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BRAZIL DUEL

ROSBERG DOES THE DOUBLE

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Hamilton
backed off
after title win?

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THE PACE, BUT
YOU CAN'T
OVERTAKE"



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POLE POSITION

Mercedes rules dull but understandable

INEVITABLY, SOME HAVE DECIDED THAT NICO ROSBERG taking his second win on the bounce is the consequence of a team plot to allow him to finish second in the championship. It isn't. The Mercedes rules of engagement have been long established – they don't diverge in terms of number of pitstops, although they have been allowed to run a different tyre-compound sequence.

Yes, that's frustrating for Lewis Hamilton. But the fact is he has benefited from Rosberg not being able to attack using an alternative strategy when behind. You can argue that it's dull that a team that has already sealed the drivers' and constructors' titles is playing it so conservatively (the fear of aggressive strategies is they will lead a driver to gamble and lose out to nearby Ferraris), but Mercedes is in F1 to win so who can blame it?

The tension between team and driver interests in grand prix racing is as old as the hills – it's just that in the 1930s, rather than Rosberg and Hamilton chucking Pirelli caps at each other, it was about Luigi Fagioli flinging a wheel hammer at Rudolf Caracciola.

It is a team sport, and that tension is just part of what makes grand prix racing so fascinating – even if it can sometimes be 'dull'.



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COVER STORY



“I don't have an exact explanation for why it's going so strongly now”

Nico Rosberg, p16

STALEVILAT

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THE BIG PICTURE

Fernando Alonso was forced to watch F1 qualifying at Interlagos from a camping chair after he was told to park his McLaren because of an engine temperature alarm

Photographer Photo4 / XPB Images

This week in F1

AUSTIN'S F1 FUTURE 'NOT LOOKING GOOD'

Circuit of the Americas chairman Bobby Epstein admits the future of F1 in Austin "is not looking good" after a funding cut for the United States Grand Prix.

Since its GP debut in 2012, the Austin track has received

\$25 million per year from the Texas state government based on the economic value of F1 to the region. But following an audit of how the fund is distributed, the state feels F1 is worth 20 per cent less to Texas than previously believed and subsequently cut funding to \$19.5m. This has hit COTA hard, with falling

attendances since 2012, an annual rise in the race-hosting fee and losses at 2015's event because of bad weather.

Epstein told AUTOSPORT: "I'm concerned about the future. We did not know they would change how they calculated the funding. To cover the loss of funding, we have to sell another

30,000 tickets. But if we could have sold another 30,000 this year we would have. We didn't stop selling. So I don't think we're going to make our way out of it by selling more tickets. It's not looking good."

The 2016 race remains scheduled to go ahead on October 23.



8

Lotus 2016 car well advanced

Lotus believes it is making good progress on developing its 2016 car ahead of the team's impending takeover by Renault.

Technical director Nick Chester said: "We're well progressed through the design process and most of the layout has been done.

"There hasn't been the greatest amount of development through the year on the E23, so we've been able to dedicate quite a bit of additional manpower to our 2016 challenger."



TEE/LAT



XPB IMAGES

HAMILTON SAYS 'HEAVY PARTYING' LED TO CRASH

Lewis Hamilton says his Monaco car crash resulted from "heavy partying".

Hamilton admitted on Instagram to "very light contact with a stationary vehicle" in his shunt in the early hours of Tuesday in his Pagani Zonda.

In a statement, Monaco's Palais de Justice confirmed the accident occurred as Hamilton's "foot slipped

on the brake and clutch pedals and his vehicle struck three parked cars".

Hamilton said: "It [the crash] was a result of heavy partying and not much rest for a week and a half.

"I am generally a really energetic person, but that week after Mexico and the party we drank a lot and I was really feeling it."

Sainz expecting to stay with Toro Rosso

Carlos Sainz Jr has dropped the firmest hint yet that he is set to stay with the Toro Rosso team for 2016.

"This is my main focus, to stay with Toro Rosso," said the Spanish rookie. "I'm not worried - let's put it like that."



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STALEV/LAT

Wolff: Engine plan 'does my head in'

Mercedes chief Toto Wolff says the independent engine proposal will not work and the idea of two specifications "does my head in".

The FIA and Bernie Ecclestone are keen to offer independent teams a cheaper power unit to drive down costs.

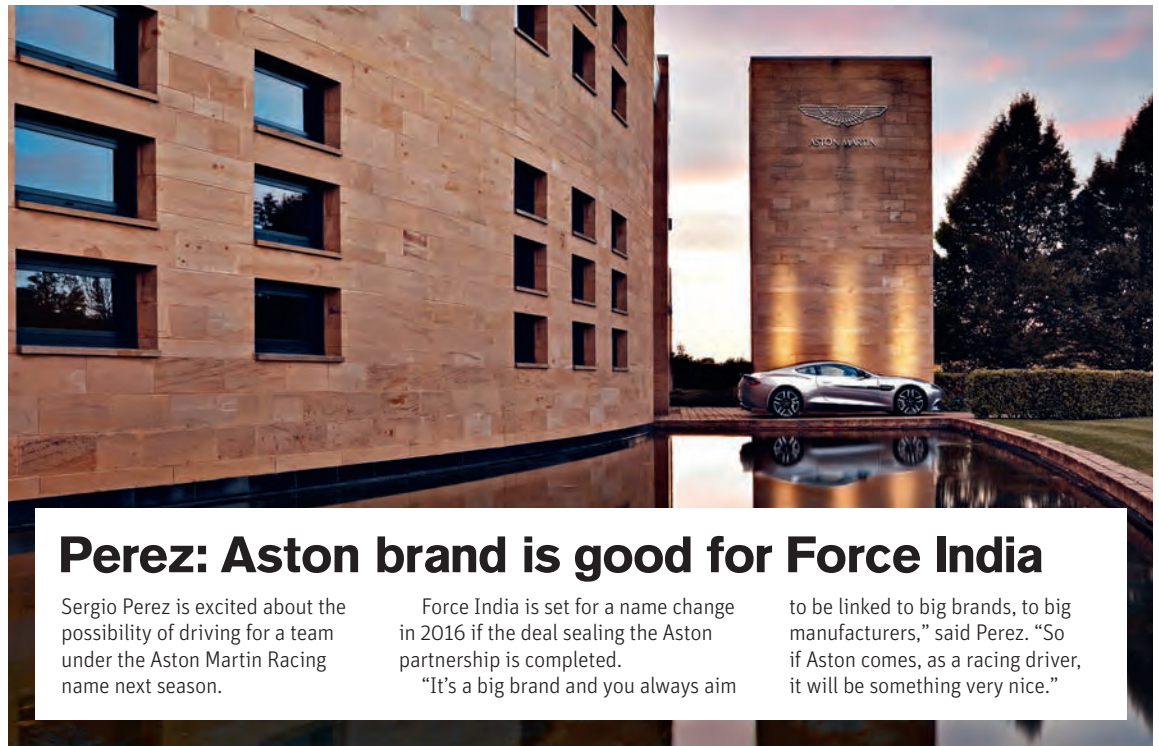
Toro Rosso team boss Franz Tost has backed the idea but Wolff has voiced his concern over the prospect, arguing it would be impossible to achieve performance equivalence.

The 'Balance of Performance' concept is common in sportscar series where different engine types compete, and Wolff is sceptical.

"Personally, I think many of us and many of you share the opinion that the 'balance of performance' engine doesn't work in Formula 1," he said.

"It doesn't even work in any other category.

"We hear the aggravation in GT racing and it does my head in hearing ideas."



Perez: Aston brand is good for Force India

Sergio Perez is excited about the possibility of driving for a team under the Aston Martin Racing name next season.

Force India is set for a name change in 2016 if the deal sealing the Aston partnership is completed.

"It's a big brand and you always aim

to be linked to big brands, to big manufacturers," said Perez. "So if Aston comes, as a racing driver, it will be something very nice."

Ryan is Manor's new team chief

Manor has appointed the former McLaren sporting director Dave Ryan as its new racing director.

It follows the news that sporting director and team principal John Booth will leave the team after the Abu Dhabi GP finale.

"Having spent time with [owner] Stephen [Fitzpatrick], and understood his vision for the future, it is clear

he has ensured there is a strong platform from which the team can make big steps forward in the seasons ahead," said Ryan.

Meanwhile, Manor team owner Stephen Fitzpatrick has confirmed he has not yet offered anyone the role of team principal, despite speculation in Brazil that ex-F1 driver Alexander Wurz has been singled out for the role.

REMEMBER WHEN



Dave Ryan spent three decades with McLaren, before splitting with the team in April 2009, amid an FIA investigation about Lewis Hamilton lying to Australian GP stewards.

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ETHERINGTON/LAT

Alonso: I must improve in 2016

Fernando Alonso believes he has not driven particularly well in 2015, confessing McLaren-Honda's poor form has affected his motivation.

The double world champion's and his team-mate Jenson Button's grand prix weekends have often been stymied by engine penalties and unreliability, as Honda tried to get up to speed after a six-year absence.

Asked if he felt he had produced any particularly good performances, Alonso replied: "From me? I don't think so. I did some good laps here and there. Definitely I need to improve for next year."

"I'm on standby, let's say, in economy mode. I will have more energy next year."



DUNBAR/LAT

ALONSO IN 2015

Starts	17
Points	11
Points finishes	2
Best finish	5th
Retirements	7
Engines	12
Championship standing	17



FOUR JAILED FOR RED BULL HQ RAM RAID

A gang of four that ram-raided Red Bull's headquarters in Milton Keynes, stealing more than 60 trophies, as part of a wider crime spree have been jailed.

It was one of 40 burglaries and thefts committed across the south of England over a six-month period, yielding an estimated haul of almost £1 million.

Danny Stevens, Paul Smith, Jason Eastwood and Luke Cole pleaded guilty to conspiracy charges and received sentences between two and seven years.

TYLER MCQUARRIE
Photo by: Tyler McQuarrie

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Ben Anderson

From the paddock

Technical parity will probably never happen in Formula 1, but it would certainly sort out the age-old debate about who is the best driver

For the drivers' sake, does F1 need a new identity? Who is the best driver in Formula 1? Lewis Hamilton? Sebastian Vettel? Valtteri Bottas? Kimi Raikkonen? Jenson Button? Daniel Ricciardo? Daniil Kvyat? Max Verstappen? Romain Grosjean? Nico Hulkenberg? Fernando Alonso?

It's impossible to know for sure, because of the technical disparities between the different constructors in F1. It's possible to extrapolate through various comparisons over time, to get a rough idea, but a true comparison is fraught with caveats.

It's fun to analyse, debate and guess, but certainty is always evasive. Take Alonso, for example. He's a double world champion who has toiled in uncompetitive cars for the past two seasons. Last year (with Ferrari) he reckoned to be his best in F1 in terms of his own performance – crushing world champion team-mate Raikkonen.

This year's McLaren has been even more dismal in terms of performance. Alonso is the same driver, but he admitted ahead of the Brazilian Grand Prix that he hasn't driven well this year, describing himself as "in economy mode" until he rediscovers the extra motivation that comes from being able to fight at the front once again.

But the truth is he could have been utterly awesome this season and it would make little difference to his predicament, such as the significant shortcomings of the technical package McLaren-Honda has placed at his disposal. This raises the question of whether

The suggestion is that F1 should standardise more technology, in order to become better focused on the drivers, and the quality of the racing.

"With respect to McLaren, the public struggles to understand Fernando and Jenson – two champions of the sport – so far off the pace," adds Hembery. "Is it the car, is it the driver, should they both retire, are they too old?"

"It's a nonsense, but if you're watching in a bar on the big screen, all you're seeing is two of your great idols nowhere near. That's hard to understand for people."

In this context, could the FIA's new 'budget' F1 engine (proposed for the 2017-19 seasons) help provide the answer to Hembery's question?

Imagine, for a moment, a 'perfect' world, where an independent manufacturer is found, the FIA engine is introduced, is better than anything else currently out there, and every team on the grid adopts it.

All of a sudden you would create Bernie Ecclestone's ideal scenario – a modern way of returning to a rose-tinted past where everyone (apart from Ferrari) used a Cosworth DFV engine and the championship was supposedly mega every season. You would also dramatically reduce a big technical discrepancy between the various cars, which would then allow the better drivers on the grid to shine more brightly, more often.

Except I can't see this 'ideal scenario' happening, because F1's governance structure will struggle to allow it. And even if the FIA and Ecclestone force it through,

"Perhaps it's more pertinent to ask how it may be possible for the *drivers* to stand out more"

fundamental reform is needed in F1 to place more emphasis on the human element of the equation – the loosest nut on the car, if you will.

Amid ongoing debate about how F1 should change for the better in 2017, much of the focus is on how to make the cars more spectacular, but perhaps it's more pertinent to ask how it may be possible to make the *drivers* stand out more.

"That's the biggest single problem we have as a sport," argues Pirelli motorsport boss Paul Hembery, who is keenly interested in making F1 more alluring to the public, given the money Pirelli pumps into the category as a partner. "We have star drivers, of course, but the most common question you get asked is 'who's the best driver?' because they [the public] can't work it out.

"I think it's very hard for the public to perceive individual brilliance here. If you get into a debate about who the best driver is, all you can do at the moment is compare team-mates. That's a little bit of a shame."

the current engine manufacturers (which have spent millions to be part of F1's current V6 hybrid formula) would suddenly find their investments wasted.

You can't reasonably create a set of rules to encourage manufacturers to remain in or join F1, then turn around after two years and effectively force them out by creating a faster and cheaper alternative through regulations.

They won't stand for that. They will quit, teams will have to downsize dramatically to continue, and many, many jobs will be lost. F1 as we know it would be utterly transformed. Maybe that's a good thing, maybe it's the only way to create the sort of F1 Hembery would like to see? Perhaps the pain would simply be too great to bear?

More likely the current manufacturers will eventually agree to lower the price of customer engines to ease the financial burden on the smaller teams, the 'budget' engine will go away, and our debates about who the best driver in Formula 1 is will have to rage on regardless of technical parity, or rather a lack thereof... ❧

This week in motorsport

PALMER WANTS WEC ROUND

MotorSport Vision chief Jonathan Palmer hopes his forthcoming French race circuit will host the World Endurance Championship in the future.

MSV secured the freehold to the 1263-acre Laon-Couvron aerodrome last week and plans to renovate the former French Air Force base into a new motorsports park, including an FIA-grade race circuit between 4.5 and 5 miles long.

The track, which is being designed by Palmer himself, will include a unique 1.5-mile main straight. Palmer hopes Laon could replicate Spa's status as a "dress rehearsal" for the Le Mans 24 Hours.

It would need to be built to at least Grade 2 standard, with the Circuit de la Sarthe the only non-Grade 1 circuit on the current WEC calendar.



Van der Garde set for DTM run

Former Caterham Formula 1 driver Giedo van der Garde is set to test DTM machinery with Mercedes next month in the series' traditional rookie test at Jerez in the first week of December.

European Formula 3 frontrunner Jake Dennis and Formula Renault 3.5 driver Jazeman Jaafar are also likely to run.

BoP break for Aston in WEC

Aston Martin will race with the same Balance of Performance at this month's WEC finale in Bahrain with which its Vantage GTEs proved competitive at the start of the season.

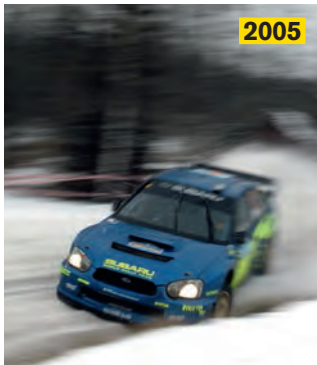
The Aston's engine air-restrictor has been restored to its original 29.1mm diameter after a 0.5mm cut ahead of the start of the second leg of the WEC in August at the Nurburgring and a 0.2mm increase for Fuji in October.

The GTE Pro class Astons have proved off the pace of the Porsche 911 RSR and Ferrari 458 Italia in the last four races.

12

REMEMBER WHEN

2005



Petter Solberg took his only Rally Sweden win in 2005?

The World Rallycross champion is working on a deal to return to the World Rally Championship stage on the Swedish event next February. Solberg has contested the historic rally the last three years and first contested the WRC event in 1998.

LMP3 JOINS LE MANS BILL

LMP3 cars will join GT3 machinery in the new-for-2016 support race ahead of the Le Mans 24 Hours in June.

P3 teams racing in the European Le Mans Series will be allowed to start in the blue-riband round of the new Michelin GT3 Cup, which was announced as part of the ELMS undercard last month.

Le Mans organiser the Automobile Club de l'Ouest has also reserved the right to invite other GT3 and LMP3 entrants not competing in the ELMS or the GT3 Cup to take part in the one-hour race late on the Saturday morning of the 24 Hours weekend.

The GT3 Cup will be made up of the Le Mans one-hour race, with a mandatory pitstop, and two-hour enduros at five of the six ELMS rounds.

One bronze-rated driver will be mandatory in each driver line-up.



TCR-spec Alfa Romeo revealed

Italian engineering firm Romeo Ferraris has revealed the Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR it has built for the fledgling touring car series. Mario Ferraris and Salvatore Tavano were due to shake the car down this week

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Audi drivers join Corvette

Audi drivers Marcel Fassler and Mike Rockenfeller will join the Corvette Racing line-up for the IMSA SportsCar Championship enduros at Daytona and Sebring next year.

Fassler and Rockenfeller, part of Audi's World Endurance Championship and DTM respectively, will be the two additional drivers in the pair of new-rules Chevrolet Corvette C7.Rs at the Daytona 24 Hours and Sebring 12 Hours. Which of the regular pairings they will be placed with has yet to be announced.

Rockenfeller moves over from the Chevrolet-supported Spirit of Daytona squad, while Fassler was part of the Corvette Racing line-up in 2009.



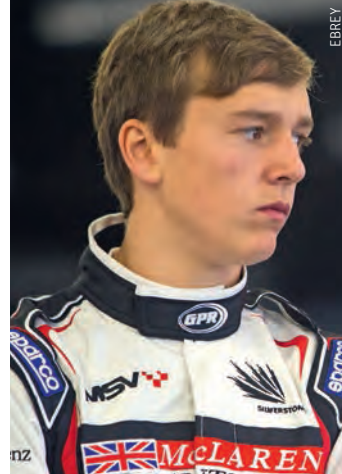
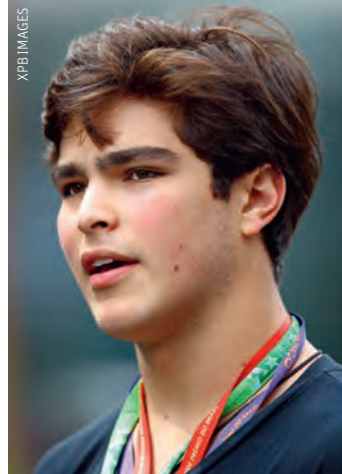
Vanhooor out of Macau race

Laurens Vanhooor will be replaced by fellow Audi factory driver Rene Rast in the WRT team's attack on the FIA GT World Cup in Macau later this month.

Vanhooor has been ruled out of the November 21-22 event as a result of the leg injuries he sustained in the penultimate round of the Blancpain Sprint Series at Misano at the beginning of October.

He is scheduled to drive a racing car for the first time since the accident on Thursday at a track-day and incentive facility close to WRT's Belgian workshops.

