and home to his family's legendary restaurant/bar and favorite hangout of the off-road crowd, Papas & Beer. All of that makes it a perfect fit for a blast of Lucas Oil Off Road when the series heads there, Aug. 1-2.

"I don't think I have words for how excited I am for it and how excited people are about it," says Ampudia, whose family is largely responsible for making the event happen.

"Everywhere I go, people are asking me about the race. There's a lot of excitement in Ensenada."

The event will be held at the Estero Beach Hotel and Resort in what Ampudia promises will be a spectacular location.

"We're fortunate where we're able to have this track," Ampudia says. "It's going to be 20ft from the ocean, on the beach in a beautiful resort. It's just going to be epic."

Ensenada (BELOW) loves off-road racing, but the intensity will ratchet up when the Lucas Oil Off Road Racing Series hits town.



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March 29	S	Streets of St. Petersburg
April 19	S	Streets of Long Beach
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April 26	S	Barber Motorsports Park
May 8	S	Indianapolis Motor Speedway
May 9	S	Indianapolis Motor Speedway
May 22	S	Indianapolis Motor Speedway
June 13	S	Streets of Toronto
June 14	S	Streets of Toronto
July 12	S	The Milwaukee Mile
July 18	S	Iowa Speedway
August 1	S	Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course
August 2	S	Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course
September 12	S	Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca
September 13	S	Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca

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March 28	S	Streets of St. Petersburg
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CHARGED UP

A new partnership is set to energize the 2015 Mazda MX-5 Cup season.

> As the Mazda MX-5 Cup kicked off its 2015 season at Sebring in March, it did so with a new title sponsor.

The SCCA Pro Racing Battery Tender Mazda MX-5 Cup presented by BFGoodrich Tires brings a partnership with Battery Tender to the MX-5 Cup family.

"Mazda had a great relationship with [previous title sponsor] Playboy, but I think if the truth be known the series wanted a sponsor that was a little more family friendly in the non-bunny way," says Mike Prelec Sr., CEO of Deltran Battery Tender. "We've had a very long and respectful relationship with John Doonan [director of motorsports at Mazda North American Operations] and his staff, so when they presented the opportunity we jumped on it."

The Battery Tender brand is by no means new to motorsports, but some changes within its previous partnership



MAZDA FAN
Mike Prelec Sr. (ABOVE), CEO of Deltran Battery Tender, is a fan of Mazda power. He owns two Miatas and is onboard as title sponsor of the 2015 MX-5 Cup.

resulted in them looking for other motorsports outlets.

"The main reason was not knowing how the new TUDOR Championship would turn out," says Prelec. "After the announcement of the ALMS/Grand-Am marriage, we decided to take a little time off from the professional side of racing - sit back and watch it unfold. The new TV package was not what we were accustomed to, but we had to find something that would keep us in racing, which is a big part of our customer base. The Miata association was always in the back of my mind to give support to the grassroots side of the business."

In fact, the Mazda relationship has always been close to home for Prelec and Battery Tender.

"I'm the proud owner of two Miatas," he says. "A 1992-spec car that we use for some of the ChumpCar series' 14-hour

races, and a newer '07 Cup car I use for track days. Hopefully, in the near future, I'll get involved in SCCA events.

"Mazda and the Miata MX-5 have had a long and healthy relationship with professional and amateur racers like myself. Needless to say, I was an easy target. I love driving Miatas. Mazda presented us with the perfect avenue to stay in front of our customers. It's a win-win! Zoom, zoom, zoom!"

KEEPING TRACK

For the latest news from the 2015 MX-5 Cup series, or updates on the upcoming Global MX-5 Cup series, visit www.mazdamotorsports.com or check out @MazdaRacing on Twitter.



There's a new look for the popular MX-5 Cup in 2015, courtesy of Deltran Battery Tender.



Richard S. James



Mazda

GLOBAL MX-5 CUP: IT'S ALIVE!

Do you hear that? Mazda MX-5 fans from around the world are still cheering as Ujina Plant No. 1 in Hiroshima, Japan, began production of the ND MX-5, the fourth generation of the iconic Miata, at the start of March. Japanese sales of the lightweight roadster begin in June, with U.S. dealers set to receive their first allocation of cars later in the summer.



