

F1 We talk to
the unluckiest
driver of 2018

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LE MANS 24 HOURS
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AUTOSPORT

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JUNE 7 2018

The new battle for Le Mans

Alonso and Button lead the
Formula 1 invasion of the
world's greatest race





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GEARING UP FOR LE MANS AND THE CANADIAN GP

Can Fernando Alonso win Le Mans? Will Toyota finally break its jinx in the 24 Hours? How will Jenson Button fare on his debut? These are just some of the key questions ahead of this year's endurance classic, which we preview in our special supplement this week ahead of the event on June 16-17.

As the only works team left in LMP1, Toyota is the favourite, but its incredible catalogue of near-misses at Le Mans is a reminder that nothing can be taken for granted in the infamous French enduro. And if Toyota does win, will Alonso be one of the drivers celebrating, leaving just the Indianapolis 500 on his triple crown list?

Le Mans has always been about variety of machinery, and the LMP2 and GTE classes look as strong as ever in 2018. Both are highly competitive, with top teams and drivers, so picking likely winners this year is even tougher than for outright honours.

In our preview, we also look back at how Jan Lammers saved Jaguar from a late disaster to secure a famous victory in 1988, pick out the greatest sportscar drivers never to win the 24 Hours, and present some of the best memories of the event you've sent to us.

Given his lack of luck so far this season, one driver who shouldn't be thinking about Le Mans just yet is Valtteri Bottas. In this issue, the Mercedes driver tells Edd Straw why his current 42-point deficit to team-mate Lewis Hamilton is not a fair reflection of his 2018 performances (see page 16). Bottas needs a change of luck, particularly this weekend in the Canadian Grand Prix at Montreal, where Hamilton has won six times and hasn't lost since Daniel Ricciardo's first Formula 1 victory in 2014.



Kevin Turner

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CONTENTS



COVER IMAGES

Jakob Ebrey

PIT+PADDOCK

- 4 Alonso tops Le Mans test
- 6 Porsche leads the way in GTE
- 8 Liberty: new tracks will promote passing
- 10 F2 boss answers new-car criticism
- 11 Canadian GP preview
- 13 In the paddock: Edd Straw
- 14 In the paddock: Adam Cooper
- 15 Feedback: your letters

INSIGHT

- 16 Bottas: the unluckiest driver of 2018?
- 22 How racing returned to Switzerland

RACE CENTRE

- 26 IndyCar: Dixon and Hunter-Reay strike
- 30 World of Sport: MotoGP; European F3; IMSA; NASCAR Cup; DTM; Blancpain Endurance

CLUB AUTOSPORT

- 48 Thruxton set for annual festival
- 50 More BTCC runners for TCR UK
- 53 Club column: Kevin Turner
- 54 National reports: Thruxton; Donington Park; Brands Hatch; Silverstone

FINISHING STRAIGHT

- 62 What's on this week
- 64 From the archive: 1980 Acropolis Rally
- 66 Pit your wits against our quiz

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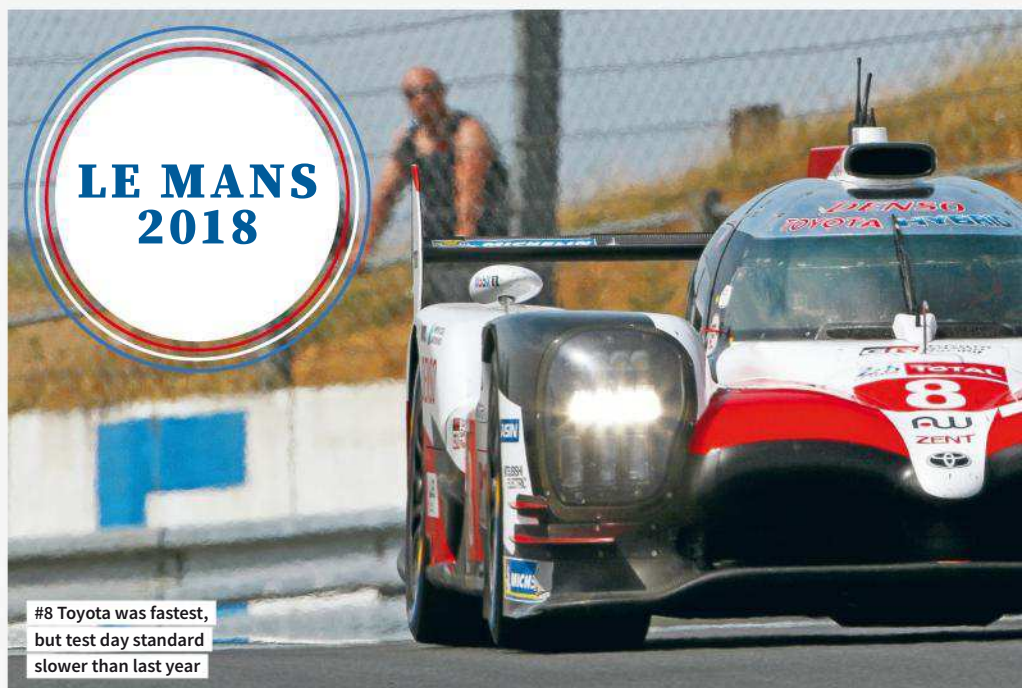
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FREE INSIDE

LE MANS SUPPLEMENT



All you need to know about this month's 86th running of the Le Mans 24 Hours, with a rundown of every car and driver.



#8 Toyota was fastest, but test day standard slower than last year

ALONSO AND TOYOTA TOP TEST, BUT REBELLION LOOMS

LE MANS TEST DAY

Toyota reckons it is going to have a fight on its hands at the Le Mans 24 Hours. That was its conclusion after the best of the privateers edged closer during the official pre-race test last Sunday.

Le Mans debutant Fernando Alonso topped the times over the course of the day in his Toyota TS050 HYBRID, but the best of the non-hybrid privateer LMP1 cars was only six tenths away around the eight and a half miles of the Circuit de la Sarthe. That was close to the magic half-second advantage the rulemakers have given the one remaining manufacturer left in the premier class of the World Endurance Championship under the Equivalence of Technology.

Alonso posted a 3m19.066s to end up fastest, but Rebellion Racing wasn't far behind with the best of its eponymous Gibson-engined contenders. Mathias

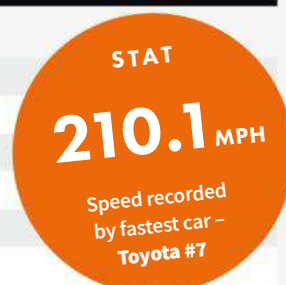
Beche ended up on a 3m19.680s in the #3 Rebellion-Gibson R-13. That put him three tenths ahead of Kamui Kobayashi in the second of the two TS050s.

Toyota Motorsport GmbH technical director Pascal Vasselon labelled Rebellion, as well as the SMP Racing squad, as "very serious competitors" after the test. It wasn't just the times they set – though SMP's pair of AER-powered BR Engineering BR1 chassis were more than two seconds off the pace in fifth and sixth positions – more the gains they had made since the opening round of the WEC at Spa early last month.

"They are coming strongly, so we cannot rest so much," said Vasselon. "What we are interested in is the progress, because obviously our new competitors are not stabilised in their performance development. We have seen very large progress for the Rebellion and even more for the SMP cars."

TEST TIMES LMP1

POS	DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Fernando Alonso	Toyota TS050 HYBRID	3m19.066s
2	Mathias Beche	Rebellion-Gibson R-13	3m19.680s
3	Kamui Kobayashi	Toyota TS050 HYBRID	3m20.008s
4	Andre Lotterer	Rebellion-Gibson R-13	3m21.344s
5	Vitaly Petrov	BRE-AER BR1	3m21.603s
6	Stephane Sarrazin	BRE-AER BR1	3m21.761s





Asked if he thought Toyota would have a fight on its hands in the race at Le Mans on June 16-17, Vasselon replied: "It looks like that. We are already pushing and we will try to find some extra tenths."

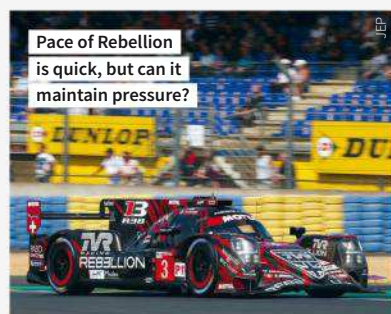
But Rebellion wasn't getting too excited about its performance. Team boss Bart Hayden reckoned the R-13 was where it should have been, though he wasn't quite sure if Toyota had shown its hand. The Japanese manufacturer didn't go for a time in the same way as last year.

There were no qualification simulations from Toyota on the test day this time around, which explained why it ended up slower than 12 months ago, but Vasselon explained that the race pace of the TS050s had improved.

Hayden pointed out that half a second per lap multiplied by more than 300 laps would still result in a deficit of somewhere approaching a lap. And that's before the gains Toyota will make by stopping for fuel less frequently and by spending less time in the pits are factored in.

"I wouldn't say we are hopeful of being able to race the Toyotas," he said, "but we are encouraged."

GARY WATKINS



BRE compromised on aero

LMP1

The aerodynamic revisions made to the BR Engineering BR1 after one of the cars run by SMP Racing took off in the closing stages of the Spa World Endurance Championship round last month have blunted its performance for Le Mans.

The front-wheelarch openings, one of the key weapons in stopping 'blowovers' since 2001, have been increased in size and more downforce added to the car. This has created a shift in the centre of aerodynamic pressure towards the front of the LMP1 machine.

Dallara, which developed the BR1 for the Russian group, revealed that the changes inevitably came with a performance penalty. "We will have more downforce than planned," said Luca Pignacca, head of the design office. "Unfortunately that means we will lose some performance here at Le Mans."

SMP and its race team, ART Grand Prix, believe there will be benefits for the race, however. "We have lost performance, but gained consistency," said ART technical director Gaetan Jegou. "That's important for the race because our target is to finish."

The Italian constructor and BRE undertook the modifications in consultation with the FIA and the Automobile Club de l'Ouest. The rulemakers also required the P1 runners to supply more information about aerodynamic loads on the cars in the wake of the accident in which SMP's Matevos Isaakyan took off at Eau Rouge at Spa.

Teams had to open up more telemetry channels to race control during the test day to allow the loads to be monitored in real time, and were also required to supply

a file of additional information every two hours through the test.

That explained why the #5 Ginetta-Mecachrome G60-LT-P1 didn't set a time in the morning session. The Manor-run car wasn't equipped with a full set of the necessary sensors, which meant it couldn't run until the sister car had completed 15 laps. The #6 car was also late on track courtesy of what Ginetta and the team called a "paperwork problem".

The Ginettas ended up just behind the fastest LMP2 cars. The best from the car, set by Oliver Rowland in the afternoon, was eight and a half seconds off the pace, but the British constructor pointed out that there is more to come from its largely untested contender. The car didn't run in its definitive low-downforce configuration for Le Mans and had significantly more downforce than was optimal.

The Ginettas still completed more laps than the DragonSpeed customer BRE, which is powered by the same Gibson V8 as the Rebellion. The car had been built up around a new monocoque in the wake of Pietro Fittipaldi's accident at Spa, and hadn't turned a wheel before the test.

GARY WATKINS



It's Bell and Ickx! Bruni 911 was second in Rothmans colours, one of two retro liveries Porsche has produced for the 24 Hours



Porsche and Ford leave the rest trailing

GTE PRO

Porsche and Ford dominated the timesheets in GTE Pro. There's nothing new in that. The two manufacturers that led the way at the official pre-season World Endurance Championship test at Paul Ricard in April, and then at the Spa season opener, took the top seven spots at the end of the day.

Patrick Pilet jumped ahead of Gianmaria Bruni at the end of the afternoon as Porsche finished up first and second with one car each from the CORE Autosport IMSA operation and the Manthey-run WEC squad. The Frenchman's 3m52.551s edged out Le Mans returnee Bruni, driving one of two retro-livery 911 RSRs that Porsche is fielding at Le Mans, by just under a tenth.

Ford had blocked out the top four positions in the morning session, when

Andy Priaulx had led the way on a 3m53.008s in one of the British-run WEC entries. That mark still stood as the best by a Ford GT time at the end of the day, though Olivier Pla improved to within 0.05s of his team-mate's time in the second entry from the Silverstone-based squad.

Best of the rest in eighth position was the MTEK BMW M8 GTE in which Nicky Catsburg posted a 3m53.946s, the better part of a second and a half off the pace on the German manufacturer's return to Le Mans for the first time since 2011. The fastest Ferrari 488 GTE 'evo' and Chevrolet Corvette C7.R were a couple of tenths further back.

Aston Martin was nowhere once again on a day that it lost a chassis when Marco Sorensen crashed heavily at the first kink between Mulsanne and Indianapolis corners. The sister car ended up just

under five seconds off the pace.

The Balance of Performance for Le Mans, which is separate from the automatic system used in the rest of the WEC, remains a work in progress. It can change ahead of and even during race week.

Aston Martin Racing was confident that it would. It claimed that its times were pretty much as its simulations had predicted. AMR managing director John Gaw pointed out that the new Aston was competitive through the Porsche Curves, but was missing 10km/h in the speed traps.

"The ACO and the FIA know we are missing top speed, because it's the same as at Spa," he said. "They clearly wanted to see it again with the car in Le Mans configuration, so we are confident that there will be a change in time for the race."

GARY WATKINS

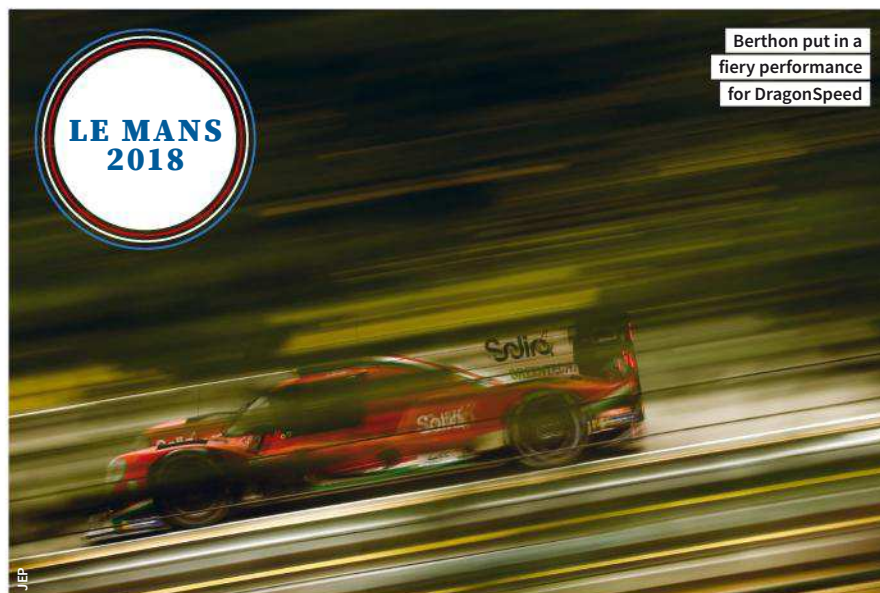
TEST TIMES GTE PRO

POS	DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Patrick Pilet	Porsche 911 RSR	3m52.551s
2	Gianmaria Bruni	Porsche 911 RSR	3m52.647s
3	Andy Priaulx	Ford GT	3m53.008s
4	Olivier Pla	Ford GT	3m53.052s
5	Dirk Muller	Ford GT	3m53.064s
6	Richard Westbrook	Ford GT	3m53.476s

STAT
33,723
Miles covered
in total by
60 cars

Priaulx car headed
the Ford flotilla
in third place





Michelin ORECAs on form

LMP2

ORECA predictably led the way in LMP2, but there was something unusual in the secondary prototype class at the test day. The tyres underneath the two 07s at the head of the times were Michelins rather than the Dunlops that have dominated the division for so long.

DragonSpeed ended up fastest with Nathanael Berthon, four tenths up on the IDEC Sport ORECA-Gibson 07 in which Paul-Loup Chatin set the best time.

The best Dunlop-shod entry, also an ORECA-Gibson 07, was the lead G-Drive entry run in conjunction with TDS Racing. Jean-Eric Vergne ended up almost exactly four tenths up on the next best Dunlop runner, Matthieu Vaxiviere in the 07 that TDS runs under its own flag.

Michelin has admitted that it is making a bit of push in the category this year, and its latest P2 tyres have shown form in both the WEC and the European Le Mans Series. The events of the Le Mans test day reinforced the suspicion that the French products have an advantage over one lap.

Ligier and Dallara, ORECA's only rivals in P2, ended up sixth and eighth. Both constructors have been allowed to make revisions to their aerodynamics for this year, but neither is convinced that it has been allowed to do enough to fully close the gap to the dominant marque in class.

Top time from a Ligier was from United Autosports' Filipe Albuquerque, 2.1s off Berthon. The best by a Dallara driver was by Le Mans debutant Felipe Nasr in Villorba Corse's entry, 2.7s off the pace.

GARY WATKINS

TEST TIMES LMP2

POS	DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Nathanael Berthon	DragonSpeed ORECA-Gibson 07	3m27.228s
2	Paul-Loup Chatin	IDEC Sport ORECA-Gibson 07	3m27.252s
3	Jean-Eric Vergne	G-Drive Racing ORECA-Gibson 07	3m28.394s
4	Matthieu Vaxiviere	TDS Racing ORECA-Gibson 07	3m28.795s
5	Nicolas Lapierre	Signatech Alpine Matmut ORECA-Gibson 07	3m29.205s
6	Filipe Albuquerque	United Autosports Ligier-Gibson JSP217	3m29.281s

TEST TIMES GTE AM

POS	DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Julien Andlauer	Dempsey-Proton Racing Porsche 911 RSR	3m55.970s
2	Giancarlo Fisichella	Spirit of Race (AF) Ferrari 488 GTE	3m56.269s
3	Matt Griffin	Clearwater Racing Ferrari 488 GTE	3m56.672s
4	Matteo Cairoli	Dempsey-Proton Racing Porsche 911 RSR	3m56.946s
5	Patrick Long	Proton Competition Porsche 911 RSR	3m57.515s
6	Jeroen Bleekemolen	Keating Motorsports (Risi) Ferrari 488 GTE	3m57.572s

IN THE HEADLINES

VAUTIER IS RESERVE...

Sometime IndyCar driver Tristan Vautier drove the Panis-Barthez Competition Ligier LMP2 car at the test day in a reserve capacity. The Frenchman, who has never contested the 24 Hours, completed the 10 laps necessary to go into race week.

...AND SO IS IMPERATORI

Alexandre Imperatori was fastest in LMP2 at the end of the morning session in G-Drive Racing's lead ORECA-Gibson 07 on a 3m30.176s. The Swiss driver is acting as reserve for the Russian entrant, which is also fielding a second ORECA in conjunction with the French Graff squad.

NEW CHASSIS FOR ASTON

Aston Martin Racing is rebuilding Marco Sorensen's crashed Vantage GTE around a new chassis for the race. The team opted to prepare an entirely new car for the race rather than bring its test machine into play.

AMR AM TRIO STYMIED

Aston Martin Racing drivers Pedro Lamy, Mathias Lauda and Paul Dalla Lana got off a bad start in their attempt to finally get a GTE Am class win at Le Mans to go with the WEC class title they won last year. They completed only 27 laps in the morning before an oil leak curtailed their day before the end of the morning session.

YELLOLY ON HAND

Monaco Porsche Supercup race winner Nick Yelloly was on hand at Le Mans as reserve driver for the GTE Am Project 1 Porsche, but didn't drive because the German team's 911 RSR completed limited running as a result of an incident while Jorg Bergmeister was at the wheel in the morning.

ANDLAUER TOPS CLASS

Porsche junior driver Julien Andlauer jumped to the top of the GTE Am times at the end of the day. The Frenchman, who experienced the full Le Mans circuit last year in the Carrera Cup support race ahead of the 24 Hours, posted a 3m55.970s in the #77 Dempsey-Proton Porsche 911 RSR (below) to knock Giancarlo Fisichella's Spirit of Race Ferrari 488 GTE off the top of the times by 0.3s.





Liberty boss says new tracks must encourage racing

FORMULA 1

Formula 1 chairman Chase Carey has made it clear that new grand prix venues will only earn their places on the calendar if they provide tracks good for racing.

Amid talk of new races in Miami and Vietnam, Carey has laid out the key criteria incoming circuits must meet as F1 moves away from the Bernie Ecclestone era's focus on high fees.

Carey also admitted that some of the championship's existing circuits need work to meet the standard for overtaking now being sought. "There are a handful of things that are important for us," said Carey, speaking at the FIA's Sport Conference in the Philippines on Monday.

"First, we want to make sure that it is great for a race. While we build all the things around it, it starts with having a track that provides a great race.

"Today, realistically, there are tracks that probably we need to work on that are not conducive to providing the most exciting and best racing. There are some that are fabulous.

"Second, we want a site that is going to capture the world's imagination. We are in the great cities around the world. We use the phrase 'destination cities'; and we are in places where when they [fans] look at it on TV, they are excited about it, think it looks spectacular, and that really

capture people's imagination. And if they go to it, it is even more special. We want those magical cities and magical countries that really intrigue and fascinate the world."

Carey's comments about tracks being suitable for racing comes amid intense criticism of the recent Monaco Grand Prix, which Fernando Alonso suggested may have been the most boring race ever. Liberty is working hard on changes to make F1 more exciting, with aero tweaks planned for 2019 and a more significant revamp on the cards for '21.

Carey emphasised that next year's changes would not solve all the problems. "Overtaking is clearly an issue, and we know the steps we are taking for 2019 with the FIA are not a cure-all, they are a step," he said. "We don't want to lose the aerodynamic aspects that make F1 racing so spectacular, but we do think we need to do things that enable overtaking to be a much more significant part of the sport.

"But it's not the only one. There are a lot of things we have under way that will bring a more competitive balance, more action on track, and in many ways more unpredictability. Predictability is not good in sports. You want the unexpected, the moments that you didn't see coming. You want the underdog winning."

**JAMES ALLEN &
JONATHAN NOBLE**

Mallya resigns, downplays sale

FORMULA 1

Force India boss Vijay Mallya has resigned as a director of the team and is expected to hand the board role to his son Siddharth, but he will remain the team principal of the Silverstone squad.

Mallya says he wants to focus on his own legal issues, and doesn't want them to impact the team.

Although best known as an actor and media personality, 31-year-old Mallya Jr has also worked in the family business and served as a director of the Royal Challengers Bangalore IPL cricket team.

"I continue as team principal," Mallya told Autosport. "There was no compulsion anywhere to resign, it's just that I decided that my son should replace me. I have my own legal issues to take care of, so it's better that the company remains unaffected."

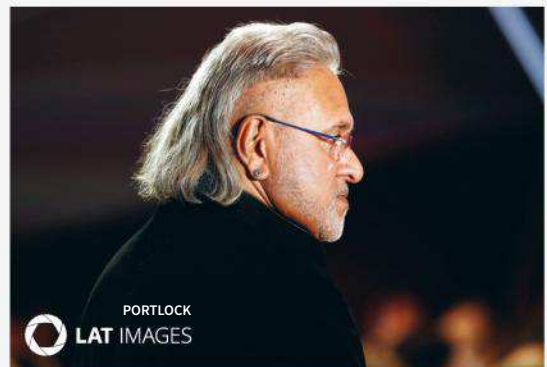
Mallya downplayed ongoing suggestions that the team is close to a sale. "Rumours keep going on and on and on, and people talk and talk and talk," he said. "That's what the F1 paddock is all about. The finances of Force India, whether I'm selling or not selling, have been a matter of speculation on and off for many years.

"We don't go around with a 'for sale' sign. The bottom line is that we are focusing on getting the best performance out of the car, and that is our priority. We're focusing on getting more sponsors. There are three shareholders, remember — I'm not the only one. If somebody comes along with a serious offer, and puts cash on the table, we will jointly consider it."

Mallya also denied rumours that Mercedes could strengthen its ties with Force India by extending the current cooperation on engines and gearbox and making it into a junior or B-team. "I have not had any discussions with Mercedes — they have not made any approach to us," he said. "This hasn't even featured in casual discussions."

Regarding this season's form he said: "We've not had the best of luck. Last year we had the good fortune of both cars finishing, and both in the points. This season for one reason or another both cars have not finished in the points yet. Hopefully that will get corrected as the season goes on. In terms of competitiveness and race pace this is evolving."

ADAM COOPER





PIKES PEAK Two-time Le Mans 24 Hours overall winner Romain Dumas tested Volkswagen's I.D. R at the Pikes Peak Hillclimb course for the first time last week. The Frenchman, who has already won the Colorado event three times, said the car's all-electric motor was the best thing he'd ever driven up the 12.42-mile course. Dumas will attack Rhys Millen's electric record of 8m51.118s and Sebastien Loeb's outright record of 8m13.878s in the June 24 event.

Old-school F3 plan takes step forward

FORMULA 3

The current Formula 3 cars are looking more likely to race on as part of the DTM undercard next season after positive developments at the Hungaroring round of the category's European championship.

The Euro F3 teams met last Saturday with DTM boss Gerhard Berger and F3V chief Walter Mertes – whose company is a subsidiary of the DTM-promoting ITR and has organised the FIA's F3 European Championship since 2013 – as well as engine suppliers Mercedes and Spiess. Autosport understands that Spiess is happy to continue supplying its F3 powerplants regardless of the pullout from customer motorsport programmes of Volkswagen, which currently badges the Spiess engine.

Both Berger and Mertes have expressed a wish to revive the name of the F3 Euro Series – which ran from 2003-12 before effectively becoming the FIA F3 European Championship – while the FIA introduces its new single-spec International F3 in 2019 as a replacement for GP3 on the Formula 1 support bill.

The prospect has taken a further step forward in the light of Germany's Formula 4 series continuing with its existing cars for 2019 rather than adopting a new chassis with a halo. The existing F3 would therefore not suffer from the image problem of being the only significant step on the single-seater ladder without the safety measure.

"I do everything for F3 if I can," Berger (right) told Autosport. "I just need to know that the teams want it. All that I have is a platform, and I love F3. You can see the way how I position them [in the paddock and the timetable] – it's always favourable because I think this is one of the cores of our business. It's where the young guys really develop themselves, so F3 is always going to have my support. If they would like something and they are looking to it, and I can help, I will do. Wally [Mertes] and myself are discussing it and we are fine to have them on our platform."

An announcement could be made as early as this month's Norisring round, with a hope for at least 18 cars on the grid should the series get the go-ahead.

MARCUS SIMMONS



IN THE HEADLINES

WILLIAMS AERO MAN OUT

Williams aero head Dirk de Beer is the latest technical man to leave the team after its poor start to the Formula 1 season. His departure follows that of chief designer Ed Wood at the start of May. Ex-McLaren aero chief Doug McKiernan has effectively assumed the outgoing duo's responsibilities.

INDY PACE CAR SHUNT

Last Sunday's second leg of the IndyCar Series double-header at Detroit Belle Isle was delayed when Mark Reuss, General Motors' executive vice-president of global product development, crashed the Corvette ZR1 pace car on the parade lap. Reuss was relieved of his duties and replaced by Oriol Servià. Chevrolet felt moved to put out a statement describing the incident as "unfortunate", to hilarity on social media.

FORTEC BACK IN F3

British team Fortec Motorsport featured on the F3 European Championship grid at the Hungaroring last weekend, its first race in the series since 2015. Romanian Petru Florescu, a graduate of Fortec's Euroformula Open team, raced the Dallara-Mercedes, which was shaken down in free practice. Florescu plans to complete the season and the team is hopeful of a second driver.

SLOVAKIA ON WTCR BILL

The Slovakia Ring has replaced Rio Hondo on this year's World Touring Car Cup calendar. Economic difficulties in Argentina forced the cancellation of the August date. The Slovakian event is due to take place on July 14-15, with the tin-tops sharing the bill with the European Truck Racing series.

COMINI IN TCR HONDA

Two-time TCR International champion Stefano Comini will contest the remainder of the TCR Europe season in a Honda Civic Type R. The Italo-Swiss will be run by Belgian team THX Racing.

ALPINE SERIES BEGINS

The Alpine Elf Europa Cup – a new series for A110 Cup cars – kicked off at Paul Ricard last weekend with a 16-car field. The races were won by Pierre Sancinena (a former French F4 rival of Pierre Gasly's) and Vincent Beltoise (nephew of Jean-Pierre). The series visits Silverstone on September 1-2.



F2 boss on new-car issues

FORMULA 2

The new Formula 2 car has produced exciting racing at the start of this year, but it has also been prone to reliability issues, and has been criticised by drivers for its tricky clutch. Autosport posed the questions everyone is asking to the man at the top: series boss Bruno Michel.

Some of the drivers have said that the reliability issues could influence the result of the championship. Do you think that's a big problem?

Number one, it's a brand new car and a brand new engine. We've been testing and developing the car quite a lot. We've been doing it with a development car over the winter and in all the official tests. Of course you learn more things when you do testing with 20 cars than you do with only one car. So I would say that it's quite natural that there are some technical gremlins to fix, little by little, and we've been working on it.

Can you give us details of the updates for the car in the near future?

We had a couple of issues, one pertaining to reliability and one pertaining to the start of the races of course. On both subjects, we have made a massive step. OK, we discovered in Bahrain that we had some issues. After that we made a massive step in Barcelona. We sorted 80 or 90% of the issues, and we have another step coming for Paul Ricard, where everything should be sorted on both of these issues.

Are the updates all likely to be related to software and ECU, or are there plans

to change any parts too?

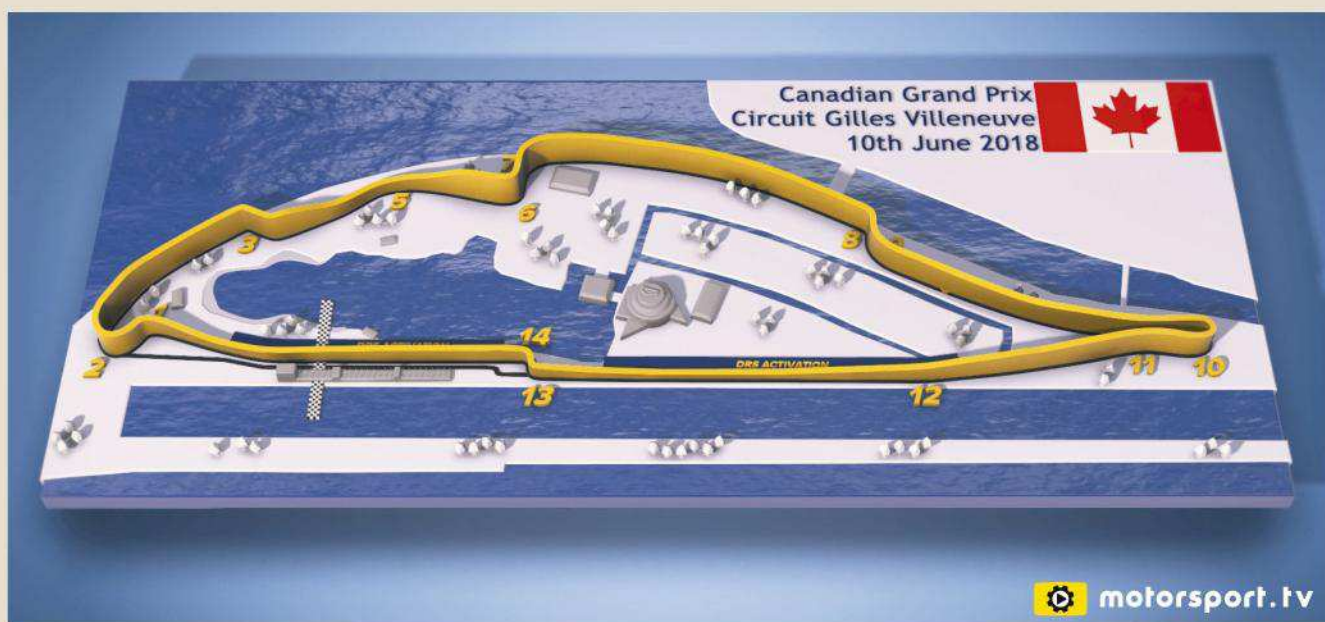
There are no parts changing because there are no issues with the parts. If you speak about the issues at the start, there are ways in which we are improving it. We are making some additional changes to the clutch control. So that's purely a software development. The other thing is we are already improving the engine management. The engine is very safe, but we still think that we can improve.

There are a lot of F2 drivers who have involvement with F1 teams at the moment. Does that show that the championship is the best place for F1 to pick its drivers from?

We are very happy about that because we need to always keep in mind the objective of F2, which is to send drivers to F1. There have been some years where it has been difficult to do it and there have been years where we have had two, three drivers [go to F1]. It also depends on what seats are available in F1. Having all these drivers being test or reserve drivers for F1 teams is fantastic for us. It is recognition of the level. The car for us is not only to produce good racing, but it is also a school for drivers going to F1. It's true that the drivers who have gone to F1 after that are always comfortable. And generally I think it's more difficult to drive in F2 than in F1. We don't have power-steering, electronic assistance. It's fantastic and they learn to work with the tyres too, which is awfully important. It shows the school we are providing works perfectly.

JACK BENYON

F1 CANADIAN GRAND PRIX PREVIEW



UK START TIMES

FRIDAY

FP1 1500 FP2 1900

SATURDAY

FP3 1600 QUALIFYING 1900

SUNDAY

RACE 1910

LIVE ON SKY SPORTS F1

CHANNEL 4 HIGHLIGHTS 2240

BBC RADIO 5 LIVE 1830

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP AND CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP SO FAR

1	Lewis Hamilton	110
2	Sebastian Vettel	96
3	Daniel Ricciardo	72
4	Valtteri Bottas	68
5	Kimi Raikkonen	60

1	Mercedes	178
2	Ferrari	156
3	Red Bull	107
4	Renault	46
5	McLaren	40

TYRE ALLOCATION



TRACK STATS

LENGTH 2.710 miles

NUMBER OF LAPS 70

2017 POLE POSITION

Lewis Hamilton 1m11.459s

POLE LAP RECORD

Lewis Hamilton 1m11.459s (2017)

RACE LAP RECORD

Rubens Barrichello 1m13.622s (2004)

PREVIOUS WINNERS

2017	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2016	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2015	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2014	Daniel Ricciardo	Red Bull
2013	Sebastian Vettel	Red Bull
2012	Lewis Hamilton	McLaren
2011	Jenson Button	McLaren
2010	Lewis Hamilton	McLaren
2008	Robert Kubica	BMW Sauber
2007	Lewis Hamilton	McLaren



It's 40 years since the first grand prix was held at Montreal. Jean-Pierre Jarier, replacing the late Ronnie Peterson at Lotus, scored pole position.

THEMES TO WATCH

HAMILTON'S MONTREAL FORM SECOND TO NONE

Lewis Hamilton hasn't had the smoothest start to the season, but Montreal is a happy hunting ground for him. He's won the last three Canadian GPs – among six over his career – and Mercedes power should tell on the high-speed circuit this weekend.

WHO RUNS RENAULT'S NEW ENGINE?

Renault will have an engine upgrade in Montreal, but has said it may not be the best for every team, "in particular Red Bull"... Daniel Ricciardo will struggle to repeat his Monaco success anyway, given he'll have a grid penalty thanks to his MGU-K failure in Monte Carlo.

MORE OVERTAKING AS THIRD DRS ZONE ADDED

After the confines of Monte Carlo, Montreal always promises more wheel-to-wheel racing and this year there could be even more. The FIA has added a third DRS zone, for the straight between the Turns 6/7 and 8/9 chicanes.



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RETURN OF THE HULK?

Nico Hulkenberg looked like a driver with a great future behind him, but at Renault he's now found a chance for redemption – will he take it?

EDD STRAW

“You’re only as sexy as your last race,” says Nico Hulkenberg when it’s put to him that he’s suddenly back in fashion in Formula 1. And he’s right. After all, he’s a driver who has played many roles since being signed as

Williams test driver back in 2007.

He’s been the hot-shot rising star, blazing a Lewis Hamilton-esque trail through the junior categories before becoming a rookie pole-winning sensation with Williams in 2010. Then he was on the bench as hard-done-by victim of the arrival of well-backed Pastor Maldonado. Then, as he moved into F1 middle age, he was seen more as a midfield journeyman whose chances had gone. Now, with re-emerging Renault, he is again making waves as one of the stars of F1’s ‘Class B’.

Hulkenberg feels like he’s been around forever, but he is still only 30 and his career has been revitalised thanks to a combination of F1’s major rules change in 2017 and the rise of Renault. Now, he could be back on a slowburn path to the top – and he’s comfortable with having to play the long game as Renault bids to fulfil its plan of becoming an F1 frontrunner.

Currently, the bare numbers favour the interpretation that

“HULKENBERG WILL HAVE TO KEEP DELIVERING TO STAY IN PEOPLE’S MINDS”

he’s just a good, but not brilliant, F1 driver hanging around and doing a decent job. He holds one of the harshest records in F1 – most starts without a podium finish, with 141. He shrugs it off, but that’s a record he’d love to hand back to old Force India stablemate Adrian Sutil, and one often used to write him off.

‘If he was that good, he’d have taken podium finishes’, is the reasoning. It’s true that Sergio Perez’s record of four third places during their time as Force India team-mates from 2014-16 tells us something. But it doesn’t tell us that Hulkenberg doesn’t have the pace to be a race-winning F1 driver.

Instead, that period exposes the limitations of a driver who had once been on the radar of Ferrari and the Enstone team in its previous guise as Lotus. It’s not that he was bad, far from it. But in the second half of 2014 Perez started to get the better of him, and in terms of pure results that continued in ’15 and ’16.

“There were characteristics in those cars, in ’14-’16, that

don’t really belong in Formula 1,” says Hulkenberg. “Those cars were not blessed with downforce – the pace was quite slow to start with in 2014. We’d lost a lot of downforce and you really had to drive very cautiously and gently, which goes against my nature.”

“So I had to adapt and relearn a little bit and figure it out. That’s why it’s fair to say now it’s definitely more fun. It’s more F1, and what F1 should be.”

Topline racing drivers need to adapt to the regulations in front of them, so you still can’t blame the rules for Hulkenberg going from looking like a potential superstar to merely a good performer. But like many of his peers, he was never entirely comfortable with the extent of management required in that era and has flourished since.

But like all fashions, Hulkenberg will have to keep delivering to stay in people’s minds. After strong finishes in the first three races of the year, during which he had a slight edge over highly rated team-mate Carlos Sainz Jr, he then had a rough spell.

In Baku he hit the wall while running fifth, behind Sainz. It’s the kind of mistake that has occasionally been seen before – specifically last year at the same track when he hit the inside barrier while running in the same position. That’s the kind of error that contributes to his reputation yo-yoing.

“It’s part of the business,” he says. “I’m not too bothered about that – I’m fully integrated at Renault and focused on this project. When you perform in a few races, the profile seems to go up, and then [when you don’t] not, but it’s about finding the consistency and a good place for yourself.”

Renault certainly is a good place for Hulkenberg. His best hope of getting the podiums and victories he could be capable of was, and still is, Renault getting to the front. To ensure he’s still there if and when Renault does that, he needs to keep performing. And that means, at the minimum, keeping on a par with Sainz.

While Sainz’s position remains uncertain as he’s still ‘on loan’ from Red Bull, should no opportunity open up there he will very likely be signed permanently by Renault. And if Enstone continues the progress it has made and can start to get close to the big three, a seat at Renault could become of more interest to proven race winners.

There are still questions for Hulkenberg to answer, not least that he can spearhead a top team – something several decision makers at the front of the F1 grid have not been confident of in the past.

But if he can stay with Renault long-term, and the French manufacturer makes good on its promise, he will finally have the chance to answer once and for all. 🍀



HARDEST CUTS

Liberty continues to discuss its plans for the future of F1 with the teams, with cost caps and staff cuts shaping up to be the most contentious issues

ADAM COOPER

Back in April in Bahrain, the Formula 1 teams learned about key aspects of Liberty's plans for the future, and in particular the financial side. It was clear that the rich would be getting poorer, and vice versa, leaving those walking

out of the gathering with distinctly mixed feelings.

As promised, discussions have subsequently continued on an individual basis. Chase Carey, Sean Bratches and Ross Brawn have been kept busy visiting team factories, and popping in and out of motorhomes. The general idea was to canvass unvarnished opinion on a one-to-one basis, without the posturing and parrying that inevitably goes on when bosses get together in group meetings. After six weeks of such interaction, there was a second Liberty presentation in Monaco, where a few more dots were joined, although there's a long way to go.

The two teams with the most to lose, and who are least happy with the direction taken on engines and finances, are Ferrari and Mercedes. Recently, they have largely kept their powder dry in public, and there have been no outbursts from Ferrari chairman and CEO Sergio Marchionne. However, they are still quietly pushing for what they want.

"FERRARI AND MERCEDES ARE THE TEAMS WITH MOST TO LOSE, AND WHO ARE LEAST HAPPY"

"Things are not going according to our requirements at the moment," admitted Mercedes chief Toto Wolff. "But it's a good process. We had a presentation in Bahrain that was to the point, we understood what Liberty's strategy was in relation to the most important topics, and we've had an update [in Monaco] on technical regulations, on their vision around the engine, on cost cap.

"I see some common sense on the table. It was a productive discussion. There are still areas where we are very far away, but it is moving forward in a constructive, structured process."

Crucially, Mercedes and Ferrari are no longer fighting the loss of the MGU-H, and are resigned to the fact that there will be some dumbing-down of technology. Still up for discussion are things such as restricting dyno time to cap development costs, and the number of power units allowed per year, which will certainly rise from the current level of three.

Engines aside, the major point of contention remains the cost cap, and specifically the impact that will have on staff levels for the major teams, who hitherto have been expanding on an annual basis.

It's a complex and contentious area. The FIA engaged former McLaren boss Martin Whitmarsh in a consultancy role, specifically to study this subject, and apparently it didn't go down well when he pointed out how difficult it was going to be to implement...