Rast, who will make his Macau debut, has raced with Vanhooor at WRT in the Spa 24 Hours in the last three years and made his LMP1 bow at Le Mans in Audi's third entry in June.



Piquet, Barnicoat land F3 gigs

Pedro Piquet, the 17-year-old son of three-time Formula 1 world champion Nelson Piquet, will contest next season's Formula 3 European Championship with Van Amersfoort Racing.

Piquet moves to the team after two successive Brazilian F3 titles. He tested for Dutch team VAR last

winter and has been out again with the squad recently at the Red Bull Ring, the Nurburgring and Spa.

McLaren-affiliated Racing Steps Foundation-backed Ben Barnicoat will also step up to Euro F3 in 2016.

The Formula Renault Eurocup race winner joins crack squad Prema PowerTeam.



Jordan 'bowled over' by Ford test

Andrew Jordan completed his first British Touring Car test with Motorbase at Brands Hatch last week. "I was bowled over by how good the car was," said the 2013 BTCC champion. "I couldn't stop smiling."

St Petersburg's IndyCar future secured to 2020



The St Petersburg street race will remain on the IndyCar calendar to 2020.

The Florida event is usually the series' season opener, and had already secured that slot on the 2016 calendar, when it will be held on March 11-13.

Organiser Green Savoree Racing Promotions has been notified that the

city council has extended its licence to hold the race for a further five years, and set the 2017/18 dates as March 9-12 and March 8-11 respectively.

● Ex-NASCAR team boss Jay Frye has replaced Derrick Walker as IndyCar's president of competition and operations.

In brief



PRIAULX/LOPEZ

World Touring Car champion Jose Maria Lopez will team up with 2012 IndyCar champion Ryan Hunter-Reay to form Team Americas in this year's Race of Champions. Andy Priaulx will join fellow BTCC racer Jason Plato in one of two Team England line-ups.

HYUNDAI'S NEW CAR

Hyundai has set the final specification for its 2016 World Rally Car and the car will be launched on December 9.

CATSBURG'S 911 TRIAL

Spa 24 Hours winner Nicky Catsburg will try a factory Porsche 911 RSR, his first GTE experience, at the official WEC rookie test on November 21 alongside Porsche Supercup champion Philipp Eng.

AMR PICKS YOUTH

Meanwhile, the six Aston Martin Evolution Academy drivers chosen to try out in its Vantage GTE car in the Bahrain test are Matt Bell, Dan Lloyd, Ross Gunn, Jamie Chadwick, Jody Fannin and Devon Modell.

FORD'S PUBLIC RUN

Ford went into this week's official IMSA test at Daytona without announcing the drivers for the Chip Ganassi Racing-run campaign with the new GT. Joey Hand, Richard Westbrook, Ryan Briscoe and Kuno Wittmer are believed to be joining the North American programme.

FOUR-CAR GP3 TEAMS

GP3's 2016 entry will comprise four-car entries from Arden, ART, Campos, DAMS, Jenzer, Koironen and Trident, after Virtuosi dropped off the entry list.



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Dieter Rencken

F1's political animal

By shutting down the engine cost-cap regulations, Ferrari has sent Formula 1's stakeholders a powerful message

Sometimes a logo is worth a thousand words. Study pictures of Tazio Nuvolari's 1935 German Grand Prix-winning Alfa Romeo, which slew the might of the home nation's Silver Arrows, and one detail is unmissable: a yellow shield bearing the letters S and F and a black rampant stallion graces the flanks of this red single-seater, more specifically its engine cover.

A tatty Nurburgring race programme elaborates on those initials. Alfa Romeo's race team was then run by Scuderia Ferrari after the Milanese company struck an agreement with its ambitious former race driver, Enzo Ferrari, to superintend its racing activities. The Second World War followed swiftly on the heels of this arrangement's end, and only after hostilities ceased did Ferrari construct and race cars under his own name.

Exactly eighty years on, photographs of Ferrari's 2015 grand prix challenger reveal a neat historical twist. The Ferrari SF15-T's engine cover bears Alfa Romeo's evocative 'cross and serpent' roundel. Therein lies the tale of Ferrari's mutation from racing stallion (for its then owner) to cash cow (for its current owners), and the reasons for its political intransigence.

Crucially, *il Commendatore* – as he came to be universally addressed – underwrote his race programmes through the sale of exotic road cars aimed at the rich and famous. So successful were his activities that by 1952 he had ended Alfa Romeo's winning two-year streak, in doing so driving Alfa out of the sport entirely, and had

During the infamous war that ripped F1 apart in the eighties as authorities and teams fought over control of the sport, the Old Man went into cahoots with the British constructors. But he cleverly protected his position by insisting on a veto over regulations to protect Ferrari's legitimate sporting and technical interests.

After he died in 1988, control ultimately passed to his trusted former lieutenant Luca di Montezemolo, who balanced Ferrari's sporting and commercial activities such that annual road car production increased 50 per cent to 7,000 units, with commensurate advances in quality. Simultaneously, Ferrari dominated F1 for five straight years from 2000-04 in a fashion never seen before, or since.

In 2011, team boss Stefano Domenicali revealed that Gestione Sportiva (note the not-so-subtle shift from "Scuderia") for the first time moved into profit, no longer being utterly reliant upon the road-car division to fund its programmes. Break-even had been achieved through cost cuts and increased F1 revenues, and the sale of F1 engines to competitors, which had been a no-no for Enzo.

After Agnelli died in 2003, day-to-day control of FIAT passed to Sergio Marchionne, an Italo-Canadian philosophy, economics and law graduate with ambitions of turning Italy's carmaker, which acquired control of Alfa Romeo from the state in 1986, into a global giant. He did, though, leave Ferrari largely to its own devices – until September 2014, when consistently poor on-track results triggered Montezemolo's departure...

“Ferrari will compete in Formula 1 only while its racing team contributes to the bottom line”

set Alberto Ascari on the road to winning the world championship – the last Italian driver to do so.

Ferrari made no bones about the fact that his company was the embodiment of his competitive spirit and that it existed to race. So much so that when Ford came knocking in the early sixties, a potentially lucrative takeover faltered over his insistence that he alone preside over Ferrari's racing activities. He eventually struck a deal with FIAT, which acquired 90 per cent of Ferrari, yet allowed him full control over his beloved Scuderia.

True, Enzo raged against race promoters, drivers and authorities alike, often threatening to withdraw his scarlet cars, and sometimes even going through with that threat. However, the fact remains that Ferrari alone has contested every F1 world championship since that inaugural 1950 season – even if the Scuderia missed the first grand prix (owing to a dispute over money, naturally) and a handful thereafter. Always FIAT, led by Gianni Agnelli, allowed him complete control over his sporting fiefdom.

The timing coincided with Marchionne's plans to list Ferrari on New York's Stock Exchange, not only to partially fund FIAT's control of Chrysler, but equally to provide a war chest for the resurrection of Alfa Romeo as a competitor for Germany's Big Three – hence the logo appearing on the SF15-Ts, in effect going head-to-head with Mercedes-Benz in an environment conspicuously avoided by Audi and BMW.

The IPO, completed in late October, proved a success, valuing Ferrari at \$10bn and indirectly raising around \$4bn for the fighting fund – at the cost of independence. Coincidentally (or not) Ferrari exercised its veto over the FIA's attempts to slash F1 engine costs, arguing that such plans could reduce Ferrari's annual income by \$30m.

The message is clear: Ferrari will compete in F1 only while Gestione Sportiva contributes to the bottom line. Where the Scuderia graced grids for sixty years, there are no guarantees it will race beyond the next six, when F1's current contracts expire. ❧



BRAZILIAN GP

ROSBERG REIGNS AGAIN IN BRAZIL

Nico Rosberg once again edged out his championship-winning team-mate in both qualifying and the race. **BEN ANDERSON** witnessed another reverse in the established one-two



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Rosberg just edged
out Hamilton at start



XPB IMAGES

19

THE RACE 14:00, 16.11.2015



Try as he might, Lewis Hamilton just cannot seem to win the Brazilian Grand Prix. This race means a great deal to Hamilton, by virtue of the fact that it was his hero Ayrton Senna's home event, but a second successive defeat to Mercedes team-mate Nico Rosberg as this Formula 1 season draws to a close means Hamilton has now failed to win this race in nine attempts.

Hamilton is a triple F1 world champion and winner of 43 grands prix in a phenomenal career, but none of those victories has come around Sao Paulo's Interlagos circuit. Those of a superstitious bent would probably describe Hamilton's relationship with this place as jinxed...

He has come close, of course, notably in 2012



As in previous race,
Rosberg took pole

when he qualified on pole and led the race before a collision between his McLaren and Nico Hulkenberg's Force India. He fancied his chances last year, too, pressuring Rosberg until a spin entering the Curva do Lago just before his final stop.

Second remains his best finish in a race he would dearly love to win. It took his hero Senna eight attempts to finally crack the nut, but Hamilton's quest will now move into double figures, foiled this time by the fact that his team-mate continues to enjoy a purple patch of form since the title was settled in Hamilton's favour in America.

Some would say Hamilton has throttled back since clinching his third championship, but the tiny margins between the two Mercedes at Interlagos suggested Hamilton – however run down/partied out/fevered up he might be feeling since sealing the deal at Austin – was pushing as hard as ever to break his Brazilian duck.

The way things panned out was almost a repeat of the last race in Mexico. Mercedes enjoyed a clear pace advantage over the rest of the field, Rosberg again crafting a small but crucial edge over his team-mate.

Ultimately, Hamilton will probably feel that just 0.078 seconds decided this race. Yes, he eventually finished more than seven seconds adrift of Rosberg on Sunday, but less than a tenth settled their private battle for pole position on Saturday.

Rosberg was a bit faster through the Senna S and slightly neater through the tight left at Pinheirinho on his pole lap, and once he'd nailed his start and covered off Hamilton's attempt to attack around the

outside into the first corner, the race was his to lose.

Hamilton felt he had the pace to win this race, and said so emphatically afterwards. In truth, Rosberg was controlling things from the front, which was the natural advantage he enjoyed from starting ahead and maintaining track position over his nearest rival.

In terms of average pace, Hamilton was faster than Rosberg across the third of the four stints that made up their grand prix, and also across the first part of the second stint, when he made his most concerted effort to challenge for the lead.

He used DRS on the main straight to stay close, and darted around behind Rosberg a couple of times (almost getting a look inside at the Senna S as Rosberg took a deeper line in on one occasion), but he grew increasingly frustrated – at the fact he couldn't pass Rosberg; at the fact he couldn't close enough to really attempt a pass; at the fact that trying to follow closely was killing his tyres, and at the lack of alternative strategic options to try to force a chink in Rosberg's armour.

Afterwards, the triple champion suggested F1 needed action to promote more overtaking and better racing. "Something has got to change," he said. "Some races you can follow, which enables good racing, like Austin, otherwise for the fans it's not too exciting to watch.

"At the end of the day, it doesn't really matter what we say because it won't happen. The big bosses make the decisions, and whether or not they are the right ones is another thing..."

Unsurprisingly, Rosberg was keen to stress ▶

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Ferraris' pace affected
Mercedes strategy...



XPB IMAGES

21

Rosberg: "I was six seconds in front at the end. Lewis was not going to pass me with that pace"

► that Hamilton wouldn't have been able to pass whatever happened, because the man in front was simply too fast.

"I had the pace advantage over Lewis, so he wasn't going to come past me," insisted Rosberg. "I was six seconds in front at the end. He's not going to pass me with that pace."

Hamilton backed off over the second portion of the second stint, at that stage seeking to preserve tyres that needed to last roughly 28 laps if Mercedes was to get both of its cars home on the fastest two-stop strategy, and he also appeared to coast home over the last seven laps or so, complaining to the team that his tyres had "gone off".

This happened even though Mercedes switched its drivers onto a three-stop strategy in the middle of the race, in order to cover a roll of the dice by Ferrari, which was unexpectedly quick in race trim. Sebastian Vettel managed to stay within roughly 10s of the two silver cars over the first 30 laps.

"We were looking to do two stops, but when Sebastian went to three it was a no-brainer to shadow him, because we had enough margin to



do it safely," explained Mercedes technical chief Paddy Lowe. "There was a slight worry with Kimi [Raikkonen], but he was much further back."

A few laps earlier, Hamilton had been asking whether he could convert to a 'Plan B' strategy in order to carry the fight to Rosberg. At that stage he was told the only thing he could do was try to extend the life of his second set of tyres, in the hope of attacking his team-mate with slightly fresher rubber at the end.

Hamilton perhaps could have forced his team's hand by just coming into the pits anyway and switching himself to a three-stop strategy. Maybe if the title was still to play for he might have taken the risk of breaking team protocol that gives first call to

the leading car. Perhaps any such move would have backfired because of the closer proximity of the Ferraris, but the way Hamilton breezed back past Raikkonen when he did eventually make a team-ordered third stop suggested otherwise.

"I know Lewis was calling for an alternative strategy in the race, but it's actually not a team policy [to not allow it]," explained Lowe. "If there's an alternative for the second-place driver, like swapping compounds, we discuss that and make it available, and the driver has an opportunity to show an underlying pace advantage."

"But when the alternative is 10s slower... I know Lewis was frustrated, but he wouldn't thank us if that threatened to lose his second place to ►

DUNBAR/LAT



Vettel was rewarded with third place

► Sebastian. Lewis was just frustrated because he couldn't overtake. I actually think this track is one of the better ones for overtaking, but a 0.2s advantage isn't enough; you need 0.5-1s."

So Hamilton was stuck with his lot. If he was going to win the race, he had to do it by forcing a change of position on the circuit. He redoubled his efforts on his final set of tyres, but got held up in traffic (at one stage gesticulating as he lapped Romain Grosjean) and took too much from the rubber trying to catch back up to Rosberg.

"I love this track, it's such a great circuit, but unfortunately it's so difficult to overtake," said Hamilton. "You get within a second and you lose downforce, there is no way you can get closer.

"Contrary to what Nico was saying, at one point I was all over him, but inside one second I just couldn't get by. I had the pace today."

The ballsy efforts of Toro Rosso's Max Verstappen showcased how overtaking is possible around the Autodromo Carlos Pace, but the Dutchman (who twice went around the outside of rivals into the Senna S in a car that is not blessed with straightline speed) pointed out overtaking is a lot more likely when you're not driving an identical car to your rival.

"With the Mercedes, maybe they have more problems when they are closer to each other," he suggested. "Also their speed is higher, so maybe it's a bit more difficult for them.

"They are both on a very good pace, and I have to say, when one of the Toro Rossos is behind the other, it's very difficult to get past. Definitely if you have the same type of cars, it's very hard.

"For us, we have very good cornering speed, so if we are behind a Lotus or a Sauber or a Force India, we always catch up in the fast corners, even when we are behind. That's different, for sure.

"For them, it's equal everywhere: the corners, the



straights. Then if you are behind, you lose a lot in fast corners, so I can understand Lewis."

Mercedes' strategic intransigence in the face of Hamilton's radio calls stemmed partly from the fact Ferrari was uncomfortably close in the race.

Friday practice form suggested the Scuderia was further behind than usual here, but the team felt its pace was disguised by traffic over such a short lap (both cars completed lengthy race runs without interruption in second practice), and Vettel's strong drive to third place (finishing less than seven seconds behind Hamilton) indicated the Maranello engineers had a valid point.

"I think overall it's true we are closer compared to Australia," confirmed Vettel. "Obviously Malaysia

Hamilton: "Contrary to what Nico was saying, at one point I was all over him, but I just couldn't get by. I had the pace"

was a bit different for us, but I think, in general, if you look at the beginning of the season to now, we are a lot closer.

"I don't know what happened to Lewis in the end. I think the real gap we have to look at is the one to Nico. I think they were dropping a bit of pace, I was catching up as well.

"Obviously, my race didn't go too well in Mexico, but I think the pace was strong [there too]. That's due to hard work. We've improved on the engine side, the motoristi in Maranello have done a miracle this year, that's due to the car."

Ferrari ultimately wasn't quite close enough to challenge Mercedes properly in the Brazilian GP, though at least close enough to deny Hamilton a strategic option in his personal duel with Rosberg. Last season, Mercedes didn't have to pay any attention to what was happening in its wake in Brazil; this year was rather different.

But whether or not Hamilton was denied a strategic chance to pass Rosberg, and regardless of whether overtaking was possible or not on this track, nothing should detract from a fine drive from



Verstappen (l) drove well to finish ninth

QUALIFYING

Bottas split Ferraris before penalty



STALEY/LAT



Nico Rosberg has now claimed pole position for five grands prix in a row. If the Formula 1 world championship hadn't already been settled in Lewis Hamilton's favour, F1's latest triple title winner would have serious cause for concern.

Perhaps he does have cause for concern. If Rosberg carries this form into the final race of 2015 and the start of next season, he will greatly increase his chances of challenging for a first world championship of his own.

Hamilton has consistently played down the significance of his current barren streak, which dates back to September's Singapore GP, where Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel broke Hamilton's run of seven straight poles stretching back to a May Saturday in Monaco.

He did so again after trailing Rosberg by just 0.078 seconds around the short Interlagos circuit. "I've had the most poles of the year and I've won the world championship, so there's nothing really to read into it," Hamilton said. "You don't always get it perfect every single time..."

Whether or not there has been a shift in mindset, intensity, technical understanding, or whatever, in Rosberg's favour recently, this was arguably the hardest won of his recent poles.

Hamilton led the way through Mercedes' single runs in Q1 and Q2, twice lapping in 1m11.6s, but Rosberg turned the screw in Q3, banging in a 1m11.461s lap to take provisional pole from Hamilton. The champion trailed Rosberg by less than a tenth after those first runs, and improved from 1m11.549s to a 1m11.360s on his final effort, but Rosberg found time too – almost two tenths, actually – to maintain his hold on top spot.

"I got a really good balance with the car, I was very happy, the laps were looking very good through Q1 and Q2, just Q3 I wasn't able to find that small bit of edge," Hamilton explained. "At the end I didn't maximise the first sector, but the other two were OK."

In fact, Hamilton was fractionally slower than Rosberg through both of the first two sectors, only pulling a couple of hundredths back through Juncao and the long drag uphill to the finish line. Even if Hamilton had repeated his stronger first sector from earlier in Q3, he would still have trailed. This was Rosberg's day.

"I was playing catch-up a little in Q2, that didn't quite go to plan [Rosberg was only third fastest in that segment], but really got going in Q3," Rosberg said. "The last lap was on the edge, there were a couple of big moments in there, but it still worked out to be a good time."

He needs to keep up this kind of effort and continue doing it next season, when Hamilton will no longer be able to claim it doesn't matter.



Rosberg was just that bit quicker...



...crossing the line 6s ahead

the German, who has simply been the better Mercedes driver over the past two grands prix.

The exact reason is unclear, and Rosberg is either unable or unwilling (perhaps both!) to explain exactly why he suddenly has the upper hand. "It's just going a lot better at the moment," he said. "I don't have an exact explanation, unfortunately, otherwise it would make it all a lot more simple."