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MAKING TRACKS

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Nikko is gunning for victory in the Skip Barber MAZDASPEED Pro Challenge, which brings with it a \$75k scholarship to the Mazda MX-5 Cup.

IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR

Reger brothers tackle open-wheel and sports cars with the support of nearest and dearest

> A sport, whether practiced or viewed, has the ability to bring families and generations together, and motorsports is one prime example. For 40 years, Skip Barber Racing School has maintained this tradition, injecting the passion for motorsports into the DNA of families. For these folk, racing is more than a hobby, it's a lifestyle.

John Reger, father of Timothy and Nicholas Reger who are two up-and-coming racers in the Skip Barber system, says: "Racing is in our blood, I rode dirt bikes, then started racing street bikes in 1999.

"I decided I didn't want my kids on motorcycles, so I put them in karts when they turned eight (Nikko) and 10 (Timo). In their first race in the Southwest Regional Cup there were more than 20 karts in the field and they came in first and second. We didn't look back after that."

Timothy, 19, is the current points leader in the 2014-'15 Skip Barber Winter Series and his younger brother Nikko began his season at the legendary 63rd 12 Hours of Sebring weekend as a competitor in the Skip Barber MAZDASPEED Pro Challenge.

"Traveling to different tracks keeps us together since I try to go to every race with them"

JOHN REGER

Both young racers appear to have a bright future ahead of them, and their family is ecstatic about the chance to share in their kids' potential careers.

"Traveling to different tracks keeps us

together, since I try to go to every race with them," says John.

Timothy will conclude his season at Sebring International Raceway in April for the Skip Barber Winter Series, while Nikko jump started his in March.

Both racers have a lot to prove, especially with scholarships on the line. If Timo holds on to his position in the series, he'll receive \$12,500 in Skip Barber credits and entry into Race Series Championship Shootout, which will allow him to compete for a ride in the 2016 USF2000 season. For Nikko, a championship win means a \$75,000 scholarship to move up to the MX-5 Cup Series presented by Battery Tender.

To track the careers of Nikko and Timo and many more rising stars like them, visit www.skipbarber.com.

By Debbie Ebalobo



ABOVE: Timo, here with his father, John, is leading the Skip Barber Winter Series.

ANOTHER STAR GRADUATE

Jacob Eidson won multiple Skip Barber series titles, before dominating the East Coast-based F1600 Championship Series and winning the Team USA Scholarship. Last year, Eidson was third in the USF2000 championship, a result he repeated in the Winterfest. He tackles his sophomore season with Pabst Racing.



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1992 MUSTANG ROUSH TRANS AM GT1/SPO



Roush ORT Alloy 436 with Motec Fuel Injection. Emco sequential trans., Full Motec data. Setup SPO currently. Can be TA/GT1 with 358, 1:09's at PIR. Many spares, plus 358 Roush Cup Motor. Complete, new Emco gearbox available. **Call: Matt at (503) 819-9007.** [25161-06]

Porsche GT2 RSR built GT3 Cup platform. Built by Rothsport Racing. +825hp 3.6 Twin Turbo. Over \$75k spent on engine alone. Brand new, just dyno time and one test day. Great spares, Moton 3way, Aim data, sequential shift, RSR suspension, RSR carbon body. **Call: (503) 819-9007.** [25163-06]

PORSCHE GT2 TURBO



2005 NISSAN 350Z GT-3/GT-2



Ken Murillo build on a Neely/Murillo chassis. 2 Runoffs wins, 4x GT-3 and 1x GT-2 poles. Hewland trans. and Speedway Mini Stock rebuilt. Two KA24 engines, 2 sets of rims. This car is very competitive. **Contact: John at (530) 412-0649 or jblackrf17@hotmail.com.** \$45,000 OBO. [25178-05]

3 National Championships with 3 different drivers. You could be next! 2 spare AVP engines available, plus many more spares. Can run F Production or GTL. **Call: John at (918) 633-9531.** Cars -- \$35,000 EACH. [25160-05]

2014 F PRODUCTION NATIONAL CHAMPION MG MIDGETS



2014 MUSTANG BOSS 302S



Limited production of 50 units offered for possibly the last generation. Car is track ready for road racing in various SCCA and NASA classes, may require minor modifications for certain series. Free shipping within the contiguous U.S.* **Contact: Dana Tomlinson at (325) 949-4621 ext. 398.** [25158-07]



After considering a switch to IndyCar, America's Alexander Rossi has opted to stay true to his dream of a Formula 1 future, and will race in GP2 this year for the Spanish Racing Engineering team.