Discussions revolve around the timing of how downsizing would work — nobody expects teams to let go hundreds of people on December 31 2020.

"This was a very good point where Liberty recognised that a cost cap cannot be an event, but it needs to be a process," said Wolff. "It needs to go over several years, and it needs to consider the various structures that are being put in place. And they are taking our feedback on board. It is clear that we will all be protecting our structures in a way, and we have expressed that."

Red Bull is more on message with the cost cap, but the Milton Keynes team will still have to face some challenges. "I think, of course, there has to be an extremely responsible approach by the governing body and the commercial rights holder," said team boss Christian Horner. "Because certainly within the UK you are talking of potentially thousands of jobs, and if a local car plant closes shop it makes headline news at the moment.

"I think there's a social responsibility that needs to be taken into account when talking about restrictions and caps and so on."

Brawn believes that staff members dropped by the big players could find a home elsewhere as the smaller teams benefit from an improved financial situation. But it's not a given that smaller teams will increase headcounts. They may be better off, but they have to dig themselves out of debt before they undertake any major expansion. There's another question — would you automatically sign up the first staff members made redundant by a big team?

"I think Ross's point is reasonable," said Force India's Bob Fernley. "There will be some absorption, but it's the quality of people that you're absorbing that you've got to look at! It will depend what the market is at the time."

Meanwhile, the discussions continue. We can only hope that, in the end, we get the sport that we want, and that self-interest does not dominate, as it always has.

"We're all going to have to give up something to make it work," added Fernley. "Maybe we'll have to give up the glide path, and it's not as quick as we'd like it to be. The cost-cap principle they'll have to give up, because it's not where they want to be. So everybody's going to have to give and take a bit, to get it through." ❧

YOUR SAY

Monaco may be prestigious and it may present specific challenges to the drivers, but those are the tired excuses for a race that is hardly a race anymore

DAVID HOBBS

Monaco is well past its sell-by date

Even before Fernando Alonso's 'the most boring race ever' comment about the Monaco Grand Prix, I thought Edd Straw's column (May 24) ignored that fact that the overwhelming majority of fans watch grands prix on TV, so don't benefit from the 'close range' view he has.

Monaco may be prestigious and it may present specific challenges to the drivers, but those are the tired excuses for a race that is hardly a race anymore and, yes, by that I mean overtaking.

Monaco is part of a championship, it's meant to be competitive, and these days it just isn't. If Edd wants a 'celebration of driving', why don't we bring back the non-championship event, the Race of Champions, take it to Monaco and then he can celebrate all those moments of driver skills he wants?

David Hobbs

By email

Could a time-trial format work for F1?

After watching the Monaco GP and hearing how bored some of the more vocal drivers were, I came to the conclusion that a five-lap time trial between 20 drivers, at speeds and levels of commitment comparable to F1 practice, could be more exciting than the grand prix.

Say, a maximum of three cars on track at any one time, equally spaced around the circuit. Five laps of flat-out driving could be awesome.

Alan Bell

Lincoln

More tyre stops to spice up the show

After the drear-a-thon that was the Monaco GP, I am still unsure where the problem lies, but Formula 1 drivers pottering around so 'slowly' all Sunday afternoon is not a 'good show'...

Maybe we could extrapolate on Lewis Hamilton's suggestion that Monaco mandates a minimum of



two tyre stops; maybe insist on a minimum of two stops at all grands prix and the use of all three tyre compounds. This could be 'spiced up' by choosing the order of the compounds to be used by each driver on a random basis. The length of any stint would be free, but this should encourage (closer to) flat-out driving all race long.

Now that may mix up the racing and throw the teams a curveball, especially if the choice was only made one hour prior to the start. Of course, a wet race would throw this out, but who needs to spice up wet races anyway?!

Guy Dormehl

South Africa

Ricciardo's grin is infectious

It's always a pleasure to see Daniel Ricciardo on the F1 podium. Here's a driver who actually appears to thoroughly enjoy doing the best job in the world. If you check out some of the videos featuring him on YouTube, he never seems to be having anything less than an absolute blast. Such a contrast to others, who shall remain nameless...

Frances Stewart

London SE12

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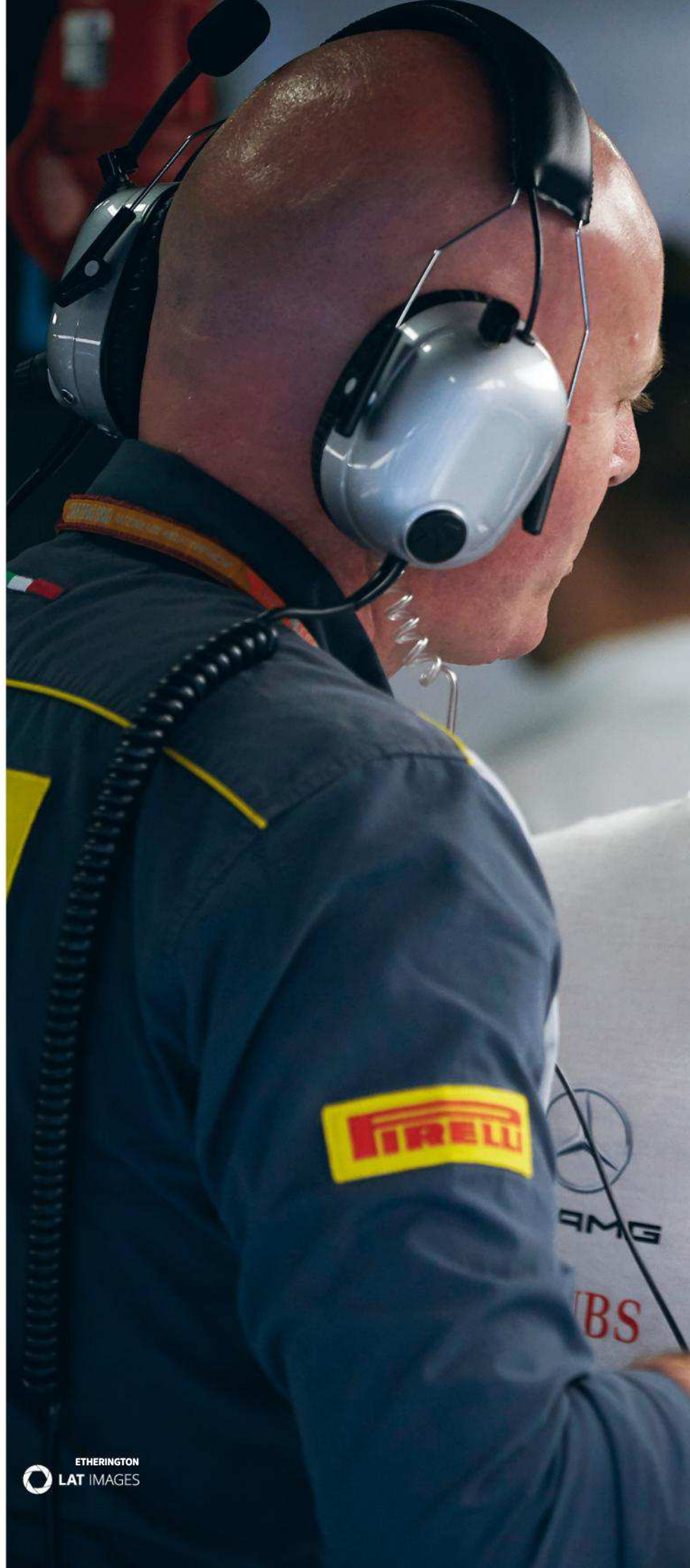

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VALTTERI BOTTAS • MOTOR RACING BACK IN SWITZERLAND





INTERVIEW

WHY BOTTAS IS THE UNLUCKIEST F1 DRIVER OF 2018

*The Finn's points tally does not reflect
how well he's been driving this year*

EDD STRAW

Circumstances outside of your control can relegate a moment of brilliance to nothing more than a footnote in history because it was all for nothing. Valtteri Bottas knows all about that, because that's been a big part of the story of his 2018 season. Take laps 19 and 20 of April's Chinese Grand Prix, when the 28-year-old nailed a good in-lap and a mighty out-lap too. Combined with a stunning 1.83-second pitstop from his Mercedes team, that effort helped him take the lead from Sebastian Vettel with a brilliantly executed undercut.

Had he gone on to win the race — and there's every chance he would have done — this would have rightly been hailed as a brilliant piece of driving in the vein of Michael Schumacher. As it was, the timing of the deployment of the safety car rendered it moot because the plaudits instead went the way of Daniel Ricciardo after his storming drive from sixth to first.

The points table never lies, goes the saying, but in Bottas's case the bare facts of his 2018 campaign misrepresent his performances. He came into this season under intense pressure to prove he deserves a long-term place among the elite drivers, having earned only a one-year deal to cover his second season with Mercedes, and a glance at the numbers doesn't look good.

Hamilton leads the championship with 110 points, while Bottas is fourth with 68. That represents a drop from 84% of his team-mate's total haul in 2017 to just 62%. Hamilton has two victories, Bottas none. And when it comes to qualifying, Hamilton is four-two up. On paper, that's not the form that would earn him a place at Mercedes for 2019, let alone the longer-term contract Bottas understandably says he wants.

Scratch beneath the surface and the reality is very different, with Bottas looking likely to book himself in for at least another year with Mercedes. The average qualifying gap between him and Hamilton is just five-hundredths of a second, compared to just under three-tenths last year, while Bottas lost likely victories in China and Azerbaijan (to a late-race puncture). Save for his costly accident during Q3 in Australia, when he touched the grass in the middle of the first right-left flick and spun into the wall before going on to finish eighth, Bottas has had a good year. And even that moment was unfortunate given that, at most tracks, it would not have been punished.

"It was a mistake and sometimes you go just a little bit wide onto the



GORIA/SUTTON IMAGES

runoff area and that's it," says Bottas. "This mistake cost us points, but it's just a mistake and those things happen, I accept it completely.

"Other than that, I've been happy with my performance and how things have been going for me. I always want to do better and it's a shame the points don't show it at the moment. I've not been the luckiest driver this year. It's a long season, so I just need to keep doing what I'm doing and it's going to get better."

What Bottas has been doing is raising his game. And it's not necessarily his peaks that are rising, because they were already pretty high. He instead focuses on eliminating the low points. With the exception of the Australia crash, his weakest performance was probably at Monaco, where he qualified 0.209s off Hamilton and ran fifth for the whole race — hardly a disaster.

"I continued where I finished the end of last year," says Bottas, who took two poles and a win in the final two grands prix in Brazil and Abu Dhabi. "When you start the second year with a team, it's a very different feeling and it makes it more straightforward. I've been able to focus on the weaknesses I've had and different issues I had in different races, whether it was my driving style or set-up direction, how I was managing the tyres — fine details here and there.

"The performance losses to Lewis last year sometimes were big, but I feel I've been able to be really close and this year sometimes I feel quicker — and that was the case at the end of last year. From every struggle I've had, I've always managed to figure out why I was slow and I've been able to change something about the way I drive or set up the car."

It's easy to underestimate just how big a deal it is to change teams, even if you don't do it as late as Bottas did ahead of the 2017 season following the shock retirement of world champion Nico Rosberg. Given the complexity of the current generation of F1 cars, even the best drivers are on a steep learning curve to adapt. Allowances must be made for a driver to make a step in their second year thanks to the ability to exploit the tiny details of set-up that vary from team to team and car to car.



Victory in Azerbaijan was lost thanks to late puncture

GALLOWAY/SUTTON IMAGES



"CHANGING TEAMS, THERE WAS A LOT OF INFORMATION, WHICH AT TIMES KIND OF OVERLOADED ME"

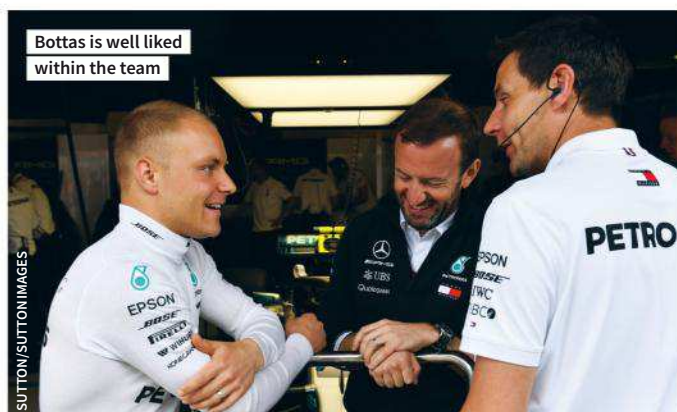


"Changing teams was a bit bigger than I expected," admits Bottas, who raced for Williams for four seasons before getting his big break. "If you change team, of course you can get it right and have a good race immediately, but in the long term you will see if you still have work to do. Getting all the new information when I changed teams, it was mid-January, and there was a lot of new information, which I think at some points kind of overloaded me.

"Some weekends, I struggled because I missed something with the set-up of the car, then I learned again. That process I felt drained a lot of energy out of me, especially that hectic beginning of the year. Things started to go well, then I had more difficult times and I honestly felt quite tired at times, especially towards the end of the year."

By way of example, take the rear differential. Countless adjustments can be made to the settings to influence the car dynamically over the lap.

"It's separated for corner entry, mid-corner and exit," says Bottas. "If I speak about the entry, we can open the diff early but we can also change



the shaping, how quickly it opens and how much it opens. The same for mid-corner, we can limit it if it's completely open or if there's a tiny bit of pressure, and at the exit how it reacts to when we get on the power, how quickly the diff locks again and the shaping of that. Every corner is different, every approach to the corner is different and that means the diff behaves differently. We are constantly tuning those, but that's only one of the set-up things we're trying.

"We have a lot more set-up options with the car than we had with Williams. For me to figure it out, how to set up the car and what is the best compromise and also how many changes you make during the lap, was the next level."

So on a technical level, Bottas's depth of understanding has grown, but he's also more secure in his needs within a top team. Having been thrown in alongside Hamilton, a driver on his way to a fourth world championship, inevitably the junior partner tended to follow the set-up direction. But he's become increasingly happy to go his own way. ➤

"WE WORKED OUT I NEED TO BE STRONGER ON WHAT I WANT WITH THE CAR AND NOT COPY LEWIS"



Finishing 2017 on a high with pole, fastest lap and victory in Abu Dhabi

ETHERINGTON
LAT IMAGES

THE DRIVER MARKET AT THE FRONT OF THE GRID

Valtteri Bottas is not the only driver in the big three teams whose future is uncertain; only two of the six seats are locked in for 2019 – Sebastian Vettel at Ferrari and Max Verstappen at Red Bull.

Lewis Hamilton said earlier this year that he anticipated having a new deal signed by the Australian Grand Prix. That's yet to happen, but the expectation is that a deal will be completed.

"There aren't any sticking points, there just hasn't been any rush," said Hamilton in Monaco last month. "There's no discussion with anybody else."

Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff is relatively relaxed – even if he would rest easier knowing that his star driving asset is locked in. "It's a funny situation because we have been discussing for a long

time," said Wolff. "We get together and sort things out and then get busy in our daily jobs. We have great confidence in each other, nobody is pressuring each other."

Daniel Ricciardo is also out of contract and hasn't been shy about inviting interest from Ferrari and Mercedes, but is widely expected to remain at Red Bull. Except in the unlikely event that Hamilton were to pitch a curveball and

leave Mercedes.

As for Ferrari, the Vettel/Kimi Raikkonen axis seems to suit all parties, especially as Raikkonen has performed consistently this season. Charles Leclerc is starring for Sauber, so it's not impossible he could be promoted to Ferrari in 2019, but the team has tended to be conservative in its driver choices and will likely give him another season to learn.



Bottas isn't alone at F1's sharp end in needing to nail down his future

“Towards the end of last year, we figured out that sometimes I need to be stronger on what I want with the car rather than always chasing the theoretical best set-up or copying Lewis’s set-up,” says Bottas. “This year, we’ve always ended up a little bit different on the set-up, but I wouldn’t change it after the race because, for me, that was the better way to go.”

While Hamilton has a precise knack for rotating the rear of the car around the front end to perfection, this isn’t something Bottas excels at in the same way. But he has generally been stronger at low-grip tracks where the front end doesn’t allow so sharp a pivot. He deals well with a car with a little understeer, and at times last year was having to force the issue too much, leading to him working against the car.

Bottas himself points to Spa, the first race after the August break, as a weekend that showcased a weakness he had when it came to the way the tyres behaved. He wasn’t able to make the most of a car that needed to work in both the fast and the slower corners.

But the Belgian Grand Prix is also important because it was ahead of this race that Mercedes is known to have switched its focus to Hamilton’s title hopes, despite Bottas only being 19 points behind. Bottas will not be drawn on this, but when he was told about this, his performances dropped. In the six races from Belgium through to the United States GP, even disregarding Monza where he was 2.279s off Hamilton in wet conditions, the average qualifying gap was half a second.

Perhaps what’s most impressive about Bottas is that he’s shown the mental fortitude to recover from that difficult phase during the second half of last season. When he crashed in Australia, team boss Toto Wolff, who was part of Bottas’s management team before stepping down when Mercedes signed the Finn, warned that a driver suffering such a setback at the start of a crucial season could struggle to battle back. Yet in the next race in Bahrain, Bottas led the line for Mercedes and finished second.

Bottas is often able to get more out of the car when it’s at its worst, but there are still a few question marks about whether he can reach the same peaks as his team-mate. After all, that bad run last season coincided with Hamilton being on the crest of a wave.

“That depends on the situation,” he says of his ability to outperform Hamilton when Mercedes is struggling. “Lewis is also very good in terms of managing a difficult car sometimes, and sometimes I feel I am. There were many races last year when I felt the car was really tricky and Lewis



was complaining as well, but then he could pull a really good qualifying lap out of it. It depends on the kind of issues we have. We do have slightly different driving styles; sometimes I can drive around it, sometimes he can, especially with the quite difficult car we have had this year.”

One question hanging over Bottas remains his killer instinct. After the Bahrain Grand Prix, where he had a chance to launch an admittedly aggressive move on Vettel on the last lap to win, there were legitimate questions about whether he should have forced the issue. That’s fair enough, given the need to find that sharp edge is something that’s been open to question at Mercedes and Williams. Then again, were he to have clattered into Vettel as Max Verstappen did in the next race in China, what would we be saying about Bottas then?

Mercedes will not be in any hurry to re-sign Bottas. First, it must complete its deal to keep Hamilton, something both sides have indicated should happen but has yet to be completed. Were Hamilton not to commit for the long term, or Mercedes feels it needs a cast-iron world championship winner as insurance in case he walks away after only another year, then a driver such as Daniel Ricciardo might appeal.

But after three intense years of intra-team warfare between Hamilton and Rosberg, Mercedes is clearly enjoying running two drivers who don’t attempt to wage psychological warfare. Bottas is well-liked in the team, and if his performances continue at this level then there’s no reason not to keep him.

“At the moment, I feel good and I’ve no reason why I can’t perform like this or even better for the rest of the year,” says Bottas.

If he does so, then there’s no reason why he wouldn’t get the chance to extend his stay at F1’s pre-eminent team. After all, the only thing he’s lacked this year has been good luck — or should that be the absence of bad luck that would have allowed him to add to his three grand prix victories. ❧





HOW MOTOR RACING IS RETURNING TO SWITZERLAND

More than six decades after it was banned in the country, motor racing is back in Switzerland – thanks to Formula E

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

After a 64-year gap, motor racing is returning to Switzerland. This weekend's Zurich E-Prix will be the first closed-circuit motorsport event to take place in the country since the Swiss government banned racing following the 1955 Le Mans disaster, in which more than 80 spectators died.

The most recent world-championship circuit event (hillclimbs have been allowed in the intervening years) remains the 1954 Swiss Grand Prix at Bremgarten. But that's about to change.

Formula E has been leading the charge to bring motor racing back to the country. In March 2015, former Andretti FE driver Simona de Silvestro drove the electric championship's demonstration car on the streets of Geneva, and later that month the law banning motor racing was relaxed. In the wake of that development, a Swiss E-Prix was announced for the city of Lugano, with mayor Marco Borradori agreeing an exclusive deal with FE CEO Alejandro Agag to stage the event, subject to the organisers raising €10million. The Lugano bid faltered, with Zurich stepping up as the next potential candidate.

The end of motor racing's six-decade absence from Switzerland was finally confirmed last autumn by the FIA's World Motor Sport Council.

Agag acknowledges the part that Swiss politicians played in changing the law – the race's promoter and organiser, Swiss ePrix Operations AG, calls Zurich councillor Roger Tognella the "initiator of the idea to bring Formula E to Zurich" – but also credits the number of FE sponsors that are based in the country, in particular watch manufacturer TAG Heuer.

"Effectively the first one who brought us to Switzerland was Jean-Claude Biver, the CEO of TAG, which is one of our founding partners," says Agag. "Of course having TAG, Julius Baer and ABB [FE partner and title sponsor respectively] in Switzerland counts a lot – but it was Jean-Claude who started hinting at the possibility of changing the law and doing this."

Swiss ePrix Operations was established last year by Pascal Derron, who joined the Zurich project "about eight months ago". The race is privately financed, with the city not bearing any of the costs arising from the racing, according to the organisers. But in order to get permission to host the event, Derron had to enter into negotiations with the office of mayor Corine Mauch.

"First of all you have to get the permit [from the city], which is very important," he says. "Then you have to get the licence, which is not so difficult because Formula E wanted to come to >>>



Swiss Grand Prix was held at Bremgarten from 1934-39 and '51-54

"IT WAS TAG HEUER BOSS JEAN-CLAUDE BIVER WHO FIRST HINTED ABOUT CHANGING THE LAW"



Formula E has close ties with Swiss businesses

Zurich. And then the last thing you need to get is the finance.

"After I got the permit, I had to submit a bank guarantee – a couple of million – which I, as a private person, obviously don't have. But then I found investors and all kinds of support to put the finance together, and then I went to Alberto [Longo, FE deputy CEO] and said, 'Let's do the race in Zurich.'"

As well as conducting negotiations with politicians, Derron had to make sure that Zurich's infrastructure services were happy for the race to go ahead.

"We went to the ambulance, the firefighters, the police – we all showed them our concept," he explains. "Everyone gave us feedback, so we corrected everything in the plans, circled back until the police said, 'From our side, now it's actually fine.'"

FE has broken new ground before – its London and New York events beat any of the long-desired Formula 1 races in those iconic locations – but Agag sees the Zurich race as an important development for the electric series precisely because motor racing had been banned for so long.

"For me," he says, "going to Switzerland is a great symbol of how Formula E is changing things because in a country where racing was banned, now there is going to be racing."

"I think it's good for motorsport in general that we open new countries – especially somewhere like Switzerland, which has so much potential and so many companies that can support motorsport. We have Sebastien Buemi and many other drivers from Switzerland, so I think it's a perfect place for us to race."

"To be honest, we didn't really do it ourselves – it kind of happened in Switzerland on its own. So we just waited – they wanted to do it. Some members of parliament had the initiative of pushing forward with this."

Buemi, the 2015-16 FE champion, who has racked up 12 race wins in the series – the most of any driver – is "very much" looking forward to his first-ever home race. Hailing from Aigle, Buemi has experienced the challenge of prevailing in a sport that he could not practise in his own country (see page 25). As well as the race itself, Buemi is pleased by the number of Swiss companies that have invested in FE.

Should he win in front of his home fans, it will mark an entire calendar year since Buemi and his Renault e.dams squad's last FE victory, which only came in the second race at Berlin due to a time penalty for on-the-road winner Felix Rosenqvist.

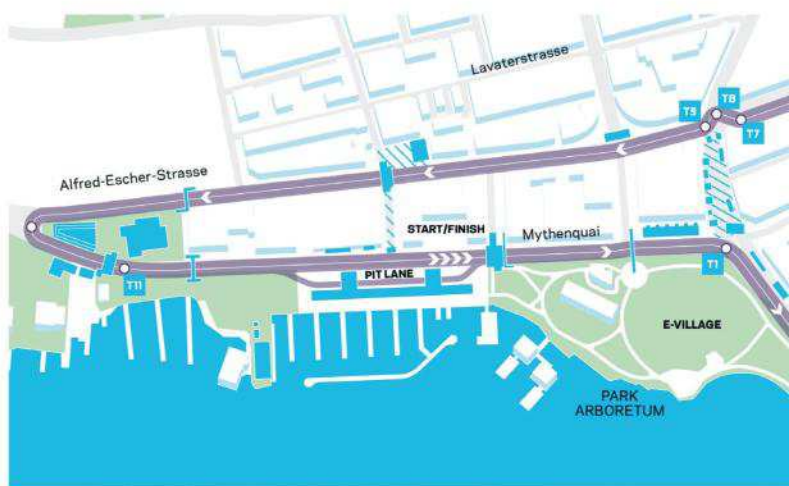
"We've always said that Switzerland is not really



Derron has secured a nine-year licence to stage the event

JANKELLER

"ON A LAKE IT'S HARD TO GET THE ELEVATION CHANGE. ON THE OTHER HAND WE HAVE A VERY NICE VIEW"



100,000-plus crowd is expected for new lakeside venue (above)

helping its drivers, but now if you look at all the sponsors we have in FE, most of them are Swiss," Buemi says. "So it does feel good to see that, because in the past they were not really helping drivers or even championships. I can't wait for Zurich."

The race will take place in the Enge area of the city's second district, with the pits and start/finish line set up opposite Enge harbour on the shores of Lake Zurich. The circuit has just 11 corners, with long main and back straights making up most of the 2.46km (1.53-mile) course, following a first half containing several point-and-squirt segments and 90-degree turns in classic FE style, but this should make for overtaking opportunities at the Turn 10 hairpin.

"I've walked it – we've had a few marketing things around the track – it's definitely the right location," says Buemi. "The track itself is not bad – a few of the corners look the same – but I'm looking forward to driving the shakedown just to see for sure. It's going to be cool."

FE's most recent new location was Rome, three races ago, which garnered a lot of praise for its track layout. One of the most popular aspects of that venue was the elevation changes provided by Rome's undulating topography, something Derron laments that Zurich does not possess.

"Zurich has almost everything that is needed," he says. "You have long straights, two high-speed areas and one hairpin, which is going to be great for racing. The main thing that's missing is the elevation – that would be nice, going up and down – but on a lake it is very difficult to get the elevation change. But on the other side we have a nice view, so the track is actually very attractive."

Unusually for FE, the Zurich race will take place on Sunday. This was at the request of the local organisers to minimise disruption to the city, as ePrix events involve a pre-race-day shakedown that often means another day of street closures. The race start time is also later than normal, with an 1804 slot to avoid clashing with the French Open tennis finals.

Derron has secured a nine-year licence from FE to host the race, and the current arrangement with Zurich officials is for two years, with "not an option, but kind of, if there is an interest in extending it".

"But they already say that they want to do it," Derron continues. "I mean, all the construction they are doing. They are building streets now for the removal of traffic islands – that's long term."

New FE races have not always been universally welcomed by the local population – particularly in London and more recently in Chilean capital Santiago. Agag says that "over 100,000 people" are expected to attend the inaugural Zurich race, and Derron believes the event has already had "a huge positive impact".

"Obviously they are going to feel [the effects] because there it will be major work," says Derron, "and we tried to avoid work as best we can, and communicate with them and inform them very well, but in general the people like it."

But Agag adds that there are small tensions surrounding the size of the event. "People are very excited, but at the same time they're kind of cautious because they're expecting a big crowd," he says. "So they want to make sure everything is fine."

The Le Mans disaster lived long in Switzerland's memory. But come race day on Sunday, Derron doubts the tragedy will play on people's minds. "Everyone knows that times have changed," he says. "The pictures are not there anymore in their heads. They're not focusing too much on the accident."

Huge changes have taken place within motorsport since the last time a race took place in Switzerland. And with Formula E – and the electric-vehicle-based plans of the OEMs flocking to the series – the sport returns with its eyes fixed on its future. ❄



SWISS DRIVERS WHO FLEW DESPITE THE BAN



For a country that has not allowed motor-racing events for 64 years, Switzerland has produced some very successful drivers.

As well as being home to the Sauber Formula 1 team, 22 Swiss drivers have started a world championship grand prix, with two – Clay Regazzoni and Jo Siffert – scoring wins. Four Swiss drivers have won the Le Mans 24 Hours. Six Swiss drivers have competed in Formula E, with Sebastien Buemi comfortably topping the championship's win list.

But a lack of grassroots infrastructure is an obvious early stumbling block for aspiring Swiss racing drivers.

"It's actually quite tough," says Buemi. "We do have a good level in go-karts, but we have very few circuits so that means very early on you have to travel internationally and it's not easy for everyone."

"It's much easier [for young racers] to do a national championship than having to go directly outside when you are young and don't even know if you're going to be good or not."

"It requires lots of

commitments from your family. But from when you start to do single-seaters, as long as you have the backing, whether you are from Switzerland, Germany or France, I don't really see a big difference."

In Buemi's case, he was picked up by the Red Bull junior scheme when he was 14, and rose through the ranks to race for Toro Rosso in F1. He now combines his Renault e.dams FE commitments with a Toyota World Endurance Championship drive,

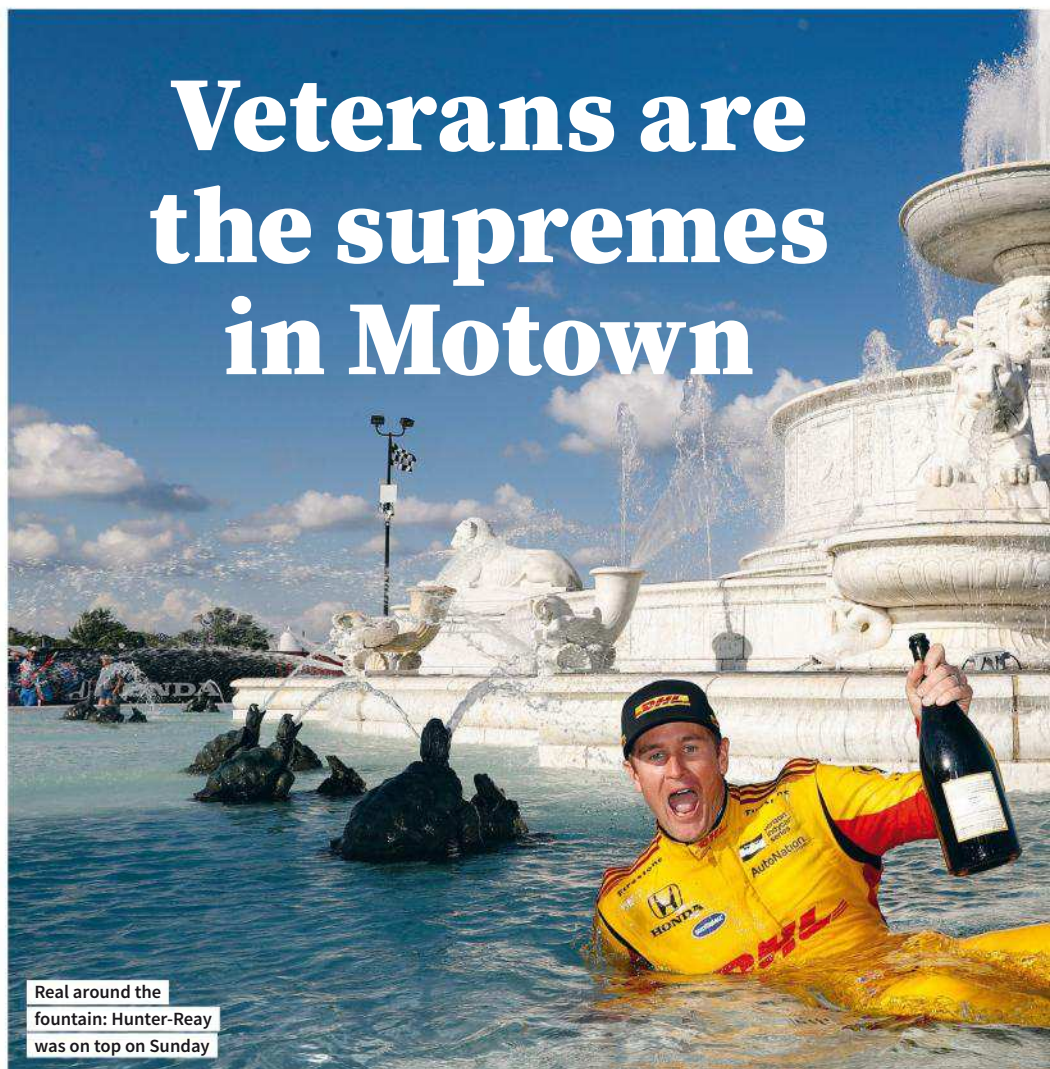
"IT'S QUITE TOUGH. VERY EARLY ON YOU HAVE TO TRAVEL INTERNATIONALLY"

winning that title alongside Anthony Davidson in 2014.

"To be honest, I was lucky enough to have Red Bull on my side from very early on," he explains. "So [growing up in Switzerland] it didn't really make that big of a difference, because I had the backing and I could do the championships like everyone else."



Veterans are the supremes in Motown



Real around the fountain: Hunter-Reay was on top on Sunday

Scott Dixon hadn't won for a long time; Ryan Hunter-Reay hadn't won for a very long time. Each of the IndyCar old guard ended their droughts in dramatic Detroit

DAVID MALSHER

Two of IndyCar's aces made their way back to the top step of the podium last weekend after too long away – far too long, in one case. Scott Dixon delivered Chip Ganassi Racing his (and the Honda-powered team's) first victory since last June at Road America.

The next day in this 'Dual in Detroit', Ryan Hunter-Reay earned his and the #28 Andretti Autosport crew's first victory since August 2015 – but it had greater significance even than that. After scoring two wins and a string of podiums since last July in Toronto, there was a feeling that Alexander Rossi had become AA's de facto team leader, a position Hunter-Reay has held since he joined the team eight long years ago. That impression was heightened when Rossi took pole in Sunday morning's wet qualifying session

as Hunter-Reay spun and lined up 10th.

Yet come the race, Hunter-Reay's flawlessness and ultra-fast pace enabled him to carry out his three-stop strategy to perfection, and he ultimately pressured erstwhile race leader Rossi into a major blunder with just a handful of laps to go.

The unique qualifying system for the Detroit double-headers sees the field divided in half with 12 minutes of track time apiece, and whichever group's leader is faster gets the 'odd' side of the grid, including pole. Marco Andretti was almost half a second quicker than his nearest rivals in Group 2, and 0.6 seconds quicker than Group 1 topper Dixon, earning himself his first pole since 2013.

Through the first stint of what was for them a two-stop race, Dixon stalked Andretti while saving fuel and looking after the red 'alternate'-compound tyres on which everyone



“If the Honda engine ideally suited Belle Isle, Chevy might have hoped for better than seventh”

Turn 7 runoff, Dixon and Rahal were called to the pits, to cover for the possibility of a full-course caution, not wishing to be stranded on track when the pitlane closed. While the Austrian struggled to extricate himself, the rest of the frontrunners also pitted. But then the yellows flew – Rahal had clipped the Turn 13 kerbing and been spat hard into the outside wall.

The restart that followed with 18 laps remaining featured Dixon chased by Hunter-Reay, Andretti, Rossi, the second Ganassi car of Ed Jones, RLLR man Takuma Sato and Team Penske’s Will Power. By the time the yellows flew again four laps later for Charlie Kimball punting debutant Santino Ferrucci into a tyre wall at high speed, Sato had got around Jones for fifth. The final restart gave Rossi the chance to pass Andretti around the outside of Turn 3 for third, but he had nothing for Hunter-Reay, who in turn couldn’t quite threaten Dixon, who won with relative ease.

If the Honda engine’s power curve was ideally suited for the Belle Isle course, still Chevrolet might have hoped for more than a best result of seventh (Power) on Saturday. Rain in qualifying for race two on Sunday morning gave the Bowtie drivers a chance to make up for their deficit, and Power responded in characteristic fashion with third on the grid behind only Rossi and the Honda-engined car of Schmidt Peterson Motorsports’ Robert Wickens, and just ahead of the Ganassi cars of Jones and Dixon. After battling hard to hold off Jones in the opening four corners, Power became a factor in the race, but would have no answer to the three-stopping Hunter-Reay.

There was an early caution when Spencer Pigot was struck by Ferrucci and spun and stalled. The restart was clean, the first >>

but last year’s Detroit dominator Graham Rahal had started. When Andretti stopped, Dixon gunned it hard in clean air, and slick pit work from the #9 crew saw him emerge comfortably ahead – albeit temporarily behind the three-stopping Hunter-Reay.

Dixon then spent his second stint pulling away from Rahal to the tune of 13s, while the Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing driver had to keep his eyes on his mirrors as the recently stopped Hunter-Reay drew nearer.

When rookie Rene Binder went down the

LESS TALK,
MORE POWER



Chevrolet IndyCar programme manager Rob Buckner told Autosport pre-season that orders had come from ‘on high’ to prioritise Indianapolis Motor Speedway and GM’s home track, Belle Isle in Detroit, when developing its 2018-spec engine.

Chevy was at a 6-5 disadvantage to Honda in terms of Motown wins since the Grand Prix was revived in 2012, its engine just not having a power curve quite compatible with the 2.35-mile 14-turn course. While Chevy engine builder Ilmor responded magnificently for the Indy 500 this year, its Detroit tally versus Honda is now 8-5, as for the second straight season Honda swept both races.

It was a walkover in race one, Honda runners occupying the top six places. Team Penske’s Will Power, showing no ill effects from his whirlwind media tour following his Indy triumph, was the best of the Chevy drivers in qualifying (sixth) and race (seventh) on Saturday. He felt he couldn’t have done much more; at the start of the race his engine hit the rev-limiter hard enough to trigger the spec ECU into burping an overboost penalty, which allowed both Rahal Letterman Lanigan Honda cars past him.

But having dropped from first to third in the championship behind Scott Dixon and Alexander Rossi, Power (above) fought back on Saturday. Again, he was Chevy’s top rep by qualifying third and, when Rossi made his late-race blunder, Power was able to take second, and go back to the top of the points table.

The contrast with his Penske teammates was striking. Josef Newgarden rose from 14th on the grid to finish ninth in the Saturday race, but a dearth of yellows on Sunday meant his strategist Tim Cindric had no room to pull a tricky strategy to help the reigning champion recover from his qualifying gaffe. Understeering into the tyre wall at Turn 11 and causing a red flag cost him his two best laps, which meant he started 19th. Simon Pagenaud was barely more visible, although on Sunday, happier with his car’s handling, he started eighth but fell to 10th at the finish.



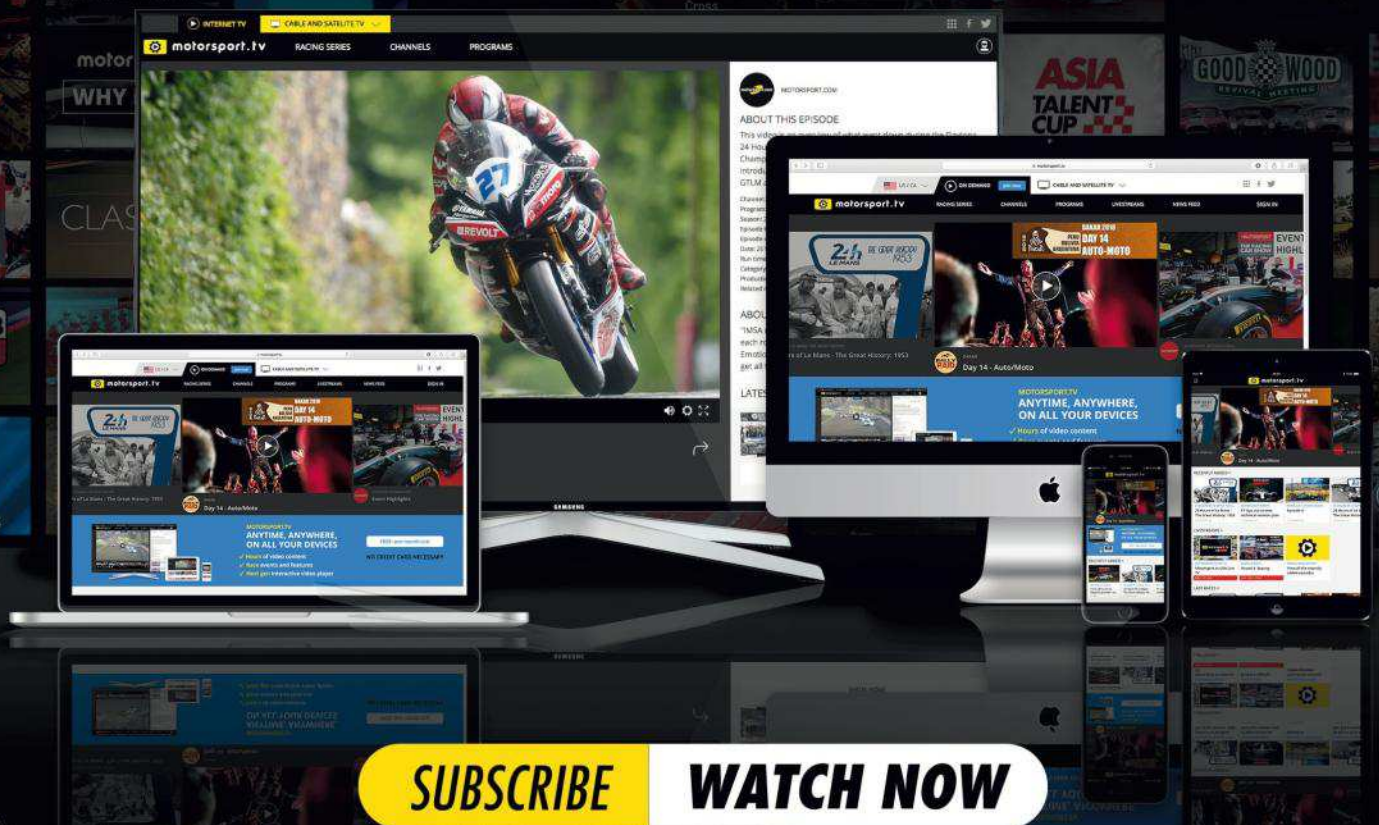


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significant change coming when Hunter-Reay made an exceptionally bold pass on Penske's Simon Pagenaud to grab 10th at Turn 1, although the #28 would make its first stop on lap 10 when RHR couldn't find a way past rookie team-mate Zach Veach.