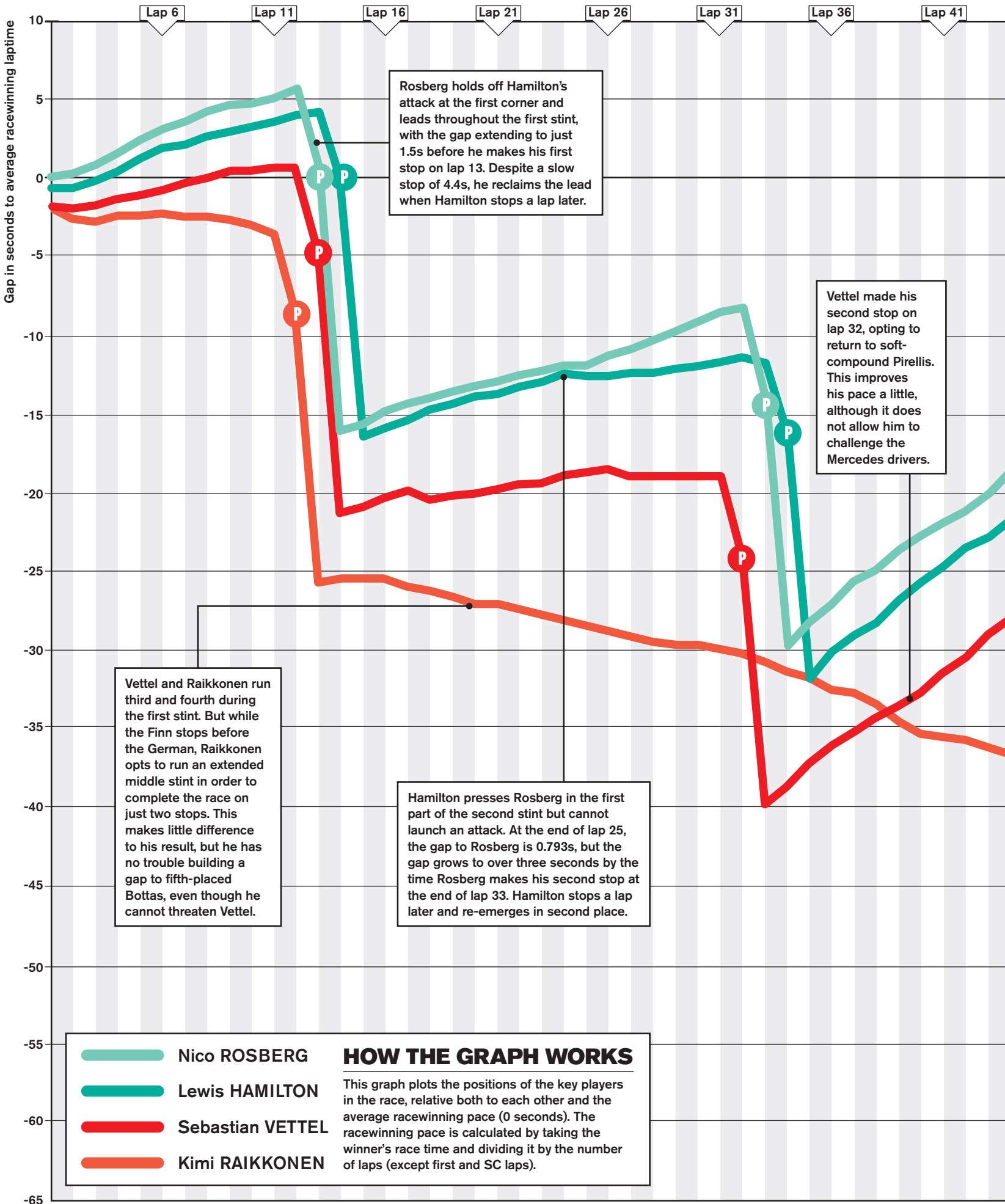
There is a theory that perhaps the new Pirelli tyre pressure limits, introduced from September's Italian GP, have affected Hamilton more than Rosberg. Hamilton won from pole there, but has failed to start from the top spot on the grid since. Mercedes suffered a mysterious disaster at the next race in Singapore, where it couldn't get either the soft or super-soft tyre compounds working properly.

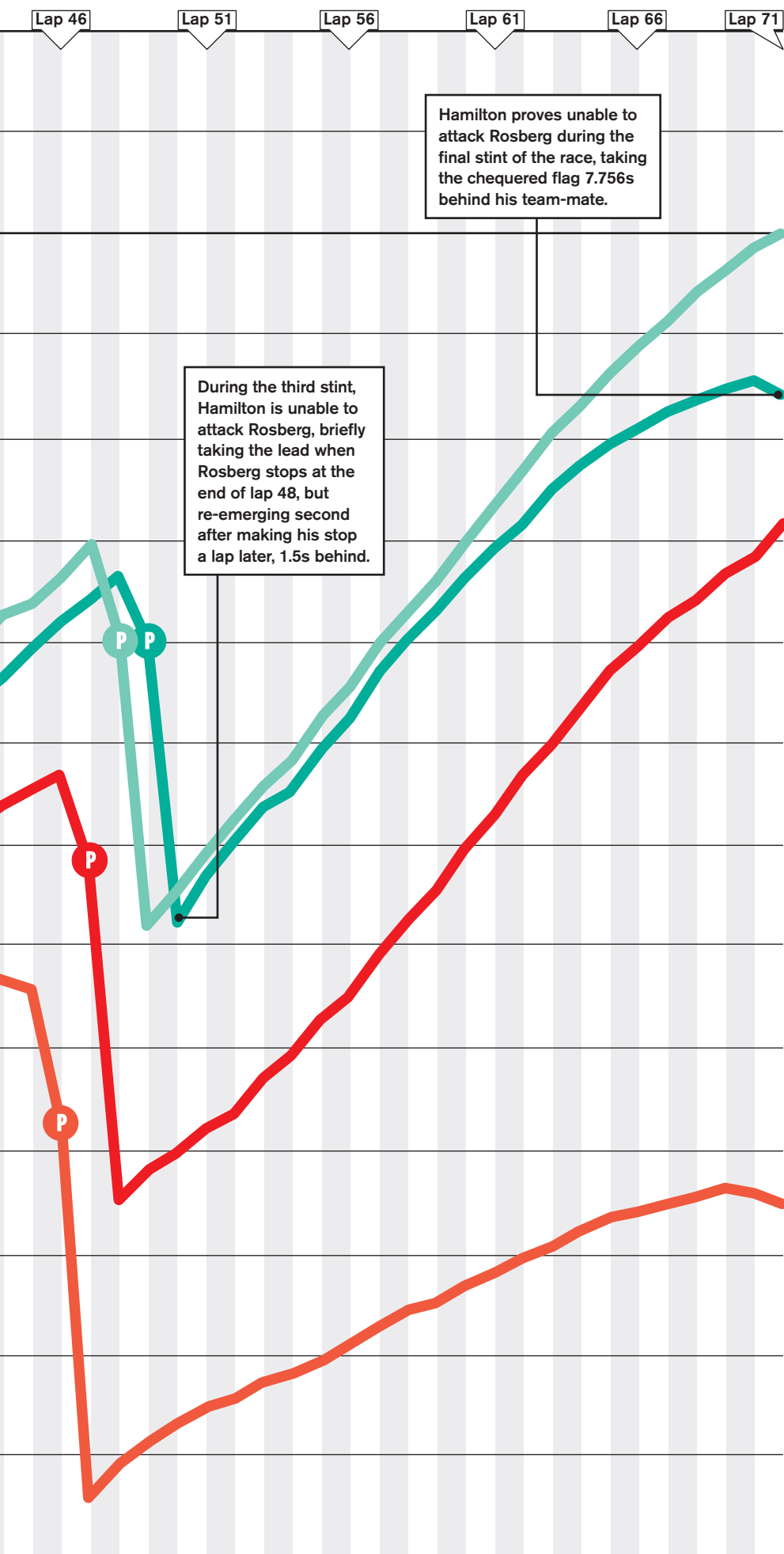
There have been no repeats since that race, but that turnaround in tyre operation has also coincided with Rosberg's qualifying hot streak. Perhaps there is some technical aspect of the W06 now that is inadvertently favouring Rosberg over Hamilton?

"From Singapore onwards there has been a change to the car, but whether or not that's made a difference I don't know, really," said Hamilton. "We'll have to see. But it has changed since Singapore."

But one thing that hasn't changed is Hamilton's bizarre lack of success at Interlagos. Nine attempts, only one pole position, no wins, only two podium finishes. It's clear Hamilton badly wants to win this race, to feel that bit closer to his Brazilian idol, but Hamilton will have to wait at least another year to make it so. Rosberg was simply too good this time. ❖

HOW THE RACE WAS WON



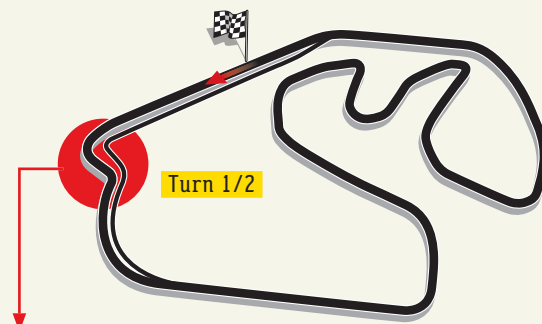


TRACKSIDE VIEW

BEN ANDERSON
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Small details make a big difference in a world as highly regulated and technically iterative as F1. That's certainly true of the cars, but applies just as well to the circuits.

The Autodromo Jose Carlos Pace is one of F1's classic tracks, first used in the 1970s and now enjoying an unbroken run hosting the Brazilian Grand Prix from 1990.

The track was resurfaced last year, and the kerb profiles were subtly revised ahead of this season's event, with 50mm bevelled elements installed at six different apexes.

These revisions applied to the second part of the iconic 'Senna S' – the opening left-right snaking sequence that plunges the cars downhill into the long Curva do Sol left-hander, which also featured a raised kerb.

Here the drivers need to strike the fine balance between accuracy and commitment. The whole section flows together as one, so any mistake at Turn 1 throws the car completely offline for the right and left that follow.

Carry too little speed into Turn 1 and you can be nice and neat, but will also throw away valuable time on what is a very short lap.

Take too much kerb at any point and the track will spit the car offline in an instant. The addition of the raised kerbs makes threading the car through this needle quickly even more difficult than ever before.

Home hero Felipe Massa seemed unable or unwilling to adjust the trajectory of his Williams, determined to clatter over the higher kerbs regardless, which required a lot of busy corrective work at the wheel, while Max Verstappen even looped his Toro Rosso after catching too much kerb on the entry to Turn 3 in FP1.

But it all starts with the entry to the first corner – one slip and you're toast. A classic example of how fine margins can make all the difference in F1...

"It all starts with the entry to the first corner – one slip and you're toast"



Drivers need to nail Senna S for fast lap

STORIES OF THE RACE

Massa excluded over tyre temperature

Felipe Massa was excluded from eighth place in the Brazilian Grand Prix, after the FIA discovered a tyre-temperature irregularity on his car.

As per the introduction of recent regulations, the tyre temperatures and pressures on a number of cars were measured during the interval between the display of the five-minute signal and the start of the Interlagos race.

The right-rear on Massa's Williams was measured at 137 degrees centigrade, 27 degrees above the maximum of 110 permitted by tyre supplier Pirelli.

The corresponding tyre pressure, with a temperature of 137, was measured at 20.6psi, 0.1psi above the minimum starting pressure.

Officials decided to delete the Williams from the results, despite hearing evidence from the team following the race. This is the first time a team has been punished under these rules. Mercedes was called up to the stewards for pressure irregularities in Monza, but wasn't penalised.

Massa's exclusion promoted Lotus duo Romain Grosjean and Pastor Maldonado up to eighth and 10th respectively, and Toro Rosso's Max Verstappen

up to ninth, but Williams immediately lodged an appeal against the penalty.

"The notice of appeal that we will make is based around the fact that we have three independent temperature readings and all of them say we are within the limits set by Pirelli," explained Williams performance chief Rob Smedley.

Smedley said the data from the team's independent sensors, one of which he says is exactly the same as the one the FIA uses, indicate the temperature to have been significantly lower than the FIA's reading.

"We have two independent sensors, the first one is the PT1000, which sits inside the tyre blanket and tells us what the surface temperature is, and that one was always in compliance with the regulations.

"The last time we could read it, when they set off to the grid, it was about 104 degrees. The next independent measure we have is from the car data, and the right rear tyre of Massa's car was 105.7C.

"In addition, we have had independent correlation from our blanket temperature sensors and car temperature sensors to the FIA guns, which Pirelli did for us after all the fuss with Mercedes in Italy.

"We have three independent temperature measures and none of them give anything like the measure the FIA took on the grid."

When asked if the tyre pressure reading should have been higher if the FIA's alleged tyre temperature was correct, Smedley added: "Yeah, it should be. If it was 27C higher, we would see that. You're probably talking around two and a half to three psi higher. But the bleed the engineer did on the grid was entirely normal."



TEE/LAT



Measurements were made on the grid

Verstappen's moves inspired by Kimi

Max Verstappen said his audacious overtaking manoeuvres in the Brazilian Grand Prix were inspired by watching Kimi Raikkonen and Michael Schumacher race in a previous edition of the event.

The Toro Rosso rookie was classified ninth at Interlagos, following Felipe Massa's exclusion, after a race in which he overtook Sergio Perez's Force India and Felipe Nasr's Sauber around the outside at the Senna S. Raikkonen, then driving for Lotus, executed a similar manoeuvre on Schumacher's Mercedes during the 2012 race (illustrated below).

"I saw it a few years ago," said Verstappen. "I thought, 'That looks nice', then when you have the opportunity to try it as well... It's very difficult to go around the outside because you have a lot of marbles there. You have to pay a lot of attention.

"I think we can be very pleased with 10th [on the road]. It was the maximum we could do, especially with those long straights. It's very hard to keep a Force India and a Lotus behind."



HONE/LAT



DUNBAR/LAT

Raikkonen bored by race to fourth

Kimi Raikkonen admitted to feeling disenchanted by the lack of opportunities to race on his way to fourth place for Ferrari in the Brazilian Grand Prix.

Raikkonen finished where he started and was the last car on the lead lap, more than 30 seconds behind team-mate Sebastian Vettel, who switched to a three-stop strategy mid-race.

Sticking to his original two-stop strategy meant Raikkonen had to run in tyre-conservation mode throughout, although he admitted that stopping again might not have had much effect on the eventual outcome.

"Quite a boring race in the end for me," he said. "With new tyres it was OK, but on the used

tyres I struggled with the front. If we'd done a three-stop rather than a two-stop I don't think the end result would have looked any different."

Before Felipe Massa's exclusion, the top eight drivers on the grid finished inside the top eight in the race, in largely the same order, prompting Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton to call for initiatives to improve overtaking. Raikkonen said it simply resembled a normal, dry grand prix.

"We [recently] had some odd conditions and then a lot of things can happen with the safety cars and stuff like that," he explained. "But quite often we can have a pretty boring race from start to finish. It's one of those days."



XPB IMAGES

Sainz angry at latest reliability woe

Carlos Sainz Jr failed to complete a lap of the Brazilian Grand Prix after suffering an engine problem in the pitlane before the start.

The Renault engine in the Spanish rookie's Toro Rosso shut down as he attempted a practice start on his way to the grid. The car was towed back into the garage and the engine eventually fired up again, but it failed as Sainz attempted to join the race.

Sainz suffered electrical problems in final practice and qualifying, which meant he lost telemetry and the use of his clutch. The suspicion is that these problems caused damage to the engine that was not detected overnight.

"I'm honestly very pissed off and angry with the situation, because I think we had a great opportunity to score points," Sainz complained. "It's the seventh time in the whole season. It means 50 per cent of the races not finishing."



XPB IMAGES

Ricciardo unimpressed with upgrade

Daniel Ricciardo expressed disappointment with Renault's latest Formula 1 engine, after struggling to an 11th placed finish in the Brazilian Grand Prix.

The Australian qualified ninth, behind Red Bull team-mate Daniil Kvyat, but dropped to the last row of the grid for taking the new engine, which Renault first made available for the US GP after spending seven development tokens on a combustion upgrade. Ricciardo beat the Manor Marussias, the Saubers,

the McLaren-Hondas, and pulled off a late pass on the Force India of Sergio Perez in the race, but otherwise endured a frustrating afternoon.

Renault anticipated the upgrade would be worth 0.1-0.2 seconds per lap, but Ricciardo said this gain did not materialise.

"I'll see what [the data] is like in the race compared with Daniil," he told AUTOSPORT, "but I'm 99 per cent sure we're not going to see any differences."

Q&A DANIEL RICCIARDO RED BULL DRIVER

Were you hoping an aggressive three-stop strategy would propel you up the order?

To be honest we were trying an aggressive two-stop, which didn't work. We just couldn't get that first prime tyre to work. We couldn't run long enough and then we just weren't fast enough, so we switched to three stops and that was better. We had a lot more pace. We eventually got past Perez, which was my most exciting moment of the race."

You were stuck fighting through traffic, so is it fair to say it wasn't worth taking the updated engine and grid penalty here?

In hindsight we didn't really find much from it. It honestly felt exactly the same. But in saying that it's good knowing what it's like. If we sign with Renault next year and we put this in then it's another year of the same thing. It's cost me some

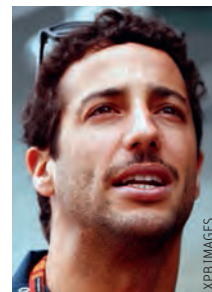
points this weekend, but I'm over the points battle, so let's just learn what we can for 2016."

How disappointing was it to realise the engine is no better?

It's frustrating. Whatever they've done they need to steer in the other direction, because it obviously hasn't worked. It's not like this is the first year any more. It's pretty much two years of development and understanding, and it's not much different to what we had last year.

Did you not even see some signs of potential improvement in it?

Not really. All it is is a bit heavier!



XPB IMAGES

STORIES OF THE RACE

Maldonado given time penalty for collision with Ericsson

Pastor Maldonado was penalised five seconds for colliding with Sauber's Marcus Ericsson during the Brazilian Grand Prix.

The Lotus driver came together with Ericsson's Sauber at the Senna S as they fought for 14th place, sending the Swede spinning.

Maldonado was given a 5s time penalty at his next pitstop, but finished 10th (after Felipe Massa's exclusion) while Ericsson ended up back in 16th.

Lotus trackside operations director Alan Permane reckoned the penalty was harsh on his driver, and told race director Charlie Whiting he felt the sanction was out of step with the more lenient policy on incidents the

championship adopted last summer.

"I thought it was a bit harsh, to be honest," Permane said. "I can't see that he's wholly or predominantly to blame. Ericsson could've given him a little more room. I thought it was a racing incident, but then I'm probably a bit biased."

"As they're supposed to be cutting down on those sort of things [penalties], I can't see that it was absolutely 100 per cent Pastor's fault, and in that case it shouldn't have been a penalty."

But Ericsson insisted Maldonado's move was never on. "Without me there he would not have made the corner – he would've gone off on the other side," Ericsson said.

What should one say? It's not the first time he [Maldonado] has been involved in such an incident. It's very, very annoying



Sauber team principal Monisha Kaltenborn



XPB IMAGES

New kerbs blamed for slower lap times

Kerb changes at the Brazilian Grand Prix venue Interlagos were described as a "step backwards" by Formula 1 drivers.