LIGHTING THE SPARK HERE AT HOME

The son of a Formula 1 legend beat America's last grand prix driver when Nicolas Prost held off Scott Speed in the U.S. debut of Formula E on the streets of Miami. The result sent Prost to the top of the points standings. City government seemed pleased with the show - fully funded by promoters, it noted, with no civic funds used - and offered the FIA-sanctioned series a five-year contract extension.

F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

- March 15 Australia Lewis Hamilton
- March 29 Malaysia (Sepang)
- April 12 China (Shanghai)
- April 19 Bahrain (Sakhir)
- May 10 Spain (Barcelona)
- May 24 Monaco (Monte Carlo)
- June 7 Canada (Montreal)
- June 21 Austria (Spielberg)
- July 5 Britain (Silverstone)
- July 19 Germany (Hockenheim)
- July 26 Hungary (Hungaroring)
- Aug. 23 Belgium (Spa)
- Sept. 6 Italy (Monza)
- Sept. 20 Singapore (Marina Bay)
- Sept. 27 Japan (Suzuka)
- Oct. 11 Russia (Sochi)
- Oct. 25 United States (CoTa)
- Nov. 1 Mexico (Mexico City)
- Nov. 15 Brazil (Interlagos)
- Nov. 29 Abu Dhabi (Yas Marina)

VERIZON INDYCAR SERIES

- March 29 St. Petersburg, Fla.
- April 12 NOLA, New Orleans, La.
- April 19 Long Beach, Calif.
- April 26 Barber, Birmingham, Ala.
- May 9 Indianapolis GP, Ind.
- May 25 Indianapolis 500, Ind.
- May 30 Detroit, Mich. 1
- May 31 Detroit 2
- June 6 TMS, Fort Worth, Texas
- June 14 Toronto, Ont.

- June 27 Fontana, Calif.
- July 12 Milwaukee, Wis.
- July 18 Newton, Iowa
- Aug. 2 Mid-Ohio, Lexington, Ohio
- Aug. 23 Pocono, Pa.
- Aug. 30 Sonoma, Calif.

ISMSA TUDOR UNITED SPORTSCAR CHAMPIONSHIP

- Jan. 24-25 Daytona S. Dixon/T. Kanaan/
K. Larson/J. McMurray
- March 21 Sebring J. Barbosa/S. Bourdais/
C. Fittipaldi
- April 18 Long Beach, Calif.
- May 3 Laguna Seca, Monterey, Calif.
- May 30 Detroit, Mich.
- June 28 Watkins Glen, N.Y. (6 Hours)
- July 12 CTMP, Bowmanville, Ont.
- July 25 Lime Rock, Conn.
- Aug. 9 Road America, Elkhart Lake, Wis.
- Aug. 23 VIR, Alton, Va.
- Sept. 19 COTA, Austin, Texas
- Oct. 3 Road Atlanta, Ga. (1000m/10hrs)

NASCAR SPRINT CUP SERIES

- Feb. 22 Daytona 500 Joey Logano
- March 1 Atlanta Jimmie Johnson
- March 8 Las Vegas Kevin Harvick
- March 15 Phoenix Kevin Harvick
- March 22 Fontana Brad Keselowski
- March 29 Martinsville, Va.
- April 11 Fort Worth, Texas
- April 19 Bristol, Tenn.

FEATURE RACE

INDIANAPOLIS 500

WHEN May 25
WHERE Indianapolis, Ind.

Why not start with the Indy GP and build up to The Greatest Spectacle in Racing?



PHILIP ADORATI/LAT

TICKET INFO

Order race tickets directly at indy500.com

WHERE & HOW

A roundabout means 16th & Georgetown no longer meet, but it's made traffic flow smoother.