Wickens had discovered he couldn't keep the reds under him, the same problem he suffered the day before, and he stopped early from second place, leaving Rossi with a 6.3s lead over Power. This pair, along with Dixon, Jones, Rahal and Sebastien Bourdais, would stop between laps 20 and 22, leaving the three-stoppers temporarily in control – Wickens and Hunter-Reay in close proximity out front and 6s ahead of Rossi. Wickens soon stopped again, and now Hunter-Reay had five laps on a clear track, setting some lightning-fast lap times before he made his next stop.

Up front, Rossi's lead over Power, which had stretched to 14s while the three-stoppers were in the mix, now started coming down rapidly, so that by the time this pair stopped, the Penske driver was a mere 5.1s behind the leader. But on rejoining the track, Rossi was able to stretch his advantage once more. Hunter-Reay's searing laps at the front meant that by the time he pitted and was served with an excellent 6.3s pitstop, he'd done enough to clear Power by 4s, and had a straight shot at Rossi.

Rossi set his fastest time yet with 16 laps to go, but Hunter-Reay trimmed the deficit, then demolished it. Rossi was told over the radio by team manager Rob Edwards to think big-picture, but Rossi wanted to fight and, ultimately, it cost him. With Hunter-Reay under his rear wing with seven laps to go, Rossi locked up his left-front as they braked from 170mph for Turn 3. A lap later at the same spot, Rossi locked both fronts and skated down the escape road. He'd limp to the pits with shredded fronts and finish 12th.

Hunter-Reay reeled off the remaining laps without problem, beating Power to the flag by more than 11s, as the Aussie reclaimed the points lead with his second place ahead of Jones, Dixon, Rahal and Wickens. Bourdais, who had reached his position of prominence after switching to the durable primary tyres after getting a puncture in his 'reds' on the opening lap, brushed a wall just past mid-distance. He damaged a toelink and looped into a spin at Turn 1, his race effectively over. 🚩



RESULTS ROUND 7/16, DETROIT BELLE ISLE (USA), JUNE 2-3 (70 LAPS – 164.500 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Scott Dixon (NZ)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	1h39m24.6189s
2	Ryan Hunter-Reay (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+1.8249s
3	Alexander Rossi (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+4.1771s
4	Marco Andretti (USA)	Andretti Herta Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+11.5191s
5	Takuma Sato (J)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+11.8757s
6	Ed Jones (UAE)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+13.7649s
7	Will Power (AUS)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+15.0733s
8	Robert Wickens (CDN)	Schmidt Peterson Motorsports / Dallara-Honda	+21.4715s
9	Josef Newgarden (USA)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+21.5622s
10	Spencer Pigot (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+21.9523s
11	James Hinchcliffe (CDN)	Schmidt Peterson Motorsports / Dallara-Honda	+22.3158s
12	Zach Veach (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+23.0621s
13	Sebastien Bourdais (F)	Dale Coyne Racing / Dallara-Honda	+23.3441s
14	Tony Kanaan (BR)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	+26.1877s
15	Matheus Leist (BR)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	+26.5471s
16	Jordan King (GB)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+27.0156s
17	Simon Pagenaud (F)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+29.8038s
18	Gabby Chaves (CO)	Harding Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+33.7246s
19	Charlie Kimball (USA)	Carlin / Dallara-Chevrolet	+34.0911s
20	Max Chilton (GB)	Carlin / Dallara-Chevrolet	+34.8584s
21	Rene Binder (A)	Juncos Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	-3 laps
22	Santino Ferrucci (USA)	Dale Coyne Racing / Dallara-Honda	55 laps-accident
23	Graham Rahal (USA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	45 laps-accident

Winner's average speed 99.285mph.

Fastest lap Hunter-Reay 1m15.8049s, 111.602mph.

QUALIFYING

GROUP 1 1 Andretti 1m14.8514s; 3 Wickens 1m15.3267s; 5 Hunter-Reay 1m15.3351s; 7 Sato 1m15.3920s; 9 Hinchcliffe 1m15.5402s; 11 Jones 1m15.8876s; 13 Pagenaud 1m16.0099s; 15 Kanaan 1m16.0740s; 17 Bourdais 1m16.2205s; 19 Chaves 1m16.2311s; 21 Leist 1m16.4182s; 23 Binder 1m18.6108s.
GROUP 2 2 Dixon 1m15.4186s; 4 Rossi 1m15.4946s; 6 Power 1m15.7210s; 8 Rahal 1m15.8273s; 10 Chilton 1m16.0396s; 12 Pigot 1m16.1430s; 14 Newgarden 1m16.1923s; 16 Veach 1m16.3157s; 18 Ferrucci 1m16.7531s; 20 King 1m16.9075s; 22 Kimball 1m17.2067s.

RACE 2 (70 LAPS – 164.500 MILES)

1 Hunter-Reay 1h33m50.5784s;
2 Power +11.3549s; **3 Jones** +13.2291s;
4 Dixon +13.7652s; **5 Rahal** +16.6280s;
6 Wickens +34.9398s; **7 Kanaan** +41.6328s; **8 Kimball** +47.3553s;
9 Andretti +56.6293s; **10 Pagenaud** +59.5891s; **11 Chilton** +1m04.6868s;
12 Rossi +1m06.6419s; **13 Veach** +1m07.6438s; **14 Leist** +1m11.6742s;
15 Newgarden +1m14.2820s; **16 Hinchcliffe** +1m17.3729s; **17 Sato** -1 lap; **18 King** -1 lap; **19 Chaves** -1 lap;
20 Ferrucci -1 lap; **21 Bourdais** -3 laps;
22 Binder -4 laps; **23 Pigot** 21 laps-mechanical.

Winner's average speed 105.176mph.

Fastest lap Hunter-Reay 1m15.0590s, 112.711mph.

QUALIFYING

GROUP 1 2 Wickens 1m33.6605s;

4 Jones 1m33.9256s; **6 Hinchcliffe** 1m34.1370s; **8 Pagenaud** 1m34.2315s;
10 Hunter-Reay 1m34.5021s;
12 Andretti 1m34.5475s; **14 Chaves** 1m35.6045s; **16 Bourdais** 1m35.6692s;
18 Leist 1m36.0439s; **20 Sato** 1m37.0851s; **22 Kanaan** no time;
23 Binder no time.
GROUP 2 1 Rossi 1m33.3143s;
3 Power 1m33.8295s; **5 Dixon** 1m33.9544s; **7 Veach** 1m34.6464s;
9 Rahal 1m35.0256s; **11 King** 1m35.1374s; **13 Ferrucci** 1m35.4664s;
15 Pigot 1m36.3713s; **17 Chilton** 1m36.9796s; **19 Newgarden** 1m38.3041s; **21 Kimball** 1m39.3597s.

CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Power 309;
2 Dixon 304; 3 Rossi 298; 4 Hunter-Reay 278; 5 Newgarden 270; 6 Wickens 232;
7 Rahal 221; 8 Andretti 197; 9 Bourdais 194; 10 Pagenaud 188.

WORLD OF SPORT

GOLD AND GOOSE
LAT IMAGES

Lorenzo wins for Ducati, but it's all too late

MOTOGP
MUGELLO (1)
JUNE 3
ROUND 6/19

There was an odd atmosphere at Mugello last weekend after Jorge Lorenzo took a long-awaited first MotoGP win with Ducati, at the 24th time of asking. It was a vintage Lorenzo performance, as the Spaniard grabbed the lead at the first corner and held on for the entire 23-lap distance. But it was a bittersweet victory, as it looks highly unlikely that Lorenzo will be part of the works Ducati line-up for 2019.

Instead, Danilo Petrucci looks set to line up alongside Andrea Dovizioso next season, after Ducati CEO Claudio Domenicali expressed regret following

the previous round at Le Mans that the Lorenzo gamble hadn't paid off.

On Thursday at Mugello, Lorenzo reminded Domenicali that he is not merely "a great rider" but a "champion" – and on Sunday he demonstrated exactly why he was able to rack up three titles and 44 wins on Yamaha machinery between 2008 and '16.

It was Lorenzo's old Yamaha team-mate Valentino Rossi who made the running during qualifying, grabbing his first MotoGP pole since October 2016 in front of his adoring public at the end of a thrilling pole shootout by just 0.035 seconds from Lorenzo.

But come race day, Lorenzo wrested immediate control, vaulting ahead of Rossi at the start. Two laps later, points leader Marc Marquez followed through

into second, after making what could charitably be described as a 'robust' pass on Petrucci at Turn 2.

Lorenzo's life was made rather easier on lap five, when Marquez lost the front end of his works Honda and crashed at the Scarperia right-hander. That elevated Rossi back into second, but he was soon passed by the second works Ducati of Dovizioso.

For a while, it looked like Dovizioso was well-placed to challenge his team-mate for a second consecutive Mugello win. But, unlike in the previous race at Le Mans, Lorenzo kept a constant pace and gradually eked out a gap as the contest entered its latter stages.

After the race, Lorenzo explained he was able to avoid a repeat of his descent down the order at Le Mans thanks to the arrival of a revised fuel tank that gave him more physical support aboard the Desmosedici, preventing a drop-off in stamina over the race distance.

It was a modification Lorenzo had been requesting for some time – but it appears to have come too late. "My future is already decided, and this result will not change it," said an emotional Lorenzo, who is likely to return to the Yamaha fold in 2019 on a satellite machine.

"A part of me is sad because I know that with this bike I could have fought to be world champion, which is why I came here. Now it's too late. There is nothing to be done. I kept telling people inside the team to believe in me, to bring me what I asked for. They have done it, but too late."



Rossi led pack chasing Lorenzo from start and held on for third

GOLD AND GOOSE
LAT IMAGES

GOLD AND GOOSE
LAT IMAGESLorenzo celebrates his
win for Ducati, which seems
set to replace him next year

Dovizioso clung to second place, six seconds down on Lorenzo at the chequered flag, after being caught by Rossi in the closing laps. Rossi managed to break free from a frenetic scrap late on against Petrucci's Pramac Ducati and the two Suzukis of Andrea Iannone and Alex Rins to take third, recording his third podium finish of 2018.

But, as Rossi admitted, the Yamaha still isn't ready to win again, with its pace in the second half of the race still not up to scratch. Maverick Vinales, who slumped to eighth from third on the grid, backed up his team-mate's assertion, while Le Mans poleman Johann Zarco also had a low-key run to 10th on the Tech3 bike.

After Marquez's early exit, top Honda rider at the finish was the LCR bike of Cal Crutchlow, who finished sixth, behind the two Suzukis and ahead of a fading Petrucci.

The other works Honda of Dani Pedrosa was an early casualty, the Spaniard crashing out on lap one – and taking Crutchlow's team-mate Takaaki Nakagami with him – after starting a dismal 20th on the grid, his worst-ever MotoGP starting spot.

Despite his crash, Marquez continues to lead the standings by a healthy 23 points, with Rossi taking over from Vinales as his closest pursuer.

You can't help but wonder where Lorenzo – the last person to take the crown other than Marquez – could be had Ducati been more responsive to his needs earlier in the season. It certainly wouldn't be a surprise if it was starting to have second thoughts about parting ways with him.

JAMIE KLEIN

RESULTS ROUND 6/19, MUGELLO (I), JUNE 3 (23 LAPS – 74.959 MILES)

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	Jorge Lorenzo (E)	Ducati	41m43.230s
2	Andrea Dovizioso (I)	Ducati	+6.370s
3	Valentino Rossi (I)	Yamaha	+6.629s
4	Andrea Iannone (I)	Suzuki	+7.885s
5	Alex Rins (E)	Suzuki	+7.907s
6	Cal Crutchlow (GB)	LCR Honda	+9.120s
7	Daniilo Petrucci (I)	Pramac Ducati	+10.898s
8	Maverick Vinales (E)	Yamaha	+11.060s
9	Alvaro Bautista (E)	Aspar Ducati	+11.154s
10	Johann Zarco (F)	Tech3 Yamaha	+17.644s
11	Pol Espargaro (E)	KTM	+20.256s
12	Hafiz Syahrin (MAL)	Tech3 Yamaha	+22.435s
13	Tito Rabat (E)	Avintia Ducati	+22.464s
14	Bradley Smith (GB)	KTM	+22.495s
15	Franco Morbidelli (I)	MarcVDS Honda	+26.644s
16	Marc Marquez (E)	Honda	+39.311s
17	Xavier Simeon (B)	Avintia Ducati	+1m01.211s
18	Takaaki Nakagami (J)	LCR Honda	-5 laps
R	Aleix Espargaro (E)	Aprilia	19 laps-rear tyre
R	Jack Miller (AUS)	Pramac Ducati	1 lap-accident
R	Thomas Luthi (CH)	MarcVDS Honda	1 lap-accident
R	Dani Pedrosa (E)	Honda	0 laps-accident
R	Karel Abraham (CZ)	Aspar Ducati	0 laps-accident
R	Scott Redding (GB)	Aprilia	0 laps-accident
NS	Michele Pirro (I)	Ducati	accident

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 107.801mph. **FASTEST LAP** Petrucci 1m48.001s, 108.635mph.

QUALIFYING 2 1 Rossi 1m46.208s; 2 Lorenzo 1m46.243s; 3 Vinales 1m46.304s; 4 Iannone 1m46.347s; 5 Petrucci 1m46.445s; 6 Marquez 1m46.454s; 7 Dovizioso 1m46.500s; 8 Crutchlow 1m46.813s; 9 Zarco 1m46.830s; 10 Rins 1m46.909s; 11 Miller 1m46.998s; 12 Morbidelli 1m47.002s.

QUALIFYING 1 1 Miller 1m46.771s; 2 Vinales 1m46.806s; 3 Rabat 1m46.908s; 4 Syahrin 1m47.188s; 5 P Espargaro 1m47.335s; 6 Bautista 1m47.708s; 7 Smith 1m47.818s; 8 Nakagami 1m47.868s; 9 Luthi 1m47.989s; 10 Pedrosa 1m48.065s; 11 A Espargaro 1m48.286s; 12 Abraham 1m48.532s; 13 Redding 1m48.744s; 14 Simeon 1m48.794s.

RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Marquez 95; 2 Rossi 72; 3 Vinales 67; 4 Dovizioso 66; 5 Zarco 64; 6 Petrucci 63; 7 Iannone 60; 8 Crutchlow 56; 9 Miller 49; 10 Lorenzo 41; 11 Rins 33; 12 Pedrosa 29; 13 Rabat 27; 14 P Espargaro 23; 15 Bautista 19; 16 Syahrin 17; 17 Morbidelli 17; 18 A Espargaro 13; 19 Nakagami 10; 20 Smith 7; 21 Mika Kallio 6; 22 Redding 5; 23 Abraham 1; 24 Luthi 0; 25 Simeon 0.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Honda 130; 2 Yamaha 108; 3 Ducati 107; 4 Suzuki 74; 5 KTM 24; 6 Aprilia 18.

WEEKEND
WINNERSMOTO2
MUGELLO

1 Miguel Oliveira
KTM
2 Lorenzo Baldassarri
Kalex
3 Joan Mir
Kalex

MOTO3
MUGELLO

1 Jorge Martin
Honda
2 Marco Bezzecchi
KTM
3 Fabio Di
Giannantonio
Honda

Moto2 winner
OliveiraGOLD AND GOOSE
LAT IMAGESMartin won
Moto3 raceGOLD AND GOOSE
LAT IMAGES

Ahmed double lifts him to the top



Ahmed leads Armstrong and the soon-to-retire Ticktum in second race

EUROPEAN FORMULA 3 HUNGARORING (H) JUNE 2-3 ROUND 2/10

Few expected Enaam Ahmed to be leading the Formula 3 European Championship after the opening pair of rounds. Least of all, it seems, the chirpy London lad himself. But after two victories at the Hungaroring – his pair of successes on Sunday also made him the first two-time winner of 2018 – that's exactly what he is doing.

His dominant BRDC British F3 season of 2017 notwithstanding, Ahmed by his own admission struggled when he began his winter testing programme with Hitech GP, and realisation dawned that he would have to work ultra-hard to get close to expected team leader Alex Palou. This he did, while Hitech seems to have developed a Dallara-Mercedes

that is ultra-forgiving. Ahmed, and even more so fellow BRDC British F3 graduate team-mate Ben Hingeley, both have spectacular, improvisational driving styles that bely the cliché that you have to corner on rails to be quick in F3. "I'm really aggressive with braking late, so I need an understeery car with the rear on the ground," admitted Ahmed. "I need a really stable car, while other F3 cars I drove don't suit me."

Of all the places you wouldn't expect this style to work, it's the Hungaroring, full as it is of long, medium-speed corners. But that Hitech car appears to have a very kind, large operating window that allows Ahmed to do his flamboyant stuff, while Palou, who's so precise you'd put money on him winning a contest of steering an F3 car around a 50p piece, prefers more front end on his chassis.

Ahmed did struggle with balance in Friday qualifying, and converted this into

seventh place in the opening race on Saturday morning – where his race pace was extremely good, and where his weekend changed. As he admitted, "since Friday I've been busting my balls to try to be quick here". A double pole was denied him in Saturday afternoon qualifying by Dan Ticktum, the winner of the opening race of the weekend stamping in a last-gasp session-topper, although on second-best times Ahmed grabbed pole for race three.

Ticktum bogged down from pole in race two, allowing Ahmed into an easy lead, while Marcus Armstrong also got past and into second place. Red Bull Junior Ticktum settled into third place, but a brakeline failure left him with no brakes on the left-rear on the fifth lap, and he was out. Meanwhile, Prema Powerteam starlet Armstrong was becoming familiar with the Hungaroring tradition of a pursuer's tyres falling away, meaning that once someone is out in front it becomes almost impossible to keep pace with them. "I was close to Enaam in the beginning," said the Ferrari-backed Kiwi, "and I was surprised how quick I was, but eventually I fell off a wee bit." Palou closed in on him a little, Armstrong's cause not helped by a floppy mirror.

This was the only race of the weekend where Ticktum and Armstrong didn't collide at Turn 1 – just as they did in the Pau finale. In the opener, Armstrong's magnificent start from fifth on the grid brought him level – on a track damp from earlier rain – with the McLaren Autosport BRDC Award winner. Armstrong had the inside line, but Ticktum's right-front wing snagged the



Ticktum's opening-race win put him temporarily into the series lead



left-rear tyre of the Prema machine, sending it to the pits with a puncture. Ticktum continued with his right-front suspension slightly askew, and built a margin over Ralf Aron, who headed Guan Yu Zhou, Robert Shwartzman and Mick Schumacher in a Prema 2-3-4-5 – on the road.

Unfortunately Aron had wobbled on the grid as he preloaded the clutch. He never even moved outside his grid box, and reckoned the officials had been distracted by his head moving, but was pinged with a five-second penalty. His blistering opening lap from seventh to second – “To be honest I didn’t do a great start; I think everyone was a bit more clueless than I was!” – was converted to fifth in the results.

Armstrong, whose starts are consistently superb, got a great launch from the second row in the finale to run side by side with Ticktum and Ahmed to Turn 1. Ahmed wisely backed out, and Ticktum and Armstrong collided – while off the track in the runoff – on the exit. Armstrong was out again, and Ticktum was temporarily down to fourth before Palou and Shwartzman came together at Turn 2.

Ahmed’s subsequent win was the most convincing of the weekend, as Ticktum beat Schumacher to second, the podium trio all grinning about this being a reprise of their 2014 World and European Junior Karting seasons. The respect they have for each is clear, as is Ahmed’s for all his rivals. You can tell he’s a bit taken aback by this early success, but make no mistake: he’s a contender this season.

MARCUS SIMMONS

RESULTS HUNGARORING (H), JUNE 2-3 RACE 1 (22 LAPS – 59.889 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Dan Ticktum (GB)	Motopark / Dallara-Volkswagen F318	36m07.068s
2	Guan Yu Zhou (PRC)	Prema Powerteam / Dallara-Mercedes F315	+7.514s
3	Robert Shwartzman (RUS)	Prema Powerteam / Dallara-Mercedes F314	+8.792s
4	Mick Schumacher (D)	Prema Powerteam / Dallara-Mercedes F318	+9.454s
5	Ralf Aron (EST)	Prema Powerteam / Dallara-Mercedes F317	+10.289s
6	Juri Vips (EST)	Motopark / Dallara-Volkswagen F315	+17.256s
7	Enaam Ahmed (GB)	Hitech Grand Prix / Dallara-Mercedes F315	+17.986s
8	Sacha Fenestraz (F)	Carlin / Dallara-Volkswagen F317	+18.553s
9	Ben Hingeley (GB)	Hitech Grand Prix / Dallara-Mercedes F316	+25.007s
10	Fabio Scherer (CH)	Motopark / Dallara-Volkswagen F316	+29.931s
11	Nikita Troitskiy (RUS)	Carlin / Dallara-Volkswagen F315	+30.809s
12	Alex Palou (E)	Hitech Grand Prix / Dallara-Mercedes F315	+32.201s
13	Jehan Daruvala (IND)	Carlin / Dallara-Volkswagen F315	+35.708s
14	Sebastian Fernandez (YV)	Motopark / Dallara-Volkswagen F314	+42.523s
15	Marino Sato (J)	Motopark / Dallara-Volkswagen F314	+44.830s
16	Keyvan Andres (D)	Van Amersfoort Racing / Dallara-Mercedes F317	+47.113s
17	Jonathan Aberdein (ZA)	Motopark / Dallara-Volkswagen F315	+48.317s
18	Devlin DeFrancesco (CDN)	Carlin / Dallara-Volkswagen F312	+50.203s
19	Ameya Vaidyanathan (IND)	Carlin / Dallara-Volkswagen F316	+51.796s
20	Artem Petrov (RUS)	Van Amersfoort Racing / Dallara-Mercedes F316	+54.189s
21	Petru Florescu (RO)	Fortec Motorsports / Dallara-Mercedes F317	+1m05.047s
R	Julian Hanes (D)	ma-con / Dallara-Volkswagen F312	13 laps-suspension
R	Ferdinand Habsburg (A)	Carlin / Dallara-Volkswagen F317	11 laps-stopped
R	Marcus Armstrong (NZ)	Prema Powerteam / Dallara-Mercedes F317	3 laps-stopped

Winner's average speed 99.489mph.

Fastest lap Habsburg 1m36.404s, 101.655mph.

QUALIFYING 1 1 Ticktum 1m35.275s; 2 Palou

1m35.307s; 3 Zhou 1m35.377s; 4 Schumacher 1m35.412s; 5 Armstrong 1m35.489s; 6 Shwartzman 1m35.522s; 7 Aron 1m35.679s; 8 Aberdein 1m35.789s; 9 Ahmed 1m35.943s; 10 Vips 1m36.110s; 11 Habsburg 1m36.119s; 12 Hingeley 1m36.121s; 13 Fenestraz 1m36.177s; 14 Scherer 1m36.178s; 15 Daruvala 1m36.187s; 16 Sato 1m36.249s; 17 Fernandez 1m36.430s; 18 Andres 1m36.530s; 19 Petrov 1m36.641s; 20 Troitskiy 1m36.697s; 21 DeFrancesco 1m36.897s; 22 Vaidyanathan 1m37.167s; 23 Hanes 1m37.178s; 24 Florescu 1m37.756s.

RACE 2 (22 LAPS – 59.889 MILES)

1 Ahmed 35m50.068s; 2 Armstrong +2.872s; 3 Palou +4.666s; 4 Zhou +8.077s; 5 Shwartzman +10.606s; 6 Daruvala +14.187s; 7 Schumacher +14.492s; 8 Habsburg +15.436s; 9 Fenestraz +17.565s; 10 Hingeley +18.998s; 11 Scherer +26.582s; 12 Aron +27.411s; 13 Sato +29.700s; 14 Aberdein +31.665s; 15 Andres +33.040s; 16 DeFrancesco +33.676s; 17 Vaidyanathan +36.157s; 18 Vips +39.299s; 19 Fernandez +39.913s; 20 Troitskiy +40.593s; 21 Hanes +48.221s; 22 Florescu +57.700s; 23 Petrov -1 lap; R Ticktum 4 laps-brakes.

Winner's average speed 100.276mph.

Fastest lap Troitskiy 1m37.075s, 100.953mph.

QUALIFYING 2 1 Ticktum 1m34.937s; 2 Ahmed

1m34.960s; 3 Zhou 1m34.993s; 4 Armstrong 1m35.048s; 5 Palou 1m35.122s; 6 Daruvala 1m35.218s; 7 Shwartzman 1m35.270s; 8 Hingeley 1m35.327s;

9 Habsburg 1m35.333s; 10 Scherer 1m35.341s; 11 Schumacher 1m35.353s; 12 Vips 1m35.359s; 13 Fenestraz 1m35.519s; 14 Troitskiy 1m35.603s; 15 Aron 1m35.608s; 16 Aberdein 1m35.625s; 17 Sato 1m35.760s; 18 Fernandez 1m35.769s; 19 DeFrancesco 1m36.102s; 20 Andres 1m36.171s; 21 Vaidyanathan 1m36.321s; 22 Hanes 1m36.461s; 23 Petrov 1m36.493s; 24 Florescu 1m36.995s.

RACE 3 (21 LAPS – 57.167 MILES)

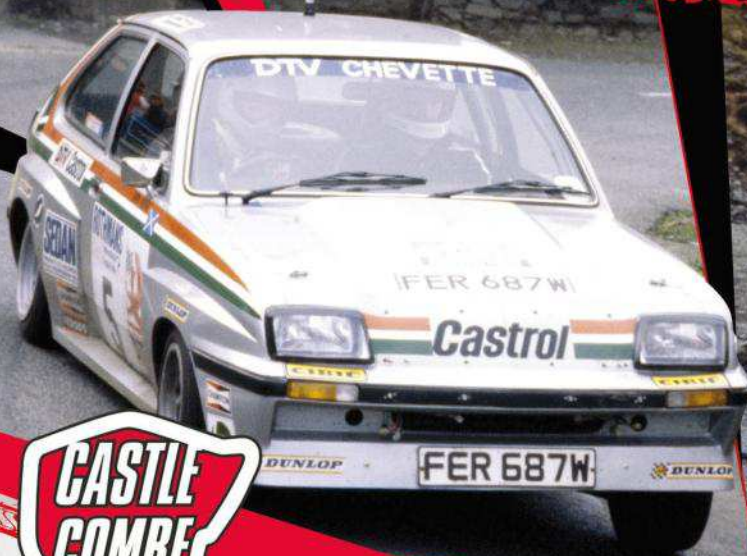
1 Ahmed 34m54.062s; 2 Ticktum +7.225s; 3 Schumacher +8.914s; 4 Vips +12.559s; 5 Zhou +13.917s; 6 Fenestraz +15.514s; 7 Aron +20.154s; 8 Aberdein +22.749s; 9 Troitskiy +23.964s; 10 Scherer +26.216s; 11 Daruvala +26.497s; 12 Fernandez +30.942s; 13 Andres +32.341s; 14 DeFrancesco +34.046s; 15 Habsburg +34.578s; 16 Sato +37.446s; 17 Petrov +38.269s; 18 Vaidyanathan +38.384s; 19 Florescu +48.200s; 20 Hanes +54.346s; R Palou 13 laps-stopped; R Hingeley 1 lap-accident damage; R Armstrong 1 lap-accident damage; R Shwartzman 0 laps-accident.

Winner's average speed 98.278mph.

Fastest lap Palou 1m36.417s, 101.642mph.

GRID FOR RACE 3 1 Ahmed; 2 Ticktum; 3 Armstrong; 4 Daruvala; 5 Zhou; 6 Shwartzman; 7 Palou; 8 Vips; 9 Schumacher; 10 Habsburg; 11 Hingeley; 12 Fenestraz; 13 Scherer; 14 Troitskiy; 15 Aron; 16 Fernandez; 17 Aberdein; 18 Andres; 19 Sato; 20 DeFrancesco; 21 Vaidyanathan; 22 Petrov; 23 Hanes; 24 Florescu.

CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Ahmed 83; 2 Zhou 65; 3 Ticktum 63; 4 Fenestraz 51; 5 Aron 50.5; 6 Armstrong 43; 7 Palou 39; 8 Schumacher 37; 9 Shwartzman 35; 10 Daruvala 23.5.



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Nasr's action is expressive

IMSA
DETROIT BELLE ISLE (USA)
JUNE 2
ROUND 5/12

Acura Team Penske just about had enough of a performance edge to score a one-two. That it failed to do so was the result of a long, strong race stint from ex-Formula 1 driver Felipe Nasr that ended with the #31 Action Express Racing Cadillac DPi-V.R defeating both Acura ARX-05s.

Poleman Pipo Derani's ESM Nissan faded on raceday with steering issues, leaving the Acuras of Helio Castroneves and Juan Pablo Montoya at the front. But under a full-course caution for debris, the other Action Express car, driven by Joao Barbosa, went into the lead and Derani rose to third as most of the leading runners pitted.

When Barbosa stopped to hand off to Filipe Albuquerque with 48 minutes of the 1h40m race to run, the Acuras — now driven by Ricky Taylor and Dane Cameron — moved forward, and with a lead of almost 50 seconds they eventually pitted for a second time. That wasn't enough to prevent the one-stopping Cadillac of Nasr and Eric Curran from hitting the front. Although Taylor and Cameron fought hard (sometimes with each other), they couldn't get close enough to the Cadillac to make a serious stab at passing before the finish.

In GT Daytona, Katherine Legge, along with team-mate Mario Farnbacher, scored hers and Meyer Shank Racing's second straight win at Belle Isle, heading an Acura NSX one-two completed by Justin Marks and Lawson Aschenbach.

DAVID MALSHER

WEEKEND WINNERS

IMSA SPORTSCAR
DETROIT BELLE ISLE
DPI Felipe Nasr/Eric Curran
 Action Express Racing Cadillac DPi-V.R
GTD Katherine Legge/Mario Farnbacher
 Michael Shank Racing Acura NSX GT3

NASCAR CUP
POCONO
Martin Truex Jr
 Furniture Row Racing Toyota Camry

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES
POCONO
Kyle Busch
 Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota Camry

SUPER TC2000
RAFAELA
Facundo Chapur
 Citroen Total Racing Citroen C4 Lounge

ITALIAN FORMULA 4
MONZA
Race 1 Leonardo Lorandi
 Bhaitech
Race 2 William Alatalo
 Mucke Motorsport
Race 3 Leonardo Lorandi
 Bhaitech



Truex uproots Busch

NASCAR CUP
POCONO (USA)
JUNE 3
ROUND 14/36

Kyle Busch was "damned if he did and damned if he didn't" as the Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota star watched a potential fifth win of the season fall out of his grasp.

Busch led with 31 laps remaining ahead of title rivals Martin Truex Jr (Furniture Row Toyota) and Kevin Harvick (Stewart-Haas Ford), having stopped for fuel and

tyres after Derrike Cope caused a caution.

But 10 laps later a debris caution led to Busch's crew calling him in while Truex and Harvick remained on track. Busch rejoined eighth but could only climb to third as clean air proved more important than fresh rubber, ironically after Busch lost last year's race at Pocono by staying on old tyres.

That released Truex to storm away to victory ahead of Chip Ganassi Racing's Kyle Larson and Busch. Harvick fell to fourth, but a three-way title fight between Truex, Busch and Harvick is still on the cards.



DTM

STANDINGS		
1	Timo Glock (BMW)	90
2	Gary Paffett (Mercedes)	79
3	Paul di Resta (Mercedes)	67

For more info: autosport.com/dtm

Mercedes, mercurial, merciful

DTM
HUNGARORING (H)
JUNE 2-3
ROUND 3/10

Paul di Resta was arguably the star of the DTM weekend at the Hungaroring, even if he was apparently gifted victory in the Saturday race by Mercedes team-mate Lucas Auer. BMW, dreadfully off the pace this weekend, was then gifted a podium wipeout on Sunday — topped by Marco Wittmann — when the skies unleashed a heavy shower and the race was red-flagged.

But the biggest gift of the weekend was that for the DTM itself. The reason for the red-flagging of that race was a spate of accidents in the pits that left three marshals with bad leg injuries, and some mechanics picking themselves up after becoming unwitting skittles in a tenpin bowling game. It could have been so much worse.

When the rain struck in the early stages, many of the field dived for the pits. The surface for the pit boxes at the Hungaroring is concrete, and Auer slithered straight past his mechanics, striking the marshals as he hit the garage wall. Moments later, Bruno Spengler sent his BMW mechanics sprawling, and on the following lap

Edoardo Mortara's Merc knocked over its gantry into the pitlane.

The subsequent red flag turned the race on its head for what would be a 17-lap run of green-flag action to the finish — on a circuit now rapidly drying in the hot Hungarian sun. BMW pair Philipp Eng and Wittmann had made their mandatory pitstops just as the rain started to fall, switching onto grooved Hankook rubber and making up time on those who'd remained on slicks. Although Eng and Wittmann were sixth and seventh respectively, the five cars ahead had yet to make any stops, so Eng effectively had the net lead. Just behind them was Timo Glock — the pre-weekend championship leader had been 'lucky' enough to have been turned into a spin on the opening lap by Nico Muller's Audi, so had immediately switched onto his second set of slicks, moving him onto what turned out to be an advantageous strategy.

Five laps into the restart, Wittmann moved his RMG-run M4 DTM past Eng at Turn 1. Up front were the Mercs of Daniel Juncadella and Pascal Wehrlein, the Catalan having just taken the lead from his team-mate, but they were doomed as they needed to make their stops, and wouldn't even score points. Glock too passed Eng, and his second place moved him back into a points lead he

had lost overnight to Gary Paffett — the Brit was one of those not to have stopped at the time of the red flag, and his punt on wet-weather tyres for the restart flopped.

Glock and BMW had been full of gloom on Saturday, the Hungaroring's 30-plus temperatures playing havoc with the Munich machines' performance. Not a single BMW scored points. Effectively, this was a Mercedes weekend, and Stuttgart can feel unfortunate that the bizarre occurrences on Sunday compromised its ability to make capital on a weekend where the C63 reigned.

Audi also bounced back from its early-season woes — Muller joined poleman di Resta on the front row for the first race, and pursued the Scot in the early stages. Time lost in the pitstop dropped di Resta to a net third, with team-mate Auer now leading, before di Resta muscled his way past Muller's Audi around the outside of Turn 1. With 13 laps remaining, Auer stayed well out of the way as di Resta sailed past the Austrian into Turn 2. "It was a clear fight," protested Auer in response to questions about what was 100% obvious to everyone watching. "You have to be quite careful with the tyres. I pushed to the limit and got P1 but Paul came back to me. I tried to save the tyres and by the end I was again back on it."

DTM

HUNGARORING

Race 1 Paul di Resta

HWA Mercedes C63 DTM

Race 2 Marco Wittmann

RMG BMW M4 DTM (below)

BLANCPAIN ENDURANCE CUP

PAUL RICARD

Christian Klien/Marco Seefried/Albert Costa

Emil Frey Racing Lexus RC F GT3



Di Resta leads Auer to
victory in the opening race

While Auer was just half a second behind di Resta at the finish, the two Audis of Muller and Rene Rast were also within 2.8s of victory. This was a big step forward from Ingolstadt, and Muller reckoned he could have pressured the Mercs more had he not flat-spotted his front-right tyre in his second-stint fight with di Resta.

Whatever the merits of his Saturday win, di Resta was flying on Sunday. A qualifying mistake at Turn 4 cost him a shot at pole, putting him third – behind Auer and Wehrlein – in a Merc 1-2-3-4-5. Auer led, but Wehrlein took over as the rain fell, and then came Auer's catastrophic pit mishap.

Di Resta starred on the restart. He was a net 10th when the race went green, but by the finish had made his way up to fifth. On the way he passed Auer, who freely admitted "I didn't care about this race." To add insult to injury – in what can be regarded as a callous implementation of regulation zealotry – Auer, Spengler and Mortara were excluded for their pit incidents.

"After the events this was the most we were going to get," pointed out di Resta. "Another two laps and we could have been back on the podium. It was a lottery when we pitted, and you can always look back to see what you would have done differently. But the most important thing is that everyone is OK."

MARCUS SIMMONS



Emil Frey Racing Lexus
jumped leading Bentley
on the very last lap

Costa is star turn as Lexus springs surprise

BLANCPAIN ENDURANCE
PAUL RICARD (F)
JUNE 2
ROUND 3/5

After six hours and 1000 kilometres of Paul Ricard, it wasn't until the final lap that the Blancpain GT Series Endurance Cup race was decided. And, after a truly incredible contest, it was a Lexus that finished on top to take the car's maiden Blancpain win.

Albert Costa proved to be the star as the Emil Frey Lexus RC F driver grabbed the lead with three corners to go when he passed the Bentley Continental of Jules Gounon – a car that had started down in 18th place.

For almost five hours of the race the best battling was for third, with as many as 10 cars running line astern at one point. But up front the Garage 59 McLaren 650S GT3 of Ben Barnicoat, Andrew Watson and Come Ledogar was in control.

That was until two consecutive safety cars – bizarrely called at the end of full-course-yellow periods – bunched the field up and eradicated the McLaren's 20-second lead.

That allowed the SMP Racing Ferrari 488 GT3 of Miguel Molina to claim the advantage after using its shorter joker stop in the final round of pit visits to claim top spot. But it didn't last long as, with 40 minutes to go, the Ferrari lost a wheel and was out.

That, and a late FCY for a damaged kerb, set up the thrilling finale, with the Lexus that Costa shared with ex-Formula 1 driver Christian Klien and

Marco Seefried claiming victory. After the late pass, the M-Sport Bentley of Gounon, Steven Kane and Jordan Pepper finished two seconds back. The Garage 59 McLaren salvaged a podium, despite receiving a drivethrough penalty for having two mechanics in the working area of the pitlane during its final stop.

Elsewhere, a number of the other early-season frontrunners hit trouble, including the points-leading WRT Audi R8 LMS of Dries Vanthoor, Alex Riberas and Christopher Mies. That retired with two hours on the clock with a starter-motor issue when running third.

Barnicoat had grabbed the lead at the start after the polesitting R-Motorsport Aston Martin of Jake Dennis had a "bit of a disaster" as the race began, with Dennis losing power and plummeting down the order. The Aston did eventually get going and Dennis worked his way back into contention over the opening stint. But there was then more woe when a left-front suspension failure while Nicki Thiim was at the wheel dropped them towards the rear of the field.

Further back, there was some success for McLaren still as Alexander West, Chris Harris and Chris Goodwin won the Am class.

The Barwell Motorsport Lamborghini Huracan GT3 of Michele Beretta, Sandy Mitchell and Martin Kodric won the Silver Cup, while the AF Corse Ferrari of Gianluca de Lorenzi, Matt Griffin and Duncan Cameron took Pro-Am honours.

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FURTHER HISTORIC FESTIVALS PLANNED FOR THURXTON

THRUXTON 50TH

Thruxton is likely to host a historic racing festival every year, following the success of the circuit's 50th anniversary meeting.

A mix of categories organised by different clubs, from 1950s sportscars to Mini Se7ens, formed part of the two-day

event last weekend, which also included several high-speed demonstration runs.

Thruxton Group managing director Bill Coombs now intends to repeat the event. "I'd love to," he said. "When we started out we were hoping it wouldn't just be for the 50th – if it got momentum, we thought we could do it again with a wide range of

Bumper grids for CMMC debut

CMMC

The Classic and Modern Motorsport Club's first official meeting will take place at Mallory Park this Sunday with bumper grids for most races.

The Classic and Modern Motorsport Festival features races for single-seaters, sportscars, saloons and even motorcycles.

The Motorsports School Sports Saloon Challenge will feature 18 cars, including four Ariel Atoms, Mazda MX-5s, two Citroen C1s and a Triumph Spitfire among others. The British Thoroughbred Sports/Saloon/GT and the Classic Car Challenge also sports a grid of 18, including a Jaguar XJ12 and XJS, Morgan +8, five MGs and a Triumph GT6 entered from Australia.

The Historic Sports Car Club is supporting

the event, and a full grid is expected for the club's 70s Road Sports series, with almost 20 cars for the Historic Road Sports field.

CMMC founder Richard Culverhouse, formerly of the Classic Sports Car Club, said: "People don't want to see the same make of cars go around: there are plenty of one-make series. It's a real clubby meeting and it's grown from last year [which was organised by the 360 Motor Racing Club]. We couldn't get the bikes on board [last year], but we've got a full grid of 30 500cc F3 cars instead of the Formula Fords."

The CMMC also plans to hold a meeting at Snetterton in September, which will include a one-off race for powerful production-based cars, with the aim of creating a new series in 2019 should be there sufficient interest.

STEFAN MACKLEY



Mansell and Murray
opened the new
Thruxton Centre

historics. We're very keen to have a flagship historic meeting covering all the ages, to appeal to a wide audience.

"I'm really pleased with what we managed to do and the paddock had a lovely atmosphere. We had a fantastic marshal turnout too – even more than for British Touring Cars."

Grid sizes varied from 13 starters in the Spirit of Thruxton Single-Seater race for the Jochen Rindt Memorial Trophy to 30 for Historic Formula Ford. Future events are likely to have different categories on the bill but some will remain.

"Because it was the 50th we looked at what was relevant to Thruxton, but now we can open things up a bit," said Coombs. "You've got to mix and match – pick

competitor groups from various clubs that really want to come and people really want to see, interspersed with some demos.

"The 1950s sportscars have got some beautiful cars and I'm delighted they raced so hard. They were a highlight, and so was Historic Formula Ford, which I believe deserves a more prime slot."

Reaction from the drivers, many of whom had not raced at the high-speed Hampshire venue, was positive.