The kerbs on the apexes of Turns 2/3 (Senna S), 4/5 (Descida do Lago), 8 and 10 (Bico de Pato) now have 50mm-high bevelled elements.

This has been cited as the reason for slower lap times this year, with Nico Rosberg's pole position time 1.259 seconds slower than in 2014.

"They've changed the kerbs a lot, so now we can't attack the kerbs and have to drive round them," explained Rosberg after practice on Friday. "That costs a lot of lap time."

Asked why times were slower, his Mercedes team-mate Lewis Hamilton replied: "I'm pretty certain it's just the kerbs. It used to be pretty much flat through Turn 2, but now you have to lift. Also Turn 8 has a big kerb. You used to just run over the whole of it. Now you can't. I think those two corners on their own make a big difference."

Force India's Nico Hulkenberg was particularly critical, adding: "I much preferred the old kerbs. It was nice to ride them. It looked cool and was fun. Now they're so steep and harsh that you can't really ride them. From a driver's point of view, it's a step backwards."



COATES/LAT

Force India fifth in constructors' race

Force India secured its highest finish yet in the Formula 1 constructors' championship, thanks to the points secured for Nico Hulkenberg's sixth-place finish in the Brazilian Grand Prix.

That result allowed Force India to outscore nearest rival Lotus by three points at Interlagos and, with a maximum 43 points left available at the season finale in Abu Dhabi, Force India can no longer be caught for fifth place in the standings.

"Credit to the team, they dug deep in the first half of the season, and they've optimised the opportunities in the second half," deputy team principal Bob Fernley told AUTOSPORT.

"We've consistently punched above our weight from day one, and it's justification for the work and the investment over the years."

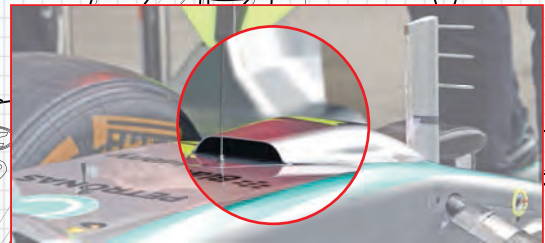
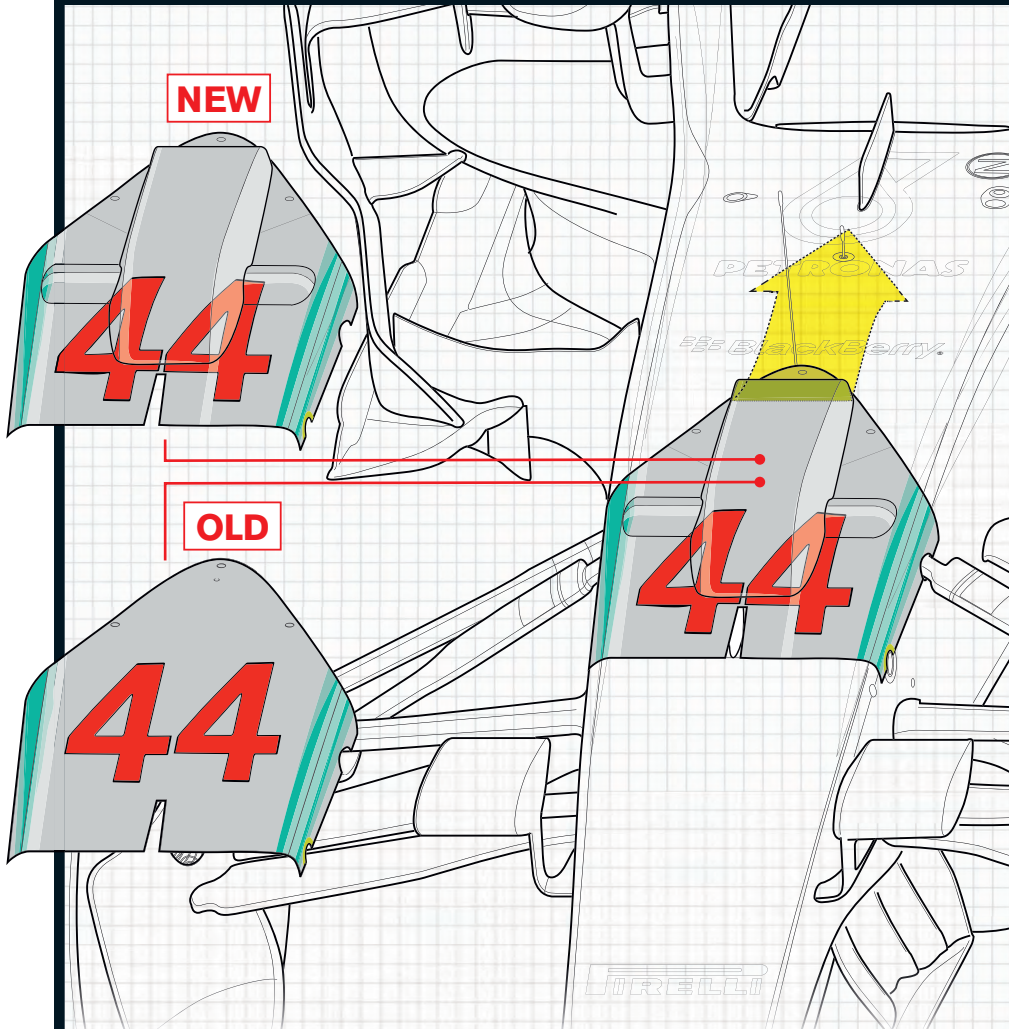


TEEL/LAT

50mm ADDITION TO KERBS

DRAWING BOARD

by Craig Scarborough



Mercedes tests new nosecone design

During first free practice, both cars ran equipped with a new scuttle panel on the top of the chassis. Outwardly, this appeared to be an S-Duct set-up, as pioneered by Sauber and since raced by Red Bull, Toro Rosso, McLaren and Force India.

By taking air in a slot under the nose, an S-Duct feeds the airflow back out over the front of the chassis towards the driver. It cleans up the airflow above and below the nose and allows a shallower nose cone. This aids the car's frontal aerodynamics.

However, the test with the bulged and vented panel was not an aerodynamic test, instead it was to see if the proposed nose panel obstructs the driver's view. The lower inlet and other ducts were not fitted to make the design work.

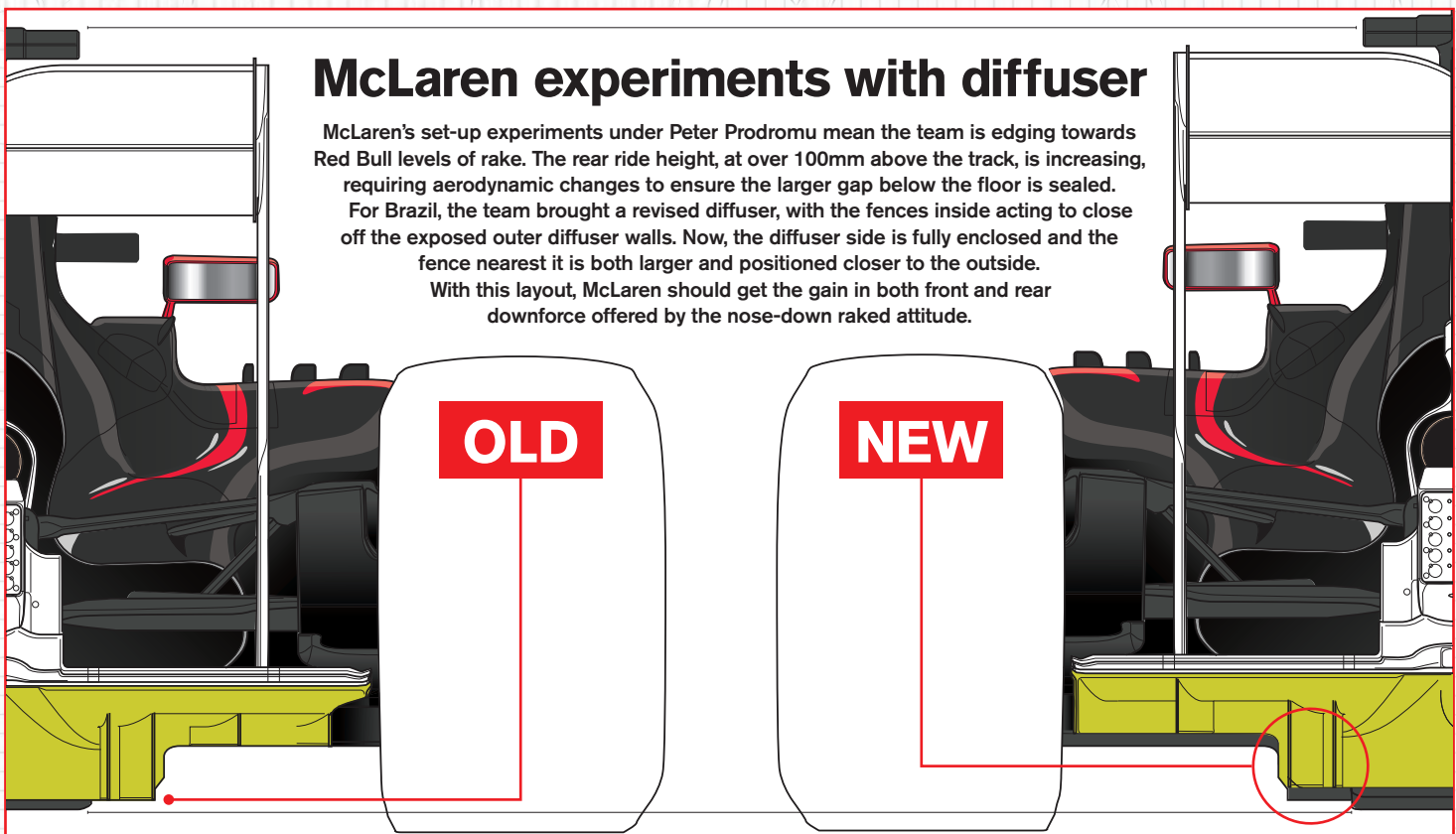
It's likely Mercedes cannot test a full set-up as the current nosecone and monocoque do not allow a tidy route for the duct-work to feed the rear-facing outlet, without revisions requiring a crash test. It may be that we do not see the full version until the W07 is released in the new year.

McLaren experiments with diffuser

McLaren's set-up experiments under Peter Prodromu mean the team is edging towards Red Bull levels of rake. The rear ride height, at over 100mm above the track, is increasing, requiring aerodynamic changes to ensure the larger gap below the floor is sealed.

For Brazil, the team brought a revised diffuser, with the fences inside acting to close off the exposed outer diffuser walls. Now, the diffuser side is fully enclosed and the fence nearest it is both larger and positioned closer to the outside.


With this layout, McLaren should get the gain in both front and rear downforce offered by the nose-down raked attitude.




DRIVER RATINGS

MERCEDES

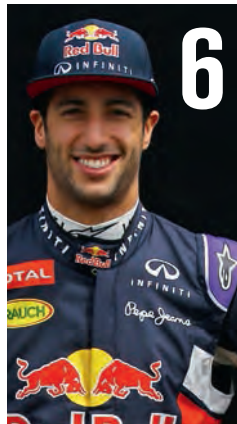



NICO ROSBERG 
Remains coy, but whatever subtle changes he's made to improve in qualifying are working a treat. Fifth pole in a row (this time by just 0.078s) was brilliantly executed after a messy run in Q2, and provided the bedrock from which he could seal second place in the drivers' championship. Produced a flawless drive to frustrate Hamilton's victory ambitions for the second race in a row.




LEWIS HAMILTON 
Hamilton insists he's driving with the same intensity he had before he clinched his third title, and the fact he came close to denying Rosberg pole suggests he hasn't let up. Missed out by less than a tenth for the second year in a row, which ultimately proved crucial in extending his wait for a first Brazilian GP victory. Tried hard to reverse positions, but Rosberg had him covered.

RED BULL




DANIEL RICCIARDO 
Ran the updated Renault engine, but the expected 0.1-0.2s improvement didn't materialise and wasn't worth the 10-place grid penalty, especially as his new unit was heavier than the old one. His race was a battle against traffic while trying to climb order via alternative strategy. Did well to pass Perez near the end, but Maldonado's Lotus proved just out of reach.




DANIIL KVYAT 
Felt the team did a good job setting up the car in final practice on a hotter track than previously, and was relieved to stick with Renault's old engine given he was faster than his team-mate in qualifying. Arguably should have beaten Hulkenberg for sixth, but got beaten at the first round of pitstops and couldn't recover, or get close enough to attack on track. Still, a solid effort.

WILLIAMS

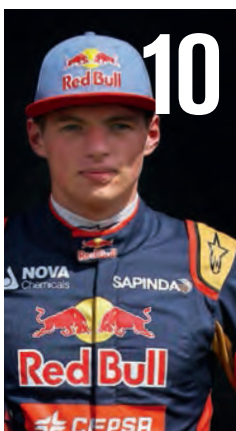



FELIPE MASSA 
The home favourite usually goes well at Interlagos, but he struggled for grip, particularly in the twisty parts of sector two, where he gave away most of his 0.330s qualifying deficit to team-mate. Described his pace as a "disaster" in the race, in which he failed to make any impression on Hulkenberg or Kvyat, and finished eighth before his exclusion for a tyre temperature irregularity.




VALTTERI BOTTAS 
Another excellent performance to split the two Ferraris in qualifying, so was frustrated to start further back on account of overtaking Felipe Nasr's Sauber under red flags in practice, a penalty he felt was undeserved. Started expertly to jump Kvyat and Hulkenberg, and challenge Raikkonen into the Senna S, but Williams lacked the pace to carry the fight so that was as good as it got.

TORO ROSSO



MAX VERSTAPPEN 
Found the car difficult to drive on Friday, but struck a better balance between understeer and oversteer on Saturday and delivered a strong lap at the crucial time to make the top-10 in qualifying again. Battled hard in the race, almost passing Massa and Hulkenberg in one move at Curva do Lago on lap one, and later impressing with his passes on Perez and Nasr. Excellent.



CARLOS SAINZ JR 
Couldn't get on top of his own rear grip issues as well as his team-mate for qualifying, and was also hampered by a clutch problem and loss of his steering wheel display, lapping three tenths adrift of team-mate. Suspected these electrical glitches were the beginnings of what caused his engine to stall in the pitlane, refuse to fire up, then seize as he attempted to join the race.



BEN ANDERSON reviews and rates each driver's grand prix weekend performance out of 10

FERRARI



9

SEBASTIAN VETTEL

Ferrari looked a bit slow on Friday, but got the SF15-T working well enough for Vettel to qualify third, with a "comfortable" 0.281s gap to Bottas behind. Vettel showed a good turn of speed in the race to keep Mercedes' drivers honest, even though he could never get close enough to mix it with them properly. Was comfortably the better of the Ferrari drivers again.



6

KIMI RAIKKONEN

Another average qualifying from Raikkonen, who was quicker than Vettel in Q1 but didn't improve much as the track gripped up. Admitted to errors which meant he qualified behind Bottas. A grid penalty for the Finn took care of that, and Raikkonen enjoyed a clean, quiet and in his own words "boring" race to fourth, struggling for grip at times. A solid result, but unspectacular effort.

McLAREN



6

FERNANDO ALONSO

Woeful reliability meant Alonso's McLaren lunched its way through two engines, denying him track time in second practice and forcing him to watch qualifying from a deckchair after the car conked out again on his first flying lap. The team fitted a new unit for the race, which Alonso felt had some glitches, but he was at least able to pass Maldonado's Lotus and finish the race.



7

JENSON BUTTON

Button suffered none of his team-mate's reliability woes, and actually came within 0.079s of making it into Q2, which at least meant the MP4-30 wasn't cut adrift from the midfield on pure pace here. Came within 0.563s of beating Nasr in the race, but couldn't quite make his three-stop strategy work to achieve that. Enjoyed himself at least, on another tough weekend.

FORCE INDIA



5

SERGIO PEREZ

Reckoned qualifying a huge 0.662s slower than team-mate was "probably the worst" Saturday performance of his season. He struggled with the set-up of his VJM08 and admitted to errors that meant he failed to escape Q2. Found the race tough, where he lost places to Verstappen, Grosjean, and Ricciardo. This was a weekend to forget after his recent strong run.

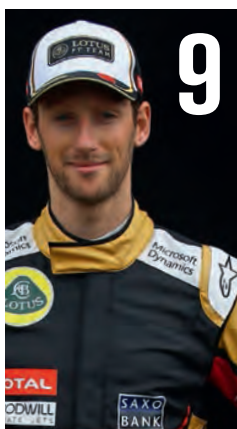


8

NICO HULKENBERG

Produced a mega performance to beat both Red Bulls and Massa's Williams in qualifying. Team reckons the slippery nature of the track suits him, and Hulkenberg is also a big fan of Brazil. Wheelspun away two places off the grid, but re-passed Kyat with smart strategy and held the place to secure Force India's best constructors' championship result yet.

LOTUS



9

ROMAIN GROSJEAN

Reckoned a top-10 grid position was possible without an error at the Senna S, and then a spectacular spin at the Ferradura that meant he qualified a lowly 14th, an unusual blip this season. Made up for it with a combative drive in the race, in which the team felt he achieved the maximum possible. A superb drive by the Franco-Swiss, in trying circumstances.



7

PASTOR MALDONADO

Struggled with rear instability throughout Friday and Saturday, but should have made it through to Q2. Without a mistake at the last corner on his best lap, he would have done. Starting on the medium tyre was tough, and was penalised for clattering into Ericsson while coming through the field. Inherited the final point when Massa was excluded. A solid drive.

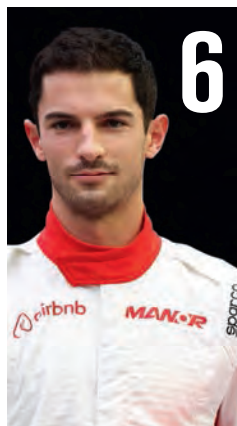
MANOR



7

WILL STEVENS

Came out second best in a close fight with team-mate in qualifying, but decided to set his car up with a bias towards protecting his tyres in the race, following struggles in Mexico. That paid off handsomely in what he felt was one of his strongest races of the year, in which he was allowed past the sister Manor at mid-distance after proving he was the quicker of the two.

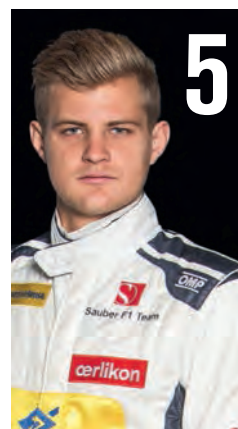


6

ALEXANDER ROSSI

Rossi's weekend appeared to spring to life once the team corrected a rear rideheight error on Friday that made his car extremely unstable. Trailing Stevens after the first runs in Q1, but edged his team-mate by a tenth to gain the superior grid position. That counted for little in the race, during which he battled "terminal" understeer and had to let his faster team-mate past.

SAUBER



5

MARCUS ERICSSON

Struggled with car balance at high speed in qualifying, ending up nearly a quarter of a second adrift of his team-mate (though started ahead on account of Nasr's three-place penalty for blocking Massa). Made a "shocking" start to the race, losing places off the grid and going off at the Curva do Lago on lap one. Contact with Maldonado derailed his recovery.