- April 25 Richmond, Va.
- May 3 Talladega, Ala.
- May 9 Kansas City, Kan.
- May 24 Charlotte, N.C.
- May 31 Dover, Del.
- June 7 Pocono, Pa.
- June 14 Brooklyn, Mich.
- June 28 Sonoma, Calif.
- July 5 Daytona, Fla.
- July 11 Sparta, Ky.
- July 19 Loudon, N.H.
- July 26 Indianapolis, Ind.
- Aug. 2 Pocono, Pa.
- Aug. 9 Watkins Glen, N.Y.
- Aug. 16 Brooklyn, Mich.
- Aug. 22 Bristol, Tenn.
- Sept. 6 Darlington, S.C.
- Sept. 12 Richmond, Va.
- Sept. 20 Chicagoland, Ill.
- Sept. 27 Loudon, N.H.
- Oct. 4 Dover, Del.
- Oct. 10 Charlotte, N.C.
- Oct. 18 Kansas City, Kan.
- Oct. 25 Talladega, Ala.
- Nov. 1 Martinsville, Va.
- Nov. 8 Fort Worth, Texas
- Nov. 15 Phoenix, Ariz.
- Nov. 22 Homestead, Fla.

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES

- Feb. 21 Daytona Ryan Reed
- Feb. 28 Atlanta Kevin Harvick
- March 7 Las Vegas Austin Dillon
- March 14 Phoenix Joey Logano

HAAS'S HORSES

While his NASCAR team surges, Gene Haas keeps adding to his F1 team with partner Gunther Steiner. Ex-Ferrari man Ben Agathangelou and Red Bull alum Rob Taylor serve as aerodynamics expert and chief designer, respectively.



Charles Coates/LAT

"I have some unfinished business here. I am very excited to be joining Andretti Autosport and to become part of a team with such a successful history."

SIMONA DE SILVESTRO ending her IndyCar sabbatical to join Andretti's armada in St. Pete.



Charles Coates/LAT

Alamy/Slavik/LAT



"In a few days the championship starts and we run out of science fiction. Most creative rumors!"
FERNANDO ALONSO on speculation over his testing crash, and Australia GP absence.

Keith Rizzo/COTA



Pirelli World Challenge had an international flavor at Circuit of The Americas, where Monaco's Olivier Beretta (Ferrari) and Austria's Kevin Estre (McLaren) took GT wins.

Table with 3 columns: Date, Location, Driver. Includes entries for March 21 (Fontana, Kevin Harvick) through Nov 15 (Homestead, Fla.).

NASCAR CAMPING WORLD TRUCK SERIES

Table with 3 columns: Date, Location, Driver. Includes entries for Feb. 20 (Daytona, Tyler Reddick) through Nov. 20 (Homestead, Fla.).

FIA WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

Table with 2 columns: Date, Location. Includes entries for April 12 (Silverstone, UK) through Nov. 21 (Sakhir, Bahrain).

PIRELLI WORLD CHALLENGE

Table with 2 columns: Date, Location. Includes entries for March 6-8 (COTA, Austin, Texas) through Jul 31-Aug. 2 (Mid-Ohio, Ohio).



Table with 2 columns: Date, Location. Includes entries for Aug. 14-16 (Mid-Ohio, Ohio) through Sept. 11-13 (Monterey, Calif.).

FIA WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Table with 3 columns: Date, Location, Driver. Includes entries for Jan. 25 (Monte Carlo, Sebastien Ogier) through March 8 (Mexico, Sebastien Ogier).

CLIFF DIVING

World rally and swimming don't normally go together, but they did for Ott Tanak and co-driver Raigo Molder after rolling their Ford Fiesta into a lake during Rally Mexico.

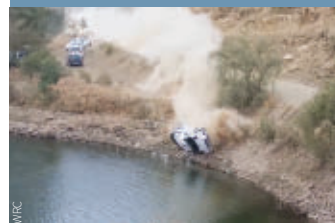


Table with 2 columns: Date, Location. Includes entries for April 23-26 (Argentina) through Nov. 12-15 (Britain, Wales).

NHRA MELLO YELLO SERIES

Table with 2 columns: Date, Location. Includes entries for Feb. 8 (Pomona, Calif.) through March 15 (Gainesville, Fla.).

FLIGHT RISK

Larry Dixon went for a wild ride during NHRA qualifying at the Gainesville Nationals when his Top Fuel dragster flexed, split and flew near the finish line.



Table with 2 columns: Date, Location. Includes entries for March 29 (Charlotte, N.C.) through Nov. 15 (Pomona, Calif.).

FEATURE RACE

BELLE ISLE DETROIT GP

WHEN May 29-31
WHERE Detroit, Mich.