Former BTCC racer Patrick Watts, who competed in both the combined RAC Woodcote Trophy/Stirling Moss Trophy for '50s sportscars and Historic Touring Car Challenge, said: "It's fantastic. It's unique in terms of British circuits – fast and flowing, and with undulations that

would have been ironed out if it was a Formula 1 track. For drivers there's nothing like it. The Ford Capri is like a bucking bronco out the back.

"I think there's lots of drivers out there this year who are going to see how it goes."

Lola Mk1 Prototype driver Keith Ahlers, who last raced at Thruxton in a Morgan in 2011, said: "It's awesome. It's got to be in the top three of circuits in the UK. It's a privilege to race at Thruxton."

The new Thruxton Centre was also officially opened on Sunday. Coombs says the commercial boosts at the circuit in recent years have helped improve facilities with more planned, including a bigger pitlane and more viewing areas.

KEVIN TURNER



AERIAL CRASHES

Mini Se7en racer Daniel Budd and track marshals had a miraculous escape after Budd's car was sent spiralling over the barriers at Thruxton last weekend. The crash occurred along Woodham Hill during Sunday's race as the Mini was launched into the barrier (below) following contact with Max Hunter's car. Budd and a marshal were taken to the circuit's medical centre but released. Martin Bloss also flipped over at the chicane in his Van Diemen RF83 after colliding with Andrew Smith in the single-seater race (left) but escaped injury. **Photographs by Steve Jones**





BMR boss Scott (l) will join TCR at next round

Scott eyes Combe TCR UK drive and plans for 2019

TCR UK

Team BMR is set to field two cars in TCR UK from the next round at Castle Combe in July after plans for team boss Warren Scott to join the series at Brands Hatch last weekend fell through.

The squad has run British Touring Car Championship driver Josh Price in a first-generation Honda Civic since round two at Knockhill, and Scott now intends to join him for the rest of the season. After

missing out on one of the similar FK2-shape Civics, another option was for Scott to use the car vacated by championship frontrunner Ollie Taylor, who has upgraded to a newer FK7 model. But it could not be prepared in time for Brands.

"The first car never materialised, and then I was going to borrow a car from Mark [Hunt] at Pyro and unfortunately he couldn't get it ready in time," said Scott.

"I think I should go well at Castle Combe. From my days on motorcycles, I've done a

lot of laps round Castle Combe.

"We should be running with Josh and myself for the rest of the year and then looking at a proper challenge next year."

Former BTCC runner-up Sam Tordoff had also attempted to get on the grid at Brands, and was initially looking at the series in conjunction with Motorbase Performance, with which he is racing in the BTCC this season. Motorbase shelved its TCR plans earlier this year, but Tordoff still wanted to tackle the round before running out of time to get a drive.

"I had forgotten that [the Brands Hatch rounds] were coming up so quickly," said Tordoff. "I tried to get something organised with a new team, but we just couldn't make it happen. I wanted to sample TCR just to see what they are like – I've never driven one but they look like good fun. The only problem is that with my work, BTCC and historic racing commitments, I won't have the time to do any rounds."

DPE Motorsport was forced to withdraw its two Alfa Romeo Giuliettas from both races – leaving just 12 cars on the grid – after both suffered unrelated engine problems in qualifying.

Debutant Robert Gilmour – who was driving the Alfa vacated by Aiden Moffat after the BTCC driver quit the series – was able to set the eighth-fastest time before his car blew a valve, while the sister car of Derek Palmer Jr had a head gasket fail.

MARK PAULSON AND MATT JAMES

Poor grids mar LMP3/GT Cup at Spa

LMP3 CUP/GT CUP

Just four LMP3 Cup cars joined 12 GT Cup machines for their combined races at Spa-Francorchamps last weekend.

The quartet of LMP3 cars matched the entry that took part in the previous round at Brands Hatch.

Colin Noble and Tony Wells took victory in race one for Ecurie Ecosse/Nielsen Racing in their Ligier JSP3, while Mectech Motorsport duo

Bradley Smith and Duncan Williams won the second aboard a Norma M30.

In GT Cup, two-time champion Paul Bailey took his first class win since returning to the series. Alongside Phil Glew, Bailey won the GT class in the second race with in a Ferrari 488 Challenge, while Fulvio Mussi and Laki Christoforou won the first, also in a 488 Challenge.

Overall GT Cup honours went to Adam Wilcox and



Nigel Hudson in race one driving an Aston Martin Vantage GT3, and Gareth

Downing in race two with a Mosler MT900.

STEFAN MACKLEY

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Mazda air-filter confusion

MAZDA MX-5 SUPERCUP

An eligibility row led to three cars in the Mazda MX-5 Supercup running in an invitation class at Brands Hatch last weekend.

Nick Boon, Geoff Gouriet and Tom Parker were forced to race for no points after not fitting the right air-filter system to their cars, although Parker sourced one overnight for races two and three.

Confusion emerged over differing interpretations of regulation 5.7.5, which states: "It is permitted to replace the standard induction system cold air pipe and filter with an aftermarket induction kit, i.e. Pipercross universal VM7100."

Some drivers had taken this wording

to mean that other aftermarket brand kits could also be used on their cars.

A clarification was then issued to state that "the Pipercross Venom universal VM7100 is the part that *must* be used". A number of drivers changed to the correct part between qualifying and the first race and were allowed to compete as normal.

British Racing & Sports Car Club competitions director Dominic Ostrowski commented: "It's unfortunate for [the affected drivers] but we had to draw the line and say that is the regulation. It had been brought to our attention that some of them weren't running to the regulations so that was the best option to allow them to still race this weekend."

MARK PAULSON

Ballard bounces back

MG LIVE

Taylor Ballard took a double MG Trophy Class C win at Silverstone's MG Live last weekend in a new car after writing off his previous ZR in a spectacular Brands Hatch crash.

Ballard won the opening Class C race of the season at Silverstone's National Circuit in April, but then in the first race of the following round at Brands later in the month he barrel-rolled at Paddock Hill Bend and came to rest on top of a barrier.

"The previous car was a write-off," Ballard said. "We had to build a new car ready for MG Live so we built it in four weeks. It was a complete rebuild, so

rollcages, engines, axles, painting, welding, the lot. It was a bit manic, but we got there. To be back in the car felt quite weird, but I enjoyed it and soon felt back at home. I couldn't wait to get back out after the accident – I was gutted to miss race two at Brands. I'm young enough, I have no fear!"

Sam Kirkpatrick also returned to the MG Trophy in a new ZR 170 after he missed the Brands meeting altogether having written his car off at Silverstone in the opening race of the year. At the MG Live meeting he returned to take Class B pole and finish the opening race second in class. In the second race he stopped with a transmission problem.

GRAHAM KEILLOH

IN THE HEADLINES

FROM SWEDEN TO THE UK

Reigning Swedish Clubmans champion Monika Arvidsson made her UK racing debut at Donington Park last weekend in the equivalent British Automobile Racing Club-run series. The 17-year-old was runner-up in her first season in 2016 before winning the title last year. "There's more good drivers in good cars here so there's more competition," she said, as she took two second places.

KENDRICK DENIED WINS

Simon Kendrick was twice denied a shot at victory in the MG Owners' Club Championship races at Donington Park last weekend when his car expired in a cloud of steam. The double series champion led the opening five laps of the first race from pole before his MGF overheated. In race two he was second before developing a misfire.

KARTERS TO STEP UP

Highly-rated karters Rob Welham – who was rookie champion in the Super One Junior TKM series last year – and Reece Lycett will join the F1000 field later this year. Both have used the F1000 iZone driver development programme to prepare for their debuts. Welham said: "I'm still buzzing! After a few sighting laps I let it go a bit and was hooked."

LAUDA F2 CAR PROBLEMS

The ex-Niki Lauda Formula 2 March 722 was one of the highlights of the Thruxton 50th anniversary meeting, but owner Stephen Weller was thwarted in his bid to match Lauda's 1972 podium finish. The car ran as high as second in Sunday's race before engine issues. "I've been amazed at the interest shown in the car," said Weller. "I would have loved to have finished third, to match Lauda's 1972 finish."

JUNIOR WINS FOR BRITS

Brit Chris Drake (Terrier-Ford T4 S1) scored three victories at the latest Formula Junior Diamond Jubilee World Tour meeting at the Nemunas Ring in Lithuania. Jack Woodhouse, son of racer Mark, scored his first and second rear-engined wins in the family Lotus 20/22.

DAVID LATCHFORD

David Latchford, the first International racer of a British-built Formula Junior, died last Sunday, aged 86. A graduate of 500cc F3 and the small-capacity Halseylec sports-racer, Latchford drove the Halson built by Eugene Hall and himself at Monaco and elsewhere in 1959. In '60 he drove the UK-built Dolphin now raced by Kevin Musson.

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SUPER TOURING'S PROBLEM

The machines are spectacular and popular, but grids for touring cars of the 1990s are struggling, so what's the problem?

KEVIN TURNER

Thruxton's 50th anniversary celebration was undoubtedly a success, with excellent cars, a fine crowd and popular demonstrations. But a late change to the line-up underlined a problem for one of historic racing's most appealing series.

The Historic Sports Car Club's Super Touring Car Trophy was originally on the bill, only to be cancelled due to a lack of entries. And just 12 cars appeared at the Donington Historic Festival last month.

The category for tin-tops of the 1970-2000 (now extended to '05) era, with the two-litre Super Touring cars of the 1990s at the forefront, proved a hit when included on the 2012 Silverstone Classic programme. That led to more races and then a slot on the British Touring Car programme at Oulton Park in '14. But grids have always fluctuated and now the series is in danger of being discontinued (at least with the HSCC) next season.

That's a shame because the cars are superb and can bring a younger audience to historic. "The spectators like them, the circuits like them because they are promotable, and the marshals love them," says HSCC CEO Grahame White.

"We would love to think the Super Touring Car Trophy could continue to be successful, but the entry level is inconsistent.

"THE SILVERSTONE CLASSIC ATTRACTS A STRONG FIELD – AND NEXT MONTH IT NEEDS TO"

No-one can run a series without the support of the competitors to make it financially viable."

Drivers love them too. Period BTCC racer Patrick Watts, an occasional competitor in his Peugeot 406, says: "A Super Tourer is fantastic around Thruxton – uncompromising suspension and damping with a little bit of aero. For 1000kg cars with 300bhp, the lap times were amazing."

So, what's the problem? Cost would be an obvious answer, but there is more to it than that, given the money required for many other successful categories – STs of the late 1990s can be bought for under £100,000. That's not cheap, but there are many cars in historic with higher values. It's more the commitment needed to run them.

"The cars are not easy to maintain and there are no spare parts available," reckons White. "They were run by manufacturers that, if they needed a part, they made it."

But series champion James Dodd believes part of the problem is

perception – and that some cars are easier than others. "People think they're more awkward than they are," he says. "We're lucky with the Honda Accord and Nissan Primera – if we had a Ford Mondeo we probably wouldn't be racing."

Co-founder and competitor Dave Jarman adds: "I think the cars have a bad reputation for being expensive and difficult – it's created by the Mondeos. They're very difficult to run."

"People don't realise there are people like me. I've run a Nissan for five years and never had a problem. There are people with Hondas sending the engine to Neil Brown on a Friday, and getting them back the following Friday with a rebuilt engine for £3000."

Watts agrees some cars are trickier to run than others, but points out that all of them are potentially more challenging than the older cars most historic preparers are used to.

"They're all specially made with fabricated suspension – nothing is off the shelf," he says. "And nothing was built to last. Every race, they'd strip the whole car and probably change half of it. They'd spend maybe 300 man-hours preparing for the next race – by comparison, my Group 1 Ford Capri requires 16!"

He adds that, although it is possible to modernise the ECUs, they are "outside the realms of people running historic cars. They have to put a lot more work into it."


It may be that the 1990s and rise of electronics provides something of a barrier for historic racing. But the industry did get on top of Group C sufficiently for that to become viable, and the Masters Endurance Legends for endurance GTs and sports-prototypes of the 1995-2012 period has made a promising start.

A relatively small pool of available cars puts the pressure on the regulars to come out. "I think a portion of people who have bought the cars are collectors and not racers," reckons Jarman. "I think there are about 30 raceable Super Tourers in the country. If you then take the number in garages or sat in collections, there are probably another 30 or 40. It relies on the same people to race their cars often."

Given that the Super Touring Car Trophy is open to tin-tops going back as far as 1970, the existence of the overlapping Motor Racing Legends' Historic Touring Car Challenge could also be a factor, as is the general malaise due to current economic uncertainties.

Perhaps fewer events, to minimise costs and give preparers time to get on top of the technology, could help. Keeping the rules broad, including cars such as the Group A Ford RS500s, seems sensible.

The Silverstone Classic invariably attracts a strong field. And next month it needs to, to demonstrate that viable grids are still possible.

Watts wants to be out next year – he's got no plans this season because he "needs an engine builder". Let's hope there are some events for him in 2019. A pack of Super Tourers flying around Thruxton – where the current BTCC cars still don't lap faster than their predecessors – would be a worthy addition to the calendar. 



Mitchell double at Thruxton celebration

**THRUXTON
BARC
JUNE 2-3**

On a glorious Sunday when 1992 Formula 1 world champion Nigel Mansell and Murray Walker opened the new Thruxton Centre, and Karun Chandhok exercised a Williams-Cosworth FWo8C to mark the ultra-fast circuit's 50th anniversary, Ian Taylor Trophy Historic Formula Ford and Minis lived up to their reputation, enthralling the crowds.

Eight points adrift of Cameron Jackson after Donington and Cadwell Park double-headers, Ben Mitchell pulled off two astonishingly close wins in a Merlyn Mk20 to top the Historic Sports Car Club Formula

Ford 1600 table. In repeating his 2015 double (in father Westie's sister chassis), Mitchell emulated the car's first owner Rob Cooper's July 1972 victories at Thruxton.

Having led four times previously – as a writhing seven-car snake embroiled title rivals Jackson, reigning champion Richard Tarling and Callum Grant, plus Max Bartell, brother Sam Mitchell and veteran Tiff Needell (in his original Autosport prize Lotus 69) – Mitchell left it to the final corner before rounding Bartell boldly in race one. With Tarling robbing Grant of third on the line, the first four missed the chequered flag – indeed, Bartell thought he'd won it a lap later! "The kids should have been disqualified,

then I'd have won," smiled Needell.

Ben Mitchell waited patiently in another breathtaking slipstreamer later, drafting through from fourth to edge Jackson by 0.147 seconds, with Bartell, the clutchless Tarling and Ed Thurston, who had raced from the back to seventh in the opener, chasing them. Grant started in the pitlane, scrutineers having spotted that his rollhoop stay-pin was missing, but shot through to sixth.

The Mini championship races were equally frenetic, although Tom Sanderson broke the tow, unusually, to win Saturday's 1000cc Se7en opener by 5.699s. Sunday's sequel was brewing up on lap four when Daniel Budd, in the lead group, had a monumental accident, having clipped Max Hunter at around 115mph on Woodham Hill and somersaulted over the guardrail (see page 49). Budd and a marshal escaped serious injury. Darren Thomas was leading Spencer Wanstall, from row five, and Sanderson when red flags flew.

The slick-shod Miglias, pulling 130mph with 1293cc engines screaming towards 9000rpm, hunted in packs as ever. Sunday morning's opener lost Alfie Brown, double champion Rupert Deeth and Charlie Budd in an early incident at the chicane, but points leader Dave Drew, Nick Padmore – eight days after his Historic F1 Williams FWo7C win at Brands Hatch – Aaron Smith and 2009 champ Kane Astin (whose 1m29.270s lap was the weekend's





Mitchell (24) twice headed large Historic Formula Ford pack

best) were blanketed by 0.65s at the finish.

Second time out, Smith beat early pacemaker Drew by a second after the six-car lead battle distilled to the pair of them. They finished clear of a train embroiling Astin (almost overcome by petrol fumes with his car's filler cap off), Colin Peacock, Budd, Jason Porter and Deeth – who set fastest lap in his patched-up car – with Robert Howard trying to join them.

Motor Racing Legends' sportscar miscellany, combining RAC Woodcote Trophy Pre-1956 and Stirling Moss Trophy Pre-'61 contenders, was popular and the racing up front was very close as many debutants learned the unforgiving track. Honours were shared between the vastly experienced and versatile Chris Ward in a rorty Lister-Jaguar and Oliver Bryant in a nimble Lotus 15.

Bryant had a rear wheel work loose in the opener but, following overnight hub machining by Clive Robinson, bounced back to win a wonderful Sunday dogfight. Behind the duo, who traded places constantly through the Noble, Village and Goodwood sweepers to Church, Billy Bellinger finished a super third in Keith Ahlers's little Lola Mk1 Prototype.

Coopers had finished third and fourth on Saturday, the T49 Monaco of Justin Maeers (who survived a hairy wobble at Church) and the intrepid Charlie Martin crossing the line ahead of the Jaguar-powered T38 >>

THRUXTON'S FIRST 100MPH SALOON



Anybody who saw burly Tony Hazlewood wrestle his DAF V8 Supersaloon around British circuits in the early 1970s will not have forgotten his lightning reflexes. The powerful short-wheelbase bolide required them, particularly on quicker circuits or in the wet. Watching Tony set Thruxton's first 100mph saloon car lap on October 28 1973 is an indelible memory of my first visit to the Hampshire airfield track, where son Phil displayed the gallant machine last weekend.

Built in High Wycombe over the winter of 1971 by Hazlewood and Ray Kilminster, with help from Tony's brother Gerry's Weswood Lawnmowers company and invaluable assistance from Tom Cooper (father of Rob, first owner of my FF1600 Merlyn) and suspension guru Chas Beattie, the DAF was built from a new steel 55 Coupe shell supplied via the Dutch manufacturer's gregarious UK PR man Tom Northey. Collected from the Eindhoven factory, it was invoiced helpfully for £58 – £100 less "compensation for transport".

The base car's rear-mounted Variomatic transmission enabled Hazlewood to use a Hewland FT200 transaxle which, with a 4.3-litre Oldsmobile V8 engine mounted well back under the scuttle, gave near fifty-fifty weight distribution. March F2 suspension picked up on tubular steel frames grafted to the shell's front and rear bulkheads. The DAF V8 debuted, sans front air dam and boot spoiler, at Silverstone in July 1972.



Prodigiously fast in a straight line, aided by a compact frontal area, its Achilles' heel was the Special Saloon category's 10-inch maximum wheel width. When the rules were derestricted – and the Super Saloon movement took off, with Hazlewood and Mick Hill prime movers – Beattie advised 16-inch F1 rears, which transformed it.

Installing the five-litre Oldsmobile V8 he bought from London-born Canadian F5000 March 72A racer John Cannon upped the game. With 450bhp at his hefty right foot, Hazlewood was a frontrunner and the 'smiling' 170mph DAF became a crowd favourite. "Any fast circuit became a great adventure. In particular, drifting that little car through Silverstone's proper Woodcote Corner, pedal flat to the floor, was pure magic," he said. With Firestone wet tyres it became "a delight to drive in any conditions".

Rising costs forced Tony to sell the DAF at the end of 1973, but buyer Colin Folwell of Corbeau Seats generously let him continue to race his baby. It subsequently passed to Demon Tweaks founder Alan Minshaw and was later raced (sometimes rebranded as a Volvo, which had taken over Van Doorne's Automobielabrieken BV) with a two-litre Cosworth BDX engine by veteran Tony Sugden, still a safety car driver!

Thirty years after he sold the DAF, Hazlewood and associates couldn't resist buying the shell – long stripped of its running gear by top car restorer Simon Hadfield – from an enthusiast whose dream of rebuilding it met a reality check. Joe Butler and Tony reworked it, installing a modern rollcage, one of Super Saloon Chevrolet Corvair racer Ian Richardson's five-litre Rover Wildcat V8 engines and a stouter Hewland FG400 gearbox from a Pilbeam MP58 hillclimber. Finished at Jon Lee's workshop, it now appears on special occasions, a great reminder of club racing's past. And still a joy to drive!

MARCUS PYE



Bryant's Lotus (leading) beat
Ward's Lister (86) on Sunday
after hub failure on Saturday

JONES

WEEKEND WINNERS

HISTORIC TOURING CAR CHALLENGE

Race 1 Adam Morgan (Ford Capri)

Race 2 Ric Wood (Ford Capri)

HSCC GUARDS TROPHY

Graeme & James Dodd (Ginetta-BMW G16)

HSCC IAN TAYLOR TROPHY HISTORIC FORMULA FORD

Race 1 Ben Mitchell (Merlyn Mk20)

Race 2 Ben Mitchell (Merlyn Mk20)

MINI MIGLIA

Race 1 Dave Drew

Race 2 Aaron Smith

MINI SE7EN

Race 1 Tom Sanderson

Race 2 Darren Thomas

RAC WOODCOTE TROPHY/ STIRLING MOSS TROPHY

Race 1 Chris Ward (Lister-Jaguar 'Knobbly')

Race 2 Oliver Bryant (Lotus 15)

SINGLE-SEATERS

Race 1 Paul Smith (Ralt-VW RT3/83)

Race 2 Andy Smith (March-Toyota 783)

For full results visit:
www.tsl-timing.com

of Patrick Blakeney-Edwards.

Ric Wood's Ford Capri won both Historic Touring Car races, its crossover-injected Weslake V6 engine sounding magnificent. British Touring Car leader Adam Morgan tamed it on Saturday, when James Hanson led initially in Paul Pochciol's Broadspeed Jaguar XJ12C replica. The Chevrolet Camaros of Tony Dron Trophy Group 1 winner Olly Bryant and Alex Thistlethwayte, and American Fred Wakeman's Rover V8 displaced the Jag once in Pochciol's hands.

Hanson led Wood until the stops on Sunday. Thereafter Ric was unstoppable and Bryant ousted Pochciol from second. Patrick Watts and John Spiers enjoyed a heady Group 1 Capri tussle, in which Watts's Levis Frank & Jeans car lost out to Spiers's Hermetite version when it ran out of fuel.

The HSCC Guards Trophy round reminded older onlookers of the BARC's Castrol/Motoring News sportscar races of the early '70s in which obsolete Chevron B6s and B8s featured. They are now at the sharp end, although once Graeme Dodd had relayed son James in their Ginetta G16, intermediate leader James Schryver (B8) was destined for silver. Yorkshiremen John Waggitt – on his Thruxton debut – and Peter Needham made it a three-marque podium with the former's Lenham.

The GT section was pretty intense, John

Spiers earning top honours in his thunderous TVR Griffith. In the Lotus Elan class, defending champion John Davison (Ian Walker Racing Gold Bug tribute 26R) was pressed extremely hard by local ace Paul Tooms who, having been hindered by pesky Chevrons, went out when a driveshaft let go at Allard.

Star of the Spirit of Thruxton single-seater races, which drew a small two-litre field, was UK-born Australian Stephen Weller's works March 722-5 – in which Niki Lauda finished third behind champion Ronnie Peterson and Francois Cevert in the venue's European F2 round in 1972.

Although the 'soft' BDA-engined car was ultimately hobbled by fuel-pump issues, Weller ran second on Sunday, behind runaway winner Andy 'Ginetta' Smith, whose Saturday debut in the F3 March 783-2 was curtailed by electrical failure, benefiting Paul Smith (ex-Didier Theys Ralt RT3) with whom he'd been dicing.

With Andy charging from the back, Paul Smith was leading on Sunday when a broken damper forced retirement. Andy lapped ever quicker to claim the Jochen Rindt Memorial Trophy. Two exemplary drives by Scott Blakeney in dad Pat's FF2000 Delta netted fine runner-up placings, over Tom Smith (Royale RP27) and Chris Levy (Van Diemen RF83) respectively.

MARCUS PYE



Chandhok thrilled
in Williams FW08C

JONES



Morgan won in
Wood's Capri

JONES

DONINGTON PARK WEEKEND WINNERS

BRITISH SUPERKART GP DIVISION 1
Peter Elkmann (Anderson/VM)

BRITISH SUPERKART GP F125 OPEN
Liam Morley (MS Kart/TM)

BRITISH SUPERKART GP FOR F250/F450
Jordan Forde (Anderson/DEA)

CLASSIC FORMULA FORD 1600
Race 1 Benn Tilley (Merlyn Mk20)
Race 2 Benn Tilley (Merlyn Mk20)

CLUBMANS CHAMPIONSHIP
Race 1 Clive Wood (Mallock Mk23)
Race 2 Clive Wood (Mallock Mk23)
Race 3 Clive Wood (Mallock Mk23)

EUROPEAN SUPERKARTS
Race 1 Peter Elkmann (Anderson/VM)
Race 2 Peter Elkmann (Anderson/VM)

**F250 NATIONAL/DIVISION 1 UK/
F450 NATIONAL**
Race 1 Jordan Forde (Anderson/DEA)
Race 2 Liam Fox (Anderson/FPE)

KUMHO BMWs
Race 1 James Card (BMW E46 M3)
Race 2 Piers Reid (BMW E46 M3)

MAX5 CHAMPIONSHIP
Race 1 Paul Roddison (Mazda MX-5 Mk4)
Race 2 Paul Roddison (Mazda MX-5 Mk4)

MG OWNERS CLUB
Race 1 Martin Willis (MG F)
Race 2 Steve Darbey (MG ZR)

MIGHTY MINIS
Race 1 Dave Rees (Super Mighty Mini)
Race 2 Dave Rees (Super Mighty Mini)

NATIONAL F125 OPEN
Race 1 Matt Robinson (Anderson/Redspeed)
Race 2 Chris Needham (Anderson/IAME)

For full results visit:
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Elkmann in Anderson/VM
won 40th anniversary
Superkart Grand Prix

Elkmann crushes opposition to win Superkart Grand Prix

**DONINGTON PARK
BARC
JUNE 2-3**

Prior to the British Superkart Grand Prix at Donington Park, it seemed as though the drivers had privately agreed that whoever should win must do so in crushing fashion.

Nowhere was that more evident than with Peter Elkmann. Already a two-time victor in the event, the ex-Formula 3 Euro Series race winner celebrated the GP's 40th anniversary by reaping maximum rewards.

Elkmann was untouchable during the headline race for 100bhp Division 1 karts, capable of 140mph, and won by nearly 10 seconds from fellow German and Anderson/VM driver Andreas Jost.

Although Jost was quicker away at the start, Elkmann occupied the inside line into Redgate and held on to first. A loss of water that resulted in overheating curtailed Liam Morley's race, having started third and briefly passed Jost.

Elkmann was as much as 1.3s per lap faster than the rest of the field and he duly cleared off into the distance. "It was absolutely a

fantastic weekend for us," he said.

"Maximum points, winning the GP, pole position and fastest lap. There was nothing more to dream about before this weekend."

His triumph in the blue-riband race added to taking both European Superkart victories during the championship's opening round. Despite smaller winning margins, he looked just as comfortable as he led home Czech Adam Kout (the 2007 Swiss Formula Renault champion) each time.

Also winning in a bruising fashion, Australian Jordan Forde was a massive 13s clear of Paul Platt in the GP race for F250/450 karts come the chequered flag. That followed on from taking the spoils in the first British National F250/450 race, although his fortunes took a downward turn when a broken ignition switch sustained on the green-flag lap of race two meant he dived into the pitlane from what would have been pole. Second-starting Liam Fox instead claimed top spot.

The only exception in the GP trend of dominant victories was during the F125 Open race, in which just 0.037s separated Chris Needham from nipping champion Liam Morley's victory, Matt Robinson having won the previous day's race.

While it may have been the kart races that topped the billing, the Mighty Minis provided the pick of the action with Dave Rees's brace belying two frenetic battles. In the opening race, he led into Redgate but David Kirkpatrick and Alex Comis flanked him under braking into the Melbourne Hairpin. Rees recovered with a superior run into the final corner and survived further threats to take his first championship race



Rees twice headed
Mighty Mini pack

win, which he dedicated to his late mother.

Anyone of the top nine looked in contention in race two, until Greg Jenkins, Mark Ditchburn and Steven Rideout collided at Melbourne and brought out the safety car. Rees led at the restart but a last-lap pass from Comis appeared to have denied him. But Comis was slapped with a track-limits penalty, which relegated him to fourth, although he only learned of his costly indiscretion after returning to the pits.

A safety car called to retrieve bodywork on track allowed Benn Tilley to close and then pass the Van Diemen RF80 of Ben Tinkler in the opening Classic Formula Ford 1600 race. A clean getaway in race two left Tilley unchallenged into Redgate, and from there the Merlyn Mk20 driver added a second win.

MATT KEW



HAWKINS

Lloyd on top as TCR development continues

**BRANDS HATCH
BRSCC
JUNE 2-3**

Renault became the seventh manufacturer to be represented on the TCR UK grid as Alex Morgan's Megane joined the fray at Brands Hatch last weekend.

The Swiss Wolf-Power Racing team is running the new Vukovic Motorsport-developed car in TCR Germany, but teething troubles at the Oschersleben opener led to it skipping the next round. It went back to the test bench, before travelling to the UK in preparation for the third round of TCR Germany at the Red Bull Ring on June 10.

"We didn't seem far away at the Balance of Performance test in Valencia, but when we got to Oschersleben we had a few issues with the power delivery and the driveability of the car," says Morgan, who was runner-up in the 2013 Renault UK Clio Cup and drove a SEAT for Wolf-Power in TCR Germany last year.

"It was clear that we were not even in

the same ballpark as the other cars. We were down about 11km/h [7mph]. There were some issues that meant the engine would sacrifice power to save itself.

"The development started last year but after Valencia, when all the homologation details came through, we had to do a lot of re-working and, for some reason, the system just didn't work as we were expecting."

Developing a car in public is not easy, as DPE Motorsport has also found with its pair of Alfa Romeo Giuliettas (see page 50). Performance may not translate from test bed to race track as solving one problem can unmask another.

"We see it on the dyno, we are close to the SEAT now," says Wolf-Power team boss Adrian Wolf. "It's a big, big step forward. The data looks great today in the morning, but after four laps he started to push more, and after that we had a power-steering problem and boost problem.

"Maybe we need too much power for the power-steering so the power box says, 'Thank you, not with me,' and cuts

everything. So you have 200-and-something horsepower. Alex did a really good job with the lap time [in qualifying] because half of the lap he has not [even] 300bhp."

Morgan qualified 12th of the 14 cars, then made several pitstops during the races as he struggled to manhandle the car, allowing the team to perform further systems checks, eventually retiring from both. But he is convinced that it will be worth the effort.

"It's been difficult for us to do actual car set-up work because we've been so down on power," Morgan says. "I'm hoping now we actually start to unlock a bit more of the potential of the car because if you look at the build quality of it, it's absolutely fantastic – I've not seen anything like it.

"Things that I think will make the car better, Milenko [Vukovic] is more than happy to just get on the case and start developing. We've got to go through this phase now because it's not as tried and tested as the SEAT but it's just a matter of time and persevering."

At the head of the field, Daniel Lloyd continued his dominant form. The WestCoast Racing driver took his Volkswagen Golf to another pair of victories, stretching his winning streak to six races. Lloyd didn't have it all his own way, though, as first Ollie Taylor – in his new FK7 model Honda Civic – and then Carl Swift (Cupra) gave him a good run.

In the opener, Taylor moved ahead as Lloyd bogged down from pole position and was nudged into a half-spin by fourth qualifier Lewis Kent's Hyundai i30 N at



HAWKINS

BRANDS HATCH WEEKEND WINNERS

CATERHAM ACADEMY

Green Group Justin Heap

White Group Gregory Monks

CATERHAM SEVEN 270R

Race 1 Jamie Falvey

Race 2 Jamie Falvey

CATERHAM SEVEN 310R

Race 1 Alan Cooper

Race 2 Chris Rankin

Race 3 Christian Szaruta

CATERHAM ROADSPORT

Race 1 Daniel French

Race 2 James Murphy

HRDC ALLSTARS

Peter Chambers (Lotus Ford Cortina Mk1)

HRDC TOURING GREATS

James Colburn (Austin A40 Speedwell)

MAZDA MX-5 SUPERCUP

Race 1 Luke Herbert

Race 2 Luke Herbert

Race 3 James Blake-Baldwin

NATIONAL FORMULA FORD

Race 1 Niall Murray (Van Diemen RF99)

Race 2 Niall Murray (Van Diemen RF99)

Race 3 Neil MacLennan (Ray GR16)

TCR UK

Race 1 Daniel Lloyd (Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR)

Race 2 Daniel Lloyd (Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR)

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Druids. But the Yorkshireman hung on and chased the leader down, catching Taylor by surprise with a move at Clearways on lap five of 36. He then managed to build and sustain a two-second lead while struggling with tyre pick-up. Behind them, Kent secured a maiden podium from Lloyd's team-mate Jessica Backman, who benefited when Josh Price's Honda Civic lost power on the final lap.

In the reversed-grid race two, Lloyd carved through from ninth to challenge polesitter Swift. The Volkswagen dived inside at Graham Hill Bend, only for Swift to hit back at Surtees. Lloyd finally completed the move with an outside pass at Druids three laps later, but the tenacious Swift had impressed with his pace and racecraft. Sadly, he had no reward as later contact with Andreas Backman (VW Golf GTI) at Druids ended both their races.

That promoted Jessica Backman to second and Howard Fuller (Honda Civic) to third, maiden podiums for both. Taylor's threat had been blunted by early contact knocking his tracking askew, while Kent went backwards with a return of the tyre delamination issues he suffered at Knockhill.

MARK PAULSON

MURRAY TURNS THE SCREW



Foster pressured
Murray in race two

Niall Murray's crushing pace meant that the rest of the National Formula Ford Championship field was fighting for second in their opening two races. Murray's Van Diemen RF99 took the first by nearly six seconds from Joey Foster (Ray GR08), who evoked memories of his latest Festival triumph with his pass on Michael Eastwell (Spectrum 011C). On this occasion, though, not only did he brave it around Paddock Hill Bend, he also had to hang on around the outside of Druids before completing the manoeuvre.

Foster kept Murray in his sights in race two, but was unable to mount a challenge for victory as the opener's podium was repeated. Points leader Murray rose from eighth to third in the reversed-grid race three, his task made harder by yellow flags. Polesitter Neil MacLennan led from lights to flag in his Cliff Dempsey Racing Ray GR16, having progressed from the back of the grid in race two. He had stuttered to retirement after running second in the opener; initially suspecting a carburettor problem, MacLennan had in fact run out of fuel after the race was extended by a safety car period. Hugo Bentley-Ellis followed MacLennan home, his maiden National FF1600 podium.

The large Caterham 310R entry required a two-from-three race format, with Alan Cooper ducking out of Lee Bristow's slipstream to take the first by 0.04s after a thrilling battle also involving Chris Hutchinson and Gordon Sawyer, until championship leader Sawyer spun. Bristow was beaten by Christian Szaruta

by an almost identical margin in race three, which was shortened after Nathan Bell's engine blow-up led to a multi-car accident on the run to Graham Hill Bend. Chris Rankin won a typically close race two from Szaruta and Cooper.

The closest finish of the weekend, though, was in Caterham Roadsport, when James Murphy held off Caterham CEO Graham Macdonald to win the second race by just 0.016s. Early leader Daniel French was third, having dropped to eighth when momentarily stuck in second gear exiting Clearways. French had taken a more comfortable victory in race one, from Dan Halstead and Murphy.

Pete Walters lost the opening Caterham 270R race after being slapped with a 10s penalty for excessively blocking Jamie Falvey on the run to the flag. Such was the pair's advantage that Walters kept second. They had duked throughout, with Walters moving ahead when Falvey was baulked by a backmarker. It was a similar story in race two, with Falvey prevailing.

Reigning champion Luke Herbert added two more wins to his tally in the Mazda MX-5 Supercup, holding off Jack Harding and James Blake-Baldwin in race one. The following pair's order was swapped in race two, where Herbert admitted he was helped by numerous yellow flags allowing him to take better lines for defending the available overtaking spots.

Blake-Baldwin claimed a more frantic race three, spiced up by a top-eight grid-reversal. He sealed the win with identical lunges on both Aidan Hills and then Jon Greensmith at Paddock Hill, as Herbert could only manage fourth.

James Colburn took his Austin A40 to victory in the HRDC Touring Greats, passing Ding Boston's 1959 Riley 1.5 and the 1962 Alfa Romeo Giulietta Ti of Gavin Watson after the pitstops. Neil Brown was closing on Boston in second when he spun his Austin A35, but recovered to third.

MARK PAULSON



French (l) and Murphy (c)
were Roadsport winners



Harker takes MGF 20-year anniversary race

SILVERSTONE
MGCC
JUNE 2-3

There is never a shortage of attractions at Silverstone's MG Live, but this time one stood apart, with a special race open to all competition MGFs and TFs to mark the 20th anniversary of the BRDC's MGF Cup and MG Car Club's Abingdon Trophy.

The MGF Cup was a famous big-budget series supporting British Formula 3 and GT; it even supported the British Grand Prix in 1998 and '99. The Abingdon Trophy ran in parallel for club competitors with roadgoing vehicles, before the two series were merged into the MG Trophy in the 2000s.

The anniversary race was the work of MG stalwart David Coulthard, who owns one of the remaining Cup cars, which he drove in the anniversary race.

"That's how the ball got going – my Cup car," says Coulthard. "I noticed that it was coming up to the 20th anniversary from 1998 to 2018, so I thought it would be a good idea to mark it.

"Championship coordinators that do this week in, week out, I take my cap off to them. I've found it such hard work to motivate the drivers, and identify who the drivers are and

keep them informed of what's going on.

"There hasn't been an abundance of MGFs racing so it was always a bit of a tall order of trying to identify the cars. Many of the Cup cars have migrated to Australia and the roadgoing cars were a little thin on the ground."

Anniversary race winner Jonathan Harker paid tribute to Coulthard: "He deserves a trophy for doing that. I'm very grateful to him; I think we all are."

The MGF Cup provided a springboard for the careers of a number of notable drivers during its existence, including future British Touring Car Championship race winners.

"People like Warren Hughes who won the MGF Cup in 1999 – he moved onto touring cars and racing the sportscar for MG at Le Mans," Coulthard explains. "Also people like Dave Loudoun, who will race anything with a Rover badge on the front of it, and Paul O'Neill who is commentating on touring cars, he was a driver in 1999 and 2000. It's been a springboard for a few people."

Harker led the anniversary race from lights to flag after poleman Phil Standish pitted at the end of the formation lap with fuel-injection problems. But Harker's race was far from trouble-free.

"[Second-placed Brian Butler] gave me a workout I wasn't really expecting," he says. "I did have a problem three laps from the end – a coolant hose had gone and the inside of the car steamed up. I couldn't see so I had to back off. I thought I don't want to lose the race on the basis of something that insignificant.

"I was desperately trying to wipe the windscreen and the car was smelling

really badly inside of something burning. I don't think I would have done one more lap with it like that."

Butler limited Adam Key to third – a long overdue battle for MGF enthusiasts, as the pair missed each other in the Cup by a year. "We got a very good reaction from the crowd," Coulthard smiles. "Everybody gave us a good wave at the end."

He admits, though, it was "slightly disappointing" to have an 11-car grid. "I managed to identify about 45 cars in the UK that could race," he continues. "I was hoping we'd get around 30. The MG Owners' Club had a clashing meeting at Donington – it was just one of those unavoidable clashes. We were very keen to get the race here at MG Live."

The race was nevertheless considered a success and Coulthard is hopeful that an MGF series can again be established. "One of the ideas behind it is, if we round up enough cars, to see if we can actually get a championship together, along the lines of MG Trophy that runs the MG ZR," he explains. "But we'll see what happens."

Standish thinks it's important the MGF has its own category. "We often race against the front-wheel-drive ZRs and they are a lot more forgiving," he says. MGFs racing together means that we've all got the same problems."

Harker agrees and would be keen to support any future races. "They're not the easiest car," he admits. "They're quite quick in a straight line but they're a bit interesting in the corners. They're very quirky. I would love to think we could have more of these cars out in future and have single-marque races. It's a great thing to do."

GRAHAM KEILLOH



McCARTHY FIGHTBACK SECURES HONOURS



Spencer (90), McCarthy (93)
and Fowler set pace in BCV8s

Both MG BCV8 races started in similar fashion, with poleman Russell McCarthy losing out and then having to fight his way back against Neil Fowler and Rob Spencer.

Fowler led race one until lap three of nine, when Spencer slipped inside at Brooklands. With McCarthy following a lap later, Spencer's lead was soon under threat. It was while lapping backmarkers that the decisive move was made. With Spencer baulked, McCarthy went around the outside at Becketts to lead onto Hangar Straight.

Despite a last-lap spin at Abbey, Spencer retained second, with Fowler completing the podium after spinning to within inches of the Wellington Straight wall.

Spencer was never headed in race two, with Fowler regaining second after McCarthy retired, having holed the oil cooler.

The concurrent Cockshoot Cup was won on both occasions by Ray Collier's ZR, despite a critically overheating engine.

After running side by side with Pete Morris down the Wellington Straight on the opening lap of the first Porsche Club race, reigning champion Mark McAleer showed a clean pair of heels to the rest of the field. Morris retained second until both he and third-placed Mike Price spun on oil on lap seven. Tom Bradshaw came out on top of an entertaining duel with Mark Sumpter for second, both counting themselves lucky not to have joined the spinners.

Sumpter's and Bradshaw's duel for race-two supremacy ended with contact at

Luffield on the penultimate lap. Sumpter had led from the start, but as Bradshaw challenged into Brooklands they rubbed doorhandles and made further contact with a backmarker into Luffield. Both were out, leaving Morris to take the victory from team-mate Chris Dyer and Kevin Harrison.

Graham Ross secured a winning double in the MG Trophy. Andy Spencer held a secure second, and William Payne snatched third from Doug Cole on the last tour.

Both Ross and Spencer held station from the start of race two. With Gary Wetton pulling off on the first lap, Cole got his revenge over Payne as he completed the podium finishers.

Jack Rawles's Austin-Healey 3000 had both Equipe Pre-63 and MGB races sewn up on the opening lap. Martin Brewer (Aston Martin Project 214) had to chase down the Healey of John Pearson before securing second. Bob Binfield kept Paul Kennelly at bay in an all-Jaguar E-type scrap for third, after Pearson had a couple of spins at Aintree.