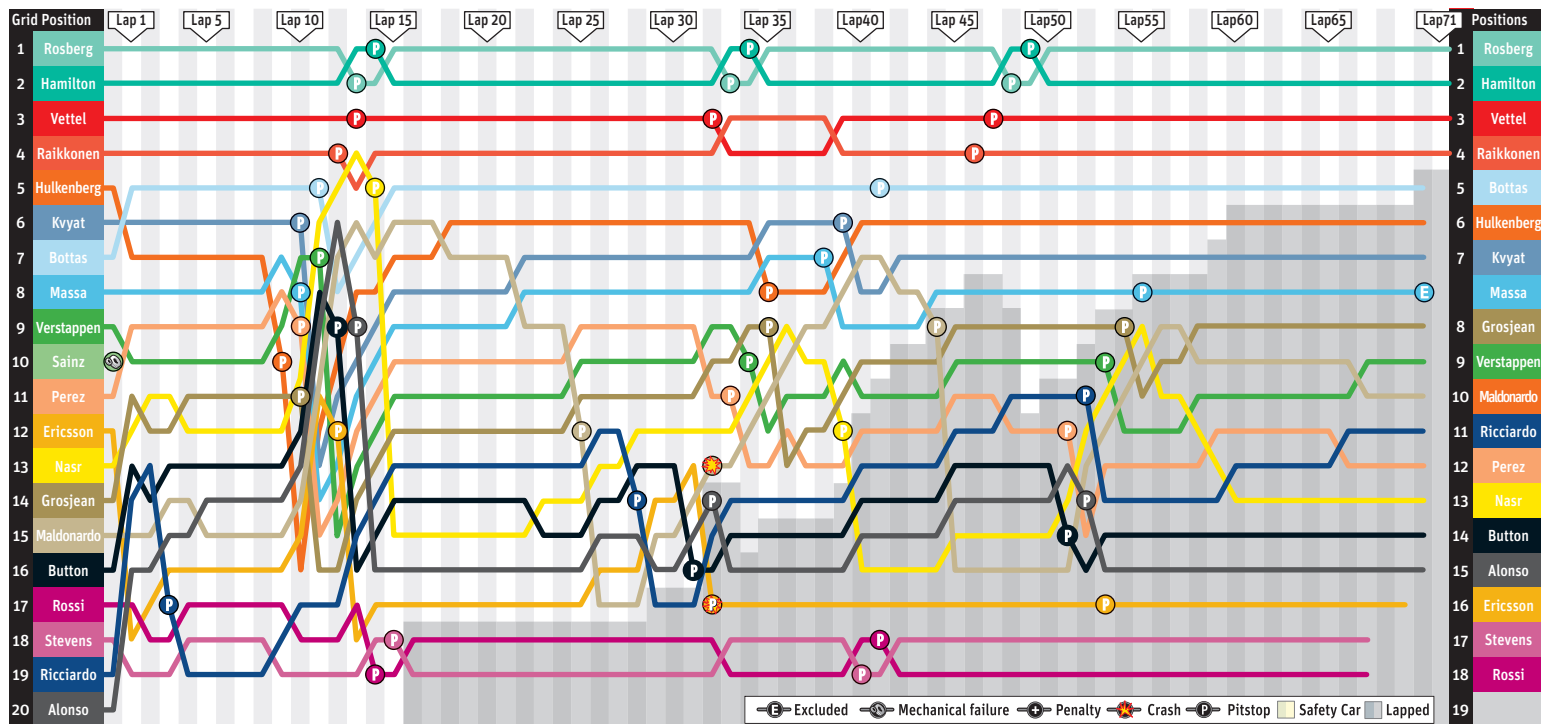


7

FELIPE NASR

Produced a fine display on Saturday to qualify 11th fastest, reckoning his team did a good job anticipating hotter track temperatures compared to Friday. Grid penalty for impeding fellow countryman Massa was unfortunate, but even with a better starting position it's doubtful he could have fought for points. Ended up battling the two McLarens, a fight he narrowly won.

RESULTS



PRACTICE 1: Friday

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	HAMILTON	1m13.543s
2	ROSBERG	1m14.062s
3	VETTEL	1m14.168s
4	RICCIARDO	1m14.449s
5	RAIKKONEN	1m14.549s
6	KVYAT	1m14.696s
7	BOTTAS	1m14.886s
8	VERSTAPPEN	1m14.960s
9	HULKENBERG	1m15.174s
10	MALDONADO	1m15.192s
11	SAINZ	1m15.314s
12	PALMER	1m15.352s
13	BUTTON	1m15.379s
14	NASR	1m15.381s
15	PEREZ	1m15.408s
16	ALONSO	1m15.413s
17	MASSA	1m15.469s
18	ERICSSON	1m15.798s
19	ROSSI	1m17.860s
20	STEVENS	1m18.090s

Weather: sunny, dry; track 37C, air 27C



PRACTICE 2: Friday

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	ROSBERG	1m12.385s
2	HAMILTON	1m12.843s
3	VETTEL	1m13.345s
4	RAIKKONEN	1m13.500s
5	RICCIARDO	1m13.585s
6	BOTTAS	1m13.603s
7	GROSJEAN	1m13.634s
8	HULKENBERG	1m13.710s
9	KVYAT	1m13.848s
10	MASSA	1m13.870s
11	PEREZ	1m14.056s
12	MALDONADO	1m14.124s
13	NASR	1m14.134s
14	VERSTAPPEN	1m14.226s
15	SAINZ	1m14.326s
16	BUTTON	1m14.644s
17	ERICSSON	1m14.772s
18	ALONSO	1m15.129s
19	STEVENS	1m16.501s
20	ROSSI	1m16.787s

Weather: cloudy, dry/damp; track 32C, air 28C



PRACTICE 3: Saturday

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	HAMILTON	1m12.070s
2	ROSBERG	1m12.193s
3	VETTEL	1m12.760s
4	RAIKKONEN	1m13.096s
5	BOTTAS	1m13.335s
6	HULKENBERG	1m13.345s
7	GROSJEAN	1m13.437s
8	PEREZ	1m13.506s
9	MALDONADO	1m13.534s
10	VERSTAPPEN	1m13.548s
11	RICCIARDO	1m13.572s
12	MASSA	1m13.742s
13	KVYAT	1m13.829s
14	ALONSO	1m13.850s
15	SAINZ	1m13.959s
16	ERICSSON	1m14.185s
17	NASR	1m14.288s
18	BUTTON	1m14.445s
19	STEVENS	1m16.671s
20	ROSSI	1m17.059s

Weather: sunny, dry; track 45C, air 27C



FRIDAY TESTERS

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	PALMER	1m15.352s



QUALIFYING TIMES

POS	DRIVER	QUALIFYING 1	QUALIFYING 2	QUALIFYING 3
1	ROSBERG	1m11.746s (2)	1m12.213s (3)	1m11.282s
2	HAMILTON	1m11.682s (1)	1m11.665s (1)	1m11.360s
3	VETTEL	1m12.240s (4)	1m11.928s (2)	1m11.804s
4	BOTTAS	1m12.934s (9)	1m12.374s (5)	1m12.085s
5	RAIKKONEN	1m12.185s (3)	1m12.243s (4)	1m12.144s
6	HULKENBERG	1m12.595s (5)	1m12.485s (6)	1m12.265s
7	KVYAT	1m12.730s (7)	1m12.527s (7)	1m12.322s
8	MASSA	1m12.980s (10)	1m12.858s (10)	1m12.415s
9	RICCIARDO	1m12.639s (6)	1m12.825s (9)	1m12.417s
10	VERSTAPPEN	1m12.824s (8)	1m12.712s (8)	1m12.739s
11	NASR	1m13.111s (12)	1m12.989s	-
12	SAINZ	1m13.267s (14)	1m13.045s	-
13	PEREZ	1m13.140s (13)	1m13.147s	-
14	ERICSSON	1m13.346s (15)	1m13.233s	-
15	GROSJEAN	1m13.056s (11)	1m13.913s	-
16	MALDONADO	1m13.385s	-	-
17	BUTTON	1m13.425s	-	-
18	ROSSI	1m16.151s	-	-
19	STEVENS	1m16.283s	-	-
DSQ	ALONSO	-	-	-

Weather: sunny, dry; track 46C, air 29C

QUALIFYING STATISTICS

	HEAD TO HEAD	
ROSBERG	6	12 HAMILTON
RICCIARDO	11	7 KVYAT
MASSA	8	10 BOTTAS
VETTEL	15	3 RAIKKONEN
ALONSO/MAGNUSSEN	9	8 BUTTON
PEREZ	7	10 HULKENBERG
SAINZ	9	9 VERSTAPPEN
GROSJEAN	17	1 MALDONADO
ERICSSON	10	8 NASR
STEVENS	10	6 MERHI/ROSSI



POLE POSITION TROPHY

HAMILTON	POS
AUS	11
MAL	
PRC	
BRN	
MC	
CDN	
A	
GB	
H	
B	

ROSBERG	POS
E	6
J	
RUS	
USA	
MEX	
BRA	

VETTEL	POS
SGP	1



RACE: 71 LAPS - 190.083 MILES

POS	DRIVER	DRIVER NUMBER	TEAM	LAPS	TOTAL TIME	FASTEST LAP	PITSTOPS	TIME IN PITS	GRID
1	NICO ROSBERG	6	MERCEDES	71	1h31m09.090s	1m14.957s	3	1m11.406s	1
2	LEWIS HAMILTON	44	MERCEDES	71	+7.756s	1m14.832s	3	1m10.412s	2
3	SEBASTIAN VETTEL	5	FERRARI	71	+14.244s	1m15.046s	3	1m11.136s	3
4	KIMI RAIKKONEN	7	FERRARI	71	+47.543s	1m15.416s	2	48.601s	4
5	VALTTERI BOTTAS	77	WILLIAMS-MERCEDES	70	-1 lap	1m16.039s	2	48.649s	7
6	NICO HULKENBERG	27	FORCE INDIA-MERCEDES	70	-1 lap	1m16.774s	2	48.208s	5
7	DANIIL KVYAT	26	RED BULL-RENAULT	70	-1 lap	1m16.500s	2	47.785s	6
8	ROMAIN GROSJEAN	8	LOTUS-MERCEDES	70	-1 lap	1m15.739s	3	1m12.220s	13
9	MAX VERSTAPPEN	33	TORO ROSSO-RENAULT	70	-1 lap	1m15.972s	3	1m12.397s	9
10	PASTOR MALDONADO	13	LOTUS-MERCEDES	70	-1 lap	1m16.354s	2	54.197s	14
11	DANIEL RICCIARDO	3	RED BULL-RENAULT	70	-1 lap	1m16.313s	3	1m12.691s	18
12	SERGIO PEREZ	11	FORCE INDIA-MERCEDES	70	-1 lap	1m15.970s	3	1m11.195s	10
13	FELIPE NASR	12	SAUBER-FERRARI	70	-1 lap	1m16.794s	2	50.020s	12
14	JENSON BUTTON	22	McLAREN-HONDA	70	-1 lap	1m16.321s	3	1m10.909s	15
15	FERNANDO ALONSO	14	McLAREN-HONDA	70	-1 lap	1m16.519s	3	1m10.009s	19
16	MARCUS ERICSSON	9	SAUBER-FERRARI	69	-2 laps	1m15.789s	3	1m18.949s	11
17	WILL STEVENS	28	MARUSSIA-FERRARI	67	-4 laps	1m19.098s	2	52.642s	17
18	ALEXANDER ROSSI	53	MARUSSIA-FERRARI	67	-4 laps	1m18.617s	2	52.198s	16
DSQ	FELIPE MASSA	19	WILLIAMS-MERCEDES	70	-	1m15.743s	3	1m11.215s	8
R	CARLOS SAINZ	55	TORO ROSSO-RENAULT	0	electrical	-	-	-	20

Weather: cloudy, dry; track 39C, air 25C. Winner's average speed: 125.121mph. Fastest lap: Hamilton 1m14.832s (128.808mph) on lap 51. Lap leader: 1-12 Rosberg, 13-14 Hamilton, 15-32 Rosberg, 33-34 Hamilton, 35-47 Rosberg, 48-49 Hamilton, 50-71 Rosberg.

TYRE CHOICE

STINT 1	STINT 2	STINT 3	STINT 4
Soft u	Medium N	Medium N	Medium N
Soft u	Medium N	Medium N	Medium N
Soft u	Medium N	Soft u	Medium N
Soft u	Medium N	Medium N	Medium N
Soft u	Medium N	Medium u	Medium N
Soft u	Medium N	Medium N	Medium N
Soft N	Medium N	Medium N	Soft u
Soft u	Medium N	Medium N	Soft u
Medium N	Soft N	Medium N	Medium N
Soft u	Medium N	Medium N	Soft u
Soft N	Medium N	Medium N	Soft u
Soft N	Medium N	Medium N	Medium N
Soft N	Medium N	Soft N	Soft u
Soft N	Medium N	Soft N	Soft u
Soft N	Medium N	Medium N	Soft u
Soft N	Medium N	Medium N	Medium N
Soft N	Medium N	Medium N	Medium N
Soft u	Medium N	Medium u	Medium u
Medium N	Medium N	Medium N	Medium N

N - New; U - Used

DRIVERS' STANDINGS

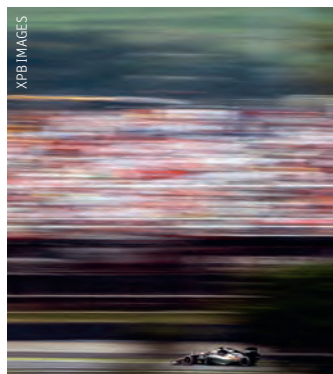
POS	DRIVER	PTS	AUS	MAL	PRC	BRN	E	MC	CDN	A	GB	H	B	I	SGP	J	RUS	USA	MEX	BR	UAE
1	HAMILTON	363	1st	2nd	1st	1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	1st	6th	1st	1st	ret	1st	1st	1st	2nd	2nd	-
2	ROSBERG	297	2nd	3rd	2nd	3rd	1st	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	8th	2nd	17th	4th	2nd	ret	2nd	1st	1st	-
3	VETTEL	266	3rd	1st	3rd	5th	3rd	2nd	5th	4th	3rd	1st	12th	2nd	1st	3rd	2nd	3rd	ret	3rd	-
4	BOTTAS	136	DNS	5th	6th	4th	4th	14th	3rd	5th	5th	13th	9th	4th	5th	5th	12th	ret	3rd	5th	-
5	RAIKKONEN	135	ret	4th	4th	2nd	5th	6th	4th	ret	8th	ret	7th	5th	3rd	4th	8th	ret	ret	4th	-
6	MASSA	117	4th	6th	5th	10th	6th	15th	6th	3rd	4th	12th	6th	3rd	ret	17th	4th	ret	6th	ex	-
7	KVYAT	94	DNS	9th	ret	9th	10th	4th	9th	12th	6th	2nd	4th	10th	6th	13th	5th	ret	4th	7th	-
8	RICCIARDO	84	6th	10th	9th	6th	7th	5th	13th	10th	ret	3rd	ret	8th	2nd	15th	15th	10th	5th	11th	-
9	PEREZ	68	10th	13th	11th	8th	13th	7th	11th	9th	9th	ret	5th	6th	7th	12th	3rd	5th	8th	12th	-
10	HULKENBERG	52	7th	14th	ret	13th	15th	11th	8th	6th	7th	ret	DNS	7th	ret	6th	ret	ret	7th	6th	-
11	GROSJEAN	49	ret	11th	7th	7th	8th	12th	10th	ret	ret	7th	3rd	ret	13th	7th	ret	ret	10th	8th	-
12	VERSTAPPEN	49	ret	7th	17th	ret	11th	ret	15th	8th	ret	4th	8th	12th	8th	9th	10th	4th	9th	9th	-
13	NASR	27	5th	12th	8th	12th	12th	9th	16th	11th	DNS	11th	11th	13th	10th	20th	6th	9th	ret	13th	-
14	MALDONADO	27	ret	ret	ret	15th	ret	ret	7th	7th	ret	14th	ret	ret	12th	8th	7th	8th	11th	10th	-
15	SAINZ	18	9th	8th	13th	ret	9th	10th	12th	ret	ret	ret	ret	11th	9th	10th	ret	7th	13th	ret	-
16	BUTTON	16	11th	ret	14th	DNS	16th	8th	ret	ret	ret	9th	14th	14th	ret	16th	9th	6th	14th	14th	-
17	ALONSO	11	-	ret	12th	11th	ret	ret	ret	ret	10th	5th	13th	18th	ret	11th	11th	11th	ret	15th	-
18	ERICSSON	9	8th	ret	10th	14th	14th	13th	14th	13th	11th	10th	10th	9th	11th	14th	ret	ret	12th	16th	-
19	MERHI	0	DNQ	15th	16th	17th	18th	16th	ret	14th	12th	15th	15th	16th	-	13th	-	-	-	-	-
20	ROSSI	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14th	18th	-	12th	15th	18th	-
21	STEVENS	0	DNQ	DNS	15th	16th	17th	17th	17th	ret	13th	16th	16th	15th	15th	19th	14th	ret	16th	17th	-
22	MAGNUSSEN	0	DNS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-