Where else this year will you get IMSA, Pirelli World Challenge and two IndyCar races on the same bill? Nowhere. Belle Isle is IndyCar's only double-header event.

TICKET INFO

Order race tickets directly at detroitgp.com

WHERE & HOW

Hotel and restaurant listings, plus lots of other useful visitor info on the Detroit area can be found at visitdetroit.com.

COOPER TIRES INDY LIGHTS CHAMPIONSHIP

Table with 2 columns: Date, Location. Includes entries for Mar. 28-29 (St. Petersburg, Fla.) through Sept. 12-13 (Monterey, Calif.).

PRO MAZDA CHAMPIONSHIP

Table with 2 columns: Date, Location. Includes entries for Mar. 28-29 (St. Petersburg, Fla.) through Sept. 12-13 (Monterey, Calif.).

USF2000 CHAMPIONSHIP

Table with 2 columns: Date, Location. Includes entries for Mar. 28-29 (St. Petersburg, Fla.) through Sept. 12-13 (Monterey, Calif.).

RACER.com

RACER.com has the latest racing news, views and features, plus Robin Miller's answers to your questions. Write to MillersMailbag@racer.com



Australia's V8 Supercars Championship has relaunched on CBS Sports Network. The 600hp V8 beasts create some of the best sedan racing and on some of the world's most beautiful race tracks.

APRIL 12

GP OF LOUISIANA

Before the Verizon IndyCar Series hits the bricks of Indianapolis, it has another key date ahead of it. The series will make another inroad into the Southeast with its first appearance on the New Orleans Motorsports Park road course, on the outskirts of the Big Easy.

Pre-season testing at NOLA demonstrated that the 2.6-mile track, with its fast, sweeping turns, presented a significant physical challenge. There also appears to be vast amounts of the track visible from the seating areas - something fans of the late, lamented Cleveland and Edmonton tracks will appreciate.

The South is no longer just stock car racing country...

DETAILS

3:00pm NBCSN: live coverage of IndyCar's debut at NOLA.



Chris Owens/IMS

ALL TIMES ARE EASTERN (ET); ALWAYS CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS FOR LATEST AIR TIMES

SATURDAY, APRIL 4

6:30pm FS1: FIA Formula E, Long Beach, Calif. (L)

SUNDAY, APRIL 5

9:00am IMSA Continental Tire Challenge, Sebring, Fla. (D)
5:00pm CBSSN: Pirelli World Challenge GT, St. Petersburg, Fla. (D)

FRIDAY, APRIL 10

11:30am FS1: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series practice, Fort Worth, Texas (L)
1:30pm NBCSN: FIA Formula 1 Chinese Grand Prix practice, Shanghai (L)
2:00pm FS1: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series practice, Fort Worth, Texas (L)
4:30pm FS1: NASCAR Xfinity Series qualifying, Fort Worth, Texas (L)
6:30pm FS1: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series qualifying, Fort Worth, Texas (L)
8:30pm FS1: NASCAR Xfinity Series, Fort Worth, Texas (L)

SATURDAY, APRIL 11

2:30am NBCSN: FIA Formula 1 Chinese Grand Prix qualifying, Shanghai (L)
6:00pm ESPN2: NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing qualifying, Las Vegas, Nev. (SDD)
7:30pm FOX: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series, Fort Worth, Texas (L)

SUNDAY, APRIL 12

1:30am NBCSN: FIA Formula 1 Chinese Grand Prix, Shanghai (L)
1:00pm FS1: MotoGP Moto3, Circuit of The Americas, Austin, Texas (L)
2:00pm FS1: MotoGP, Moto2, Circuit of The Americas, Austin, Texas (L)
3:00pm FS1: MotoGP, Circuit of The Americas, Austin, Texas (L)
8:00pm ESPN2: NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing, Las Vegas, Nev. (SDD)

FRIDAY, APRIL 17

10:30am NBCSN: FIA Formula 1 Bahrain Grand Prix practice, Sakhir (L)
12:00pm FS1: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series practice, Bristol, Tenn. (L)
4:30pm FS1: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series qualifying, Bristol, Tenn. (L)