In race two Brewer headed the pursuit of Rawles throughout, with Binfield third again after Pearson's early challenge faded.

It was one win each for the TVR Granturas of Will Penrose and Mark Ashworth in Equipe GTS. Penrose just retained a race-long lead in the opener over Ashworth, with Tom Smith's MGB winning the duel for third over Rod Begbie's TVR. It came down to the last lap in race two, though, with Smith leading to Luffield, before Ashworth took the outside to clinch the win from Smith, Penrose and Begbie.

Although Tom Stoten's Gunn was a lights-to-flag Sports 2000 winner, Michael Gibbins (MCR) had shadowed him throughout, until a last-lap collision in traffic put him out with a puncture and handed Tim Tudor second in his MCR.

PETER SCHERER



Stoten (1) won but
Gibbins (76) retired

WEEKEND
WINNERS

Collier triumphed in
Midget/Sprite Challenge

BMW & FIESTA/HOT HATCH
CHAMPIONSHIP

Race 1 Peter Cruickshank (Fiesta ST)

Race 2 Wayne MacCaulay (Fiesta ST)

ALLCOMERS

Dan Surridge (MG ZR 170)

EQUIPE GTS

Race 1 Will Penrose (TVR Grantura)

Race 2 Mark Ashworth (TVR Grantura)

EQUIPE PRE-63/EQUIPE MGB

Race 1 Jack Rawles (Austin-Healey 3000)

Race 2 Jack Rawles (Austin-Healey 3000)

ICONIC 50s

Steve Watton (Turner MkII)

MG BCV8/COCKSHOOT CUP

Race 1 Russell McCarthy (MGB GTV8)

Race 2 Rob Spencer (MGB GTV8)

MG CUP

Race 1 Alan Brooke (Rover Metro GTi)

Race 2 Alan Brooke (Rover Metro GTi)

MGF/TF ANNIVERSARY

Jonathan Harker (TF LE500)

MG TROPHY

Race 1 Graham Ross (ZR 190)

Race 2 Graham Ross (ZR 190)

MIDGET/SPRITE CHALLENGE

Stephen Collier (MG Midget)

PORSCHE CLUB

Race 1 Mark McAleer (996 C2)

Race 2 Pete Morris (997 C2S)

SPORTS 2000

Tom Stoten (Gunn TS11)

For full results visit:

www.tsl-timing.com



Morris won race two
after spin in opener

Nurburgring provides setting for one of truck racing's biggest events



TRUCK RACING'S CROWN

Formula 1 has the Monaco Grand Prix, endurance racing has the Le Mans 24 Hours, and IndyCar has the Indianapolis 500. And truck racing has the ADAC Truck Grand Prix. Although not as well known as the races forming motorsport's unofficial Triple Crown, the Nurburgring round of the FIA European Truck Racing Championship, which takes place on June 29-July 1 this year, is without doubt the discipline's crown-jewel event.

Given that truck racing didn't arrive in Europe until the mid-1980s, the German event first held in 1986 has to be considered old. It is also one of the biggest truck races, possibly the biggest of all.

According to ADAC's estimations, there are currently only around 75 eligible and race-ready trucks in Europe. Over 50 are part of the Nurburgring event, forming the grids of the FIA ETRC, as well as the supporting Mittelrhein Cup.

As with an increasing number of major motorsport events, there is more to the GP than just racing. It's held in the Eifel

mountains, where truck racing meets the trucking industry and trucking community, and there is as much happening off-track as there is on it. Last year the event, which is also the second-biggest commercial-vehicle fair in Germany, welcomed over 1200 trucks spread across five different camps. That number easily could have been exceeded if more space had been available.

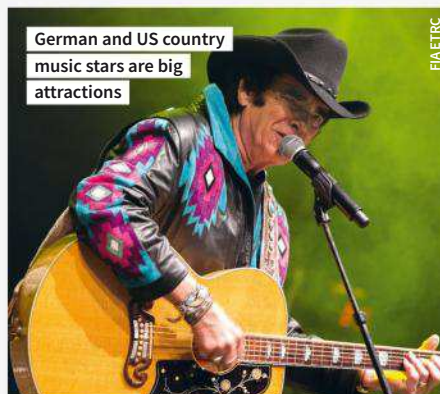
While racing takes place on the sprint configuration of the circuit, the neighbouring Mullenbachschleife is a home of a vibrant, three-day festival of trucking culture.

Once you're in the trucker camp, you'll find yourself walking through a tunnel formed of customised trucks facing each other. It may take you a while to realise that you're strolling on the track surface used by F1 as recently as 2013.

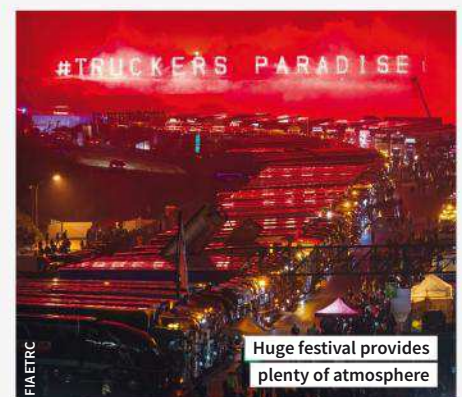
Some of the vehicles on display are unique works of art, making you appreciate the passion and hard work their owners have put into creating them.

As you move on, a huge open-air scene emerges. You've now reached the Dunlop

German and US country music stars are big attractions



#TRUCKERS PARADISE



Huge festival provides plenty of atmosphere



DOWN JEWEL

"IT WILL LEAVE YOU WONDERING WHY TRUCK RACING IS UNDERAPPRECIATED"

Kehre and that's where the heart of the festival is. While electronic music dominates at most truck shows and exhibitions these days, this festival has a more traditional feel to it.

Friday is for rock music, while country takes over on Saturday. Stars of the German country scene such as Tom Astor are among the headliners, but non-German-speaking audiences will also find something. Jessica Lynn, labelled America's newest country star, will perform for the second time in a row this year.

The weekend at the ADAC Truck Grand Prix is an eye-opening experience. It makes you realise that trucking is much more than just delivering goods. For thousands of people across Europe, trucking is a way of life. It will also leave you wondering why truck racing is so underappreciated. It tends to fly under the radar of major motorsport publications, including Autosport, and yet is able to attract crowds that some of the more conventional racing series can only dream of.

This weekend, the British Truck Racing Championship will be on the bill once again, bolstering the grid numbers of the Mittelrhein Cup. If you've never seen truck racing live before, there's no better way to start than with a trip to the Eifel mountains.

PIOTR MAGDZIARZ

HIGHLIGHT OF THE WEEK

THE WINDSOR INTERVIEWS

In this insightful six-part series, Peter Windsor sits down with motorsport luminaries David Hobbs, Patrick Tambay, Jackie Stewart, Nigel Mansell, Gordon Murray and Mauro Forghieri. Go to <http://bit.ly/thewindsorinterviews>

THIS WEEKEND'S EVENTS

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Canadian GP

Formula 1 World Championship

Rd 7/21

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

June 10

TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sunday 1630.

Radio BBC Radio 5 Live, Sunday 1830.

TV Highlights

Channel 4, Sunday 2240

Rally Italy-Sardinia

World Rally Championship

Rd 7/13

Alghero, Italy

June 7-10

TV Live BT Sport 1, Thursday 1800, Saturday 0730, 1500, Sunday 0830, 1100.

Red Bull TV, Saturday 1445. **TV Live**

coverage on wrc.com

All Live service

(available via WRC+).

TV Highlights

Motorsport.tv,

Friday, Saturday,

Sunday 2230

IndyCar Series

Rd 8/16

Texas Motor

Speedway, USA

June 9

TV Live BT Sport ESPN, Sunday 0100

Formula E

Rd 9/10

Zurich, Switzerland

June 10

TV Live Channel 5, Sunday 1630.

Eurosport 2,

Sunday 1700

World Rallycross

Rd 5/12

Hell, Norway

June 9-10

NASCAR Cup

Rd 15/36

Michigan, USA

June 10

TV Live Premier

Sports, Sunday 1830

Euroformula

Open

Rd 3/8

Spa, Belgium

June 9-10

TV Live BT Sport 2,

Saturday 1300. BT

Sport 3, Sunday 1215

International GT

Open

Rd 3/7

Spa, Belgium

June 9-10

TV Live BT Sport 2,

Saturday 1400. BT

Sport 3, Sunday 1315

TCR Europe

Rd 3/7

Spa, Belgium

June 9-10

TV Live Motorsport.

tv, Saturday 1610

ADAC GT Masters

Rd 3/7

Red Bull Ring, Austria

June 9-10

UK MOTORSPORT

Oulton Park TOCA

June 9-10

BTCC, F4, Carrera

Cup, Clio Cup, Ginetta

GT4, Ginetta Junior

TV Live ITV4,

Sunday 1115

Silverstone BRSCC

June 9-10

British GT, F3, Ginetta

GT5/Ginetta G40,

Caterham 420R,

Ginetta Racing Drivers

Club, Mini Challenge

Brands Hatch

MSVR

June 9-10

American SpeedFest VI:

NASCAR Euro Series,

Formula 5000, FF1600,

Legends, Bernie's V8s/

Sports Racing and GT,

Modified Saloon Cars,

Tin Tops

Snetterton BRSCC

June 9-10

TVRs, Open Sports, ST-XR Challenge, Production GTIs, Fun Cup

Rockingham 750MC

June 9-10

Clio 182s, Club Enduro,

Toyota MR2s,

Roadsports, 750

Formula, Bikesports,

Sport Specials, Armed

Forces Race

Pembrey BARC

June 9-10

Classic VWs, Welsh

Sports and Saloons,

Citroen C1s, BARC

Saloons

Mondello Park MEC

June 9-10

Formula Vee, Formula

Sheane, BOSS Ireland,

Touring Cars, SEATs,

Historic Racing Cars,

Fiesta Zetecs, Fiesta

STs, Legends Cars,

ASK Supercars

Mallory Park CMMC

June 10

Classic and Modern

Motorsport Festival:

FF1600, 70s Road

Sports, Historic Road

Sports, 500cc F3,

Northern Sports/

Saloons

FINISHING STRAIGHT





FROM THE ARCHIVE

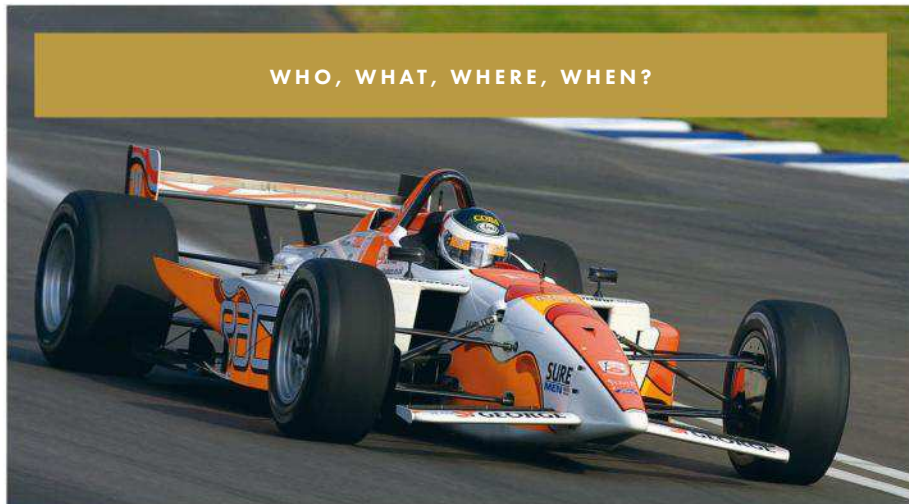
Ari Vatanen hurries his David Sutton-run Ford Escort RS1800 past the monastery in the Meteora rocks on the 1980 Acropolis Rally. The Greek event was the Finn's only win of the season – but he did it in style, leading for all but the first two of 56 stages. After taking almost 13 hours to complete the route, Vatanen headed Timo Salonen's Datsun 160J home by 2m42s. Markku Alen's Fiat 131 Abarth was a further 4m22s back.

McKLEIN PHOTOGRAPHY

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

QUIZ

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN?



WHO IS THIS?

Putting nominative determinism on pole position, this son of the city of drizzle was struck down in his prime.

In convoy with familial contemporaries, he travelled to an even wetter place to make his name, partnering with a privateer with big ambitions to get a toehold on the ladder.

A move to a unique champion's team was a step forward, but it was in the Old Man's endurance squad that he caught the eye.

After the inevitable parting of the ways with his famously prickly boss, he took a six-sided route into the viper's nest and a shot at glory.

He hit the highest high at home but, when a returning great provided the motivation, results fell flat.

Any possible redemption was denied when tragedy struck as he was leaving his homeland during a particularly dark period for the sport.

ON THIS DAY

1 Which marque recorded its first grand prix fastest lap on this day in 1970?

2 That race was also the last to be held on the classic layout of which still-active venue?

3 Which Japanese ex-F1 racer scored his only Indycar top-three on this day in 2003?

4 Niall MacKenzie scored his first 500cc 'bike GP podium on this day in 1987. How many top-flight podiums did he manage?

5 On this day in 2009, Tony Stewart posted his first NASCAR Cup win as an owner/driver. Who was the previous driver to do that over a decade earlier?

NAME THE HELMET



LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS

Who, what, where, when Colin McRae, Ferrari 550 Maranello, June 12-13 2004. **Who is this?** Juha Kankkunen.

On this day 1) Riccardo Patrese. 2) BRM. 3) Watkins Glen. 4) Patrick Tambay. 5) Wayne Gardner/Didier de Radigues.

Name the helmet Andrea de Cesaris.

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE



**CANADIAN GRAND PRIX:
THE THRILLER IN MONTREAL**

COATES



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 **AUTOSPORT**

LE MANS 2018

EVERY CAR, EVERY DRIVER

YOUR
FREE
56
PAGE
LE MANS
GUIDE



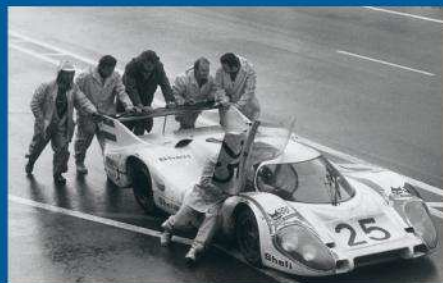
PLUS



**WHY BUTTON AND ALONSO
ARE TAKING ON THE 24 HOURS**



**HOW JAGUAR ALMOST
LOST IN 1988**



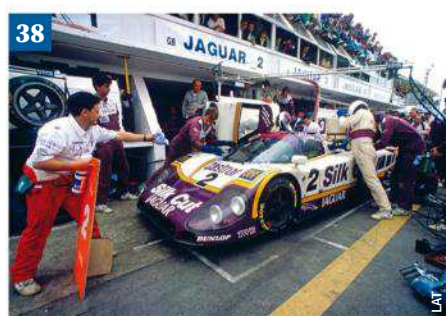
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TIMETABLE

WEDNESDAY JUNE 13

1600-2000 Le Mans 24 Hours
free practice

2030-2130 Road to Le Mans
free practice 1

2200-0000 Le Mans 24 Hours
qualifying 1

THURSDAY JUNE 14

0900-1000 Road to Le Mans
free practice 2

1030-1115 Aston Martin
Racing Le Mans
Festival free
practice 1

1155-1240 Aston Martin
Racing Le Mans
Festival free
practice 2

1330-1350 Road to Le Mans
qualifying 1

1405-1425 Road to Le Mans
qualifying 2

1530-1630 Aston Martin
Racing Le Mans
Festival qualifying

1730-1825 Road to Le Mans
race 1

1900-2100 Le Mans 24 Hours
qualifying 2

2200-0000 Le Mans 24 Hours
qualifying 3

SATURDAY JUNE 16

0900-0945 Le Mans 24 Hours
warm-up

1015-1100 Aston Martin
Racing Le Mans
Festival race

1130-1225 Road to Le Mans
race 2

1500 Le Mans 24 Hours start

SUNDAY JUNE 17

1500 Le Mans 24 Hours finish

AUTOSPORT

LE MANS 2018

4 THE F1 INVASION

WHY F1 STARS ARE DOING LE MANS

Fernando Alonso and Jenson Button are just two of the F1 racers on this year's grid

10 TOYOTA'S CURSE

HOW ITS TRYING TO BEAT THE RACE

Unusual issues have stopped Toyota in the past, so its test programme has been different for 2018

14 BATTLE FOR LMP2

LIGIER'S ATTEMPT TO GET IN THE MIX

The secondary prototype class has been all about ORECA, but it could now have a rival

16 LAMMERS AT 24

THE DUTCH LEGEND LOOKS BACK

Jan Lammers will start his 24th Le Mans this month and picks out some of his highlights

18 ASTON'S NEW CAR

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE VANTAGE

Last year's GTE Pro winner Aston Martin returns with a new racer, but it's been tough going so far

22 TEAM BY TEAM

SPOTLIGHT ON THE 60 ENTRIES

Your guide to all the cars and drivers that will tackle the 86th Le Mans 24 Hours

38 JAG'S 1988 SECRET

ONE GEARCHANGE FROM DISASTER

The story of how Jaguar's famous '88 victory almost didn't happen – and the crucial cog

42 BEST LM LOSERS

GREATEST DRIVERS NEVER TO WIN

Some just don't get the luck. Here's our list of those who should have won Le Mans but didn't

48 OVER TO YOU

FAN MEMORIES FROM LA SARTHE

We asked you for your best Le Mans memories – here's what you told us

50 SPECTATOR GUIDE

WHERE TO GO AND WHAT TO WATCH

Porsche ace Nick Tandy talks you around the circuit on which he took victory in 2015

52 WINNERS & STATS

VICTORS AND CURRENT POINTS

Every Le Mans winner since 1923, plus the 2018-19 World Endurance Championship standings

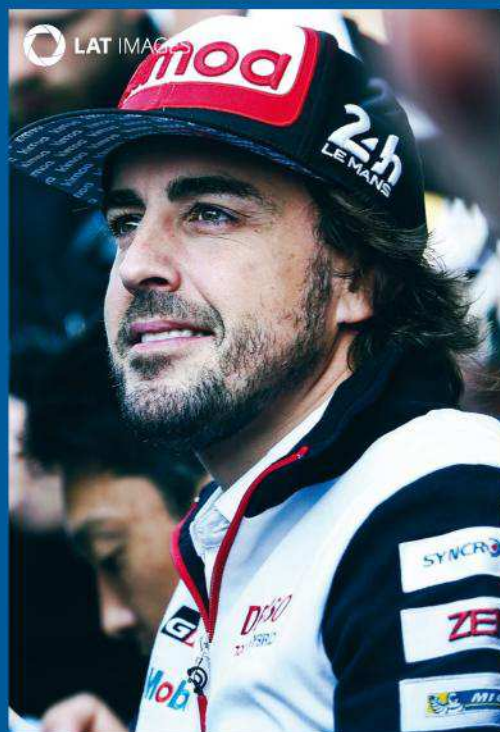
54 ENTRY LIST

ALL THE CARS AND DRIVERS

Car number, driver, team, manufacturer and class information for every 2018 entry

WHY I'M RACING AT LE MANS

This year's Le Mans will feature a starry line-up of ex-Formula 1



FERNANDO ALONSO

#8 Toyota TS050 HYBRID
F1 starts 297
Sportscar starts 2

There may only have been one Spanish winner in the history of the Le Mans 24 Hours, but Fernando Alonso knows all about the big race. He couldn't help but, because one of his oldest friends in motorsport, Antonio Garcia, has been a regular at the French enduro since 2006.

"We've known each other for maybe 28 or 30 years," explains two-time Formula 1 world champion Alonso of the Corvette Racing man, who will be making his 12th start at the 24 Hours this year. "I follow him every time and we talk a lot."

Alonso admits that he started thinking about racing at Le Mans some time ago,

long before the idea of trying to emulate Graham Hill by winning the French enduro, the Monaco Grand Prix and the Indianapolis 500 entered his head. He says "Le Mans came first", and then thoughts of the triple crown began to grow.

"From about 2013, it was an idea I had in my head and I was close on a couple of occasions when I was at Ferrari," he says, "but Ferrari was not very keen on sharing me with another brand. Then in 2014 I was waving the flag and in 2015 I was 99.9% certain to drive."

Those are references to his invite to be honorary starter and how close he was to a seat in Porsche's third 919 Hybrid. That spot

eventually went to Nico Hulkenberg, who claimed victory with Nick Tandy and Earl Bamber, after contractual wrangles prevented Alonso from taking up the offer.

Alonso is now realising his dream, but he won't be driving for Toyota just at Le Mans. He is contesting the full eight-race World Endurance Championship superseason that encompasses both the 2018 and '19 editions of Le Mans.

"The original idea was just to do Le Mans," says the Spaniard of his initial conversations with Toyota. "But if you do Le Mans, Spa is sort of mandatory [as a warm-up]. And then with the changes to the calendar with the

"It was an idea I had and I was close on a couple of occasions at Ferrari"

FERNANDO ALONSO

NS – BY THE F1 BIG SHOTS

racers, but what's the big attraction for them? They tell Autosport



TIME IN THE SIM

Fernando Alonso has become a regular on the Toyota Motorsport GmbH sim in the run-up to the start of the WEC and his first Le Mans.

"I'm not a big fan of the simulator as a tool for setting up and optimising the car," he explains. "I don't trust the results. The tests we do in the Toyota simulator are more about driver training. It is useful for optimising the driver, rather than the car, which is the way we are using it."

That, he says, includes "learning about all the issues the car can have and how to bring it back to the pitlane". He reckons it can also offer vital shortcuts in how to understand the traffic he will encounter when he gets to the race.

"The more training you do, the better prepared you will be," continues Alonso. "There will be different challenges in the real car. Here the slower car is on a reference lap. In the race, the driver ahead might react

differently. He might close the door on you.

"The reality might be different, but the simulator puts a reference in your mind, which is very useful."

Alonso has left no stone unturned in his preparations. He's even been poring over in-car footage from the #8 Toyota from last year – a total of 22 hours so far. That's six hours from Spa and all 16 hours available from Le Mans. He admits it hasn't exactly been riveting viewing, however.

superseason, it was only three more races this year. A full season became more attractive to me and to the team because they wanted continuity of the driver line-up. It worked for both sides."

It also gives Alonso two chances to win Le Mans in his bid for the unofficial triple crown of motorsport. That, he insists, wasn't a motivating factor.

Yes, he wants to win Le Mans, but he also wants "to try to be world champion".



JENSON BUTTON

#11 SMP Racing BRE-AER BR1

F1 starts 306

Sportscar starts 4

Jenson Button admits that he's always had a latent desire to compete in the Le Mans 24 Hours, an event he describes as "one of the biggest races in the world". But it wasn't on his radar at the end of last year as he worked out where he wanted to race after a sabbatical following his retirement from F1.

The 2009 F1 world champion opted to maintain his links with Honda and race in the Super GT series, though there were discussions about joining the Japanese manufacturer's Acura brand for its IMSA

SportsCar Championship assault with Penske Racing. As for Le Mans, he says, "I really didn't think there was an opportunity for me".

That changed with a phone call from James Rossiter. An old friend from BAR days, when he was part of the F1 team's roster of test drivers, Rossiter had been running with the ByKolles privateer P1 team and had seen SMP Racing's new BR Engineering BR1 chassis on track.

"He told me that he'd seen the car testing at Aragon and Portimao and said, 'You've got to get yourself in it,'" recalls Button. "He reckoned that it was working really well out on circuit and he thought they had a seat for me.

"I thought, 'Oh, hello.' I got my manager to call them and we came to an agreement

pretty quickly that I'd do Le Mans and the WEC superseason."

Button explains that the chance was too good to turn down – he didn't want to wait to fulfil his ambition to race at Le Mans: "The superseason includes two Le Mans races, so if I didn't jump in now, I was really looking at 2020 before I could get there. And I'll be 40 by then."

Button insists he isn't looking at his drive in the AER-engined BR1 as a lead-in to a possible deal with a manufacturer in the future.

"At this stage of my career, I'm only thinking about the now," he says. "This year is a fantastic opportunity for the privateers and I'm committed to going to Le Mans to challenge for victory and hopefully stand on the podium."



JUAN PABLO MONTOYA

#32 United Autosports
Ligier-Gibson JSP217
F1 starts 94
Sportscar starts 14

Juan Pablo Montoya is his usual insouciant self when talking about his Le Mans debut with the United Autosports team. He may be a full-time sportscar racer now in the IMSA ranks with the Penske Acura team, but he didn't set out to contest the race this year.

The link with the Anglo-American team is obvious. He knows its co-owner, McLaren F1 boss Zak Brown, who made the approach when United needed a high-profile driver to satisfy some sponsors who had been on its

Ligiers when Alonso had joined the team at the Daytona 24 Hours IMSA opener in January.

"I've known Zak for years and he asked me if I was interested," explains the former Williams and McLaren F1 driver. "I said that he didn't really need to ask, and one thing led to the other. It's something I haven't done before, so it's a good opportunity."

Montoya, who tested a Porsche LMP1 back in 2015 in what was essentially a PR opportunity, is already an experienced sportscar driver with three overall wins at Daytona with Chip Ganassi Racing, starting with a victory on his debut in 2007. But again, he didn't set out to race in the Florida enduro with the team with which he was then racing

in NASCAR's premier division.

"Honestly, being at Ganassi, you'd get an email saying we need you on the track on this day," explains Montoya. "I don't think the conversation was ever, 'Hey, do you want to run Daytona with us?' It was, 'We'll see you there.' But it was always fun and a good race to win."

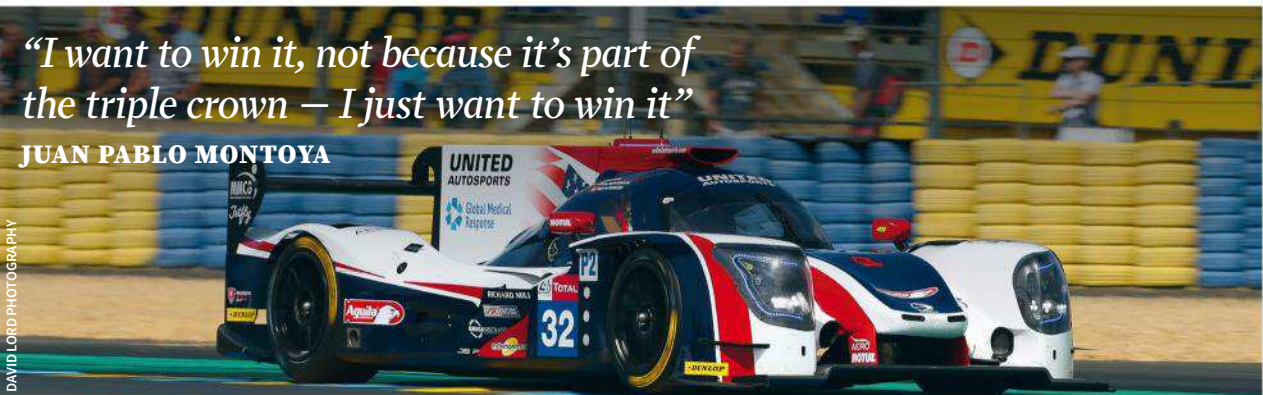
Montoya reckons he isn't motivated by the unofficial triple crown of motorsport, although with wins already at the Indy 500 and the Monaco Grand Prix he's one step closer to emulating Hill's unique record than Alonso.

"I want to win it, but not because it's part of the triple crown," he says. "I just want to win it."

"I want to win it, not because it's part of the triple crown — I just want to win it"

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA

DAVID LORD PHOTOGRAPHY



FELIPE NASR

#47 Villorba Corse Dallara-Gibson P217
F1 starts 39
Sportscar starts 11

Former Sauber driver Felipe Nasr got to sample arguably the second biggest 24-hour sportscar race in the world as a 19-year-old. He raced at the Daytona 24 Hours in 2012 after claiming the Sunoco Challenge prize drive during his successful assault on the British F3 Championship in '11. It sowed the seed in his mind of maybe one day racing at Le Mans.

"I did Daytona on my way to F1 and always had it in the back of my mind that I'd like to go to Le Mans at some point," says Nasr, who has just started his first full season of sportscar racing in IMSA with the Action Express Racing

"I always had it in the back of my mind that I'd like to go to Le Mans"

FELIPE NASR



DAVID LORD PHOTOGRAPHY

team. "Maybe it came a little forward in my mind when I signed to do the full IMSA season this year. Getting the call from Villorba Corse to do Le Mans and the rest of the European Le Mans season was a nice surprise. It's a great opportunity for me in my first

full year of sportscar racing."

Nasr sees his future in the WEC: "This will be good for my CV by giving me the opportunity to get Le Mans under my belt and learn the track. If more manufacturers join in the future, they'll want drivers with Le Mans experience."

PASTOR MALDONADO

#31 DragonSpeed ORECA-Gibson 07
F1 starts 95
Sportscar starts 1

Pastor Maldonado makes no bones about the fact that he's starting a new chapter of his career in the wake of a couple of seasons on the sidelines following his final year in F1 with Lotus in 2015. It was time, he says, to get back in the saddle

after deciding to back off and spend more time with his family.

The winner of the 2012 Spanish Grand Prix with Williams had become a father for the second time, but by the end of last year was "looking around for other experiences and thinking about coming back to racing".

An approach from DragonSpeed boss Elton Julian through a mutual friend has resulted in a full superseason campaign in the LMP2

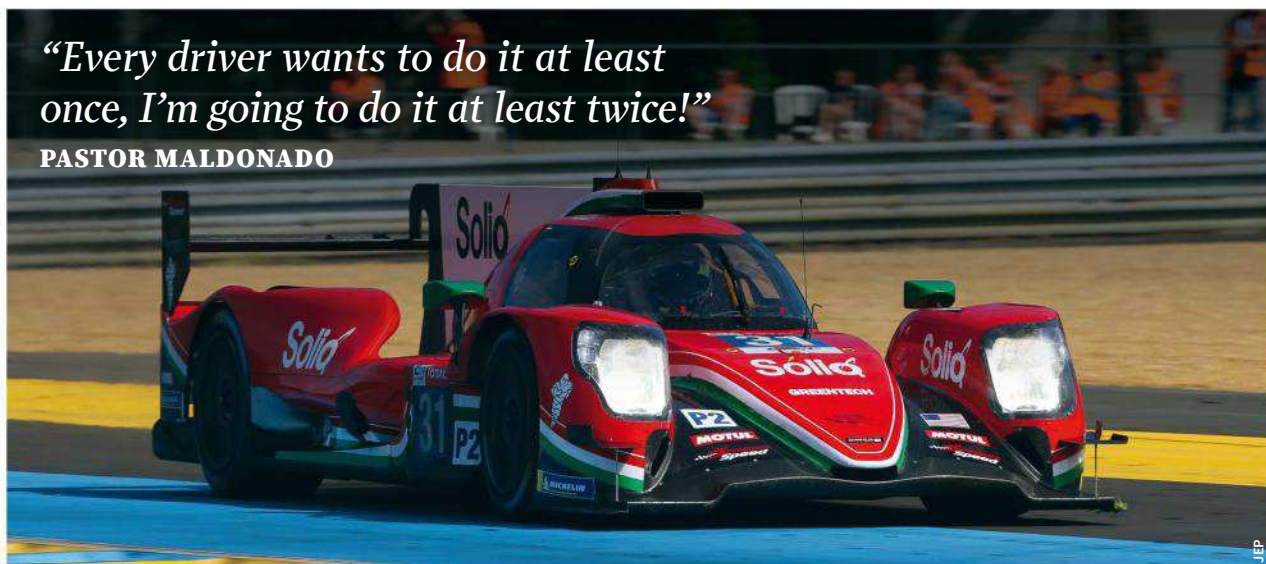
ranks. He says it's "a good place to start and gain experience" as he kicks off his career in sportscar racing.

But he'll also be ticking a box by racing at Le Mans. "It's an event I've always watched on TV, because it's quite a big deal in Venezuela and I think the country is getting behind me for this one," he says.

"Every driver wants to do it at least once, and I'm definitely going to do it at least twice!"

"Every driver wants to do it at least once, I'm going to do it at least twice!"

PASTOR MALDONADO



ADVICE FROM A LE MANS WINNER

The key for the newcomers to Le Mans, especially those coming directly from Formula 1 with limited sportscar experience, is not so much learning the track or understanding the cars. It's working out how to get cleanly through the traffic with the least time lost — and the least risk taken.

That's the verdict of Porsche star Nick Tandy, who partnered Formula 1 driver Nico Hulkenberg to victory in 2015.

"It comes down to

understanding the level of risk that needs to be taken," explains the Briton, who is back in the GTE Pro ranks this year after Porsche's withdrawal from LMP1.

"You could come into Le Mans thinking that it's all about sticking around to the end, and drop a minute by not taking enough risks. You might never get that

back. Or you can take too much risk and crash out in the first corner or the first hour. It's about managing the risk. You have to strike the right compromise."

Getting on top of the track and the cars is relatively easy, although Tandy suggests picking up the nuances of the track can take time.

"Learning the circuit in itself isn't that difficult because there aren't that many corners for such a long track," he says, "but you have to work out the intricacies of the place. You have to get your head around how much you can use the kerbs and the extremities of the track."



"Having done two races means I feel as prepared as I can be for Le Mans"

PAUL DI RESTA



PAUL DI RESTA

**#22 United Autosports
Ligier-Gibson JSP217
F1 starts 59
Sportscar starts 2**

Mercedes DTM driver Paul di Resta has always wanted to do Le Mans. It's just that an opportunity had never presented itself before, nor was he in a position to pursue one.

"I was so focused on what I was doing in F1 that Le Mans never really came into the

equation," says the Scot, who spent three seasons as a full-time grand prix racer with Force India in 2011-13. "And when you are working with one manufacturer in a particular series it limits opportunities with other manufacturers."

The chance to finally race at Le Mans came via United co-owner Zak Brown. A deal to race at Daytona in January was extended to include the Sebring and Watkins Glen enduros in March and June respectively, and again to

encompass a Le Mans drive alongside Filipe Albuquerque and Phil Hanson.

"Zak asked me if I fancied doing Daytona, and I said that I did," says di Resta. "The relationship has gone from strength to strength. Having done two races already means I feel as prepared as I can be for Le Mans."

Di Resta is also looking to the future, as his employer's time in DTM is ending. "You never know what will happen with me and Mercedes," he says. "My future is up for discussion."

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2015 winner
Tandy says key
is learning to
manage risk

LMP1

LMP2

GTE PRO

GTE AM

TOYOTA BIDS NOT TO BEAT ITSELF

There's no question the LMP1 class's only factory entry will have the fastest car in the race. Now it's been preparing for when things go wrong

GARY WATKINS





Has a team ever been so well-prepared for the Le Mans 24 Hours? That's a question that has to be asked about Toyota as it bids for an elusive first victory in the French enduro this year. The Japanese manufacturer hasn't just been pounding around the test tracks of Europe in the opening months of the year with its already-proven TS050 HYBRID; it has also been gearing up for the big race in an altogether different way. It has been preparing for the unexpected.

The task this time around, says Toyota Motorsport GmbH technical director Pascal Vasselon, is "to beat Le Mans" in a year when it has no factory opposition and is up against privateers only in LMP1. And that means reacting correctly to the kind of problems that deprived it of a clear-cut chance of victory in three of the past four editions of the great race.

"We failed through unexpected problems — what I would call Le Mans-specific problems — that we obviously did not handle correctly," explains Vasselon. "My personal feeling, looking at the past two years, is that we beat ourselves."

Vasselon is talking about a run of relatively minor issues — though ones that had major consequences — in 2014, '16 and '17 that pulled the rug from underneath Toyota when it was sitting pretty at the head of the field. The task for this year is to be able to overcome such problems should they occur.

Dealing with the unexpected has been top of Toyota's list as it prepares for Le Mans 2018. It explains a slightly eccentric routine during pre-season testing that has involved sending a car out with a tyreless rim, learning how to change components in the fastest possible time and making sure that each driver is *au fait* with the complicated systems of the twin-hybrid TS050.

THE GAME HAS CHANGED

The landscape has changed at the front of the World Endurance Championship for the 2018-19 'superseason'. Porsche's withdrawal from the LMP1 ranks at the end of last season, a year on from Audi's disappearance, means that Toyota is the clear favourite as the only manufacturer left standing in P1.

Manufacturers generally have the biggest budgets, the best organisation and strongest driver line-ups. All those things apply to Toyota this time as it goes up against Rebellion, SMP Racing, DragonSpeed, ByKolles and the Manor Ginetta team. But it also has an in-built advantage under the myriad technical agreements that cover the WEC superseason.

The promise of lap time parity made to the independent teams running non-hybrid LMP1 machinery on the announcement of the superseason last September wasn't quite what it seemed. The reality is that Toyota has been given an advantage of half a second per lap over the eight and a half miles of the Circuit de la Sarthe under the Equivalence of Technology rules being used to balance the hybrid and non-hybrid machinery.

The rulemakers — the Automobile Club de l'Ouest and the FIA — say that this is a necessary buffer to ensure that the rules breaks the privateers have been granted do not result in them going faster than Toyota. The Japanese manufacturer simply suggests that it wasn't going to agree to parity of lap times and had FIA statutes on rules stability on its side.

Toyota has made concessions, most dramatically in the number of laps the TS050s can go between pitstops. Last year, they hit 14 ►

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laps on occasion, but this year are limited to 11. The privateers are allowed to do just 10 green-flag laps on a tank of fuel.

Toyota has a threefold advantage at Le Mans. In addition to the pace and mileage advantages, the TS050s will spend less time in the pits. The time taken to refuel the two different types of P1 car have been set up to give Toyota a five-second margin.

CHANGE OF APPROACH

All this explains a change of approach for a manufacturer that will again be running two cars at Le Mans this year. The expansion to three entries for Le Mans was never destined to be continued. It was off the agenda even before Porsche's announcement that it wouldn't be returning to LMP1 this year.

"If you want to beat Porsche and Audi you have to outperform them," explains Vasselon. "Then you have to make this performance reliable. Testing before was all about mileage, mileage, mileage. This year performance has not been a priority. In the past we have not given a lot of time to the team to prepare for things that do not go as expected. This year has been the opposite. We have sacrificed mileage to give the team the opportunity to learn how to handle a car that comes back on three wheels, a car where everything blacks out on the driver."

Vasselon has invoked the word 'fake' from the 'fake-news' term of the moment to describe the kind of problems Toyota has been simulating during its three endurance tests leading up to the start of the WEC season at Spa last month. Running the car around with only three Michelin tyres is probably the most extreme example of the kind of fake problem it has thrown into the mix during its pre-season preparation, but the TMG squad has tried to simulate a whole host of issues.

"We want to train our guys to change parts that normally should not need changing," explains John Litjens, TMG's LMP1 project leader. "We made a long list of things that might need to be changed and we now know the time it takes to change them."

Toyota has twice run a TS050 for a lap with a rim sans Michelin tyre. It ran without a front tyre at the Algarve circuit in Portugal and without a rear at Motorland Aragon in Spain. "It was done to simulate a flat tyre," explains Litjens. "We wanted to see what the driver felt and to understand what speed he could come back to the garage without causing major damage. But we also wanted to see how the systems reacted to the wheel-speed sensors giving different information to normal."

Training the drivers has also been part of the routine. "Our engineers have come up with a kind of quiz to help train the drivers," continues Litjens. "They ask, 'If this happens, what do you do, what switch do you hit?'. The problem is that when the car is running well you don't need all these solutions; you kind of forget about them. There are always back-ups, but sometimes it takes a long time to react, even for the race engineers."



"Racing is unpredictable. We don't want to transform it and we can't"

PASCAL VASSELON

NO GO-SLOW

Toyota hasn't been slowed down for this season and it has no intention, it says, of slowing itself down no matter how far it is in front of the Le Mans field. That's because modern P1 hybrids need to be driven near to their limit to function properly.

"If we ask ourselves whether we should drop our pace if we have a big advantage, the answer would be no," explains Vasselon. "These cars are designed to run at a given pace. If you start to drop the speed, you lose grip in the tyres and you recover more energy and saturate your battery. We have to keep the car within its working window. It would not be clever to run 3s off the pace."

There will be strict guidelines in place about what the drivers can do out on the track in traffic, but Vasselon insists that has been the case for the past couple of years. "We have had strong guidelines in place already, but this year they will probably be a bit stronger," he says. "We don't have all the answers, because accidents and contact are a recurring issue at Le Mans. For sure our drivers will have a very clear briefing."

The next obvious question concerns team orders. Toyota could be in a position to use its likely dominance of the race to determine which of the two cars wins. Again, Vasselon says no change. "We have had a set of rules in place for a long time," he explains. "You have seen many times that the fastest car goes in front, and it has been working reasonably well."

Asked if that raises issues of the drivers taking unnecessary risks to try to prove they are the fastest, Vasselon responds: "Don't you think that is their job? Racing is somehow a little bit dangerous and unpredictable. We will never transform it into an activity that is totally safe and predictable. We don't want to and we can't."

Le Mans will never be predictable. The accident that put the third Toyota out of the race last year, when Nicolas Lapierre was hit up the rear by an LMP2 car into the Dunlop Chicane, is testament to that.

Nor should it be forgotten just how complex a modern twin-hybrid LMP1 racer is. There's a lot more to go wrong on a Toyota TS050 HYBRID than a Rebellion or a Ginetta.

"Our cars are so complicated," says Sebastien Buemi, who is teamed with Nakajima and Fernando Alonso in the #8 Toyota. "We have a front motor, a rear motor, a front diff, a battery. That means we have so many more chances of having an issue. We should be a little bit quicker than the privateers, but I don't know how many times more complex our cars are."