Rosberg and crew see the funny side



Brazilian F1 hero Emerson Fittipaldi

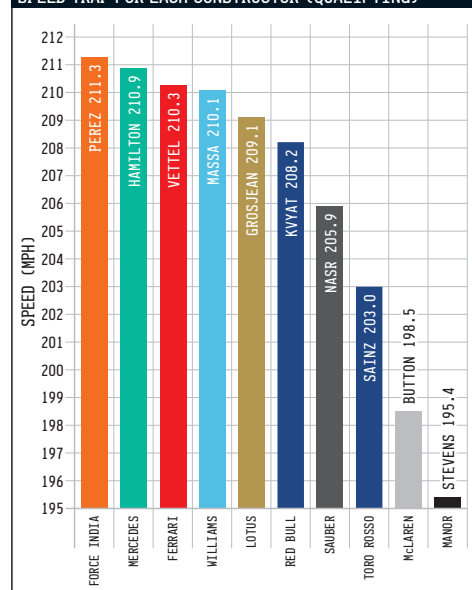


Ferrari fans had something to cheer

CONSTRUCTORS' STANDINGS

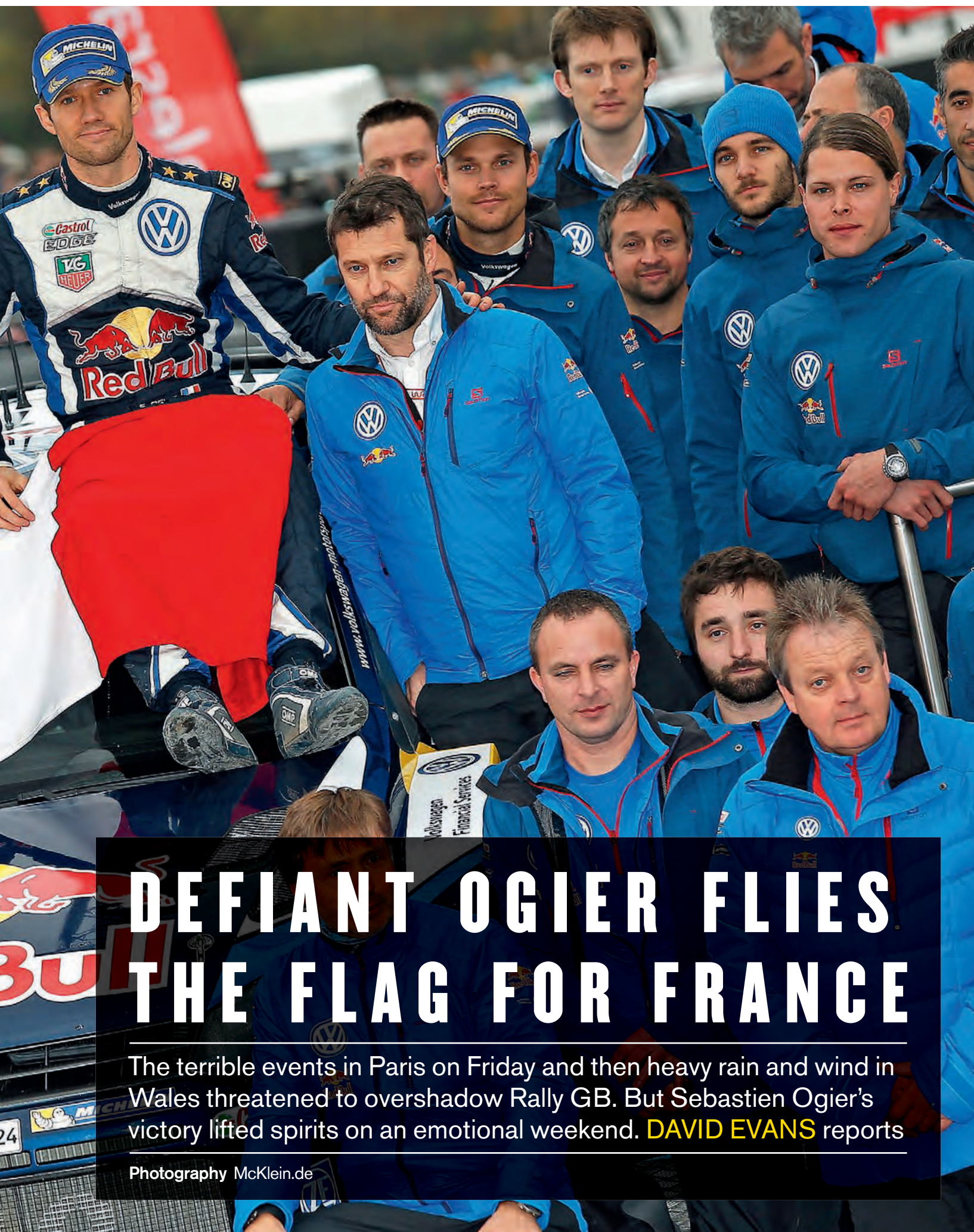
POS	CONSTRUCTOR	PTS	AUS	MAL	PRC	BRN	E	MC	CDN	A	GB	H	B	I	SGP	J	RUS	USA	MEX	BR	UAE
1	MERCEDES	660	43	33	43	40	43	40	43	43	43	12	43	25	12	43	25	43	43	43	-
2	FERRARI	401	15	37	27	28	25	26	22	12	19	25	6	28	40	27	12	15	0	27	-
3	WILLIAMS	253	12	18	18	13	20	0	23	25	22	0	10	27	10	10	12	0	23	10	-
4	RED BULL	178	8	3	2	10	7	22	2	1	8	33	12	5	26	0	10	1	22	6	-
5	FORCE INDIA	120	7	0	0	4	0	6	4	10	8	0	10	14	6	8	15	10	10	8	-
6	LOTUS	76	0	0	6	6	4	0	7	6	0	6	15	0	0	10	6	4	1	5	-
7	TORO ROSSO	67	2	10	0	0	2	1	0	4	0	12	4	0	6	3	1	18	2	2	-
8	SAUBER	36	14	0	5	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	8	2	0	0	-
9	McLAREN	27	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	1	12	0	0	0	0	2	8	0	0	-
10	MARUSSIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-

SPEED TRAP FOR EACH CONSTRUCTOR (QUALIFYING)



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DEFIANT OGIER FLIES THE FLAG FOR FRANCE

The terrible events in Paris on Friday and then heavy rain and wind in Wales threatened to overshadow Rally GB. But Sebastien Ogier's victory lifted spirits on an emotional weekend. **DAVID EVANS** reports

Photography McKlein.de

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- ✓ **VIP WELCOME RECEPTION** and behind-the-scenes tour
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In what year did the Rolex 24 At DAYTONA® first take place?

A

B

C

1966

1970

1976

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Ogier regained focus to bounce back

SEBASTIEN OGIER DIDN'T WANT TO GET OUT OF the Volkswagen motorhome. It was pouring with rain, he was on the telephone and – just hours earlier – a state of emergency had been declared in his home country.

Ogier's mind was everywhere on Saturday morning. Everywhere except Wales.

Like the rest of the world, Ogier had watched in horror as the full extent of what had happened in Paris unfolded. Standing in Corris just after daybreak, he wasn't a three-time world champion, he was a proud but devastated Frenchman.

Nothing made sense.

But he tried to make sense of it.

"This doesn't matter," he said, nodding in the direction of the assembled rally cars. "This is secondary. It's horrible. In the first stage, I couldn't really... I mean..."

He struggled on.

"I have to try to put this to one side, it's so hard to concentrate."

Arriving in Wales, the Volkswagen star was still sore – metaphorically speaking – from his powerstage shunt in Spain. He wanted to put that right and end the season with one of those



Latvala was quick initially, before crash

Rally Great Britain

World Rally Championship
Deeside, Wales (GB)

November 12-15
Round 13/13



emphatic wins for which he's becoming famous. But for now he looked like a man who wanted to be elsewhere.

A FINE START

Despite tricky conditions – those would become something of a running theme – Ogier drove well to take the lead in Hafren, the opening stage. He wasn't convinced. His Polo R WRC had given him too much understeer for the most part.

Perplexed, he said: "I don't know what it is about that stage, I never seem to go well in there."

His team-mate Jari-Matti Latvala had gone better, at least for the first two splits, before dropping eight-tenths of a second to Ogier in the final split. Latvala wasn't too concerned. Myherin was coming. Finnish hands were being rubbed together. The stage on the far side of the A44 is one of the highlights of Latvala's season. He intended to make the most of it.

Separating stages one and two was the smaller matter of Sweet Lamb – nothing to fear from that one though. Nobody goes off in there, do they?

Second corner. J-ML got as far as the second corner, but didn't get through it. He dropped the car under braking off-line and slid into a ditch.

"It was too deep," said Latvala hours later, feet

convincingly covered in mud, "I just couldn't get out. It's so frustrating. The pace was good."

Third after SS1 became second after SS2 for Kris Meeke. And, sensing a chink in the Ogier armour, the Northern Irishman pounced and pushed like mad second time through Hafren. His reward was an astonishing 5.2 seconds.

The gap had tumbled from 12.9s to 7.7s as they lined up for a second run through Sweet Lamb.

Twenty years ago, Meeke's mentor Colin McRae took the lead of the RAC Rally and went on to clinch the world championship on these very roads. Surely, at least part of that history, wasn't going to be repeated, was it?

No.

Ogier's not really one for fairytales. He's a fact man. And a fast fact man at that. Four tenths up on KM in SS5, he'd built the gap back up to 13.5s by the time they were heading back to Deeside on Friday night.

Upbeat, bouncy and ready for the weekend fight, Ogier smiled at the prospect of the long day ahead, that smile thinning only slightly when it was pointed out to him that his alarm would be waking him up in just a handful of hours.

And then Friday night happened.

OGIER'S FRENCH RESISTANCE

Meeke cut back into Ogier's lead on Saturday morning's half-light opener, but once the champion had cleared some space in his head, he was back on it. There was, however, no lightning-quick heroic charge through the woods, more a workmanlike effort to carve and craft an advantage.

By the end of the day he was more than half a minute ahead, despite some of the worst conditions in the event's recent history.

He wouldn't be beaten. Having missed out on a Catalan certainty three weeks earlier, Ogier ►



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Ogier battled on in terrible conditions



“This win has meaning, I want to dedicate this victory to all the victims of this atrocity”

Sebastien Ogier

► was absolutely on target this time.

A returning Latvala (returning for the second time after breaking a driveshaft on SS7) made the most of running at the front of the field in the preferential conditions to take a clean sweep of the Sunday stages. Ogier didn't care. His eye was on the final finish of the season and a Tricolore, installed in the back of the Polo and ready to be unfurled at this most apt of moments.

Crossing the line in Brenig, Ogier and fellow Frenchman Julien Ingrassia sealed a 26-second win. But this time there were no fist-pumping celebrations. Yes, he'd eclipsed the misery of Spain, but this was about a bigger picture.

He and Ingrassia stepped from the Polo and laid the flag out across the windscreen of their car.

Having composed himself, the subdued winner said: “The decision to carry on was not difficult. For me it was clear in this moment that you have to carry on and show that this kind of attack is to try and scare the world.

“Somehow, if you give up and stop what you do then you give them some sort of victory. To stand up in this moment and carry on, it's a sign and a good sign. That's why we took the decision to carry on and why we wanted to get this victory. This win has meaning, I want to dedicate this

victory to all of the victims of this atrocity.”

On an exceptionally tricky event, Ogier had given France something to cheer at the end of a weekend that began in the most horrific of circumstances.

MEEKE'S MOMENT

Tyle, SS3, Friday November 23, 2011 is the last time a Brit led at home. That was Colin McRae, shortly before he cut a 'don't cut' and launched his Ford Focus RS WRC into a rally-ending, title-robbing roll.

Ahead of the event, Meeke really didn't rate his own chances of ending that 14-year run. Everything, he reasoned, was stacked against him. His DS 3 WRC is a quality motor, of that there can be no doubt, but it's not quite got the advancement through technology of the thing in front. And Meeke had only done the event twice in a World Rally Car.

Even when he came within 7.7s of the front, he was still adamant Ogier had more to give.

Coming out of Dyfnant, that 14-year wait was done. Meeke led. The official classification said so. And he stayed there after Aberhirnant. The Brits were back.

Not for long. It turned out Ogier had been held

Meeke led Ogier, but only for a short time



up by a rolling Thierry Neuville and when the stewards gave the Polo man the time back that he'd lost stationary at the scene of the Belgian's latest drama, Meeke's lead went south, like it never happened.

The Dungannon man showed himself to be a great actor in Wales. The Citroen-supplied script talked of a sensible drive to bag second in the manufacturers' championship. For a team that dominated world rallying for a decade, *les rouges* seem to have developed an unhealthy interest in the position of first loser.

Outwardly, Meeke would play the game, talk the talk and follow the script. But, a dozen or so seconds off the front on Friday night, Meeke spent an hour arguing in favour of saving weight and running just one spare on Saturday morning. His wish was granted, but had his wings firmly clipped when team-mate Mads Ostberg suffered a puncture and slipped back from fourth overall.

“No chance now, eh?” grimaced Meeke at the Corris regroup on Saturday morning.

In all honesty, Meeke knew his race was run. His head told him there was no hope of catching Ogier, but the fighter in his heart clearly fancied one more shot. Ahead of the two night stages, the gap had inched past the half-minute mark and Meeke accepted his lot.

What happened next was undoubtedly one of the highlights of Meeke's season. No, he didn't win, but what he did was turn in one of the most sensible and calculated drives – you know, the ones he's not supposed to be able to muster – to bring the car home second.

Citroen could smile while Meeke and co-driver Paul Nagle reflected on a job exceptionally well done. “For me, that was better than the win in Argentina,” said Meeke. “It was controlled, no drama, nothing. It was perfect. Now I just need to find myself a job so I can do it again a few more times next year!”

Despite his recent upturn in form and finish, Citroen team principal Yves Matton resolutely refused to talk about contracts and deals before ►



Meeke was forced to settle for second



Sordo put in strong drive to finish fourth

It might be 20 years, but out in the forest you can still feel the memory of Colin McRae

Chris Meeke

► the end of Wales. Let the debate begin.

TWO DECADES ON

Meeke's self-confessed best performance in the world championship couldn't have come at a more perfect moment. Two decades on from McRae's magic, Meeke gave those same fans something to cheer all over again.

"It might be 20 years," he said, "but out in the forest, you can still feel the memory of Colin McRae – those Scottish flags are all still out there and the support from those fans – his fans – is just incredible. Rally GB is always in the spirit of Colin McRae and all he achieved on this event."

And those fans endured plenty last weekend. It was easy to reach for the line about typical Rally GB weather, but this was more – much more. The rain was biblical, the wind storm-force, but still they stood shoulder-to-shoulder and cheered.

Despite the best efforts of Storm Abigail, Rally GB stood firm. That the event did so was thanks to a 2000-strong volunteer force, who Nagle wasted no time in praising. "They were absolute heroes," he said, "all of those marshals and officials were just incredible. They stood there in some of the most horrendous conditions and did their jobs magnificently."

Meeke added: "Even the sheep had gone inside,

but the marshals stood there. You have to take your hat off – or maybe not... Those guys were impressive, especially in Aberhrrnant on Saturday night, when I could barely get the door open for the wind and the driving rain."

At the time, in the dark and the rain, anybody and everybody lambasted Rally GB. Just hours later, this was already being talked of as a classic.

THE REST

For a while on Friday, much of the talk turned to Andreas Mikkelsen and his chances of edging Latvala for second in the drivers' title. Only the day before, the Norwegian had flown home to Germany for a check-up after feeling ill during the recce. Flybe delivered him back just in time for the start, but the winner of the last round looked distracted as he took to his car.

With Latvala in a ditch, Mikkelsen did the maths. He needed to win. Hmm... it was a long shot that would get longer. Third place beckoned, both on the event and across the season.

There were those who questioned Hyundai's sanity when the Korean team elevated Dani Sordo to the lead car ahead of Neuville. I was one of them. History will show Neuville rolled and Sordo finished fourth. This was one of the Spaniard's best efforts yet – even if he was almost three

minutes off the front, he'd done his bit.

Team-mate Hayden Paddon might have expected to kick Sordo firmly into touch. The Kiwi was clearly up for it, talking about how similar some of the roads were to home, but when he stepped aboard a first team Hyundai for the third time this season, it just didn't work for him. He couldn't find a rhythm through the first half of the rally and, by the time he'd done that, the fight was lost. He backed Sordo up in fifth, but that was largely thanks to the demise of Ott Tanak, who underlined the question mark over his career by retiring from fourth with suspension damage.

Elfyn Evans would have been fourth had it not been for a puncture on the sister M-Sport Fiesta. The Welshman kicked himself into gear after a steady Friday and found some speed over the weekend. Even with wilting Pirellis beneath him, Robert Kubica showed what a potent piece of hardware the Ford is – the Pole stuck in ninth after the now customary punctures.

Despite the absolute adversity of this event, Ogier managed to shine. Winning Rally GB is all about rhythm, focus and the mind being firmly on the job of keeping the speed, when the grip comes and goes.

Even with his mind elsewhere, Ogier had the instinct to win. The mark of a true champion. 🏆

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

ROUND 13/13 WALES RALLY GB, NOVEMBER 12-15

1 Sebastien Ogier (F)/Julien Ingrassia (F) Volkswagen Motorsport Volkswagen Polo R WRC	3h03m02.0s
2 Kris Meeke (GB)/Paul Nagle (IRL) Citroen Total Citroen DS3 WRC	+26.0s
3 Andreas Mikkelsen (N)/Ola Floene (N) Volkswagen Motorsport II Volkswagen Polo R WRC	+36.2s
4 Dani Sordo (E)/Marc Marti (E) Hyundai Motorsport Hyundai i20 WRC	+2m51.3s
5 Hayden Paddon (NZ)/John Kennard (NZ) Hyundai Motorsport Hyundai i20 WRC	+3m00.5s
6 Elfyn Evans (GB)/Daniel Barritt (GB) M-Sport WRT Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+3m09.1s
7 Mads Ostberg (N)/Jonas Andersson (S) Citroen Total Citroen DS3 WRC	+4m28.4s
8 Stephane Lefebvre (F)/Stephane Prevot (B) Citroen Total Citroen DS3 WRC	+5m38.4s
9 Robert Kubica (PL)/Maciek Szczepaniak (PL) RK World Rally Team Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+6m22.7s
10 Lorenzo Bertelli (I)/Lorenzo Granai (I) FWRT Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+8m05.0s
14 Josh Moffett (IRL)/John Rowan (GB) Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+16m53.1s
15 Sam Moffett (IRL)/Karl Atkinson (IRL) Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+17m06.3s
21 Martin Prokop (CZ)/Jan Tomanek (CZ) Jipocar Czech National Team Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+27m50.7s
50 Jari-Matti Latvala (FIN)/Miikka Anttila (FIN) Volkswagen Motorsport Volkswagen Polo R WRC	+1h24m19.3s
R Ott Tanak (EST)/Raigo Molder (EST) M-Sport WRT Ford Fiesta RS WRC	Suspension damage
R Thierry Neuville (B)/Nicolas Gilsoul (B) Hyundai Motorsport Hyundai i20 WRC	Rolled
R Kevin Abbring (NL)/Sebastian Marshall (GB) Hyundai Motorsport Hyundai i20 WRC	Engine

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Ogier 263; 2 Latvala 183; 3 Mikkelsen 171; 4 Ostberg 116; 5 Meeke 112; 6 Neuville 90; 7 Evans 89; 8 Sordo 89; 9 Paddon 84; 10 Tanak 62

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Volkswagen Motorsport, 414; 2 Citroen Total Abu Dhabi WRT, 230; 3 Hyundai Motorsport, 224; 4 M-Sport WRT, 181; 5 VW Motorsport II, 131; 6 Hyundai Mobis WRT, 67; 7 Jipocar Czech National Team, 51; 8 FWRT, 13

STAGES

SS1 Hafren 1 (19.97 miles)
 FASTEST Ogier 18m28.2s LEADER Ogier
 SECOND Latvala +0.8s
 SS2 Sweet Lamb 1 (2.07 miles)
 F Ogier 2m06.3s L Ogier S Meeke +6.0s
 SS3 Myherin 1 (18.78 miles)
 F Ogier 17m01.8s L Ogier S Meeke +12.9s
 SS4 Hafren 2 (19.97 miles)
 F Meeke 18m56.8s L Ogier S Meeke +7.7s

SS5 Sweet Lamb 2 (2.07 miles)
 F Ogier 2m09.4s L Ogier S Meeke +8.1s
 SS6 Myherin 2 (18.78 miles)
 F Ogier 17m15.8s L Ogier S Meeke +13.5s
 SS7 Gartheiniog 1 (7.05 miles)
 F Neuville 7m03.4s L Ogier S Meeke +12.1s
 SS8 Dyfi 1 (16.07 miles)
 F Neuville 15m10.1s L Ogier S Meeke +15.1s
 SS9 Gartheiniog 2 (7.05 miles)
 F Mikkelsen 7m14.4s L Ogier S Meeke +13.7s

SS10 Dyfi 2 (16.07 miles)
 F Ogier 15m23.2s L Ogier S Meeke +19.3s
 SS11 Dyfnant 1 (11.82 miles)
 F Ogier 11m03.3s L Ogier S Meeke +25.6s
 SS12 Aberhrrnant 1 (8.64 miles)
 F Ogier 7m44.7s L Ogier S Meeke +28.9s
 SS13 Chirk Castle (1.28 miles)
 F Tanak 1m33.3s L Ogier S Meeke +30.5s
 SS14 Dyfnant 2 (11.82 miles)
 F Mikkelsen 11m10.0s L Ogier S Meeke +31.0s

SS15 Aberhrrnant 2 (8.64 miles)
 F Ogier 7m50.5s L Ogier S Meeke +35.7s
 SS16 Brenig 1 (6.61 miles)
 F Latvala 6m46.5s L Ogier S Meeke +30.1s
 SS17 Alwen (6.47 miles)
 F Latvala 5m44.0s L Ogier S Meeke +27.9s
 SS18 Great Orme (2.95 miles)
 F Latvala 2m38.8s L Ogier S Meeke +29.8s
 SS19 Brenig 2 (Power Stage) (6.61 miles)
 F Latvala 6m50.3s L Ogier S Meeke +26.0s



Subdued Ingrassia and Ogier after win

IN THE PADDOCK

DAVID EVANS
RALLIES EDITOR

@daviddevansrally



GETTING OUT OF BED AT JUST after five o'clock on Sunday morning was painful, but by no means the end of the world. Pulling my boots on and finding a puddle still in the bottom came a little bit closer.