SATURDAY, APRIL 18

10:30am NBCSN: FIA Formula 1 Bahrain Grand Prix qualifying, Sakhir (L)
9:30am FS1: NASCAR Xfinity Series qualifying, Bristol, Tenn. (L)
11:30am FS1: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series final practice, Bristol, Tenn. (L)
1:30pm FS1: NASCAR Xfinity Series, Bristol, Tenn. (L)

SUNDAY, APRIL 19

10:30am NBCSN: FIA Formula 1 Bahrain Grand Prix, Sakhir (L)
12:30pm FS1: MotoGP, Argentina (L)
1:00pm FOX: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series, Bristol, Tenn. (L)

4:00pm FS1: IMSA TUDOR United SportsCar Championship, Long Beach, Calif. (D)
4:00pm NBCSN: Verizon IndyCar Series, Long Beach, Calif. (L)

FRIDAY, APRIL 24

11:00am FS1: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series practice, Richmond, Va. (L)
3:30pm FS1: NASCAR Xfinity Series qualifying, Richmond, Va. (L)
5:30pm FS1: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series qualifying, Richmond, Va. (L)
7:30pm FS1: NASCAR Xfinity Series, Richmond, Va. (L)

SATURDAY, APRIL 25

5:00pm ESPN2: NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing qualifying, Baytown, Texas (SDD)
7:00pm FOX: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series, Richmond, Va. (L)

SUNDAY, APRIL 26

2:00pm ESPN2: NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing, Baytown, Texas (SDD)
3:00pm NBCSN: Verizon IndyCar Series, Barber Motorsports Park, Birmingham, Ala. (L)
3:30pm CBSSN: Pirelli World Challenge GT, Long Beach, Calif. (D)

SATURDAY, MAY 2

10:00am FS1: NASCAR Xfinity Series qualifying, Talladega, Ala. (L)
12:00pm FS1: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series qualifying, Talladega, Ala. (L)

3:00pm FOX: NASCAR Xfinity Series, Talladega, Ala. (L)

SUNDAY, MAY 3

1:00pm FOX (May 3)
NASCAR Sprint Cup Series
Get your restrictor plate kicks again as the Cup stars hit the high banks of Talladega.



Nigel Kennealy/LAT

2:00pm CBSSN: Pirelli World Challenge GT, Birmingham, Ala. (D)
4:00pm FS1: IMSA TUDOR Championship, Monterey, Calif. (L)

FRIDAY, MAY 8

3:30pm FS1: NASCAR Camping World Truck Series qualifying, Kansas City, Kan. (L)
5:30pm FS1: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series qualifying, Kansas City, Kan. (L)
7:30am NBCSN: FIA Formula 1 Spanish Grand Prix qualifying, Barcelona (L)
8:30pm FS1: NASCAR Camping World Truck Series, Kansas City, Kan. (L)



Conor Daly is among 24 competitors in a TV reality show to race in this year's Le Mans 24 Hours. *Raceto24* will select a winner to co-drive a Morand Team SARD Morgan LMP2.

SATURDAY, MAY 9

7:30am NBCSN: FIA Formula 1 Spanish Grand Prix qualifying, Barcelona (L)

3:30pm ABC (May 9)
Grand Prix of Indianapolis
Take 2 for the IndyCar Series on the IMS road course gets the Month of May rolling.



7:30pm FS1: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series, Kansas City, Kan. (L)

SUNDAY, MAY 10

7:30am NBCSN: FIA Formula 1 Spanish Grand Prix, Barcelona (L)

FRIDAY, MAY 15

7:00pm FS1: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Sprint Showdown, Charlotte, N.C. (L)
8:30pm FS1: NASCAR Camping World Truck Series, Charlotte, N.C. (L)

SATURDAY, MAY 16

4:00pm ABC: Verizon IndyCar Series, Indy 500 qualifying, Indianapolis, Ind. (L)
6:00pm ESPN2: NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing qualifying, Atlanta, Ga. (SDD)
7:00pm FS1: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Sprint All-Star Race, Charlotte, N.C. (L)

SUNDAY, MAY 17

9:00 am FS1: IMSA Continental Tire Challenge, Monterey, Calif. (L)
1:00pm ABC: Verizon IndyCar Series, Indy 500 qualifying, Indianapolis, Ind. (L)
2:00pm FS1: NASCAR Xfinity Series, Newton, Iowa (L)
6:00pm ESPN2: NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing, Atlanta, Ga. (SDD)