LIGIER RELOADS FOR FRENCH CLASS WAR

ORECA has held the upper hand since LMP2's new regulations were introduced for 2017, but Ligier reckons it's now ready to fire back

JAMES NEWBOLD

With 18 races in the books since the advent of the control LMP2 formula in the World Endurance Championship and European Le Mans Series in 2017, the tally reads 15 wins for the ORECA 07, two for the Ligier JSP217 and just one for the Dallara P217.

Even if that figure is swayed by ORECA's monopolisation of the WEC grid last year, that doesn't make happy reading for Ligier constructor Onroak Automotive.

Le Mans 2017 was an apt summary of the story so far. On the biggest stage of them all, Ligier was not in the picture as the DC Racing ORECA threatened to steal outright victory from the unreliable LMP1s. For Onroak's Philippe Dumas, it was a living nightmare; ORECA locked out the top nine in qualifying, while the quickest Ligier from United Autosports was regularly three seconds off the pace in race trim. A clean run from Filipe Albuquerque, Hugo de Sadeleer and Will Owen gave United fifth overall, but there could be no disguising that the result owed much to others' misfortune.

"I've done many 24-hour races and I never had such a clean race, even the ones I won," says Daytona 24 Hours victor Albuquerque. "It's going to be difficult to top what we did last year."

But concern that LMP2 will be another foregone conclusion might be misplaced. Dumas contends that the opening rounds of the ELMS at Paul Ricard and Monza – in which Ligier's best result thus far is seventh – will not be representative of Le Mans, as the FIA and ACO have given Ligier (and Dallara) dispensation to improve their Sprint and Le Mans kits.

Albuquerque drove a Rebellion ORECA at the Nurburgring WEC round last year and quickly saw why it was the benchmark.

"It felt like more of an agile car," he says. "I think they have a lighter car, but as well I think a lot of their strength is with the aero package. They were spot on at making the car at the first attempt. How easy the car was to get to those lap times was also pretty nice, but at the same time I could see it was more demanding on the tyres."

Ligier's kindness on its tyres was key in United's ELMS victories at Silverstone and the Red Bull Ring last year, and Albuquerque has been working closely with Dunlop to fine-tune the compounds to best suit the car.

But greater durability over a quadruple stint will mean nothing if it is no closer on pace. With this in mind, Ligier has focused its work on improving the aerodynamic efficiency of the nose section to reduce drag on the Mulsanne Straight and, while Dumas brands the result a "compromise" between what it wanted to change and what was allowed, he is confident of being more competitive this term.

"Last year was a disaster because we did Le Mans with the Sprint package," he says. "It's a difficult question because we can take the dispensation as a present from the FIA, but it's not the complete package. We have to find a compromise with the room

we were allowed to modify. We did a test after Paul Ricard ELMS with the Le Mans package for the first time and the numbers look promising. We are reasonably confident to be a lot closer to the ORECA."

United boss Richard Dean, also the UK agent for Ligier, has expanded to two cars, with Juan Pablo Montoya making his Le Mans debut alongside Owen and de Sadeleer, while Albuquerque partners Paul di Resta – who impressed Dean at Sebring – and Phil Hanson. Although he's not getting carried away by the "significant step up" from the Sprint and Le Mans kits in testing, the 2006 GT2 winner is quietly optimistic of turning the tables on ORECA after a "98% perfect operational Le Mans" on the team's debut last year.

"You don't need many detail differences at 150mph-plus or 200mph to effect a big change," he says. "We're not looking at it, if it happens, that it will be so much of a surprise. I can understand why people would think that, based on what we've seen from the first two ELMS races, but you don't put a driver line-up together like we've done and have a debut like we did last year and not go into it thinking anything other than 'we've got a good chance'."

"I can guarantee that we will not be as far off as we were last year"

FILIPE ALBUQUERQUE



Albuquerque is confident of improved speed

EBREY
LAT IMAGES

DID YOU KNOW?

Ligier's first Le Mans came in 1970. The JS1 driven by Guy Ligier/Jean-Claude Andruet failed to finish




Dean believes team underperformed in Monza ELMS round

Ligier was far off ORECA's LMP2 race pace in 2017



"I can guarantee that we will not be as far off as we were last year," adds Albuquerque. "I don't know how much closer we will be, but if we are within half a second to one second, we are still fine."

Aside from the United cars, Ligier has a couple more bullets in the gun to pose a challenge. There is the Panis-Barthez Competition car run by Tech 1 Racing, which features ex-Manor F1 driver Will Stevens, while DC Racing also has two examples fielded by OAK Racing, in addition to its Jota-run ORECA's. The #33 car entered for team patron David Cheng isn't expected to challenge, but the #34 of reigning IMSA champion Ricky Taylor, Come Ledogar and David Heinemeier Hansson is an outside bet for a podium, bolstered by engineers from crack GT team WRT and the US-based ESM outfit.

"Le Mans this year is an obligation for us to get a good result," says Dumas. "It's extremely important because LMP2 is a top category and it's a showcase — we have to show the highest level of the company. We have a better car, so considering the line-up between United, DC Racing and Panis-Barthez, we have a chance to do well and to change the way of thinking about Ligier." 

LMP1

LMP2

GTE PRO

GTE AM

JAN HAMMERS HIS GREATEST HITS

A winner with Jaguar, Jan Lammers will contest his 24th Le Mans 24 Hours this year. He picks out his best memories for Autosport

GARY WATKINS

“People appreciated what I did and kept asking me back”

JAN LAMMERS



FIRST TASTE OF LE MANS

1970**JW Automotive****Porsche 917K (as a passenger!)**

My first experience of Le Mans came as a 14-year-old, and it's one I'll never forget. I worked for Rob Slotemaker at the Zandvoort skid school and he was the stunt coordinator for the Steve McQueen movie *Le Mans*, so he took me along to the filming.

I remember being up at Tertre Rouge just kicking stones, when a Gulf 917 stopped. The mechanic driving it asked me if I was with Rob and then told me to hop in. I could barely see out of the windscreen because I was so tiny, but I'll always remember him shifting up through the gears on the Mulsanne Straight.

McQueen gave me a signed photo, which I didn't really know what to do with at the time. It didn't mean much to me, but now it's up on the wall in my kitchen.



THE START OF SOMETHING BIG

1983

**GTi Engineering
Porsche 956**

We didn't have anything remotely resembling a simulator back then. We had to learn the track by walking around it. I remember going out for my first lap in that Canon Porsche and

accelerating out of Arnage, arriving at the Porsche Curves and going straight on up the old circuit at full speed.

I must have thought that straight was a bit longer than it really was or maybe it was still 1970 or '71. But, anyway, I had to do a U-turn to get back to the real circuit.

It didn't really matter, because my first flying lap was pretty much straight up there in the times. Thankfully, people appreciated what I did at Le Mans and kept inviting me back.



SUTTON IMAGES

WINNING THE RACE

1988

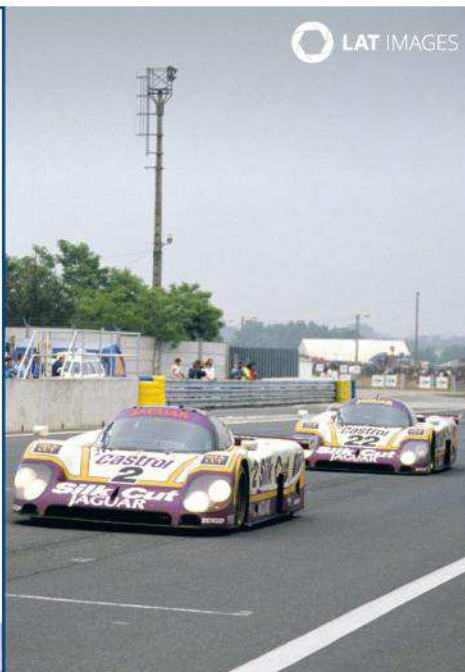
**Tom Walkinshaw Racing
Jaguar XJR-9LM**

The memory that stands out for me from that year is those last few hours of the race. I think we all went through a rollercoaster of emotions. First it was, yes we are going to win this, and then we had the gearbox problem, and it was, oh no, this is not going to happen for us.

I had the Steve McQueen movie in my head while the gearbox was hanging together by a thread. I refused to let it slip away. I just drove around in fourth making sure I didn't put one jitter through the transmission.



LAT



LAT IMAGES

RACING WITH A LEGEND

1996

**Courage Competition
Courage-Porsche C36**

Driving at Le Mans with Mario Andretti is one of the great moments of my career. The man is a legend and was one of the drivers who inspired me when I was younger.

I'd actually met him at the end of 1978. He was Formula 1 world champion and I was European Formula 3 champion, so we shared the stage at the end-of-season prize-giving ceremony. I'd met him again when I was doing CART in the mid-1980s, but I'm happy to say that I really got to know him that year at Le Mans with Courage.

The race was disappointing for us. I always thought that he deserved better to fulfil his dream of winning Le Mans.



LAT

LEADING THE RACE AS A TEAM OWNER

2001

**Racing for Holland
Dome-Judd S101**

We led Le Mans in our first year as a team with Racing for Holland. It was crazy, really. The team was two and a half months old when we got to the race. Three months before Le Mans I didn't have a car, workshops or any mechanics, and there we were ahead of Audi. It's only with hindsight that I appreciate what we achieved.

We'd been running near the front when it started to rain and I moved into the lead. I was probably too desperate and should have kept my cool and come in for wet tyres, because I had a spin on the straight that lost us time with some bodywork repairs.

I thought I drove really well in those years with my own team and the Dome chassis. Climbing in the car was always a relief from the stresses of running the team, because there are no bailiffs or bank managers out on the circuit.



SUTTON IMAGES

FORMULA 1 PERFORMANCE AT LE MANS

1992-93

**Toyota Team TOM'S
Toyota TS010**

We weren't able to get the result we wanted, but driving those 3.5-litre Group C cars around Le Mans was phenomenal. They had so much downforce that they were glued to the track – it was like driving a monorail.

We did the same times as Formula 1 cars at some tracks, and there we were driving them around Le Mans. When I got back to F1 at the end of the '92 season, I was definitely well prepared.

It was a huge thrill flying through the Porsche Curves in those things.

LMP1

LMP2

GTE PRO

GTE AM

CAN ASTON MARTIN'S NEW CAR WIN IN GTE?

The British team took victory last year and has a new challenger in 2018 for what is likely to be the hardest-fought class at Le Mans

JAMIE KLEIN





Last year's GTE Pro contest at the Le Mans 24 Hours truly was a battle for the ages, as old rivals Aston Martin and Corvette went head to head in a fierce duel for the win that was resolved in dramatic style on the final lap after 40 minutes of thrilling nose-to-tail racing.

In the end, Jonny Adam managed to get the better of Jordan Taylor when the Corvette man picked up a puncture after a trip across the gravel at the second Mulsanne chicane, sealing an unforgettable class triumph alongside Darren Turner and Daniel Serra in the venerable, old-generation Vantage GTE's final outing at the Circuit de la Sarthe.

Now Aston Martin faces an altogether different challenge: to defend its class title with a new car.

A major 2016 upgrade for the old Vantage GTE, not to mention the category's Balance of Performance system, helped keep it competitive, but with Porsche bringing a new car in '17, BMW joining the party for this year and Ferrari introducing an 'Evo' version of its 488, it was clear something fresh was required.

Almost as soon as the dust had settled on Le Mans last year, Aston's focus shifted to building and honing its new machine, which covered 35,000km in testing across no fewer than 14 different circuits before arriving at Spa at the start of May for the opening round of the 2018/19 WEC 'superseason'.

Besides the visual differences, the most obvious change from the old Vantage is the engine, with the new machine now using the same base unit as its road-car brethren. That means a four-litre turbocharged V8 replaces the old 4.5-litre naturally aspirated motor, bringing it in line with Ferrari, Ford and BMW.

But the more crucial point of differentiation is a much more sophisticated aerodynamic package that, according to Adam, has made the car considerably easier to drive than its predecessor.

"It generates a lot more downforce than the previous car," explains Adam, who shares the #97 Vantage with BMW convert Maxime Martin and former single-seater and LMP2 ace Alex Lynn. "That means more consistent lap times, and generally it brings it up to the level that the rest have in terms of that aero platform.

"Darren and I were the first to shake down the car [in August 2017] and even then you could feel the difference, without the car even being developed – the ride quality, the kerb strikes, kerb usage: all round the car is easier to drive.

"At Spa we all got out of the car feeling really fresh, and in the #97 car we all did double stints, two and a bit hours in the car. We weren't drained at all, ready to go again."

Turner, who moves back to the 'Dane Train' #95 car with

"You could feel the difference from the start. All round the car is easier to drive" **JONNY ADAM**

Nicki Thiim and Marco Sorensen after partnering Adam in the sister machine last year, adds that being able to go aggressive on the kerbs at Spa was also a major help in being able to deliver consistent lap times over a stint.

"The area where the old car struggled was how much kerb you could take without unsettling it," he says. "Suddenly the track opened up and we were able to take more kerbs and be more aggressive. That does make life easier, it makes it a bit more predictable, and makes it easier to commit."

Sixth and seventh places in the GTE Pro category at Spa might not be what you'd call a dream debut, but Aston Martin Racing technical director Dan Sayers conceded the British manufacturer didn't expect to be bang on the pace for the opener given the vagaries of the Balance of Performance system.

A glance at the speed traps from Spa immediately shows the ▶

LE MANS GUIDE

issue. The new Vantage's top speed over the weekend was 165.9mph, versus 170.5mph for the class-leading Ford GT, a major handicap blasting up Eau Rouge and along the Kemmel Straight.

In those situations, all a team can do is focus on minimising errors and technical issues – which is precisely what Aston managed to do, banking valuable points in the process.

“Irrespective of what you do, you always find new issues or niggles every time you go out,” says Sayers. “But at Spa we didn’t lose any time with technical issues or in the pitlane. That was our main target and that was what we achieved.

“It was a tough weekend performance-wise, but it was something we were expecting beforehand given the [balance of] performance we were handed. All we could do was focus on execution. We came away with some sensible points despite being far off the pace.”

BoP was a particular bone of contention in the GTE Pro class at Spa, not only for Aston but also for BMW and Ferrari – the three manufacturers with new or upgraded cars, in other words. And given the performance gulf between the BoP ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’ in Belgium, it’s not hard to see why.

A new BoP has been issued for Le Mans, with weight increases and power reductions applied across the board to maintain speed differentials between the classes. But Sayers expects Aston to find itself off the pace again unless further changes are made in the run-up to the race.

“I believe they are still looking at it, but the way it’s written at the moment, I think we’d struggle again,” he admits. “It’s always difficult with new cars. Instinctively they [the rulemakers] are always slightly conservative with new cars, because you don’t want a new car to turn up and win everything.

“So I think they would be conservative whoever it was [that had a new car]; they were just a bit too conservative. For sure, now they’ve got some race data [from Spa], they will see what’s needed.”

It’s clear that the Le Mans GTE Pro class is in the midst of a



golden era. A bumper crop of 17 cars makes it the largest field the category has assembled since it in effect replaced the old GT1 class in 2011, and six different manufacturers – Corvette makes its usual trip across the Atlantic to join the quintet of WEC marques – gives it variety like no other part of the grid.

Ford, as per the last two years, has four cars entered, and Porsche has doubled its car count in GTE Pro after its withdrawal from LMP1 (see below). Ferrari also has a third AF Corse 488 GTE entered this year, with Risi Competizione only racing in the Am class in association with Keating Motorsports.

Aston on the other hand, like BMW and Corvette, has only two cars, but Turner thinks having fewer entries has its benefits as well as the obvious drawbacks of numerical inferiority.

“We only had one car when we did the Nurburgring 24 Hours

Will BoP changes
shake up the GTE
order at Le Mans?





Darren Turner says GTE class is better than ever



New Vantage lacked outright speed at Spa

against a number of manufacturers with quite a few cars on the grid," Turner points out, referring to the fourth-place finish he and his team-mates scored in the lone Vantage GT3 last month against the hordes of Porsche, BMW and Mercedes outfits.

"The norm is two cars, and that's fine. I don't think it will be a big issue. If you have four cars it can be distracting and complicated with strategies, whereas it's fairly simple for us. Both Ford and Porsche have the European WEC squad and the American squad, whereas we have one team."

For Turner, who has been part of Aston's set-up since it joined forces with Prodrive and introduced the DBR9 back in 2005, this year's field will be by far the most competitive he's raced in.

"I don't think I've ever been in a class with 17," he enthuses. "There's no entry on the grid that's weak – they are all works cars,

works drivers. Whoever wins it this year will thoroughly deserve it.

"You can only imagine how cool it will be in the early stages of the race with 17 cars line astern – there's going to be a massive train of GTE Pro cars going at it hammer and tongs. For the spectators and those watching on TV it should be a fantastic race to watch."

Aston Martin took three years to win with the DBR9 and six with the old Vantage, so aiming for victory at the first time of asking with the new Vantage may seem ambitious. But Sayers is adamant that the freshness of the project can be no excuse not to aim for success in year one.

"The preparation has been meticulous," he says. "We don't see it as a test year or a practice year. We see it as our first opportunity to go and win it. If all the cars have equal performance, then we're in with a shout. We'll give it our best shot." 🇫🇷

PORSCHE'S NEW CLASS FOCUS

Porsche might not be back to defend its outright Le Mans victory of last year, but that does not mean the Weissach marque is neglecting the French classic entirely.

Far from it, in fact.

The resources freed up by the cessation of the ultra-successful 919 Hybrid LMP1 programme have allowed Porsche to enter four cars in the GTE Pro division this year, with its pair of full-time WEC entries joined by its two IMSA SportsCar Championship-entered 911 RSRs.

Nothing has been left to chance in terms of drivers, with three members of its LMP1 roster from 2017 – Earl Bamber, Nick Tandy and Timo Bernhard – returning to the GT ranks. The presence of the

ultra-versatile Romain Dumas bumps up the total number of ex-overall Le Mans winners in the line-up to four.

Add in the likes of Gianmaria Bruni, back in the WEC after a year in exile

following his departure from Ferrari, Laurens Vanthoor, Patrick Pilet and Richard Lietz, and it's clear Porsche means business.

The mid-engined 911 RSR introduced last year to much fanfare has yet to

take a maiden race win in the WEC, but it has tasted success on the other side of the Atlantic, the CORE Autosport-run cars having won the Sebring 12 Hours (below) and at Mid-Ohio.

Porsche was also exceptionally unlucky to miss out on victory in the Spa WEC opener, with the debris from Harry Tincknell's monster crash at Eau Rouge managing to damage both its cars. A late safety car period that bunched up the field was the final nail in the coffin for the team's hopes.

Although the Fords were faster in a straight line at Spa, whether that remains the case at Le Mans will of course depend on the Balance of Performance the 911 RSR is handed.

But if, as Aston Martin suspects, the newly issued Le Mans BoP doesn't fundamentally change much, Porsche has to be in with a strong chance of adding to its sole Le Mans GTE Pro class victory in 2013.



CLASS OF 2018 AT A GLANCE

New and diverse cars, not to mention a crop of familiar star names, pepper the list of Le Mans runners and riders this year

GARY WATKINS

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY JEP AND  LAT IMAGES

LMP1

Pure-bred prototypes with mandatory energy-retrieval systems (if run by a manufacturer) are the fastest cars at Le Mans. Power outputs of around 500bhp from their conventional engines are boosted by up to 400bhp of electric drive from their hybrid systems. The non-hybrid P1s run by the privateers are given a series of performance breaks, including nearly 200bhp more power and a 40kg lower minimum weight, to enable to run near — but not quite at — the pace of the remaining factory team, Toyota.



LMP2

A faster breed of machine came on stream last year in the secondary prototype division, which is aimed at the privateer. All cars are powered by the one-make Gibson V8 engine pushing out around 600bhp and four constructors have been granted licences to build the cars, of which three are represented on the grid at Le Mans this year. The LMP2 category is a pro-am class of sorts: each line-up must have a silver-rated driver — a kind of amateur — on its line-up.





GTE PRO GTE AM

The class for road-based GT machinery is split into two: GTE Pro is the domain of factory or works-supported teams with all-professional driver line-ups; GTE Am is fought out by pro-am crews that can only include one platinum or gold-ranked professional driver and must have one bronze or true amateur. GTE Am is for year-old machinery, so that means the Aston Martin teams are running the first-generation Vantage GTE rather than the all-new car of the factory squad.



REBELLION RACING Rebellion-Gibson R-13

1 ANDRE LOTTERER 
NEEL JANI 
BRUNO SENNA 

3 MATHIAS BECHE 
THOMAS LAURENT 
GUSTAVO MENEZES 

The top privateer in the first five seasons of the born-again WEC — and one with three top-six finishes at Le Mans to its name — is back at the top table after a title-winning LMP2 campaign. The Anglo-Swiss squad has again turned to French constructor ORECA to build an LMP1 contender that has had an incredibly short gestation period. The return of Jani, who cut his sportscar teeth with the team, and the signing of Lotterer is a signal of intent from Rebellion.

AUTOSPORT SAYS The privateer the smart money is on to put the most pressure on Toyota.

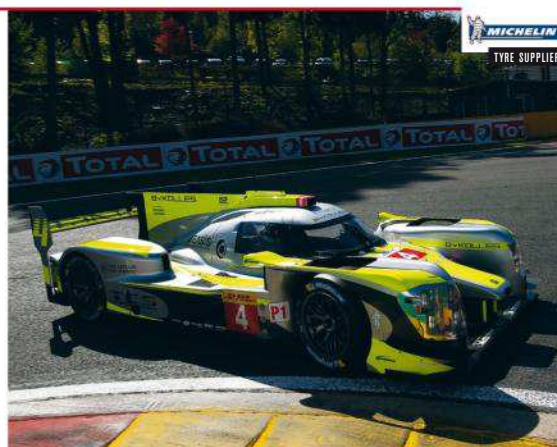


BYKOLLES RACING TEAM ENSO CLM-NISMO P1/01

4 OLIVER WEBB 
TOM DILLMANN 
DOMINIK KRAIHAMER 

ByKolles, which formerly raced in World Endurance under the Lotus banner, is back for its fourth crack at Le Mans with its P1/01 design, which is powered for the second year by the NISMO-badged Nissan twin-turbo V6. The team that flies the Austrian flag, despite being based in Germany, has taken a major step forward after opting out of last year's WEC mid-season to focus on development in preparation for the arrival of new privateer opposition.

AUTOSPORT SAYS ByKolles is emerging as a serious contender on the evidence so far.



LMP1



LMP2

GTE PRO

GTE AM

CEFC TRSM RACING Ginetta-Mecachrome G60-LT-P1

5 CHARLIE **ROBERTSON** 
 MIKE **SIMPSON** 
 LEO **ROUSSEL** 

6 OLIVER **ROWLAND** 
 ALEX **BRUNDLE** 
 OLIVER **TURVEY** 

The team also known as Manor steps up to P1 following two seasons in LMP2 after team bosses John Booth and Graeme Lowdon left the Formula 1 squad of the same name. It has forged a relationship with Ginetta to run a pair of its new Mecachrome-powered G60s and assembled an experienced driver line-up. Funding issues have limited testing — and competition after it opted out of the race at Spa — but the package showed potential at the official WEC pre-season test.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Difficult to draw conclusions with so little testing and a car that has yet to race.

**TOYOTA GAZOO RACING** Toyota TS050 HYBRID

7 KAMUI **KOBAYASHI** 
 MIKE **CONWAY** 
 JOSE MARIA **LOPEZ** 

8 FERNANDO **ALONSO** 
 SEBASTIEN **BUEMI** 
 KAZUKI **NAKAJIMA** 

Toyota is the only manufacturer left standing in LMP1 after the withdrawal of Audi and Porsche. Its entry is back down to two cars after running three TS050 HYBRIDS last year and the driver line-up for its two full-time WEC entries is unchanged, apart from the arrival of two-time F1 world champion Alonso in place of Anthony Davidson. The TS050, now in its third season, is only a mild update on last year's version, though it must live with new restrictions on the amount of fuel it can use over a stint.

AUTOSPORT SAYS This race is Toyota's to lose.

**DRAGONSPEED** BR Engineering-Gibson BR1

10 BEN **HANLEY** 
 RENGIER **VAN DER ZANDE** 
 HENRIK **HEDMAN** 

Another LMP1 newcomer, the team run by British Formula 3 race winner Elton Julian showed its credentials with a title-winning campaign in the European Le Mans Series last year under the G-Drive banner. It graduates with the new BRE chassis, though it has opted for the Gibson V8 rather than the AER of the works cars. A big shunt in qualifying at Spa, which left Pietro Fittipaldi with serious injuries, was a major setback for a team that had done little pre-season testing.

AUTOSPORT SAYS DragonSpeed probably isn't going to mix it with the other privateers.

**SMP RACING** BR Engineering-AER BR1

11 JENSON **BUTTON** 
 MIKHAIL **ALESHIN** 
 VITALY **PETROV** 

17 STEPHANE **SARRAZIN** 
 EGOR **ORUDZHEV** 
 MATEVOS **ISAAKYAN** 

The Russian team that won the 2014 WEC LMP2 title moves up to P1 with a Dallara-built chassis bearing the name of its BR Engineering spin-off. ART Grand Prix's closed-wheel team, which previously raced in the DTM with Mercedes, runs the cars for an impressive line-up of drivers now boasting 2009 F1 champion Jenson Button. The car is well tested, having run for the first time last October, but a massive shunt at Spa has inevitably set back its progress.

AUTOSPORT SAYS SMP has the potential to challenge Rebellion to be best of the rest.



LMP1

LMP2

GTE PRO

GTE AM

UNITED AUTOSPORTS Ligier-Gibson JSP217

22 PAUL **DIRESTA** 
FILIPE **ALBUQUERQUE** 
PHIL **HANSON** 




32 JUAN PABLO **MONTOYA** 
HUGO **DE SADELEER** 
WILL **OWEN** 

The Leeds-based team co-owned by McLaren boss Zak Brown is back after finishing fifth overall on its debut in 2017. This time it fields a pair of Ligiers, which should be more competitive after an aerodynamic upgrade for 2018. Some big names bolster regulars from its ELMS campaign: Penske IMSA driver Montoya, a three-time winner of the Daytona 24 Hours, makes his Le Mans debut, as does Mercedes DTM racer di Resta after competing with United at Daytona and Sebring.

AUTOSPORT SAYS With two strong line-ups, United can improve on last year's fourth in class.



PANIS BARTHEZ COMPETITION Ligier-Gibson JSP217

23 WILL **STEVENS** 
TIMOTHE **BURET** 
JULIEN **CANAL** 

The team put together by former Monaco Grand Prix winner Olivier Panis and Manchester United goalkeeping legend Fabien Barthez – and run by the Tech 1 Racing squad – has assembled a strong line-up for what will be its third Le Mans. Ex-F1 driver Stevens, a race winner in the WEC with G-Drive joins up with one of the best silver-rated drivers around in two-time WEC class champion Canal.

AUTOSPORT SAYS A decent line-up could give Panis-Barthez a shot if the Ligier is more competitive this year.



ALGARVE PRO RACING Ligier-Gibson JSP217


25 MARK **PATTERSON** 
ATE **DE JONG** 
TACKSUNG **KIM** 


The British-run team based at the Algarve circuit in Portugal is making Le Mans start number three with a trio of amateurs aboard its solo Ligier. American-based South African Patterson is making his sixth start in the 24 Hours at the age of 66 alongside a duo who raced for the team in the Asian Le Mans Series last winter. Greg Murphy, who has engineered two LMP2 class winners at Le Mans, has come in to beef up its technical side.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Three amateur drivers aren't going to trouble the class frontrunners.



G-DRIVE RACING ORECA-Gibson 07

26 JEAN-ERIC **VERGNE** 
ROMAN **RUSINOV** 
ANDREA **PIZZITOLA** 

40 JAMES **ALLEN** 
ENZO **GUIBERT** 
JOSE **GUTIERREZ** 

The Russian entrant, an LMP2 stalwart and WEC class champion in 2015, again fields two cars in its bid for a first Le Mans victory. The lead car is again run in conjunction with the French TDS squad and has already tasted success in a preparatory WEC outing at Spa (it has moved across to the ELMS this year) with ex-F1 driver Vergne, Rusinov and Pizzitola. A second car is fielded by the Graff Racing squad at Le Mans, as well as in the ELMS.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Vergne and co should be right up there based on their domination at Spa.



LMP1

LMP2

GTE PRO

GTE AM

TDS RACING ORECA-Gibson 07

28 LOIC **DUVAL** 
 MATTHIEU **VAXIVIERE** 
 FRANCOIS **PERRODO** 

Former ELMS champion team TDS, a runner-up in LMP2 at Le Mans in 2012 and '14, fields a solo ORECA under its own flag in the full WEC for a second season, though this time with a revised driving squad as it attempts to recapture past glories in an increasingly competitive class. Audi DTM driver Duval, Le Mans winner and WEC champion in 2013, is back in the sportscar ranks alongside team regulars Vaxiviere and Perrodo in place of veteran Emmanuel Collard.
AUTOSPORT SAYS TDS is a good outside bet for a podium rather than an out-and-out frontrunner.

**RACING TEAM NEDERLAND** Dallara-Gibson P217

29 JAN **LAMMERS** 
 GIEDO **VAN DER GARDE** 
 FRITS **VAN EERD** 

The all-Dutch squad, run by former Racing for Holland technical boss Davy Lemmens, raced at Le Mans for the first time last year as part of an ELMS campaign and is now back for a tilt at the WEC with its Dallara on Michelin tyres. Former Caterham F1 driver van der Garde comes in to lead the line-up alongside amateur van Eerd, a sponsor of Max Verstappen's, and the evergreen Lammers, who will stand down in favour of Formula 2 racer Nyck de Vries after making his 24th Le Mans start.
AUTOSPORT SAYS Van der Garde's pace at Spa suggests the Dallara can run up front.

**DRAGONSPEED** ORECA-Gibson 07

31 PASTOR **MALDONADO** 
 NATHANAEL **BERTHON** 
 ROBERTO **GONZALEZ** 

French-based American entrant DragonSpeed, winner of the ELMS title last year under the G-Drive Racing banner, continues in P2 for a superseason WEC campaign with a Michelin-shod ORECA alongside its LMP1 programme. Maldonado returns to the cockpit two years after his last F1 start to join sometime CART racer Gonzalez. P2 regular Berthon keeps the third seat warm for Toyota reserve driver Anthony Davidson, who joins the line-up after Le Mans.
AUTOSPORT SAYS DragonSpeed has assembled an impressive line-up to match its ambitions.

**JACKIE CHAN DC RACING** Ligier-Gibson JSP217

33 DAVID **CHENG** 
 PIERRE **NICOLET** 
 NICHOLAS **BOULLE** 

34 RICKY **TAYLOR** 
 COME **LEDOGAR** 
 DAVID **HEINEMEIER**
 HANSSON 

The two entries garnered by the Chan/DC squad for its successes in the Asian Le Mans Series last winter have been taken over by OAK Racing, part of the Onroak group that includes Ligier. Nicolet, son of Onroak boss Jacques, and Chan/DC kingpin Cheng get their Le Mans fix in one car, while a top line-up of Penske IMSA driver Taylor, Ledogar (a factory McLaren GT driver) and leading silver-graded racer Heinemeier Hansson has been assembled in the other car.
AUTOSPORT SAYS The ringers in the #34 car must add up to one of the best P2 line-ups in the field.



LMP1

LMP2


GTE PRO

GTE AM

SMP RACING Dallara-Gibson P217**35** VIKTOR SHAYTAR 
HARRISON NEWHEY 
NORMAN NATO 

SMP mounts an LMP2 campaign with a Dallara P217 in the ELMS, in which it was a race winner last year, from its own workshops in the south of France. Shaytar is a stalwart of the Russian entrant's prototype and GT campaigns, while Le Mans debutants Newey – son of F1 design legend Adrian – and Formula 2 race winner Nato come into the line-up from their respective ELMS campaigns with the Algarve Pro and Racing Engineering teams.

AUTOSPORT SAYS This line-up could be a dark horse if the two newcomers get on top of Le Mans.

**SIGNATECH ALPINE MATMUT** ORECA-Gibson 07**36** NICOLAS LAPIERRE 
ANDRE NEGRAO 
PIERRE THIRIET 




Sportscar stalwart Signatech, winner of the WEC P2 crown in 2016, returns under the Alpine flag with a solo ORECA branded after the French sportscar manufacturer. Team regular Lapierre stays with Signatech for Le Mans, after making a brief return to Toyota this time last year. He is partnered by former GP2 driver Negrao – one of his team-mates at Alpine in the second half of 2017 – and top amateur Thiriet, a former ELMS champion and twice a class runner-up at Le Mans.

AUTOSPORT If Thiriet is on form, this entry is a potential winner of the class.

**JACKIE CHAN DC RACING** ORECA-Gibson 07**37** JAZEMAN JAAFAR 
NABIL JEFFRI 
WEIRON TAN **38** HO-PIN TUNG 
GABRIEL AUBRY 
STEPHANE RICHELMI 

The Jota-run squad that almost pulled off a shock overall victory last year on the way to a one-two in LMP2 (before the scrutineers had their way) has recruited GP3 racer Aubry and 2016 WEC P2 champion Richelmi to join team regular Tung. The all-Malaysian crew is led by ex-Formula Renault 3.5 race winner Jaafar, while Jeffri and Tan move across into a full WEC programme after cutting their teeth in the prototype ranks in the Asian Le Mans Series.

AUTOSPORT SAYS A pair of evenly matched line-ups that are both capable of going for victory.

**GRAFF-S024** ORECA-Gibson 07**39** TRISTAN GOMMENDY 
JONATHAN HIRSCHI 
VINCENT CAPILLAIRE 

A regular at Le Mans back in the 1980s and early '90s under its original ownership, Graff has joined forces with the S024 organisation that was set up to help local Sarthois drivers compete in the 24 Hours for one half of its assault this year (the other comes under the G-Drive banner). Ex-Champ Car driver Gommendy and the experienced Hirschi team up with Capillaire, who is best known for waving Toyota driver Kamui Kobayashi through a red light at the end of the pitlane last year.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Could achieve more beyond a decent grid spot courtesy of Gommendy's pace.





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The rapid rise of a GT protégé

CALLUM HAWKINS-ROW

"He has proven that he has skill inside the car, but also outside it." The words of multiple World touring car champion Andy Priaulx when asked to describe British GT Championship racer Callum Hawkins-Row.

Despite very little karting experience, the 17-year-old has risen to the top echelons of British endurance racing in the space of three years.

Hawkins-Row's enthusiasm for motorsport began aged eight as he experienced karting for the first time at a friend's birthday party at Lakeside Karting, Essex. Dipping his toe in the water with short, 'Arrive and Drive' sessions, it was four years later that he joined the Brentwood Kart Series, competing in corporate machinery and fast impressed by scoring second place in only his maiden season.

"That really got the competitive juices flowing," Hawkins-Row says. "We then invested in owner-driver karting, with six months on a Mini Max machine before moving into the Junior Rotax club class for a season at Whilton Mill. It was during that time that we considered the

option of continuing up into national-level Super One karting and making a big challenge, or to graduate into car racing."

A BRAVE MOVE

With little karting experience compared to his peers, it was a bold decision to move into car racing at 15 years old and the 2016 Ford Fiesta Junior Championship. "We felt the sooner I moved into cars, the better," Hawkins-Row explains, "and it proved to be the correct decision. I smashed the lap record twice in two races at Castle Combe before going on to take several pole positions, wins and podiums. Mechanical issues at the start of the season prevented us from challenging for the title."

With a successful year of tin-top racing under his belt, Hawkins-Row continued his rapid rise up

"You never lose, you either win or you learn"

the sport's ladder moving into GT racing and the 2017 Britcar Endurance Championship in a Class 3 Ginetta G55 GT4 machine.

"Junior racing helped me to become familiar with how a car feels on the track and see if I could make that step up. You're only as good as your competition, and if you're racing against 14 to 17-year-olds, you're going to be at that level. I therefore wanted to make the step up into senior racing. I'd only experienced sprint racing in my career to date, too.

"Britcar is a good championship to get you acquainted with endurance competition and it includes some world class drivers.

MAKING A GT SWITCH

"Everything in my career to date has been done in big steps," Hawkins-Row admits, "from corporate to club karting, to Fiestas and up to a GT car which has 350bhp with slicks and aero."

The jump continued this year, as Hawkins-Row's Britcar experience, finishing third in class, elevated him into the pinnacle British GT Championship.

To be racing in the British GT Championship at the age of 17, without a significant amount of previous racing experience, would put many drivers at a disadvantage. The majority of young drivers in single-seater or sportscar racing have learnt and honed their racecraft in national or even international-level karting before making their graduation. But what Hawkins-Row lacks in experience, he makes up for in his preparation and natural talent.

"It's always been about keeping the goal in mind, and having the focus, drive and self-belief that I can achieve that goal and have an opportunity to be on the grid. As much talent as someone may have, it's also about your preparation and training."



IAN CUTTING

PREPARATION IS KEY

Prior to each race weekend, Hawkins-Row will complete a 26-page written report that channels his worries and concerns.

"For endurance racing such as Britcar or British GT, you have to be focused 100 per cent of the time," Hawkins-Row explains. "You can't afford to lose any time and try to regain it like you could do in the longer format such as the Le Mans 24 Hours. You have to be on it and attacking all the time."

"That's why I write the report. It gets any worries out of my head and on to paper, and I discuss it with my coach and engineer. So that come race weekend, my attention is completely focused on giving my best performance on track. Each morning and night leading up to the weekend, there will also be 10 minutes of meditation. It plays a key role in not over-stressing yourself or the car. Understanding the things that you can control and what you can't, can make or break a career, in my opinion."

A very level-headed and intelligent young man, Hawkins-Row and his family moved to the village of Helmdon near Silverstone specifically

so that he could study A-Levels in Engineering, Mathematics and Physics at Silverstone University Technical College furthering to Architectural Engineering at university.

"I believe the skills I have learnt have built a good foundation to build upon, but when you get into the car, you're always learning," he adds. "A good quote I memorise is: 'You never lose, you either win or you learn'".

LE MANS AMBITION

Having experienced GT racing since the start of 2017, Hawkins-Row, who looks up to experienced factory drivers Darren Turner and Johnny Adam, believes he has found his ideal discipline: "I believe my future does lie in GT racing. The category is looking for a new pool of fresh young drivers and I believe that due to my age, I have time on my side to develop my skills so I can compete on the World stage."

Hawkins-Row's target of the World stage includes one particular event: "My biggest dream since I was eight years old has always been the Le Mans 24 Hours. It is the pinnacle of motorsport and the GT category is the most accessible for drivers who want to make it up that particular ladder. I'm looking to build my GT skillset so that can become a reality."

FUNDRAISER AND BUSINESSMAN

Hawkins-Row isn't just any youngster trying to turn his motorsport dream into a reality, though. Away from the racetrack at such a young age, he keenly supports two charities, and is already an entrepreneur having recently begun his own property business.

"Alongside my university plans, I've always had an admiration for architecture, it's my second love behind motorsport. It's my chance to earn money, even if it's to pay for a deposit for next season's racing. I'm chasing the dream of a factory drive, I know that doesn't come overnight. There are sacrifices, I need to work to make those opportunities arise."

Impressed, Priaulx has signed the youngster to his driver management arm. "I have been watching Callum closely this year," Priaulx says, "and have been very impressed by his resilience and determination to overcome the adverse situations that motorsport provides us at times."

Hawkins-Row is coached by former Renault UK Clio Cup and British GT racer Enzo Mucci, who goes further by saying that his driver's mental attitude at such a young age will set him up for success in future years.

"Callum really knows how to show up," Mucci says, "when the odds are not in his favour he remains resourceful and has a 'Never Say Die' attitude. I like that, it's an important asset to have as a driver. He has also proven that he has the speed to race with the best of them. He is a pleasure to work with and is a real team player."

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SUPPORTING CHARITIES THROUGH RACING



Callum Hawkins-Row is a supporter of two important charities.

The Rainbow Trust supports for families of children who have been diagnosed as terminally ill. "Some of the stories that these families tell are heartbreaking," he says, "so my cause is to raise awareness of the trust, and to give back to people who have been far less fortunate than myself and have been dealt an unlucky blow."

CRPS Racing for a Cure was founded by two motorsport fans who suffer from Complex Regional Pain Syndrome, a debilitating condition for which there is no cure. "Many people with CRPS end their own lives due to the severity of pain, so I am raising funds to help discover a cure for this terrible plight."



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LMP1

LMP2

GTE PRO

GTE AM

EURASIA MOTORSPORT Ligier-Gibson JSP217

44 ANDREA **BERTOLINI** 
 NIC **JONSSON** 
 TRACY **KROHN** 

The Philippines-based Eurasia squad run by Mark Goddard has hooked up with long-time sportscar entrant and driver Krohn for its third Le Mans campaign and second with a Ligier. Oil baron Krohn and long-time driving partner Jonsson, who are making their 13th Le Mans start together, are joined by Ferrari stalwart (and prototype debutant – if you don't include the Maserati MC12!) Bertolini thanks to a logistical link-up with the AF Corse squad.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Don't expect Krohn and Jonsson to add to their tally of Le Mans podiums.



**CETILAR VILLORBA CORSE** Dallara-Gibson P217

47 FELIPE **NASR** 
 ROBERTO **LACORTE** 
 GIORGIO **SERNAGIOTTO** 

Villorba Corse, which has done a bit of everything in sportscar racing over the years, is again competing in the ELMS with a Dallara and returns to Le Mans for a second year in succession. Long-time Rebellion LMP1 driver Andrea Belicchi has stood down as lead driver with a back injury and is replaced by former Sauber F1 man Nasr, who is now racing full-time in IMSA with the Action Express squad. He joins two Italian amateurs now in their second year in the ELMS.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Nasr's talents are probably going to go unrewarded on his Le Mans debut.