Rally GB was more than wet. It took wet to a new, even damper, soggy level. The night before, I'd been sitting waiting for the cars near the end of the Aberhinnant stage and, for the first time in my career, I actually thought twice about getting out of the car to talk to the drivers; the rain was horizontal, the wind comfortably breaking the speed limit on the lane I was parked in. But get out I did. Hence the boots.

Wales was ravaged by a week of quite



Rare sunshine in the forest

crazy weather, but Britain's round of the world championship stood firm and laughed in the face of meteo-born adversity. Three times, the Sweet Lamb stage was set up with fencing and signage and each time it was blown over. It ran like nothing ever happened. Toilets blew off the side of Gartheiniog and marshals were marched out of the

forest for fear of hundred-year-old pines falling on their heads.

Once in, the fans were magnificent. They came and filled car parks like never before. Wellies were pulled on and klaxons sounded as their heroes flew past, making the sodden wait entirely worthwhile.

Kris Meeke might have been one place down on the dream, but still, second was a

result worth marking and making some noise for. If the Dungannon man's not a full-time world championship driver next season, post this column back to me and I'll eat it. He's earned it. He deserves it. He drove the drive of a champion in Wales.

But the champ himself gave us a lesson in what's important in life: Sebastien Ogier showed his true Tricolore last week.

Wilson voices diary concerns

M-SPORT TEAM PRINCIPAL

Malcolm Wilson fears a crowded 2016 calendar could impact on development of the 2017 Ford Fiesta RS WRC. Three rallies in October, the key time for finalising the spec of the team's all-new car, are causing Wilson serious concern.

"Some of the guys here have looked at the calendar and are now saying, 'OK, how do we resource it, how do we do it?' The density of calendar allied to the new car development – which has to be the priority – gives us some difficult decisions. It will be very, very difficult and I could understand the reasoning if Citroen did a part-programme."



Wilson concerned about 2016 calendar

BIG NUMBER

317

That's how many consecutive WRC rounds M-Sport's retiring co-ordinator John Millington had done after Rally GB.



Meeke yet to finalise 2016 WRC contract

Meeke confident of 2016 drive

KRIS MEEKE IS CONFIDENT his best-ever Wales Rally GB result will be enough to bag him a seat in the World Rally Championship next season.

Citroen driver Meeke has yet to talk to his employer about a 2016 contract – team principal Yves Matton insisted on waiting until

after the final round of the season – but will be doing so this week.

Meeke told Autosport: "I'll have a job next year, I'm confident of that. I'm not telling you what it is or where it'll be, but I'll have a job! When we were at the start in Llandudno, we parked up outside the job centre, so I went in and had a wee look in the window..."

Citroen to miss 2016 events?

CITROEN'S FUTURE IN THE

WRC will be decided before the end of this month – with the French firm understood to be considering a part-programme next year.

Sources suggest the factory DS 3 WRCs might only be seen on half the of the 2016 rounds. Team principal Yves Matton admitted this depended on the French firm's long-term future in the WRC. Autosport understands Citroen is closing on a decision to commit to rallying – at the expense of its World Touring Car Championship effort – at the end of next season.

"The problem is," said Matton, "if you miss an event, you cannot enter the WRC as a manufacturer. It



Matton (r) to confirm Citroen WRC future

depends on what we will do in 2017."

Sources close to Citroen told Autosport: "We've heard a six or eight-round programme is looking like a very real possibility for [Citroen] next year. While this might look negative, the reasoning we've heard is positive – it saves money and buys time to make sure the new car is absolutely ready when they come back in 2017."

Matton confirmed Citroen would also reveal its WRC driver-line up before the end of November.

SUBARU WINS AGAIN

Twenty years on from Colin McRae's epic win in a blue and yellow-liveried Subaru, David Higgins guided his Group N WRX STI home five and a half minutes clear of its nearest opposition in a predictably emotional event for the Manxman and the legion of McRae fans in the forests.

SOLBERG IS A LEGEND

Petter Solberg was named a Wales Rally GB Rally Legend at last week's event. The Norwegian was present on the rally and admitted he is trying to put together a deal to contest next year's Rally Sweden in a World Rally Car.

SUNINEN'S WRC2 WIN

Teemu Suninen won WRC2 in a Skoda Fabia S2000 – the Finn revelling in the wet conditions and making the most of a late-in-the-day problem for Ford Fiesta R5 driver Eric Camilli. Craig Breen led early on before a puncture. "There was a rock in the middle of the road," he said, "and like every other bloody rock this season, I found it."

WOLFF JOINS MEEKE

Williams Racing test driver Susie Wolff joined Kris Meeke for a run in his DS 3 WRC at shakedown, describing the experience as mind-blowing but she said she had no desire to try to top Meeke's effort in the driving seat.



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Matsuda and Quintarelli took the title with second



JAPANESE SUPER GT MOTEGI (J), NOVEMBER 15 RD 8/8

NISMO pair clinch the crown

VICTORY IN THE FINAL ROUND OF the Super GT championship went to TOM'S Lexus duo Andrea Caldarelli and Ryo Hirakawa. But second place was enough for Tsugio Matsuda and Ronnie Quintarelli to seal the 2015 crown for NISMO.

It was a weekend blighted by bad weather, until the sun came out in the middle of the 250km race.

But before the track dried up, Caldarelli converted pole into a growing lead on wets. He pitted for slicks, and to hand over to Hirakawa, shortly before the NISMO car. It capitalised on troubles for Hirakawa, in heating his slicks, to take the lead in the hands of Matsuda.

A five-lap safety car closed the field up, with Matsuda leading from Hirakawa. But after the restart, Hirakawa dived up the inside with 10 laps remaining to take the lead.

James Rossiter and Daisuke Ito, who were also in title contention, retired with a drivetrain problem after just 10 laps.

● Jiro Takahashi

RESULTS

1 Andrea Caldarelli/Ryo Hirakawa (Lexus RC F), 153 laps in 1h43m10.687s; 2 Tsugio Matsuda/Ronnie Quintarelli (Nissan GT-R), +0.591s; 3 Naoki Yamamoto/Takuya Izawa (Honda NSX Concept-GT); 4 Hironobu Yasuda/Joao Paulo de Oliveira (Nissan); 5 Yuji Tachikawa/Hiroaki Ishiura (Lexus); 6 Kohei Hirate/Heikki Kovalainen (Lexus); 7 Takashi Kogure/Oliver Turvey (Honda); 8 Koudai Tsukokoshi/Hideki Mutoh (Honda); 9 Kazuya Oshima/Yuji Kunimoto (Lexus); 10 Juichi Wakisaka/Yuhi Sekiguchi (Lexus).

POINTS 1 Matsuda/Quintarelli, 79;

2 Yasuda/Oliveira, 74; 3 Yamamoto/Izawa, 60; 4 Tachikawa/Ishiura, 59; 5 Hirakawa/Caldarelli, 56; 6 Satoshi Motoyama/Masataka Yanagida, 50; 7 James Rossiter/Daisuke Ito, 49; 8 Tsukokoshi/Mutoh, 39.



Caldarelli/Hirakawa took the win

NASCAR SPRINT CUP PHOENIX (US), NOVEMBER 15 RD 35/36

Earnhardt wins in rain-ruined race

A RACE IN THE ARIZONA DESERT ought to be fairly safe from rain delays, but persistent precipitation on Sunday first turned the Chase shootout scene-setter into an unexpected night event, then curtailed it unsatisfactorily.

After starting nearly seven hours late, the race was abandoned with 219 of the planned 312 laps done and the order decided mid-pitstop sequence. That meant Dale Earnhardt Jr won at the expense of long-time leader Kevin Harvick, who had led most of the racing that actually took place, and who had gone unbeaten in the last three Phoenix Cup races.

With a non-Chase-runner winning, the battle to join Jeff Gordon in the Homestead decider came down to points. Second was sufficient for Harvick, but third was no good to Joey Logano, who was eliminated along with Penske



Earnhardt won... but Harvick should have

team-mate Brad Keselowski, Carl Edwards and Kurt Busch. The latter was particularly peeved, since his race was ruined by an immediate penalty for a jump-start both he and poleman Jimmie Johnson were adamant was not actually jumped.

While the elder Busch lost out, younger brother Kyle qualified for the title decider — an achievement that looked unthinkable when he sat

out three months with leg injuries. Furniture Row underdog Martin Truex Jr completes the quartet of championship contenders since his 14th place gave him just enough points to fend off Edwards.

RESULTS

1 Dale Earnhardt Jr (Chevrolet SS), 219 laps in 2h03m22s; 2 Kevin Harvick (Chevy); 3 Joey Logano (Ford Fusion); 4 Kyle Busch (Toyota

NASCAR XFINITY

Kyle Busch extended his record for wins in the second-tier NASCAR series with his 76th victory at Phoenix — from his 47th pole position (also a record). He utterly dominated, leading all but 10 laps of the 200-lap race and crossing the line three seconds clear of Brad Keselowski. Chris Buescher leads the standings heading into this weekend's finale, although Chase Elliott's seventh place put the lead to just 18 points, with Ty Dillon and Regan Smith also in the hunt.

NASCAR TRUCKS

Timothy Peters took his second win of the season at Phoenix, while two of the title contenders collided. Erik Jones and Matt Crafton clashed, but while the former survived to finish ninth, Crafton was 23rd. Tyler Reddick, the other title hopeful, was fifth and trails Jones by 19 points, with Crafton 32 points off the lead in third place, heading to the finale.

AUSTRALIAN GT

Christopher Mies sealed the title at Highland Park in New Zealand. The Audi driver, sharing with Ryan Millier finished fourth in the first race of the double-header, while rival Nathan Antunes retired after clashing with Christopher Hasse and was unable to contest race two.

JAPANESE F4

Tadasuke Makino took two wins in the season finale at Motegi. But it wasn't enough to deny Sho Tsuboi the title, after taking fifth and second.



HOW BRITAIN'S WILD CHILD STEPPED UP

Oliver Rowland's career has been more eventful than most, but with the right backing this "independent character" has flourished. **PETER MILLS** describes the process

Late September at Le Mans. At the foot of the Circuit de la Sarthe's steeply raked pitlane grandstand, Oliver Rowland stands shoulder-to-shoulder with his Fortec crew. Sheffield's coming man has just wrapped up the Formula Renault 3.5 crown with a round to spare, sparking a deserved release of euphoria. Rowland has defined the weekend's

Awards. I was attending a lunch at the RAC hotel, and while there I was shown into a room and told the news. The thing was, there were tickets being given out for the Awards.

"As I was the previous year's Award winner, I automatically got one as well. On the night, everyone from the RSF was on one table, and I was seated on a different table – but next to them. I thought that was a bit harsh!"

Rowland is able to make light of the revised seating arrangements at the motorsport world's premier awards ceremony now, but at the time,

agenda with yet another dominant performance, the frequency of which has led many to believe his is a talent worthy of Formula 1. Joining in the celebrations, and holding the top-left corner of a Union Flag-emblazoned Rowland banner, is Racing Steps Foundation co-ordinator Derek Walters. For Pirelli's former motorsport manager, a bold tactical play worthy of Machiavelli has finally paid off.

Three years earlier, the Foundation's relationship with Rowland was decidedly cooler. For Walters, a principal player in directing RSF founder Graham Sharp's millions towards British talent, the time had come for drastic measures.

"Well, I was dropped," says Rowland, opening up on his turbulent winter of 2012. "I was off it. It happened a day before that year's AUTOSPORT

seemingly left with no means of continuing his chosen career path, he had been struck numb.

This cruel-to-be-kind treatment was exactly what Walters had thought necessary. "I got a call from Oliver's trainer saying, 'Oh, I think Ollie's really bricking it now,'" recounts Walters. "I thought, 'Yes! [punches the air] We might have got through to him this time!'"

THE KARTING PRODIGY

To explain how that curious situation came about, it is worth detailing how Rowland came to the Foundation's attention in the first place.

"It was through [kart legend and Zip Kart boss] Martin Hines, who really believed in the ability and ▶

▶ talent of Oliver,” says Walters. “That talent has never been in doubt.”

Rowland was imbued with a love of speed from an early age. “I loved bikes,” he explains. “Me and my dad were talking about getting one. My mum wasn’t keen, though. So just before my fourth birthday I got a little quad, and I was soon riding it around on two wheels on some playing fields near where we lived in Penistone [south Yorkshire].

“I can’t actually remember this, but I did meet Martin Hines before I was five. My dad took me to Zip to see about getting a kart, but Martin refused to sell us one because he said I was too little. We ended up just going around the corner and buying another chassis instead! When I was nine I was always at the front in cadets, and Martin took notice. The help grew, and he paid for my last year and got McLaren involved. They paid for three years of karting abroad.”

At the mention of his time at McLaren, Rowland becomes enthused. “I had a full programme,” he recounts. “They provided a flat, training – obviously I didn’t do enough! I also did all my work experience there, going around to all of the different departments.”

Rowland repaid the fith invested in him with a string of successes, the culmination of which was dominating the wet CIK-FIA Super KF World Cup at Suzuka in 2010.

Continued funding into cars was clearly justified. Martin Whitmarsh, McLaren boss at the time, was keen to put the company’s protege on the RSF programme to help relieve the financial burden of support. Before the 2010 Formula Renault Winter Series, the RSF organised a shoot-out with Dan Wells at Rockingham. It was to be Rowland’s first time in a racing car, but he maintained his nerve and scooped the backing.

Rowland made tremendous progress over his first season in Formula Renault UK. A late charge propelled him to the runner-up spot behind the more experienced Alex Lynn, and he concluded the year by picking up the McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award.

PERSONAL HEARTACHE

Remaining with Fortec in 2012, Rowland went into the more competitive Eurocup and found it

“DEREK WARWICK’S GUIDANCE HAS EXTENDED TO MORE ESOTERIC MATTERS”

far more arduous. The title would fall to Stoffel Vandoorne, who has gone on to be runaway GP2 champion in 2015. Vandoorne had the advantage of prior experience at several of the circuits on the calendar, so Rowland’s third in the championship as a rookie was a respectable result. Had expectations been too high?

“Well, Stoffel was with [reigning champion team Josef] Kaufmann, Daniil [Kvyat] was with Koiranen,” says Rowland. “It was my first year, and I was missing something. The tyre warm-up procedure had never really been explained to me. At Fortec that year, things were a little bit left to me. I only just finished third, so I was dissatisfied. Perhaps RSF didn’t realise how tough Eurocup was, but... my head wasn’t in the right place.”

Tragedy had struck Rowland twice in close succession with the loss of his father Dave in 2010, and the death of Martin Hines in 2011.

“With all of the difficulties that he has had, that’s where the values of the Foundation have been so relevant,” says Walters, recalling his concern. “The human side is important, if you’re going to get a result on the sporting side.”

“The RSF wasn’t happy with finishing third,” reflects Rowland. “I wasn’t doing all of the training that I was supposed to have been and they were at a loose end with me. The year before I had won the McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award, and Derek Warwick was really keen for me to carry on the programme – that’s when he really got involved.

“After that I went to Derek’s home in Jersey and stayed nearly a month. He was hot on my heels with training. I had a target weight to achieve, which I managed to get down to.”

“I had said to Derek Warwick, well you picked him, so you have a hand in this!” jokes Walters, before adding with sincerity, “Derek really did an exceptional job.”

The extent of the BRDC president’s generosity with his time to mentor Rowland was amazing given Warwick’s multitude of business commitments. It is worth emphasising that Rowland was a talented young sportsman faced with some hurdles, rather than some sort of



Mechanically apt, Rowland is happy to wield the spanners

problem child. His disarmingly likeable nature assisted in Warwick establishing a close bond.

“When my brother Paul died, I said I wouldn’t get emotionally involved again with a young driver,” says Warwick profoundly. “But with Ollie, I am emotionally involved. So much so, that I almost don’t want to let the story go. He is so good, I know there is going to be a time when he outgrows me as well, because there will be better people taking him forward. That will hurt.

“Right from the first moment I saw Oliver in action at the McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award evaluation, I could see he had something special. It was a bit raw. But then I am not sure Sebastian Vettel or Lewis Hamilton were polished when they were Oliver’s age.

“About three years ago, the RSF were losing patience, because he didn’t conform. We formulated a situation where RSF would back him, if I would look after him. I brought him into my home and took him to the gym. He was not fit, light or focused enough, but I think we helped to turn that around.”

Warwick’s guidance has extended to more esoteric matters, including dining decorum.

“We spent a lot of time on table manners!” laughs Warwick. “It is a silly thing, but they’re important. You can’t invest in young drivers who have very limited budgets, who have come from working-class backgrounds, if that is the right phrase, and expect them to be the ultimate polished article.”

Another instrumental force in getting Rowland’s career back on track was soon to come into the picture: enter Tony and Sarah Shaw, whose Manor Competition team had merged with Dutch-based MP Motorsport. Having guided Kimi Raikkonen and Lewis Hamilton to championship success with Manor in



First year in Eurocup brought mixed results



Derek Walters has been a key ally

ROZENDAA/LAT

“ROWLAND WAGED AN INTENSE TITLE BATTLE WITH EVENTUAL CHAMPION PIERRE GASLY”



Matsushita took Rowland out in GP2 feature race in Belgium

S. BLOXHAM/LAT

Formula Renault UK, Shaw had his sights set on Rowland as a future star.

“We heard that he may not be backed by Racing Steps any further,” recounts Tony Shaw. “So we went down to see RSF ambassador John Surtees. My wife and I stayed with John. When we got on to the subject of Oliver, we said, ‘Can you get him for us? Because we can turn him around.’”

GROWING UP OFF-TRACK

“There was no way that the kid could be so quick in races and on cold tyres and not be able to put together a new-tyre run,” continues Shaw. “It wasn’t a mental thing. When we first met him, it was, ‘There’s no way this guy gets nervous! Never in a month of Sundays.’ RSF agreed to our proposal, but they wanted him to move to Holland. We would give him a job, look after him, keep him out of... ‘trouble’ isn’t the right word. It is just he was quite an independent character.”