CHANNEL GUIDE

ABC	ESPN on ABC
CBS/CBSSN	CBS/CBS Sports Network
CNBC	NBC Business News
NBC	NBC Universal
NBCSN	NBC Sports Network
ESPN	ESPN networks
ESPN-N	ESPN News
FOX	FOX Broadcast Network
FS1	FOX Sports 1 (formerly SPEED)
FS2	FOX Sports 2 (formerly FUEL)
TNT	Turner Network Television
VELOCITY	Velocity Channel
L	Live Program
R	Repeat Program
TBD	Start Time to Be Determined
D	Delayed from Earlier Day
SDD	Same Day, Delayed

All listings subject to change. Networks may broadcast programs at different times in different time zones. Check local listings.

ANNIVERSARIES

MAY BIRTHDAYS



AL UNSER

Tony Adamowicz, 5/2/41; John Barnard, 5/4/46; John Watson, 5/4/46; Hurley Haywood, 5/4/48; John Force, 5/4/49; Dave Steele, 5/7/74; Bobby Labonte, 5/8/64; **HELIO CASTRONEVES, 5/10/75**; Nick Heidfeld, 5/10/77; Pete Gibbons, 5/18/56; Heinz-Harald Frentzen, 5/18/67; Dario Franchitti, 5/19/73; Tony Stewart, 5/20/71; Danny Ongais, 5/21/42; Wally Dallenbach Jr., 5/23/63; Bryan Herta, 5/23/70; Rubens Barrichello, 5/23/72; Hannu Mikkola, 5/24/42; Chip Ganassi, 5/24/58; Ivan Capelli, 5/24/63; Sam Posey, 5/26/44; **AL UNSER, 5/29/39**; Ken Schrader, 5/29/55; Jack Baldwin, 5/31/48.



H. CASTRONEVES
b. 5/10/75

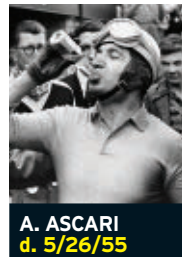
One of IndyCar's biggest stars hits the big 4-oh just ahead of his latest bid to join the exclusive club of four-time Indy 500 winners. Will this be the year Helio joins A.J. Foyt, Al Unser and Rick Mears atop the all-time Indy winner's list? Unser, another May birthday boy, is shown (LEFT) in car No. 25 avoiding chaos while on the way to his fourth win in 1987.

WE REMEMBER



DAVE MACDONALD

Ralph Hepburn, 05/16/48; **ALBERTO ASCARI, 5/26/55**; Bill Vukovich, 5/30/55; Alfonso de Portago, 5/12/57; Pat O'Connor, 5/30/58; Jerry Unser, 5/17/59; Harry Schell, 5/13/60; Tony Bettenhausen, 5/12/61; Fireball Roberts, 05/24/64; **DAVE MACDONALD** and Eddie Sachs, 5/30/64; Lorenzo Bandini, 5/10/67; Mike Spence, 5/7/68; Art Pollard, 5/12/73; Herbie Muller, 05/24/81; Gilles Villeneuve, 5/8/82; Gordon Smiley, 5/15/82; Henri Toivonen, 5/2/86; Elio de Angelis, 5/15/86; Jovy Marcelo, 5/15/92; Ayrton Senna, 5/1/94; Harry Hyde, 5/9/96; Scott Brayton, 5/17/96; Troy Ruttman, 5/19/97; Adam Petty, 5/12/00; Smokey Yunick, 5/9/01; Mike Agliardo, 5/20/01; Vittorio Brambilla, 5/26/01; Carroll Shelby, 5/10/12.



A. ASCARI
d. 5/26/55

Mario Andretti recalls how his earliest racing hero was Alberto Ascari - the second and (amazingly) last Italian national to reach the pinnacle of the sport. He scored Ferrari's first two World Championships, and his 13 grand prix wins in just 32 starts means he remains far and away Italy's most successful driver. Next up are Riccardo Patrese (6 wins) and Michele Alboreto (5), each of whom finished second in the points standings once.

MULTIMEDIA

THE RACER CHANNEL Robin Miller's Tough Guys



If you haven't been following Robin Miller's video salutes to the toughest veterans of Indy (ABOVE: Mel Kenyon in 1971), check out The RACER Channel on YouTube to see what you've been missing.