**IDEC SPORT** ORECA-Gibson 07

48 PAUL-LOUP **CHATIN** 
 MEMO **ROJAS** 
 PAUL **LAFARGUE** 

IDEC, which also competes in ocean-going yacht racing, is back for a second Le Mans with bigger aspirations than a year ago, when it posted a creditable finish in 12th overall. Team owner Patrice Lafargue, father of Paul, has stepped down from the line-up and experienced sportscar drivers Chatin and Rojas (a three-time winner of the Daytona 24 Hours and champion in last year's ELMS) are brought into the team. Former Peugeot driver Nicolas Minassian is sporting director.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Third in the ELMS at Monza raises expectations for IDEC's second Le Mans.

**LARBRE COMPETITION** Ligier-Gibson JSP217

50 ROMANO **RICCI** 
 ERWIN **CREED** 
 THOMAS **DAGONEAU** 

Le Mans regular Larbre, a five-time GT class winner and pole winner in GTE Am last year, makes a rare foray into the prototype ranks for a full WEC campaign with a Ligier, four years on from its last LMP2 outing with an Onroak-built Morgan. Ricci, son of the late Le Mans veteran Jean-Louis, makes his first start in the 24 Hours since way back in 2000 and joins up with two more bronze-rated drivers.

AUTOSPORT SAYS All-amateur line-up isn't going to trouble the frontrunners – a shame for a team with such rich Le Mans history.






LMP1




LMP2




GTE PRO

GTE AM

AF CORSE Ferrari 488 GTE 'evo'

51 JAMES **CALADO** 
ALESSANDRO
PIER GUIDI 
DANIEL **SERRA** 

52 TONI **VILANDER** 
ANTONIO **GIOVINAZZI** 
PIPO **DERANI** 

71 SAM **BIRD** 
DAVIDE **RIGON** 
MIGUEL **MOLINA** 

Ferrari and the factory AF team return in a bid for a first class win since 2014 with an evolution of the twin-turbo 488, an upgrade focused on the aerodynamics of a car that won last year's drivers' and manufacturers' WEC crowns. AF is also fielding a third factory car for the first time in the face of ever-greater competition in GTE Pro. A revised driver line-up includes Sauber F1 reserve Giovinazzi in the extra car alongside Ferrari stalwart Vilander and Derani, who moves over from Ford. Another Brazilian – Serra – comes in to share with reigning WEC champions Calado and Pier Guidi after impressing on his Le Mans debut with Aston Martin last year, while Molina again teams up with Bird and Rigon.

AUTOSPORT SAYS The three-car entry proves Ferrari's intent to end its Le Mans win drought.



CORVETTE RACING Chevrolet Corvette C7.R

63 JAN **MAGNUSSSEN** 
ANTONIO **GARCIA** 
MIKE **ROCKENFELLER** 

64 OLIVER **GAVIN** 
TOMMY **MILNER** 
MARCEL **FASSLER** 

The Chevrolet factory team run by the US Pratt & Miller organisation is back for a remarkable 19th consecutive Le Mans participation with the Corvette, seeking a ninth class victory at its annual foray in the French enduro. The driver line-up is unchanged apart from the substitution of Jordan Taylor with former overall race winner Rockenfeller alongside marque stalwarts Magnussen and Garcia. The Audi star, who won the race with the German manufacturer in 2010, is making his first Le Mans start since '12. Three-time overall Le Mans winner Fassler, who made his Corvette race debut at the same time as 'Rocky' at Daytona in '16, is teamed with Gavin and Milner for the second straight year.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Corvette narrowly missed out on victory last year, and you can expect it to be in the hunt again this time.



FORD CHIP GANASSI TEAM UK/USA Ford GT

66 STEFAN **MUCKE** 
OLIVIER **PLA** 
BILLY **JOHNSON** 

67 ANDY **PRIAULX** 
HARRY **TINCKNELL** 
TONY **KANAAN** 

68 JOEY **HAND** 
DIRK **MULLER** 
SEBASTIEN **BOURDAIS** 

69 RYAN **BRISCOE** 
RICHARD **WESTBROOK** 
SCOTT **DIXON** 

Ford mounts a mob-handed Le Mans assault for the third year in a row with the two arms of the Chip Ganassi squad, the British-run team that competes full-time in the WEC and the 'real' Chip Ganassi Racing that represents the Blue Oval in the IMSA SportsCar Championship in North America. The driver line-up is stable apart from 2013 Indy 500 winner Kanaan – who stepped in as a late substitute for the injured Bourdais last year – being given the seat previously occupied by Pipo Derani alongside Brits Priaulx and Tincknell. Bourdais is back in the harness – and winning again in IndyCar – and reforms the 2016 class-winning line-up with Hand and Muller for what will be his 12th Le Mans start.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Ford looks well set after wins on both sides of the Atlantic so far this year.



LMP1


LMP2

GTE PRO

GTE AM



BMW TEAM MTEK BMW M8 GTE

81 MARTIN **TOMCZYK** 
NICKY **CATSBURG** 
PHILIPP **ENG** 


82 AUGUSTO **FARFUS** 
ANTONIO
FELIX DA COSTA 
ALEXANDER **SIMS** 

The outright Le Mans winner in 1999 is mounting its first campaign here since 2011 with an all-new racer based on the forthcoming M8 sportscar. The German MTEK squad, which was established ahead of the DTM assault with BMW in '13, runs the two twin-turbo V8 contenders following a development year in '17 after it was stood down from the German tin-top series. Former DTM champion Tomczyk, who led the test programme of the M8 last year, is part of an eclectic mix of drivers. Farfus is serving double duty in the WEC and the DTM, while da Costa does likewise in the WEC and Formula E. Eng and Sims join the team from the DTM and IMSA respectively. **AUTOSPORT SAYS** Strong showing at the Sebring 12 Hours proves the M8 is already a capable endurance racer.

**PORSCHE GT TEAM** Porsche 911 RSR

91 GIANMARIA **BRUNI** 
RICHARD **LIETZ** 
FREDERIC
MAKOWIECKI 

92 KEVIN **ESTRE** 
MICHAEL
CHRISTENSEN 
LAURENS **VANTHOOR** 

93 NICK **TANDY** 
PATRICK **PILET** 
EARL **BAMBER** 

94 ROMAIN **DUMAS** 
TIMO **BERNHARD** 
SVEN **MULLER** 

Porsche has stepped up its presence in GTE Pro after its withdrawal from LMP1, with four examples of the mid-engined 911 design that came on stream last year. Manthey, which is part owned by Porsche, runs the regular WEC entries (#91 & #92) in special retro liveries, while CORE Autosport, Porsche's works representative in IMSA, has been brought over to field the additional cars (#93 & #94). Bruni, who left long-time employer Ferrari for last season, is back at a race he has won in class three times after a spot of gardening leave in 2017. Tandy and Bamber, who compete against each other in IMSA, race the same car at Le Mans for the first time since their overall victory in '15. Two-time WEC champion Bernhard makes a return to GTs. **AUTOSPORT SAYS** It's about time that Porsche won the top GTE class again, and it knows it.

**ASTON MARTIN RACING** Aston Martin Vantage GTE

95 DARREN **TURNER** 
NICKI **THIIM** 
MARCO **SORENSEN** 

97 ALEX **LYNN** 
MAXIME **MARTIN** 
JONNY **ADAM** 

Aston Martin defends its Le Mans class crown with an all-new GTE contender that replaces a design that has its roots in a car dating back to 2008. The second-generation Vantage developed by Prodrive-run Aston Martin Racing shares little apart from a name with its predecessor and is powered by a twin-turbo V8 developed out of the new road car's AMG-sourced powerplant. There are changes in the driver squad, too. Former Williams F1 development driver Lynn comes in for a full WEC season together with Martin, who moves over from BMW after four years in the DTM. A reshuffle of the line-up has teamed marque stalwart Turner alongside 2016 WEC champions Thiim and Sorensen, and his former team-mate Adam with the newcomers. **AUTOSPORT SAYS** A massive 35,000km of winter testing suggests Aston has a shot at Le Mans.






LMP1

LMP2

GTE PRO

GTE AM

SPRIT OF RACE (AF) Ferrari 488 GTE




54 GIANCARLO FISICHELLA 
FRANCESCO CASTELLACCI 
THOMAS FLOHR 

Ferrari factory driver Fisichella, a two-time class winner at Le Mans, has moved over to factory team AF Corse's customer division for a full WEC superseason campaign after a four-year stint with the Risi Competizione IMSA squad that included two assaults on the 24 Hours. The three-time grand prix winner joins up with Ferrari stalwart Castellacci and Swiss amateur Flohr, who together notched up a GTE Am WEC victory at Fuji last year in addition to three more podiums.

AUTOSPORT SAYS A strong line-up has the potential to be right up there.

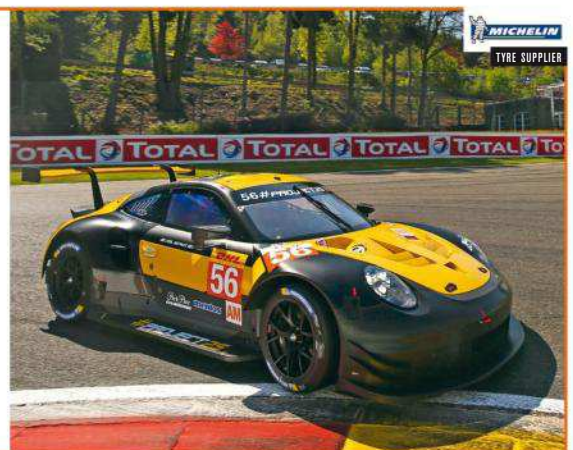


TEAM PROJECT 1 Porsche 911 RSR

56 JORG BERGMEISTER 
PATRICK LINDSEY 
EGIDIO PERFETTI 

The German Project 1 squad makes the move into endurance racing from the Porsche Supercup and Carrera Cup in Germany where it formerly raced as Tolimit Motorsport. Factory driver Bergmeister has come in to lead the line-up in a full WEC campaign with a mid-engined RSR, which is eligible for GTE Am for the first time, alongside a pair of race debutants: IMSA regular Lindsey, who was third in the GT Daytona points last year, and Porsche specialist Perfetti.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Bergmeister's team-mates must acclimatise quickly to mount a challenge.



CLEARWATER RACING Ferrari 488 GTE



61 MATT GRIFFIN 
KEITA SAWA 
MOK WENG SUN 

This Malaysian team, run with engineering and logistical support from AF Corse, was one of the surprise packages of the WEC last year, winning at Silverstone and often being in podium contention on the way to a close third in the end-of-season points. The line-up stays the same, with experienced Ferrari driver Griffin leading the line-up alongside top silver Sawa, twice a winner of the Macau GT Cup, and team boss Mok.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Strong Spa showing suggests Clearwater can improve on last year's fifth in class at Le Mans.

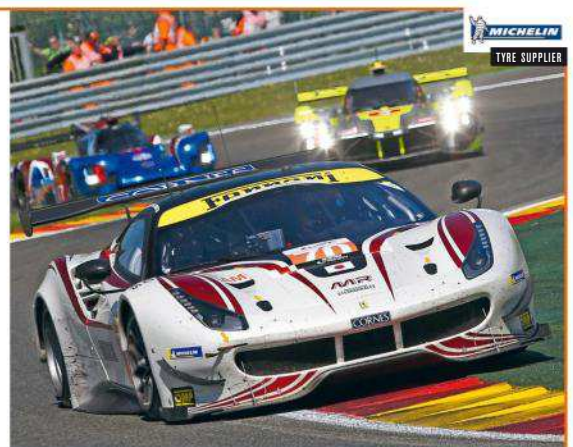


MR RACING (AF) Ferrari 488 GTE

70 OLIVIER BERETTA 
EDDIE CHEEVER III 
MOTOAKI ISHIKAWA 

AF runs a second Ferrari for Ishikawa under the banner of a team that takes its name from the initials of the Japanese driver and his wife Ren. The 51-year-old fulfils his ambition of racing at Le Mans after a season competing in the Blancpain GT Series enduros and Italian GTs with AF. Ferrari stalwart Beretta moves across from the Blancpain ranks with Ishikawa. Cheever – son of the identically named ex-F1 driver and Indy 500 winner – has signed up for the full WEC season.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Solid rather than stellar line-up should be shooting for a podium.



LMP1


LMP2

GTE PRO

GTE AM

DEMPSEY-PROTON RACING Porsche 911 RSR



77 JULIEN **ANDLAUER** 
 MATT **CAMPBELL** 
 CHRISTIAN **RIED** 

88 MATTEO **CAIROLI** 
 GIORGIO **RODA** 
 KHALED **AL QUBAISI** 

The team that bears the name of Hollywood actor Patrick Dempsey – he of *Bridget Jones's Baby* and *Grey's Anatomy* fame – fields a pair of 2017-spec RSRs. Porsche junior Andlauer and Campbell, winners of Porsche one-make cups in France and Australia respectively, share with team boss Ried. Porsche 'young professional' Cairoli races with Roda, son of sportscar stalwart Gianluca, and Al Quabaisi, who has twice been on the class podium in five attempts at Le Mans.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Two strong line-ups must make Dempsey-Proton class favourite.

**EBIMOTORS** Porsche 911 RSR

80 FABIO **BABINI** 
 CHRISTINA **NIELSEN** 
 ERIK **MARIS** 

Porsche stalwart Ebimotors from Italy finally makes its Le Mans debut after two decades of GT racing courtesy of the automatic entry gained from winning the Michelin Le Mans Cup on the ELMS support bill with a Lamborghini Huracan GT3. The team is working with Proton for its first shot at the big race. Sportscar stalwart Babini and Nielsen, IMSA GT Daytona class champion for the past two seasons, share with amateur and GT debutant Maris.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Two strong drivers should allow the Italian debutant team to make its mark.




**JMW MOTORSPORT** Ferrari 488 GTE

84 JEFF **SEGAL** 
 COOPER **MACNEIL** 
 LIAM **GRIFFIN** 

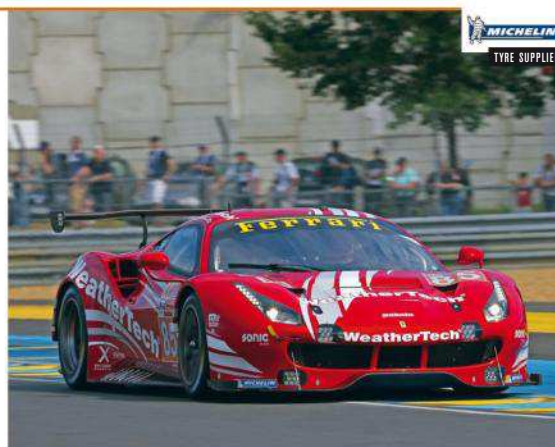
The British JMW Ferrari squad is back for its ninth Le Mans, 12 months on from its class victory with a completely different driver line-up. It might be missing the top talents of Will Stevens and Dries Vanthoor that helped the team to success in 2017, but Segal and MacNeil are experienced sportscar hands who have multiple Le Mans starts between them. Griffin, a race winner in British GTs, is back for his second start at the 24 Hours.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Defending its class title is going to be a tough ask for JMW.

**KEATING MOTORSPORTS (RISI)** Ferrari 488 GTE

85 JEROEN **BLEEKEMOLEN** 
 LUCA **STOLZ** 
 BEN **KEATING** 

American sportscar racer Keating makes his fourth Le Mans start, his second as an entrant and his second in a GT car. The 46-year-old gained one of the guaranteed entries awarded by IMSA and threw his lot in with the Risi Competizione Ferrari squad, which isn't fielding a car under its own banner this time. Racing all-rounder Bleekemolen is again part of the line-up, while Mercedes GT3 regular Stolz, who raced with Keating at Daytona and Sebring, comes in to make his Le Mans debut. **AUTOSPORT SAYS** Strong driver line-up and Risi's credentials makes Keating one of the favourites.



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SITUATED IN SOUTHERN SPAIN NEXT TO GRANADA




LMP1

LMP2

GTE PRO




GTE AM

GULF RACING UK Porsche 911 RSR

86 BEN **BARKER** 
ALEX **DAVISON** 
MICHAEL
WAINWRIGHT 




This British squad makes its third Le Mans start as part of another WEC campaign, this time with the mid-engined RSR. Team owner Wainwright and Barker, the team's full pro driver, continue their long-standing partnership. Former Australian Supercars regular Davison comes in as the silver after being downgraded for this year and makes his second Le Mans appearance, 10 years on from his first with Proton Porsche in the year he won the prestigious Porsche Cup for privateer drivers. **AUTOSPORT SAYS** With this line-up Gulf has a shot at going better than its 2016 fifth in class.

**TF SPORT** Aston Martin Vantage GTE

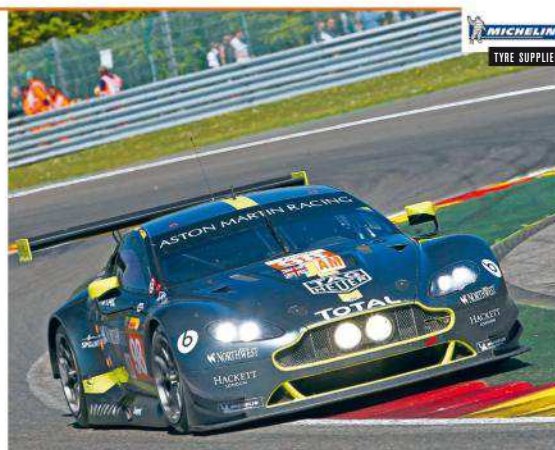
90 EUAN **HANKEY** 
CHARLIE **EASTWOOD** 
SALIH **YOLUC** 

The TF Sport Aston Martin team run by former touring car racer Tom Ferrier has moved into the WEC full time for the superseason with an impressive resume behind it. Not only did it finish second in GTE in the ELMS last year, but it has titles in British GTs, the Le Mans Cup and the Blancpain GT Series to its name. Team stalwarts Hankey and Yoluc are joined in the first-generation Vantage GTE by reigning Porsche Carrera Cup GB champion Eastwood. **AUTOSPORT SAYS** A close second in class at the Spa WEC opener bodes well for this trio's chances.

**ASTON MARTIN RACING** Aston Martin Vantage GTE

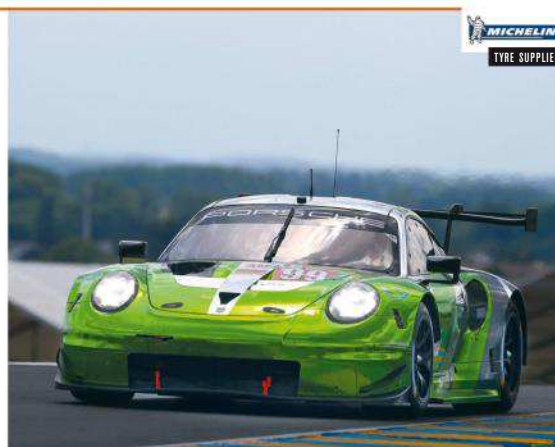
98 PEDRO **LAMY** 
MATHIAS **LAUDA** 
PAUL **DALLA LANA** 

The long-standing partnership of ex-F1 driver Lamy, Lauda (son of three-time F1 world champion Niki) and top amateur Dalla Lana are having a fourth crack together at winning GTE Am with a works-run Vantage. They've achieved everything else, after finally winning the class title in the WEC last year, bar the victory in the 'big one' that was snatched away when Dalla Lana crashed out of the lead with 45 minutes remaining in 2015. **AUTOSPORT SAYS** Another class win at Spa – their 13th together – suggests this trio are going be right up there again.

**PROTON COMPETITION** Porsche 911 RSR

99 PATRICK **LONG** 
SPENCER **PUMPELLY** 
TIM **PAPPAS** 

The German team, winner of the GT2 class at Le Mans in 2010, fields a single 2016-spec 911 RSR under its original team title alongside the two Dempsey cars. The line-up is led by factory driver Long, who is making his 15th Le Mans start. Experienced sportscar racer Pumpelly is back at the 24 Hours after an absence of four years, while Pappas – another stalwart of the North American endurance scene – makes his debut in the big race. **AUTOSPORT SAYS** Strong line-up with loads of experience should be there or thereabouts.





ONE GEARCHANGE FROM DISASTER

*Jaguar won Le Mans in 1988 for the first time in more than 30 years.
But the cogs so very nearly flew off a famous victory*

GARY WATKINS



JEP

One more gearchange, and Jaguar's comeback victory would have been derailed at the 1988 Le Mans 24 Hours. The British manufacturer came that close to losing its first win in the French endurance since 1957 in the final hour. That the winning Tom Walkinshaw Racing Jaguar XJR-9LM lasted the course owed everything to the mechanical sympathies of lead driver Jan Lammers, and perhaps to some kind of sixth sense.

The Dutchman, who shared the victorious Jaguar with Andy Wallace and Johnny Dumfries, knew he had a gearbox problem as the 24 Hours drew to a close. He'd listened to team-mate Raul Boesel explain the demise of his own Jaguar in the small hours, as he tied his bootlaces before his stint in the penultimate hour. And when the symptoms described by the Brazilian appeared to be manifesting themselves right behind him, he took a bold decision that ultimately secured himself a place in the history books. ►

Lammers left the car in fourth and didn't touch the lever again — he didn't change gear from shortly before the end of his penultimate stint through to the end of the race. Thanks to the massive torque of the seven-litre Jaguar V12, he was able to continue at a decent lick in a gear designed to send the car down the Mulsanne Straight, then unsullied by chicanes, at 200mph.

What's more, he was able to clutchslip his way out of the pits after his final pitstop. It didn't matter if he damaged the clutch, he points out, "because I wasn't going to need it again."

"Raul said that he had been shifting from second to third, and it jumped out of gear," recalls Lammers, who was at Le Mans for the second time with the Silk Cut-sponsored TWR squad. "He then explained that he went to fourth, and it jumped out again, and when he went to fifth, he said, 'All of a sudden I had an empty 'box'. I went from second to third, and it jumped out. I went for fourth, and I expected it to jump out a second time," continues Lammers. "It didn't, and I immediately decided that I wasn't going to touch the gear lever anymore."

"I didn't know exactly what was wrong, but I'd had enough experience of preparing gearboxes when I'd been racing in Formula Ford 1600 to know how sensitive they could be. I just tried to make sure that I didn't put one jitter through the transmission."

Exactly how many laps Lammers did in this hobbled state isn't quite clear. Eddie Hinckley, who engineered the winning Jaguar, reckons the problem struck a couple of laps before his driver was due to pit. His run sheets suggest that Lammers did another seven laps after his final stop. So that's nine laps — or the better part of 40 minutes — in one gear.

Lammers knew that one false move could spell disaster: "I accelerated very slowly and when I lifted off for the corners, I tried to make sure that there was always a constant load going through the gearbox. I thought that if I accelerated or decelerated too quickly, the whole thing was going to fall apart."

Lammers was probably right. The main pinion shaft of the five-speed transmission, which had its roots in a gearbox developed by British constructor March for CART single-seaters in North America using Hewland DG internals, had split in two at a point where an oilway ran through it. Somehow it was held together over those final laps by the splined hub that took the drive from fourth and fifth gears that straddled the break.

The chief mechanic on the winning #2 Jaguar, Rod Benoist, remembers the stripdown of the gearbox back at TWR HQ in Kidlington after the race. "As we took the gear cluster out, we saw that the main shaft had split in two," he remembers. "It was a case



Rod Benoist and Eddie Hinckley (r) with the crucial cog

"I immediately decided I wasn't going to touch the gear lever anymore"

JAN LAMMERS

of scratching our heads and thinking, "Thank goodness for that!"

Benoist thinks the chances of Lammers being able to select another gear were "about absolutely zero". Alastair Macqueen, the chief engineer on Jaguar's Group C programme, reckons that the Dutchman could have selected fifth, but that it wouldn't have been a lot of use to him. Making it around the tight Mulsanne and Arnage corners, let alone getting going from standstill in the pits, would have been nigh on impossible in the higher gear. And a downshift would definitely have spelt disaster. That means Lammers really was one gearchange away from bringing Jaguar's victory hopes to a juddering halt.

Lammers's role in securing Jaguar's first Le Mans victory in more than 30 years shouldn't be underestimated, reckons Macqueen. "Jan had brilliant technical sympathy," he says. "His part in that victory has been underplayed."

First, Lammers had to recognise the problem. Then he had to drive around it and keep up a decent pace. The Jaguar's lap times didn't drop away massively over the final laps, according to

SMALL DETAILS BEHIND A BIG WIN

A LONG STORY

All five TWR entries failed scrutineering in the Place des Jacobins in the shadow of the gothic splendour of Le Mans cathedral because they were somewhere between 25 and 30mm too long. The LM version of the XJR-9 had been running adjustable mounting plates in testing while the rear-wing position was finalised, and the production version had never been put on the car until they arrived in Le Mans city centre. "They didn't fit in the truck with the wings on, so the wings never went on until we got to scrutineering," recalls Macqueen. "It was a fairly simple fix — a 10-minute job on each car — by extending the front of the plate with some suspension-mounting plates we had in the truck."

A LOW POINT

The winning car went into the race with a significantly different set-up to the other four XJR-9LMs. Lammers and Hinckley had raised the front rideheight during qualifying in search of a more benign-handling car, but it also ended up running lower at the rear during the race. Lammers suggests that this was an idea that Hinckley came up with between the warm-up and the race, but the engineer suggests that it actually resulted from a mistake. "When we measured the car after the warm-up we found that the rear was lower than we'd intended," says Hinckley. "Jan said it was a bit hairy in the Porsche Curves, but that it gave him a bit of extra straightline speed."

A BONDING EXPERIENCE

A broken windscreen sustained by the winning car cost its one-lap lead over the chasing Porsche on Sunday morning, but had the TWR Jaguar been in the same spec as 1987 it would have lost more time. The car had previously sported bonded-in windscreens, but for 1988 they were clamped in place courtesy of rules in the North American IMSA series, which Jaguar entered for the first time that year. "The screens on the original Jaguars would have needed chiselling out," says TWR Jaguar designer Tony Southgate. "It made sense to have them standard across all the cars." Walkinshaw was in the thick of it during the change, taking the broken screen off Benoist as he was handed the replacement.

All smiles, from left: Walkinshaw, Wallace, Dumfries and Lammers



Hinckley. "Normally, the times would have been in the 3m26s and 27s," he says. "They went into the 3m30s straight away and, right at the end, down into the 40s, but such a drop wasn't unusual in those times for the final stages of Le Mans."

Lammers's ability to keep up a decent pace was crucial at a time when the chasing factory Porsche 962C shared by Derek Bell, Hans Stuck and Klaus Ludwig wasn't entirely out of the equation, despite a run of problems that began in the early stages of the race when Ludwig had to trickle back to the pits after running out of fuel in the Porsche Curves.

The Jaguar had been a lap to the good when Dumfries handed over the car to his Dutch team-mate, but there was some concern from the pits over the pace in the final laps. Lammers remembers being told "not to slow down too much" over the radio.

If Lammers's resolution to leave the gearbox in fourth was inspired, so too was his decision not to inform his team of his woes over the airwaves. Ludwig, the culprit for running the car out of fuel, would almost certainly have been able to put on a spurt in

the works 962C. The Group C fuel formula gave each car a strict allocation and Porsche was much deeper into the black than its rival. Jaguar had just two litres left at the finish, whereas the Porsche had 21 of its 2550 litres remaining after 24 hours of racing.

"I didn't want to give too much away to our opponents, so I said, 'I've got a little secret for you,'" explains Lammers. "They said that they didn't want to know, and I told them, 'You're right, you don't.'"

The TWR Jaguar squad understood Lammers's 'little secret' as he left the pits in what patently wasn't first gear. That explains the Plan B concocted on the old Le Mans pit counter.

The three XJR-9LMs that finished the race assembled themselves in a formation finish over the final laps at the behest of the team. But it wasn't for the benefit of the TV cameras. It was just in case the leading Jag's gearbox finally gave up the ghost. "If the car had conked on the last lap, the idea was that one of the others would have stuck its nose into the gearbox of Jan's car and pushed it across the line," explains Macqueen. "I'm not sure how, because it wasn't something we practised."

Benoist confirms that there was some kind of plan to this effect in the works, though he also questions how it would have worked. "That was the kind of plan that Tom would have come up with, being the crafty old devil he was, and I think he was ready to implement it," he explains. "That's why we needed two cars there behind Jan, because the radiator in the nose would have been incredibly prone to the wing-support plates from Jan's car going right through them."

Not that Plan B was communicated to the drivers behind Lammers. Derek Daly, who was at the wheel of the Jaguar run by TWR's North American operation that finished in fourth place, is adamant he was never told that he might be called upon to somehow push his team-mate around, just that he had to stay close behind on the run to the flag. "I don't remember that," says Daly, who was teamed with Larry Perkins and Kevin Cogan. "I don't doubt that it was discussed, but they would only have needed to communicate it to us if it suddenly became necessary."

Lammers wasn't impressed by the presence of the other remaining Jags on his tail as he tried to baby his car home. "I remember Jan telling us in rather flowery language to stop the other cars crowding him," says Macqueen. "He needed to do everything very gingerly — he was braking and accelerating so gently — that he didn't want other cars right up behind him."

The Jaguar didn't need a helping hand in the end. The only hand it needed was its driver's, to steer — but not to change gear. 🇫🇷



Andy Wallace: a winner on his Le Mans debut



GREATEST SPORTSCAR DRIVERS NEVER TO WIN LE MANS

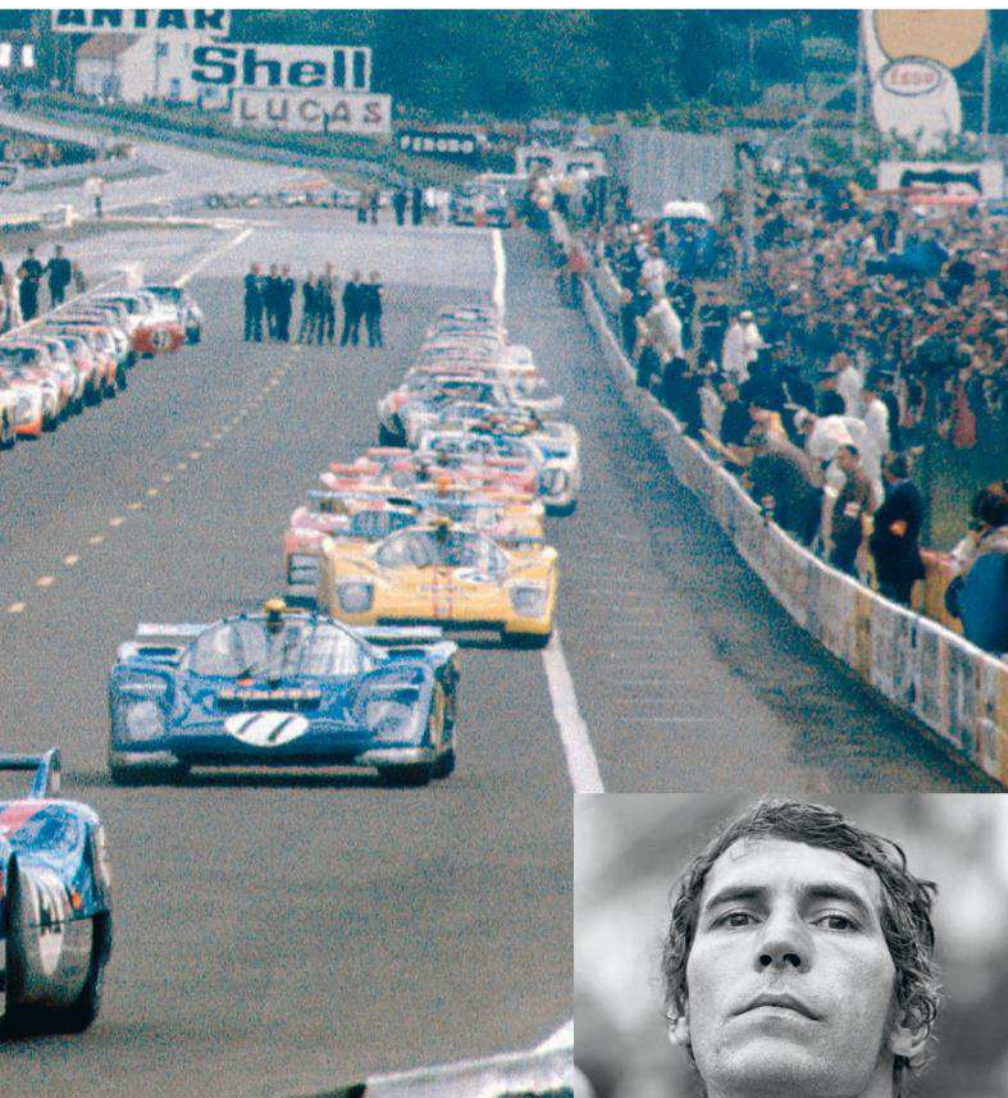
KEVIN TURNER

Given the unbelievable end to the 2016 Le Mans 24 Hours (right), Anthony Davidson, Sebastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima could make strong claims they deserve to be on this list. But the three Toyota drivers who probably came closer to victory than anyone without standing on the top step of the podium at the Circuit de la Sarthe are still current racers, so are exempt from this debate. Fortune may yet turn for them.



Many of the greats of sportscar racing got to taste success at Le Mans – Jacky Ickx and Tom Kristensen carved their reputations there – but such is the nature and challenge of the event that others have missed out. So who were the best?

To decide on our top six drivers, we looked at a number of factors. The key ones were how well they got on at Le Mans, the circumstances of their failures, and the amount of success scored elsewhere.



6

VIC ELFORD

Starts 8

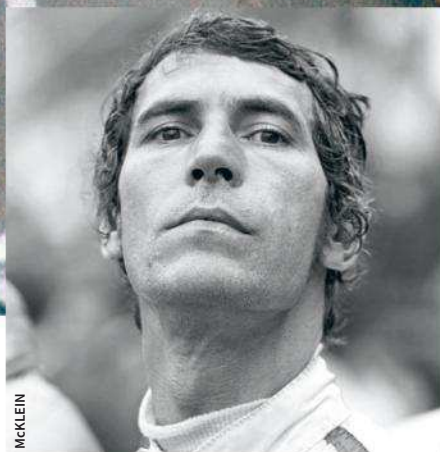
Best result 6th (1973)

Elford was one of the fastest drivers of his era, with a charging comeback drive to victory at the 1968 Targa Florio being perhaps his greatest triumph. He was also a star on the world's finest circuit, the original Nurburgring.

Not one to play it safe, Elford preferred to opt for the most-potent cars available when it came to Le Mans. That's why he chose the new and aerodynamically unstable Porsche 917 in 1969, and subsequently stuck with the *Langheck* (long tail) versions of the five-litre monster when others preferred the shorter tail of the K variant.

He and Richard Attwood dominated much of the 1969 event. They treated the 917 carefully and made it far further than most had predicted, but eventually retired with less than four hours to go. "We treated it with kid gloves," says the 82-year old. "It lasted longer than expected and it was the bellhousing that cracked. It was so fast – even though it was a bit of a bastard to drive – we were leading by five laps [at one stage]."

The following year, Elford again went for the *Langheck*, run by Porsche Salzburg. He took pole at over 150mph and was again in the mix in the



MCKLEIN

race despite rain that negated some of the long tail's straightline speed advantage.

"[JW Automotive boss, running the works Gulf 917s] John Wyer did not want the long tail," explains Elford. "No-one wanted it, except me. It was more difficult to drive than the short tail – you had to be more precise. Once you had committed to a line you couldn't adjust it, but it was 20mph quicker."

After Jo Siffert's engine blew, Elford/Kurt Ahrens moved ahead, but then got a puncture and finally broke an inlet valve.

The long tails were sorted by 1971 and the two JWA examples and the Elford/Gerard Larrousse Martini car (above) qualified 1-2-3. This time a bolt holding the cooling fan broke while Larrousse was driving. "I felt cheated," says Elford, who instead watched a short tail win for the second year in a row.

Either side of his 917 efforts, Elford won his class with a Porsche 906 in 1967 and a Ferrari 365 GTB/4 in '73, but they were the only times he saw the chequered flag.

"Sure it grates, because there were a couple of times I should have had it," he says. "I believed in the 917 and that we could make it work."

HONOURABLE MENTIONS



LAT

RUDOLF CARACCIOLA

One of the grand prix aces before the Second World War, Caracciola's only Le Mans start, in 1930, was impressive. Sharing a lone Mercedes SS with Christian Werner, the German star battled two teams of Bentleys (supercharged 4.5 litres and unsupercharged 6.6 litres) and led before retiring due to a flat battery.



LAT

ALBERTO ASCARI

The Italian only started two Le Mans, in the years he was in the middle of successful world championship grand prix campaigns. Sharing Ferraris with friend and mentor Luigi Villorresi, Ascari was predictably quick – he set fastest lap on both his appearances – but failed to finish in either 1952 or '53 (above).



LAT

JUAN MANUEL FANGIO

Although not the force in sportscars he was in F1, the Argentinian legend was still formidable. He twice won the Sebring 12 Hours and finished second in the 1953 Mille Miglia despite steering problems. He would surely have won the '55 Le Mans but for Mercedes' decision to withdraw their 300SLR (above).



LAT

JOHN SURTEES

Surtees was quick in anything and sportscars were no exception, as his 1966 Can-Am title demonstrated. The first two of his four Le Mans appearances provided his best shots. In '63 he and Willy Mairesse led before the Ferrari caught fire, while in '64 polesitter Surtees and Lorenzo Bandini finished a delayed third (above).

5

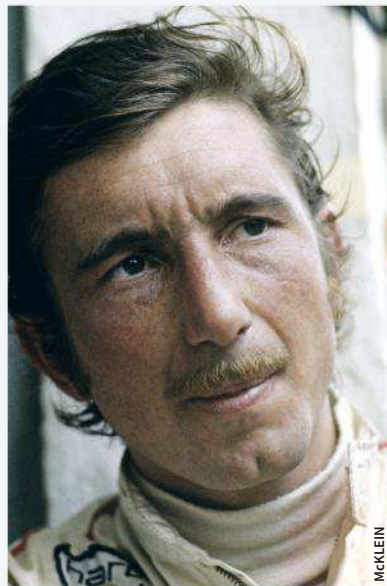
JO SIFFERT**Starts** 7**Best result** 4th (1966)

The two-time world championship grand prix winner was another Porsche ace in the second half of the 1960s. He took 14 world sportscar championship victories (including the classics at Daytona, Sebring, Nurburgring and Spa), still enough to put the Swiss ninth in the all-time winners list.

Siffert's Le Mans career started well, with two class successes (and two overall top-fives) in his first three outings. But he didn't finish on his remaining four appearances.

If he was unlucky in 1969 and '71, Siffert had to take some responsibility for the '70 failure. A missed shift blew his Porsche 917's engine right in front of the pits and team boss John Wyer...

Siffert's co-driver on that occasion was Brian Redman. It was a formidable pairing, winning eight races in 908s and 917s in 1969 and '70. The Englishman remains a Siffert fan. "Team manager Rico Steinemann asked if I'd like to be number one in my own car or if I'd go as number two to Siffert," recalls the 81-year old. "I knew if I went as number two I would get little time in the car during practice and little publicity when we won, but thought it was worth it.



"Although we had our individual seats, we never changed and I adapted to being closer to the pedals and steering wheel, to save time in pitstops.

"Jo was brilliant. If he had a fault as an endurance driver, although easy on the equipment, he had only one speed: flat-out. We got on really well and never had a cross word – even at Le Mans in 1970!"

4

BRIAN REDMAN**Starts** 14**Best result** 5th (1978, 1980)

Redman is surely one of the all-time most underrated drivers. As well as being a three-time Formula 5000 champion in the United States, he won almost all the classic enduros and drove for some of the most legendary teams: Porsche, Ferrari, JWA and Jaguar. He won at diverse venues too, including the Targa Florio, Daytona 24 Hours, Sebring 12 Hours and Nurburgring 1000Km.

Arguably Redman's best season came in 1969, when he and Siffert won half of the world sportscar championship's 10 rounds. Le Mans, however, eluded the duo, despite them eschewing the new and very fast 917. "The reason we chose the new long-tail 908 spyder for Le Mans is that we thought it would be more reliable," says Redman. "We were

leading when the gearbox failed due to a lack of cooling because of the long tail."

The following year Siffert missed a gear and blew the engine on their 917 when they were in the lead, while in 1973 the Ferrari of Redman and Jacky Ickx was still fighting Matra for victory when the engine failed in the penultimate hour.

Such a result was typical for Redman in the French classic. Of his 14 starts, he only finished four times. He was fifth overall and won his class in a Porsche 935 twice, but that was poor reward for his efforts: "Winning the IMSA class in 1978 and '80 means very little to me, although if it was today, I'd be telling everyone that, 'I won Le Mans!'"

"Le Mans is the pinnacle of sportscar driving success, even though it's not as difficult as the Targa [Florio] and the Nurburgring, or for that matter Daytona and Sebring, at least in a Porsche 917K."



Redman and Ickx suffered late Ferrari failure in 1973

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

**DENNY HULME**

A prolific sportscar winner, Hulme's CV included two Can-Am titles with McLaren. He was a class winner on his first visit to Le Mans in 1961 (above) and should have added overall victory on his next appearance. Part of Ford's massive '66 onslaught, Hulme and co-driver Ken Miles led for much of the race. Without a botched Ford attempt to stage a dead heat, Hulme and Miles would probably have won, instead of Chris Amon and Bruce McLaren.

**KEN MILES**

A fine test driver, Miles was one of the key players in the development of Ford's programme to defeat Ferrari at Le Mans. The seven-litre Fords of 1966 (above) looked likely to get the job done and Miles won both the Daytona 24 Hours and Sebring 12 Hours on the run up to Le Mans. The finishing-line debacle robbed Miles of an endurance-classics hat-trick and he was killed in a testing accident just two months later.

**MARK DONOHUE**

Versatile Donohue's Le Mans record was not good. Fourth in 1967 was his best result, although he also starred in Penske's Ferrari 512M in '71 alongside David Hobbs (above). It was in Penske's 1100bhp+ Porsche 917/30 that Donohue took his most famous sportscar successes, dominating the 1973 Can-Am to such a degree that the rules were changed.



Andretti charged back after early error in 1995

3

MARIO ANDRETTI

Starts 8

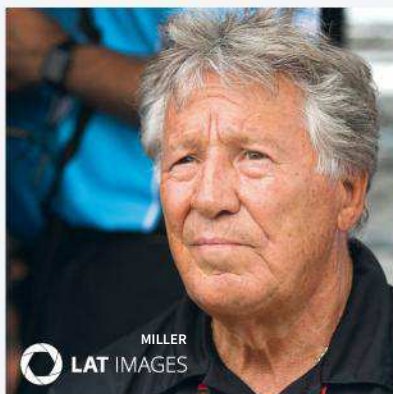
Best result 2nd (1995)

American legend Andretti's poor luck at the Indianapolis 500 is infamous, but at least he did win it once. He could, perhaps should, have won Le Mans as well, but misfortune and the odd error denied him.

In 1967 he was in one of the fancied Ford MkIVs, but crashed out in controversial circumstances, while an extra lap could have brought him an emotional victory in '83 with son Michael and Philippe Alliot, given the state of the two works Porsche 956s ahead.

In 1995, Andretti arguably lost the race twice. There was originally a plan for him to drive the TWR Porsche that later became a double Le Mans winner with Joest. But politics meant Porsche withdrew the car.

Andretti then joined the works Courage Le Mans squad, alongside Bob Wollek and Eric Helary. Andretti was caught out while lapping Antonio Hermann's Kremer and crashed at the Porsche Curves early in the race. The ensuing repairs cost the Courage-Porsche five laps. They charged to second, finishing a lap behind the winners.



MILLER
LAT IMAGES

There were a few near misses, but were you happy you did the best job that you could, that factors out of your control cost you?

Well, you have to go with that. In 1995 I made a mistake. It was wet, it was early on in the race. I didn't have to force the situation but I thought that in the car in front of me was Hans Stuck; instead it was another driver and he put me off. But we still won the [WSC] class; I still have a first place Le Mans trophy in my trophy case. Of course you want to win overall, but I can still claim on my record that I won Le Mans if I won the class, don't you think? The battle that we did, coming back from the deficit that we had, I think was pretty good. We had fun doing that and I think I did my part in the wet at night. I made up a lot of laps.

What about 1967, when a crash put you out?

I knew the car very well and we had won at Sebring. I had been a part of all the tests with Bruce McLaren and so in '67 they put me with Lucien Bianchi, who was a good friend and a very reliable partner, but he wasn't the quickest guy there. The formidable team that we were up against turned

Q & A



Ford shunt was controversial

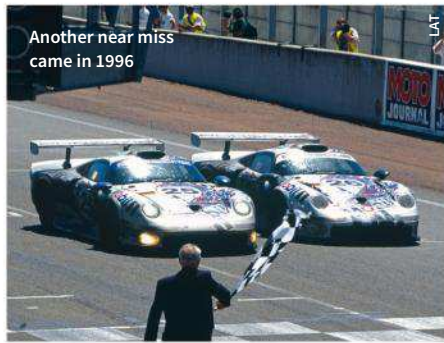
out to be Dan Gurney and AJ Foyt. I was up against AJ and Lucien against Dan. And I knew quite honestly that I was quicker than AJ, so I felt that I really needed to put time between us when AJ and I were out there, and I did. But we had some issues with the brakes. The rotors would come apart, but you had to live with it until you changed the pads and then they would change the discs as well.

I handed the car to Lucien around 1am and he went out and, of course, the brake pedal was jumping all over the place and he came in. He hadn't done much testing so he wasn't familiar. He was discussing the situation just like we're in practice and I said, 'I busted my balls to put time between us' and then he went out again and came in again. He made them change the pads, but changing the pads was not

the issue. I pulled him out of the car and said, 'You know what, I'm going back in.'

Braking for the Dunlop chicane [on his out-lap], the steering wheel came right out of my hand. On the right side where they changed the brake pads, they had put them on backwards. One of the mechanics was not very familiar with disc brakes because they were stock car mechanics and stock cars still had drum brakes. It just locked the right. We had 80 gallons of fuel so the car was very heavy. I tried wrestling with the steering wheel and just turned right head-on into the earth bank. I was lucky there, but they blamed me because the Roger McCluskey and Jo Schlesser cars were right behind and they crashed to avoid me, so I took two team cars out. That was an unfortunate time for sure.

JAMES NEWBOLD



2

BOB WOLLEK

Starts 30

Best result 2nd (1978, '95, '96, '98)

An international sportscar stalwart for three decades, the Frenchman took six outright podiums at Le Mans and four class victories. Although he scored other endurance successes, including four Daytona 24 Hours wins, Wollek's Le Mans near-misses are part of the legend of the race, like Jim Clark at the Monaco Grand Prix or the Andretti family at Indianapolis.



BRILLIANT BOB'S UNLUCKY 13

1973 Wollek's first competitive Le Mans car was the Matra MS670B, in the year the French team fought its epic battle with Ferrari. As was to become the norm during his career, Wollek did lead the 24 Hours, but was in the wrong car. The V12 he shared with Patrick Depailler suffered failing oil pressure and retired early, while two of its three sisters finished first and third.

1974 An even better chance appeared to come the following year. Wollek was again in a Matra (with Jean-Pierre Jaussaud and Jose Dolhem) but this time with no Ferrari opposition. Once more Matra finished one-three, and again Wollek was in one of the two blue cars that failed to see the flag thanks to engine maladies.

1978 Porsche team leader Jacky Ickx was moved over to join Wollek and Jurgen Barth in their 936 after problems on his own car. The trio rose to second ahead of the eventual winner until the 936 required a gearbox rebuild on Sunday morning and lost nearly 40 minutes, finishing second.

1979 Sharing with Hurley Haywood, Wollek was in one of two ageing 936s that were the quickest cars in the field. The Ickx/Redman example hit trouble when a tyre blowout caused radiator damage. Poleman Wollek's car (below) took over, only to suffer a misfire that eventually cost an hour. They recovered to second place, only to retire with engine failure.



1984 In the absence of the works Porsche team, Wollek took pole for Lancia by more than three seconds. He and Alessandro Nannini led for a third of the closely fought race, but suspension and transmission troubles left them an unrepresentative eighth, 34 laps down.

1986 Jochen Mass took pole in the works Rothmans Porsche 962 he shared with Wollek and Vern Schuppan. The car was in contention in the early stages before Mass crashed out on oil. The sister 962 of Hans Stuck/Derek Bell/Al Holbert took victory.

1987 Once again Wollek/Mass/Schuppan were in the wrong works 962. Wollek took another Le Mans pole and Mass led, but the car retired early in the second hour with piston failure, thanks to incompatibility between the centrally supplied fuel and Porsche's electronic control system. The 'other' car won again.

1988 This time Wollek with co-drivers Schuppan and Sarel van der Merwe was part of the Porsche fight with Jaguar for longer.

Wollek spent time in the lead, but water-pump issues and then engine failure ended another challenge.

1989 The 962 was long in the tooth, but the Joest example of Wollek/Stuck was a formidable threat to Sauber and Jaguar. The duo ran in the top five throughout and led until a coolant problem cost 15 minutes. They eventually finished third, despite several minor setbacks, beating the leading Jaguar and only losing out to the two best Silver Arrows.

1995 Wollek was third on the grid in the Courage C34, pole for the 'real' contenders given the front row was a WR-Peugeot lock-out. With many cars ill-prepared or unreliable, the main opposition was the horde of unproven McLaren F1 GTRs. Mario Andretti's early error meant he, Wollek and Eric Helary were always playing catch-up and finished second.

1996 Wollek, Stuck and Thierry Boutsen had a fine run in their new Porsche 911 GT1 to win the GT class. But they couldn't defeat the

lighter, Joest-run Porsche WSC95 sports-prototype, which Stuck described as "unbeatable". A key delay was Stuck being pushed over a kerb, which eventually led to the front undertray needing replacing.

1997 This was the year when Wollek was the architect of his own downfall. The revised 911 GT1s were quicker than the WSC95 and Wollek's car, which he again shared with Boutsen and Stuck, led throughout the night. It was still ahead when Wollek uncharacteristically spun into retirement at the Porsche Curves with a third of the race to go. "I don't really know what happened," said a disconsolate Wollek.

1998 Wollek's last chance of victory came with the 911 GT1-98 alongside Jorg Muller and Uwe Alzen. The challenges of Toyota and Mercedes fell away, leaving Porsche to score a one-two. An off by Muller at the first chicane, which led to underbody repairs, meant Wollek was again second, behind Laurent Aiello/Stephane Ortelli/Allan McNish.

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

**ROLF STOMMELEN**

Three class wins and two overall podium finishes (in 1976 and '79) almost got the late German onto our main list. Stommelen was very rapid and took a superb pole in '69 in the early 917 (above). His forcing race pace in the new car was perhaps optimistic, but four Daytona victories showed he could get the job done over 24 hours.

**JEAN-LOUIS SCHLESSER**

Schlesser was part of the Sauber-Mercedes team that dominated Group C in 1989 and '90, taking the drivers' title in both years. But luck was not with him at the 24 Hours, an event he didn't like. Sauber withdrew in '88 following tyre failures in practice, Schlesser took a delayed fifth in '89 and hot favourite Mercedes boycotted the '90 edition. Along with Jochen Mass and Alain Ferte, Schlesser was dominating the '91 24 Hours with just three hours to go when the C11 (above) failed.

**THIERRY BOUTSEN**

The three-time grand prix winner twice took second at Le Mans, once for Peugeot (in 1993) and once for Porsche (in '96, when he won the GT1 class with Bob Wollek and Hans Stuck), but perhaps his best chances came with the unfortunate Toyota team. Transmission failure on his GT-One with less than two hours to go denied Boutsen in '98, while an errant backmarker ended his bid a year later (above).

1 STIRLING MOSS

Starts 10

Best result 2nd (1953, '56)

Even better than 1950s Formula 1 benchmark Juan Manuel Fangio in sportscars, Moss could lay claim to the title of the finest endurance racer ever, even without a Le Mans victory.

He won the Nurburgring 1000Km – at a time when it was a much greater driver test than Le Mans – four times and performed some of the finest comebacks in the category's history, such as his drive to clinch Aston Martin the world sportscar title at Goodwood in 1959. His record-breaking Mille Miglia victory in '55 is one of motorsport's most epic performances and, had there been a drivers' championship, he would surely have topped the standings that season.

Moss's performances in the 24 Hours were no less impressive. Invariably he led the charge for whichever team he was with, but things never quite fell his way. He was part of the Jaguar 1-2-4 in 1953, sharing with Peter Walker, but fuel starvation early on pushed them outside the top 20. Their comeback drive netted second.

Moss also fought against the odds, alongside Peter Collins, for Aston Martin against the bigger-engined and more-suitable Ecurie Ecosse Jaguar D-type of Ninian Sanderson and Ron Flockhart in 1956.



Using the sporadic rain showers to their advantage, they exchanged the lead with the Jaguar and missed out by just a lap.

Arguably Moss's best chance, however, had come the year before. Sharing one of Mercedes' all-conquering 300SLRs with Fangio, Moss was well ahead of the field when the call came to withdraw in the wake of team-mate Pierre Levegh's accident, which had claimed the lives of over 80 spectators.

It was a decision Moss never agreed with. "It didn't do anyone any good," he said in a 2015 interview. "You couldn't bring people back, but [Mercedes driver] John Fitch said he thought [team boss] Alfred Neubauer should ring the directors. We could easily have won."

Just as not winning the F1 world title did not diminish Moss in the eyes of his peers, the fact that he never won Le Mans didn't prevent him being the leading endurance driver of his generation – and one of the greatest sportscar aces of all time.



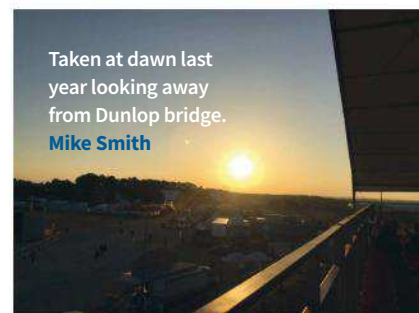
‘EVERYTHING WAS A SENSORY OVERLOAD’

We asked our readers via social media for their memories from the world’s greatest sportscar race. Here’s a selection, from 1970 to 2017...



My dad, who knew all the cars by their sound. Just as well really.

Karen Smith



Taken at dawn last year looking away from Dunlop bridge.

Mike Smith

The one and only time I went to Le Mans was in 1995 where it rained for 23 hours and 59 minutes! Graeme Lowdon was in raptures and still is.

Wendy Lowdon

1979, Paul Newman and the Hawaiian Tropic Porsche. Had an exam Friday morning, got train from Nottingham to London for Page & Moy weekend trip. Great way to celebrate end of term.

MA Cooper



Le Mans has always been my favourite race but for a variety of reasons I had never had the opportunity to go. I finally broke my La Sarthe cherry in 2015 over four days that I will never forget, and which lived up to the hype that I had personally built up about the race since I was nine years old. Everything was a sensory overload and an utter delight. The crazy Danes. The burnouts, fireworks, beer, music, raves, sirens and smoke-filled atmosphere of mad Friday evening. The LMP1s that took the breath away with their sheer speed. Arnage at dusk. Mulsanne at gone midnight. Giving in to sleep but waking at dawn to a loud, sexy symphony in the air. Standing opposite the pits and soaking in the atmosphere with barely three hours to go. Disappointingly watching just 10 yards away from a forlorn Jann Mardenborough (left) as his Nissan smoked and cried enough. Seeing Weissach return to the top step of the podium for the 17th time. Walking on hallowed ground after the race and touching the racing line of the Porsche Curves, my hand becoming noticeably sticky and warm from 24 hours of rubber and heat being pounded into it by my heroes. All electric. Pure magic.

Steven Gaitt

YOUR MEMORIES

Remember, so long as you can limp it onto the ferry, you can ring the AA from mid-channel, and some dodgy mechanics will meet you in France. #LM24memories from our first trip in 1996 with the #mightymontego
John W Clarke

The 917 that gave first overall victory to the famous racing company that manufactures top quality and high tech street cars: Porsche.
Ricardo Perez Pandelo



I know it's only last year, but sat at Indianapolis as Toyota's hopes went up in smoke (yet again), and then watching as Porsche chased down the LMP2s for the overall win.
Adam Barton



Ah the memories.
Tony Taylor



Leaving early enough this year I might even post a 2018 one!!
Rick S Cutler

This year will be my 30-something trip, my youngest son's fifth. Inclusion and accessibility is what it's all about, tied to a great atmosphere. Had the great pleasure of meeting Norbert Singer, Porsche legend, last year.
Steve Good

2014 pop-up museum at Circuit La Sarthe in the presence of history... the #917
Project 917





NICK TANDY'S SPECTATOR GUIDE

The 2015 winner takes you round the Circuit de la Sarthe

3 TERTRE ROUGE

This is a super-technical corner and so important, because it leads onto the Mulsanne Straight. You have to pick your turn-in point and commit to it. If you are slightly early, you might bounce across the kerbs and run out wide. If you are too late, you might have to slow down even more to get to the apex. There's a lot to gain from stealing another six inches of track on the left to open up the radius of the corner. If you can gain an extra 2mph, that'll gain you even more all the way to the first Mulsanne chicane.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

The LMP1 hybrids will often use a bit of extra boost to clear a slower car here because there's not much of a braking zone in which to do your overtaking. You don't want to follow a GTE car through Tertre Rouge because it kills your exit speed onto the straight.

2 THE ESSES

The right-hander after the Dunlop Bridge was really just an acceleration zone in the LMP1. It's also flat in the GTE car, but you're right on the limit because the track really tightens up. The left onto the old part of the track is deceptive because the grip is on the inside, but it's also where it is bumpiest. It's a place where you have to turn in early because there is a tendency for the car to understeer away from the apex.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR It's fast here and there isn't much of a deceleration zone, so you have to be fully alongside at the turn-in point to make a pass. If you're in the faster car, you might think that the driver ahead is still on the brakes, but they are probably already committed to the corner because of the early turn-in.

1 DUNLOP CURVE/CHICANE

It's a challenging sequence because it really starts on the straight before you get to the Dunlop Curve leading into the chicane, especially in a GT car. In the LMP1 we were flat through the right kink, but it was still a job to get the car straight before braking for the chicane. In a GTE you start to brake on the approach to the right kink. It's a compromise because you can gain a bit of speed in one part, but have to give it up in the next. You always think you could have done it better.

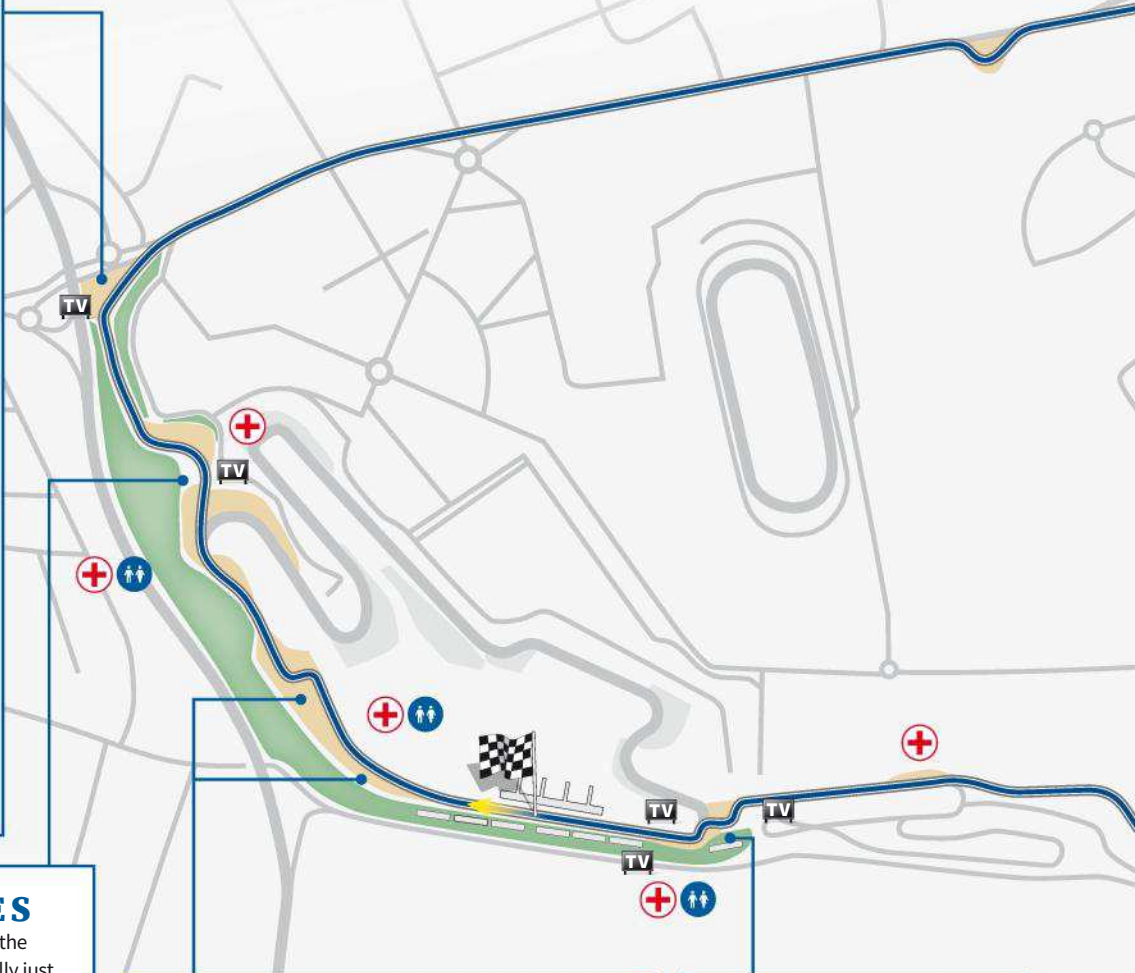
WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR The track goes over a crest when you're still turning hard out of the chicane before you get to the exit curve. You're on full power having just run the kerbs, so the car is already unstable. That's why you get a lot of spinners there.

8 FORD CHICANE

This is really two chicanes. The first one is the quicker of the two and you can attack it by using the kerbs. It's rewarding for the driver and rewarding in lap time, too.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

The kerbs in the second part are really aggressive. You can't run them, because you don't want any oscillation in the drivetrain when you are landing on full power as you head onto the start/finish straight.



4 MULSANNE CORNER

Probably the toughest braking zone anywhere on the sportscar calendar, because you're coming down from such high speed around the right kink and into one of the slowest

points on the track. It's bumpy, too, because the track surface changes from public road to permanent circuit. You brake hard initially before rolling off until you've straightened up the car and aimed for your turn-in point. That's when you can apply full pressure again.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR You get a lot of cars coming together here because you're going from the outside to the inside and back to the outside. If you don't think a slower car has seen you, you can follow them through the kink and still outbrake them in the second part.

7 PORSCHE CURVES

The right-hander that leads into the Porsche Curves is great. It's fast and wide and open on the entry, so there are different lines that can be taken. It's very technical because if you take too much speed through the right, you'll be too tight on the entry to the double left, which is flat even in a GTE car. The key is to carry as much speed as possible through the right and still be flat through the first part of the left.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR You can pass around the outside of the right so you can get alongside going into the left. You'll see a lot of prototype drivers doing that, because the track rubbers in off the conventional racing line and gives you quite a lot of grip out there.

6 ARNARGE

This is the most frustrating corner on the track. It's a place where you can gain very little but lose an awful lot. If you're too fast through the apex and get late on the power, you'll be losing time on the run to the Porsche Curves.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

The mid-corner speed is pretty much the same for all the cars, so the prototypes don't lose so much following a GT car through here. It's often better to give up 1% under braking, so you are nice and controlled at the apex and can get the power down early.

5 INDIANAPOLIS

The fast right at Indianapolis is what I'd call an oversteer corner. I've had to fight the rear end through there in everything I've driven. That's what makes it such a tough corner — there's a benefit to being brave. But it's a compromise because going too fast through the right will leave you mid-track for the left. You don't want to do that because you are in the left-hander for a lot longer, so the potential is there to lose more than you gain.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR This is the easiest place in the world to lock-up, which is why you see so many cars going into the gravel or the tyres. The left-hander is heavily cambered, which means the left-front becomes unloaded.

WHAT'S NEW

The start/finish line has been moved 145 metres up the track so that spectators in the main grandstand get a better view of the cars when they line up echelon-style before the start. A new survey has resulted in a revised track length — the Circuit de la Sarthe is now three metres shorter than before at 13.626km (8.467 miles).

-  SPECTATOR AREA
-  FIRST AID
-  TOILETS
-  TV SCREENS

LE MANS LEGENDS

LIST OF WINNERS 1923-2017

1923

Chenard & Walcker
Andre Lagache (F)
Rene Leonard (F)

1924

Bentley 3-litre
Frank Clement (GB)
John Duff (GB)

1925

Lorraine-Dietrich B3-6
Gerard de Courcelles (F)
Andre Rossignol (F)

1926

Lorraine-Dietrich B3-6
Robert Bloch (F)
Andre Rossignol (F)

1927

Bentley 3-litre
Dudley Benjafield (GB)
Sammy Davis (GB)

1928

Bentley 4.5-litre
Woolf Barnato (GB)
Bernard Rubin (GB)

1929

Bentley Speed Six
Woolf Barnato (GB)
Sir Henry Birkin (GB)

1930

Bentley Speed Six
Woolf Barnato (GB)
Glen Kidston (GB)

1931

Alfa Romeo 8C 2300
Sir Henry Birkin (GB)
Earl Howe (GB)

1932

Alfa Romeo 8C 2300
Luigi Chinetti (I)
Raymond Sommer (F)

1933

Alfa Romeo 8C 2300
Tazio Nuvolari (I)
Raymond Sommer (F)

1934

Alfa Romeo 8C 2300
Luigi Chinetti (I)
Philippe Etancelin (F)

1935

Lagonda Rapide
Luis Fontes (BR)
Johnny Hindmarsh (GB)

1937

Bugatti T57G
Robert Benoist (F)
Jean-Pierre Wimille (F)

1938

Delahaye 135S
Eugene Chaboud (F)
Jean Tremoulet (F)

1939

Bugatti T57C
Pierre Veyron (F)
Jean-Pierre Wimille (F)

1949

Ferrari 166MM
Luigi Chinetti (USA)
Lord Selsdon (GB)

1950

Talbot-Lago T26C-GS
Louis Rosier (F)
Jean-Louis Rosier (F)

1951

Jaguar C-type
Peter Walker (GB)
Peter Whitehead (GB)

1952

Mercedes-Benz 300SL
Hermann Lang (D)
Fritz Riess (D)

1953

Jaguar C-type
Duncan Hamilton (GB)
Tony Rolt (GB)

1954

Ferrari 375 Plus
Froilan Gonzalez (RA)
Maurice Trintignant (F)

1955

Jaguar D-type
Ivor Bueb (GB)
Mike Hawthorn (GB)

1956

Jaguar D-type
Ron Flockhart (GB)
Ninian Sanderson (GB)

1957

Jaguar D-type
Ivor Bueb (GB)
Ron Flockhart (GB)

1958

Ferrari 250TR
Olivier Gendebien (B)
Phil Hill (USA)

1959

Aston Martin DBR1
Roy Salvadori (GB)
Carroll Shelby (USA)

1960

Ferrari 250TR
Paul Frere (B)
Olivier Gendebien (B)

1961

Ferrari 250TR
Olivier Gendebien (B)
Phil Hill (USA)

1962

Ferrari 330LM
Olivier Gendebien (B)
Phil Hill (USA)

1963

Ferrari 250P
Lorenzo Bandini (I)
Ludovico Scarfiotti (I)

1964

Ferrari 275P
Jean Guichet (F)
Nino Vaccarella (I)

1965

Ferrari 275LM
Masten Gregory (USA)
Jochen Rindt (A)

1966

Ford MkII
Chris Amon (NZ)
Bruce McLaren (NZ)

1967

Ford MkIV
AJ Foyt (USA)
Dan Gurney (USA)

1968

Ford GT40
Lucien Bianchi (B)
Pedro Rodriguez (MEX)

**1969**

Ford GT40
Jacky Ickx (B)
Jackie Oliver (GB)

1970

Porsche 917K
Richard Attwood (GB)
Hans Herrmann (D)

1971

Porsche 917K
Helmut Marko (A)
Gijs van Lennep (NL)

1972

Matra-Simca MS670
Graham Hill (GB)
Henri Pescarolo (F)

1973

Matra-Simca MS670B
Gerard Larrousse (F)
Henri Pescarolo (F)

1974

Matra-Simca MS670C
Gerard Larrousse (F)
Henri Pescarolo (F)

1975

Mirage-Ford GR8
Derek Bell (GB)
Jacky Ickx (B)

1976

Porsche 936
Jacky Ickx (B)
Gijs van Lennep (NL)

1977

Porsche 936
Jurgen Barth (D)
Hurley Haywood (USA)
Jacky Ickx (B)

1978

Renault-Alpine A442B
Jean-Pierre Jaussaud (F)
Didier Pironi (F)

1979

Porsche 935-K3
Klaus Ludwig (D)
Bill Whittington (USA)
Don Whittington (USA)

1980

Rondeau-Ford M379B
Jean-Pierre Jaussaud (F)
Jean Rondeau (F)

1981

Porsche 936/81
Derek Bell (GB)
Jacky Ickx (B)

1982

Porsche 956
Derek Bell (GB)
Jacky Ickx (B)

1983

Porsche 956
Hurley Haywood (USA)
Al Holbert (USA)
Vern Schuppan (AUS)

1984

Porsche 956
Klaus Ludwig (D)
Henri Pescarolo (F)

1985

Porsche 956
Paolo Barilla (I)
Klaus Ludwig (D)
'John Winter' (D)

1986

Porsche 962C





Victorious Bentleys
lead away in 2003

Derek Bell (GB)
Al Holbert (USA)
Hans Stuck (D)

1987

Porsche 962C

Derek Bell (GB)
Al Holbert (USA)
Hans Stuck (D)

1988

Jaguar XJR-9LM

Johnny Dumfries (GB)
Jan Lammers (NL)
Andy Wallace (GB)

1989

Sauber-Mercedes C9/88

Stanley Dickens (S)
Jochen Mass (D)
Manuel Reuter (D)

1990

Jaguar XJR-12

Martin Brundle (GB)
Price Cobb (USA)
John Nielsen (DK)

1991

Mazda 787B

Bertrand Gachot (B)
Johnny Herbert (GB)
Volker Weidler (D)

1992

Peugeot 905B

Mark Blundell (GB)
Yannick Dalmas (F)
Derek Warwick (GB)

1993

Peugeot 905B

Christophe Bouchut (F)
Geoff Brabham (AUS)
Eric Helary (F)

1994

Dauer Porsche 962LM

Mauro Baldi (I)
Yannick Dalmas (F)
Hurley Haywood (USA)

1995

McLaren-BMW F1 GTR

Yannick Dalmas (F)
JJ Lehto (FIN)
Masanori Sekiya (J)

1996

TWR Porsche WSC95

Davy Jones (USA)
Manuel Reuter (D)
Alexander Wurz (A)

1997

TWR Porsche WSC95

Michele Alboreto (I)
Stefan Johansson (S)
Tom Kristensen (DK)

1998

Porsche 911 GT1-98

Laurent Aiello (F)
Allan McNish (GB)
Stephane Ortelli (MC)

1999

BMW V12 LMR

Yannick Dalmas (F)
Pierluigi Martini (I)
Joachim Winkelhock (D)

2000

Audi R8

Frank Biela (D)
Tom Kristensen (DK)
Emanuele Pirro (I)

2001

Audi R8

Frank Biela (D)
Tom Kristensen (DK)
Emanuele Pirro (I)

2002

Audi R8

Frank Biela (D)
Tom Kristensen (DK)
Emanuele Pirro (I)

2003

Bentley Speed 8

Rinaldo Capello (I)
Tom Kristensen (DK)
Guy Smith (GB)

2004

Audi R8

Seiji Ara (J)
Rinaldo Capello (I)
Tom Kristensen (DK)

2005

Audi R8

Tom Kristensen (DK)
JJ Lehto (FIN)
Marco Werner (D)

2006

Audi R10 TDI

Frank Biela (D)
Emanuele Pirro (I)
Marco Werner (D)

2007

Audi R10 TDI

Frank Biela (D)
Emanuele Pirro (I)
Marco Werner (D)

2008

Audi R10 TDI

Rinaldo Capello (I)
Tom Kristensen (DK)
Allan McNish (GB)

2009

Peugeot 908 HDi

David Brabham (AUS)
Marc Gene (E)
Alexander Wurz (A)

2010

Audi R15+ TDI

Timo Bernhard (D)
Romain Dumas (F)
Mike Rockenfeller (D)

2011

Audi R18 TDI

Marcel Fassler (CH)
Andre Lotterer (D)
Benoit Treluyer (F)

2012

Audi R18 e-tron quattro

Marcel Fassler (CH)
Andre Lotterer (D)
Benoit Treluyer (F)

2013

Audi R18 e-tron quattro

Loic Duval (F)
Tom Kristensen (DK)
Allan McNish (GB)

2014

Audi R18 e-tron quattro

Marcel Fassler (CH)
Andre Lotterer (D)
Benoit Treluyer (F)

2015

Porsche 919 Hybrid

Earl Bamber (NZ)
Nico Hulkenberg (D)
Nick Tandy (GB)

2016

Porsche 919 Hybrid

Romain Dumas (F)
Neel Jani (CH)
Marc Lieb (D)

2017

Porsche 919 Hybrid

Earl Bamber (NZ)
Timo Bernhard (D)
Brendon Hartley (NZ)

SEASON SO FAR

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

LMP1	
1	Buemi/Alonso/Nakajima 26
2	Conway/Kobayashi/Lopez 18
3	Menezes/Laurent/Beche 15
4	Webb/Dillmann/Kraihamer 12
5	Petrov/Aleshin 10
6	Tung/Richelmi/Aubry 8

LMP2	
1	Aubry/Tung/Richelmi 25
2	Negrao/Lapierre/Thiriet 19
3	Jaafar/Jeffri/Tan 15
4	Perrodo/Duval/Vaxiviere 12

GTE PRO	
1	Johnson/Pla/Mucke 25
2	Estre/Christensen 18
3	Rigon/Bird 15
4	Bruni/Lietz 12
5	da Costa/Blomqvist 10
6	Lynn/Adam/Martin 8

GTE AM	
1	Lauda/Dalla Lana/Lamy 25
2	Eastwood/Hankey/Yoluc 18
3	Sawa/Griffin/Mok 15
4	Ried/Andlauer/Campbell 13

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

LMP1	
1	Toyota Gazoo Racing 26
2	Rebellion Racing 15
3	ByKolles Racing Team 12
4	SMP Racing 10

GTE	
1	Porsche 30
2	Ford 26
3	Ferrari 15.5
4	BMW 14
5	Aston Martin 14



NO	DRIVERS	TEAM	CAR
LMP1			
1	Andre Lotterer / Neel Jani / Bruno Senna	Rebellion Racing	Rebellion-Gibson R-13
3	Thomas Laurent / Mathias Beche / Gustavo Menezes	Rebellion Racing	Rebellion-Gibson R-13
4	Oliver Webb / Dominik Kraihamer / Tom Dillmann	ByKolles Racing Team	ENSO CLM-Nissan P1/01
5	Charlie Robertson / Mike Simpson / Leo Roussel	CEFC TRSM Racing (Manor)	Ginetta-Mecachrome G60-LT-P1
6	Oliver Rowland / Alex Brundle / Oliver Turvey	CEFC TRSM Racing (Manor)	Ginetta-Mecachrome G60-LT-P1
7	Mike Conway / Kamui Kobayashi / Jose Maria Lopez	Toyota Gazoo Racing	Toyota TS050 HYBRID
8	Sebastien Buemi / Kazuki Nakajima / Fernando Alonso	Toyota Gazoo Racing	Toyota TS050 HYBRID
10	Ben Hanley / Renger van der Zande / Henrik Hedman	DragonSpeed	BRE-Gibson BR1
11	Jenson Button / Mikhail Aleshin / Vitaly Petrov	SMP Racing (ART)	BRE-AER BR1
17	Stephane Sarrazin / Egor Orudzhev / Matevos Isaakyan	SMP Racing (ART)	BRE-AER BR1

LMP2			
22	Paul di Resta / Filipe Albuquerque / Phil Hanson	United Autosports	Ligier-Gibson JSP217
23	Will Stevens / Timothe Buret / Julien Canal	Panis Barthez Competition	Ligier-Gibson JSP217
25	Mark Patterson / Ate de Jong / Tacksung Kim	Algarve Pro Racing	Ligier-Gibson JSP217
26	Jean-Eric Vergne / Roman Rusinov / Andrea Pizzitola	G-Drive Racing (TDS)	ORECA-Gibson 07
28	Loic Duval / Matthieu Vaxiviere / Francois Perrodo	TDS Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07
29	Giedo van der Garde / Jan Lammers / Frits van Eerd	Racing Team Nederland	Dallara-Gibson P217
31	Pastor Maldonado / Nathanael Berthon / Roberto Gonzalez	DragonSpeed	ORECA-Gibson 07
32	Juan Pablo Montoya / Will Owen / Hugo de Sadeleer	United Autosports	Ligier-Gibson JSP217
33	David Cheng / Nicholas Boulle / Pierre Nicolet	Jackie Chan DC Racing (OAK)	Ligier-Gibson JSP217
34	Ricky Taylor / Come Ledogar / David Heinemeier Hansson	Jackie Chan DC Racing (OAK)	Ligier-Gibson JSP217
35	Norman Nato / Viktor Shaytar / Harrison Newey	SMP Racing	Dallara-Gibson P217
36	Nicolas Lapierre / Andre Negrao / Pierre Thiriet	Signatech Alpine Matmut	Alpine-Gibson A470
37	Jazeman Jaafar / Weiron Tan / Nabil Jeffri	Jackie Chan DC Racing (Jota)	ORECA-Gibson 07
38	Ho-Pin Tung / Stephane Richelmi / Gabriel Aubry	Jackie Chan DC Racing (Jota)	ORECA-Gibson 07
39	Tristan Gommendy / Jonathan Hirschi / Vincent Capillaire	Graff-SO24	ORECA-Gibson 07
40	Enzo Guibbert / Jose Gutierrez / James Allen	G-Drive Racing (Graff)	ORECA-Gibson 07
44	Andrea Bertolini / Nic Jonsson / Tracy Krohn	Eurasia Motorsport	Ligier-Gibson JSP217
47	Felipe Nasr / Giorgio Sernagiotto / Roberto Lacorte	Cetilar Villorba Corse	Dallara-Gibson P217
48	Paul-Loup Chatin / Memo Rojas / Paul Lafargue	IDEC Sport	ORECA-Gibson 07
50	Erwin Creed / Romano Ricci / Thomas Dagoneau	Larbre Competition	Ligier-Gibson JSP217

GTE PRO			
51	James Calado / Alessandro Pier Guidi / Daniel Serra	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE 'evo'
52	Toni Vilander / Antonio Giovinazzi / Pipo Derani	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE 'evo'
63	Jan Magnussen / Antonio Garcia / Mike Rockenfeller	Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller)	Chevrolet Corvette C7.R
64	Oliver Gavin / Tommy Milner / Marcel Fassler	Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller)	Chevrolet Corvette C7.R
66	Olivier Pla / Stefan Mucke / Billy Johnson	Ford Chip Ganassi Team UK	Ford GT
67	Andy Priault / Harry Tincknell / Tony Kanaan	Ford Chip Ganassi Team UK	Ford GT
68	Sebastien Bourdais / Dirk Muller / Joey Hand	Ford Chip Ganassi Team USA	Ford GT
69	Ryan Briscoe / Richard Westbrook / Scott Dixon	Ford Chip Ganassi Team USA	Ford GT
71	Sam Bird / Davide Rigon / Miguel Molina	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE 'evo'
81	Martin Tomczyk / Nicky Catsburg / Philipp Eng	BMW Team MTEK	BMW M8 GTE
82	Augusto Farfus / Antonio Felix da Costa / Alexander Sims	BMW Team MTEK	BMW M8 GTE
91	Gianmaria Bruni / Richard Lietz / Frederic Makowiecki	Porsche GT Team (Manthey)	Porsche 911 RSR
92	Michael Christensen / Kevin Estre / Laurens Vanthoor	Porsche GT Team (Manthey)	Porsche 911 RSR
93	Nick Tandy / Patrick Pilet / Earl Bamber	Porsche GT Team (CORE)	Porsche 911 RSR
94	Timo Bernhard / Romain Dumas / Sven Muller	Porsche GT Team (CORE)	Porsche 911 RSR
95	Nicki Thiim / Marco Sorensen / Darren Turner	Aston Martin Racing (Prodrive)	Aston Martin Vantage GTE
97	Jonny Adam / Alex Lynn / Maxime Martin	Aston Martin Racing (Prodrive)	Aston Martin Vantage GTE

GTE AM			
54	Giancarlo Fisichella / Francesco Castellacci / Thomas Flohr	Spirit of Race (AF)	Ferrari 488 GTE
56	Jorg Bergmeister / Patrick Lindsey / Egidio Perfetti	Team Project 1	Porsche 911 RSR
61	Matt Griffin / Keita Sawa / Mok Weng Sun	Clearwater Racing	Ferrari 488 GTE
70	Olivier Beretta / Eddie Cheever III / Motoaki Ishikawa	MR Racing (AF)	Ferrari 488 GTE
77	Matt Campbell / Julien Andlauer / Christian Ried	Dempsey-Proton Racing	Porsche 911 RSR
80	Fabio Babini / Christina Nielsen / Erik Maris	Ebimotors	Porsche 911 RSR
84	Jeff Segal / Cooper MacNeil / Liam Griffin	JMW Motorsport	Ferrari 488 GTE
85	Jeroen Bleekemolen / Luca Stolz / Ben Keating	Keating Motorsports (Risi)	Ferrari 488 GTE
86	Ben Barker / Alex Davison / Michael Wainwright	Gulf Racing UK	Porsche 911 RSR
88	Matteo Cairolì / Giorgio Roda / Khaled Al Qubaisi	Dempsey-Proton Racing	Porsche 911 RSR
90	Euan Hankey / Charlie Eastwood / Salih Yoluc	TF Sport	Aston Martin Vantage GTE
98	Pedro Lamy / Mathias Lauda / Paul Dalla Lana	Aston Martin Racing (Prodrive)	Aston Martin Vantage GTE
99	Patrick Long / Spencer Pumpelly / Tim Pappas	Proton Competition	Porsche 911 RSR



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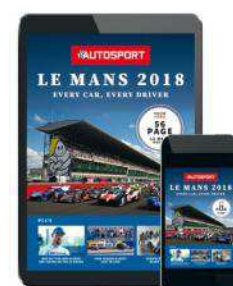
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Century Motorsport take maiden SRO win with the new BMW M4 with Tuck and Green

Rising GT racing stars Ben Tuck and Ben Green celebrated their first British GT4 win at Snetterton last weekend – a result that also marked the first glory for a customer operation in an SRO championship with the new BMW M4 GT4.

The Century Motorsport pairing battled back against the odds to secure victory in the second race of the weekend, despite Green losing ground in the opening stint when he was spun out by a rival car. Undeterred, Green battled back up the order to hand the car over to Tuck, who rejoined in 11th after the pitstops.

With both drivers, and the car, enjoying searing pace around the Norfolk track, Tuck worked his way into the lead with just over a minute to go to cement a dream result.

“We’ve always had this pace, but we’ve had a few races in tricky conditions so far in British GT, so this was the first time we’ve really been able to show what we can do,” said Green. “Hopefully this is the first of many.” Both drivers thanked the team and BMW for the set-up on the car and congratulated each other for their driving. Tuck added: “We really battled in that race and all credit to Century Motorsport, which executed the perfect pitstop strategy to get us back in the game. It’s a fantastic result.”



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