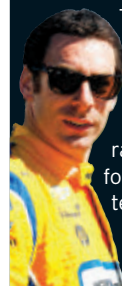
COOLEST PIT STOP EVER YouTube: Hackett & Williams Martini F1 commercial



New Williams F1 backer Hackett decked out the team's pit crew in its business suits for a practice pit stop in this TV commercial. It's weirdly watchable.

ON TWITTER

@SimonPagnaud is active on Twitter, and since this is his first year with Team Penske, with Chevrolet, with an aero kit, and racing the Indy 500 for a 15-time winning team, we suspect his "Wow!" factor will be entertainingly high.



RACER.com

As well as Robin Miller's Mailbag, Racer.com now features Marshall Pruett's answers to your tech questions. Write to PruettsTechMailbag@Racer.com

WHAT Sir Stirling Moss's breakout season
WHERE All across Europe
WHEN 1955



July 16, 1955:
Aintree, Great Britain.
From his first F1 pole,
Moss (No. 12) heads
for his first grand prix
victory. He would go
on to finish in the
top-three in the World
Championship for
seven straight years.

LAT archive

It's hard to describe 1955 as anything other than traumatic for motorsport fans. The fastest driver in an Indy car, Bill Vukovich (see sidebar, *right*) and the fastest driver in Formula 1, Alberto Ascari, were killed within four days of each other at the end of a hideous May. Then, just two weeks later, came the worst disaster in motorsport history, when Pierre Levegh's Mercedes 300SLR was launched into the crowd during the 24 Hours of Le Mans, killing the French veteran and 83 spectators.

That accident would trigger Switzerland into banning auto racing (a ban which stands to this day), and Spain, France and Germany temporarily followed suit. Then, at year's end, Mercedes-Benz would withdraw from racing for more than three decades.

On either side of this horrific two-week period, there was at least a glimmer of hope for racing's future: Mercedes had effectively relaunched the career of a 25-year-old racer named Stirling Moss. Chances are that his truly exceptional talent would eventually have been noticed, acquired and given a chance, but no question that it was from a silver



May 1, 1955: Mille Miglia. Moss revelled in the 300SLR's 290hp and gearing that allowed speeds of up to 175mph on public roads.



The man who gave Moss the faith to literally fly over blind crests was part-time navigator and full-time journalist Denis Jenkinson.

LAT archive

LAT archive

platform that European racing's new golden boy started shining brightly.

A fuel-feed problem with his W196 in the broiling heat of Argentina in January had ended Moss's Benz grand prix debut early, but by the second round of the F1 season (four months later!), Moss had become an M-B icon with his sports car victory in the Mille Miglia. Driving the mighty and sexy 300SLR, Stirling completed the 992-mile race - on public roads - at an average of 98.53mph!

Simultaneously, his F1 career gained momentum. At Monaco, Moss only retired from the lead when his engine expired, and at Spa and Zandvoort, he chased home his World Champion teammate Juan Manuel Fangio. Finally, at the British GP held at Aintree, Stirling became a grand prix winner. That was enough to earn him second in the World Championship behind Fangio, and he also scored two more huge sports car wins - the Tourist Trophy and the Targa Florio - to help the Three-Pointed Star clinch the Manufacturers' crown.

So although Mercedes-Benz uprooted and quit the sport at season's end, it had already laid the foundations for a legend. ■

INDY'S GREATEST DRIVER EVER

Bill Vukovich should have been the Indy 500's first four-time winner. In the four races between 1952 and '55, "Vuky" led 485 of the 647 laps he completed. He won twice ('53 and '54) and was dominating the '55 race when three backmarkers tangled ahead, launching his Kurtis out of the track. He was killed on landing. Eventual winner Bob Sweikert (BELOW) survived one more year before dying in a sprint car crash.



LAT archive



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POWER COUPLE.

THE BMW M3 AND M4.

The BMW M3's and BMW M4's use of weight-reducing carbon fiber enables their TwinPower Turbo engine to take you from 0 to 60 in 3.9 exhilarating seconds! Their provocative lines drop jaws, and their supreme handling turns curves into straightaways.

¹Acceleration claim based on BMW AG test results for the BMW M3 and BMW M4.
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