A fierce rivalry between Fortec and Manor in the UK meant that Shaw did not know Rowland personally before meeting up for the journey from Hull to Rotterdam in February 2013.

“Obviously it was a difficult situation with losing his father, and unfortunately Sarah and I both know how that feels now. So for a lad of that age to have gone through it, it must have been extraordinarily difficult. But if you look at and speak to him these days you’d never think that.

“Me, Sarah and Oliver sat down and had a chat on the ferry. You knew straight away that the guy knew what he was talking about. He knew what was expected of him.”

Rowland agrees: “Without Manor MP, I wouldn’t be here. They made RSF a pretty exceptional offer. I went to stay in a big house with the team in Westmaas, near the factory. I needed that. I did a lot of finding out about myself. It was just a great year.”

IMPROVING ON-TRACK

The late nature of the deal meant testing was restricted to the official collective tests, which

were mostly wet. Only after the opening round, in a two-day test at the Red Bull Ring, was an issue with Rowland’s technique in slow-to-medium-speed corners identified.

“Nobody had really picked up on this quite obvious foible,” says Shaw. “Personally, I think it was because no one had worked with him on his driving hard enough. It was a combination of brake release and steering. Sarah, me and Jeremy Cotterill had to work on him hard, like a tag team but he turned it around.”

“At Manor MP, they were quite adamant about how they wanted me to drive,” confirms Rowland. “I wasn’t too sure about it at first, but I got my head around it. When I first started there, we were pulling each others’ hair out. Also, I hadn’t driven in six months. I was rusty, but I didn’t want to admit it. We made a good step at that Red Bull Ring test with the set-up, which worked with that technique.”

Momentum swiftly built, leading to some astounding performances on the track as Rowland waged an intense title battle with eventual champion Pierre Gasly.

“No one can doubt Oliver’s innate talent,” states Shaw. “Some of his performances in 2013 were just jaw-dropping. At Most it was ridiculous, like we were in a different car. Five tenths up the road when we were on used tyres. This year, [Matthieu] Vaxiviere must have been pulling his hair out, since whenever he got into a situation with Oliver he lost out. That’s just a mark of a guy who is a natural born racer.”

Both Shaw and Rowland pinpointed his outstanding performance at Zandvoort’s NEC meeting as the highlight of the year.

“After three laps, he got on the radio and said, ‘Where are they all?’ I said, ‘Shut up and focus,’” laughs Shaw.

“Zandvoort was a bit special,” agrees Rowland. “It was a bit of a shakedown for Barcelona. Since I only lived 50 minutes away, I didn’t bother with Thursday and turned up Friday morning.



Derek Warwick lent his support

I didn’t know which way the track went. In qualifying I was one second quicker than everyone, and they had all tested there before. I was leading by 22s and then the safety car came out...”

Rowland’s mechanical ability, sharpened by late nights at the Manor MP base, came to the fore.

“Oliver was in the workshop every day,” says Shaw. “One of the Renault scrutineers recounted a story from the Red Bull Ring where after the race he wanted to see the wheel bearings. Oliver just whipped round the back, took the upright off, and, overalls round his waist, stripped the wheelbearings. It just blew their brain. But that’s the type of guy he is.”

“I used to build my brake callipers and wheel bearings,” reveals Rowland. “I would stay until nine or 10pm making sure everything was perfect. My mechanics were all really good, but I think I wanted to win more than them.”

A loose connector at Spa and an unfortunate incident when he was punted off by fellow RSF driver Jake Dennis at the Hungaroring arguably ▶

“MERCEDES HAS ALREADY HANDED ROWLAND 25 DAYS OF SIMULATOR TIME THIS YEAR”

► cost Rowland the Eurocup crown. But the performances provided a convincing argument to step up to FR3.5.

THE FINISHED ARTICLE?

Those breathtaking performances evident in karting and FR2.0 continued into a race-winning, though often luckless, maiden FR3.5 campaign, and into this memorable year as well. And any concerns over the quality of FR3.5 were quashed when Rowland was similarly impressive in two GP2 outings; but for a slow-moving Rio Haryanto lurching into his path at Maggots, Rowland should have started from second at Silverstone on his GP2 debut. His best sectors at Spa, where he did qualify second, were good enough for pole.

The Mercedes F1 team has handed Rowland around 25 days of simulator time this year, which Warwick attests has been so impressive the team drafted him in to help with energy-recovering strategies in Monaco.

But does Rowland think he is ready for F1?

“Definitely,” he shoots back. “I understand I may have to wait for it to happen. But if I have an opportunity like Carlos or Max, I can do it. We need to try and make it happen for 2017.”

If such an opportunity arises, Rowland will not be short of people to thank for getting him there.

“Graham Sharp has been absolutely phenomenal,” claims Warwick. “I think he has a bit of soft spot for Oliver. I also wouldn’t be



Rowland broke records in 2015

ROZENDAAAL/LAT

wasting three and a half years if I didn’t think he was special. I see him as a second son almost. Is he better than 50 per cent of the drivers in Formula 1 already? 100 per cent. Is he as good as Lewis Hamilton. No. Not yet. Could he be? Maybe.

“He has got that amount of talent. His overtaking reminds me of Lewis, or Max Verstappen. He will still throw the odd curveball at you, which is different. But what do we need in F1 at the moment? Characters, people who are different. When you think, the biggest character in F1 is Kimi, and he says nothing!”

Shaw worked closely with Hamilton and also thinks comparison to the triple world champion is valid.

“It’s fair to compare him with Lewis, just in the fact that he is such a fantastic

racer. You would put your money on him any day. Perhaps you didn’t have to work quite so hard with the likes of Raikkonen or Hamilton, but maybe the car they got was further up the road.

“He is a great lad. When he arrived in the GP2 team, it was just like nothing had changed. ‘Hello lads, ay up!’ Quick coffee, bit of a warm-up, gets in the car and is dynamite. Let’s all hope and pray that he is destined for big things.”



DUNBAR/LAT

4 WINNING MABA

► Rounded off 2011 by lifting the McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award. The prize included £100,000 towards his career and the promise of a Formula 1 test courtesy of McLaren.

ROWLAND’S RACING STEPS

THE KEY HIGHS AND LOWS OF OLIVER ROWLAND’S PROGRESS FROM PROMISING KARTER TO FORMULA RENAULT 3.5 GLORY

2 SNATCHING RSF SUPPORT

Won the shoot-out for Racing Steps Foundation support in the six-round Formula Renault 2.0 UK Winter Series in 2010. Rowland took his first victory in the final race. ►



EBREY

1 KARTING PRODIGY

McLaren-backed since 2007 thanks to Zip boss Martin Hines’s recommendation, Rowland topped a great karting career by winning the CIK-FIA Super KF World Cup at Suzuka in 2010. ►



WALKER/KAR/PIX





9 BREAKING RECORDS
◀ Delivered on potential with record-breaking FR3.5 season, clinching the crown with a round to spare at Le Mans. Also received prize demo run in a Red Bull F1 car at Silverstone.



6 TITLE ATTACK BUILDS...
◀ Could possibly have graduated to Formula 3, but instead Rowland went for a second season in the Eurocup. Moved to Holland and worked with Manor MP Motorsport, taking first win of the season at Spa.

8 GRADUATION JUSTIFIED
▲ Returned to Fortec for jump into Formula Renault 3.5. Unfortunate not to take the runner-up spot behind Carlos Sainz Jr, Rowland had to settle for a promising fourth. High points included wins at Alcaniz and Jerez.

5 CHALLENGE IN EUROPE
Remained with Fortec for 2012, but switched to the more competitive Eurocup. Finished third behind Stoffel Vandoorne, who had the advantage of being in his third year driving on several of the circuits. ▼

7 ...THEN GETS DERAILED
Rowland's title challenge suffered a blow when fellow RSF-supported driver Jake Dennis made a mistake and took him off in Hungary. Rowland finished second in the championship to Pierre Gasly. ▼



ROSENQVIST'S GUIDE

European Formula 3 champion Felix Rosenqvist is bidding for a second successive Macau GP win this week. But before he did that he sat down to talk about the event with **MARCUS SIMMONS**



TO MACAU



XPBIMAGES

“The atmosphere was the biggest thing. To race against all the biggest teams, and drivers who I respected a lot like Valtteri Bottas, Edoardo Mortara and Roberto Merhi... to put myself in that list was big for me. Everyone kept telling me how difficult the track was, but when I arrived it was not too difficult. When you have a good car you can learn a bit quicker; when you don't have the confidence it's difficult.”

Felix Rosenqvist is casting his mind back to his first Macau Grand Prix in 2010, when his German F3 Cup team Performance Racing decided to take a gamble in the eastern casino capital on stepping into the category's highest level. Five years on the Swede returns for his sixth attack on Macau, spearheading the effort of the Theodore Racing-backed Prema Powerteam.

Rosenqvist won the Macau GP in 2014 with Mucke Motorsport before claiming the F3 European Championship title this year with Prema.

And, since his first Macau trip, a lot of water has flowed under the bridge. Translate that to the legendary Guia circuit and it accounts for at least 335 laps – that's 1274 miles! – under Rosenqvist's belt. And that makes him pretty much the best person to provide an insight into what it takes to perform this week in junior motorsport's most celebrated race.

“YOU HAVE TO BE MENTALLY PREPARED. A MISTAKE CAN HAVE BIG CONSEQUENCES”

PREPARATION

“Honestly I never did a simulator for Macau,” says Rosenqvist. “I think it's quite a difficult track to replicate on the sim, so I never did that. In the end you try to pretend it's like any weekend. Obviously it's special, and you have to be mentally prepared because any mistake can cause big consequences.”

Drivers often travel out early to adjust to the time zone, which in Rosenqvist's case is seven hours ahead of his native Sweden. “Normally I arrived something like Sunday, Monday, which is on the limit I think [with free practice and qualifying starting on Thursday],” he says. ▶

THE MEN TO BEAT



FELIX ROSENQVIST

From late summer onwards he was near-unbeatable in European F3, and arrives in Macau looking to become only the second man, after Edoardo Mortara, to do the double in the 33-year history of the Macau GP's F3 era. The clear favourite.



ANTONIO GIOVINAZZI

The European F3 runner-up is Carlin's leading contender. Looked good on Thursday last year before team's form fell away on Friday, then got caught up in race shunts. Proved street-circuit prowess this year with Pau GP victory.



JAKE DENNIS

Took third in the points with Prema in his second year of European F3, but has never raced in Macau before. Even so, he's a dab hand on street tracks as two poles and two wins in Pau prove.



CHARLES LECLERC

Another who has never raced in Macau but who starred in Pau. Form fell away with Van Amersfoort Racing and he dropped to fourth in the Euro F3 points; don't tell the casino bookies about his wet-weather prowess if it rains...



NICK CASSIDY

Properly launched his career out of the last-chance saloon last year when he finished third in Macau with T-Sport. Now Japanese F3 champion with TOM'S, the team that has won more times in Macau's F3 era than any other.

► "This year I'm arriving on Saturday. When you're in the car it doesn't really matter, but obviously the whole time there it's always nice if you feel a bit more fresh.

"I try to do a track walk or a track drive. I did run it a couple of times but there's such a lot of traffic – the main straight is the main road of Macau – and the air is quite dirty. It doesn't give you a lot to walk around, because you can't go on the lines, but it's always good to have a look."

LEARNING THE TRACK

Rosenqvist can't remember whether he had downforce bolted on for his first taste of Macau five years ago, but a circuit rookie will often do this while they are familiarising themselves, before the wings get trimmed out. It's tough, because you need low downforce – F3 cars are flat-out for over half a minute between the final R Bend, over the start-finish line, through the Reservoir and Mandarin kinks and down to Lisboa – and this makes it very tricky over the 'mountain' section.

But for Rosenqvist, who won the Swedish Formula Renault title in 2009, it was like Knutstorp with houses. "Don't drive it like Hockenheim," he warns, "but compared to an old-school Swedish circuit it's the same, only with walls.

"I like to go straight into what's best – and that's low downforce – and get used to it. It doesn't really feel like you have low downforce because the track gets quite grippy. You only see it as low-grip in first free practice when there's dust everywhere. But when it's rubbered-in it's not bad."

A LAP OF THE TRACK

Over to Rosenqvist...

"You have the kink, Mandarin, and that can be quite tricky in the race if you're behind someone because you can lose the downforce – you might have to lift on the exit and get passed by 10 guys [or end up making contact, which scuppered Rosenqvist's 2013 Macau].

"Then you have Lisboa, which is where all the action happens with the big braking. The corner itself is not really spectacular, just a 90-degree. And then after San Francisco Bend you go up the hill, and that's where the iconic part of Macau starts, with right-left, very high speeds everywhere.

"First you have a really quick right, in fifth gear and almost flat – you can do it flat sometimes in qualifying – and then braking into the left and right [Maternity Bend] slow-speed corners. That's one of the difficult points for me on the lap. When you arrive quick and go into the left you see the wall right in front of you, and it takes time to get confidence.

"Then you have the left-hander where you can

He was once a young rookie: FR in 2010



"IF YOU'RE ON POLE YOU WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY LOSE THE POSITION IF YOU DON'T HAVE A ROCKET ON THE STRAIGHTS"

see the view of the city, which is quite a cool feeling – you can sense it for sure when you're driving – and you go into the Solitude Esses, which should be flat. That's really high speed, around 200km/h, and you're really brushing the walls – probably my favourite part of the circuit; you can gain a lot of time. After that you go to the left, which goes right on exit [Faraway Hill] – you arrive at high speed, slow down two gears and then back on the power. It's very banked so you have to throw the car in, which takes confidence because you don't really trust the grip.

"You then go up to Police, and this is where everyone is crashing normally. You're turning and braking to the left into a very narrow right-hander, so you're unloading the inside tyre, and it's very easy to lock up and go straight. When someone crashes it gets blocked and can cause a big chain reaction. Then Moorish is another tight 90-degree right, like going over a crest, second gear as well.

"Dona Maria, which follows, is a really banked hairpin – you have to attack quite hard on the brakes and carry the speed. Normally it's where you feel tyre degradation in the races and the rear tyres start to slide a bit. Out of there you head down to another iconic corner, the Melco hairpin, where I have bad memories from 2011. In free practice it was raining and there was a big pile-up.

"There is always a waved yellow flag here because Melco is so tight, and I didn't realise another yellow just before was for something wrong... I was flat-out and crashed into Marko Asmer, who was standing still, at 100km/h! I had to start at the back because of that – my weekend was already gone on Thursday.

"From here to Fishermans Bend is interesting because it's like two different circuits, because there's a change in Tarmac and characteristics. It's very high speed and very bumpy – it's also



Fishermans Bend – this is Merhi in 2014



The mountain section leaves no error margin

banked on entry so you have to hook the car up, really trust that it will stick. When you attack it seems like you're going to miss the whole thing and crash, but then it sort of grips mid-corner.

"The last corner, R Bend, is quite similar, a bit quicker, longer and more open – very high speed. That's where you're suffering from low downforce, it's moving around quite a lot, and it's easier to make a mistake than gain anything, but you have to attack otherwise you're a sitting duck on the straight."

RACE STARTS

It's the most counter-intuitive thing for a racing driver. They're hard-wired to try for pole and the best start possible, but paradoxically that leaves you vulnerable on the long drag down to Lisboa. "I've been leading more times than I want," sighs Rosenqvist.

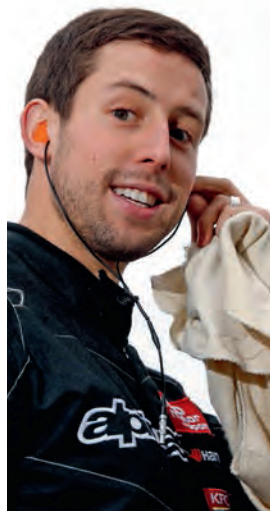
"Last year I made a bad one. It wasn't on purpose; I just had a bad start and it seemed to profit me in the end. But if you're on pole you will almost always lose the position if you don't have a rocket on the straights. That's another thing in Macau – you need some luck always."

LEADING THE TEAM

Rosenqvist is joined in the Theodore/Prema line-up by Macau virgins Jake Dennis and Lance Stroll. "My role at Prema all year was to help the others, and I can definitely bring something for Macau," he says. "I believe if you're good enough, you don't have to hide anything. I'm not telling my lines to everyone in the paddock, but if someone asks me I will probably tell them because in the end, if you're a true champion, you can do that."

Who knows? Maybe someone asking Rosenqvist for advice this week will look back in a few years' time and recall what a big deal it was to be on the same Macau entry list as this F3 great. ❧

THE DARK HORSES



ALEXANDER SIMS

BMW GT man came close to the Macau podium last time here in 2013 with T-Sport. Now he returns for a Rosenqvist-equaling sixth attack with Double R Racing. Proved that desire still burns in late-season Euro F3 outings with Hitech.



LANCE STROLL

Prema's Ferrari proteges don't have a good finishing record in Macau. If Stroll can keep it tidy, his late-season speed suggests a top-five is entirely feasible.



MARKUS POMMER

Some have a sneaky feeling that Pommer and Motopark are going to be proper contenders at the front. Only a startline stall denied him a top-six as a rookie last year.



ALEXANDER ALBON

Showed he can race on street tracks with low downforce when he fought for victory at the Norisring. It's a first trip to Macau for the Signature man, but don't rule out a podium.



DANIEL JUNCADELLA

Like Rosenqvist, this DTM man is going for a second Macau win, but it'll be a tough task. He'll do a good job with Fortec, but after three years out of F3 anything in the top five would be good.

XPB IMAGES

ROSENQVIST SAYS

"I think Alexander Sims will be good – I rate him highly as a driver; he's as good as anyone. It's a question of whether the team is ready, but with Double R he could be OK. Jake Dennis seems to be good on street circuits, so if he can hang on the whole week he can be good in the end. Charles Leclerc was really good in Pau, so he will also be strong. Antonio Giovinazzi is probably the main rival, but then you never know... Nick Cassidy? This is the time when we will see how good the current TOM'S car is."

GT GETS A WORLD CUP

Macau's GT race has gained global status, and is set to grow yet further in both grid-size and stature. **GARY WATKINS** reports

This was the race every self-respecting GT driver wanted to do – even before it acquired new kudos for 2015. The Macau GT Cup has now become the FIA GT World Cup, cementing its place as the *must-do* end-of-season event on the GT3 calendar.

That attraction of the event for GT drivers is illustrated by the unsuccessful efforts of one – with a good record at Macau, but a poor understanding of geography and international time zones – to find a flight that would get him to Macau in time for Sunday from Bahrain, scene of the 'clashing' World Endurance Championship finale on Saturday. It really is a race they all want to do, by hook or by crook.

Mercedes factory driver Maro Engel describes his victory in the GT Cup last year as a "dream come true".

"I always wanted to win at Macau from when I first raced there in Formula 3 [in 2006 with Carlin], and even before," says the German, who races a Merc SLS AMG entered under the Mercedes AMG Driving Academy but



XPB IMAGES

Engel's '14 win "a dream come true"

run by the factory HWA organisation. "I realised it was a special place just watching onboard videos. Everyone who has ever raced there, whether they are in Formula 1, DTM or wherever, wants to go back.

"I got that chance and it was amazing to win last season, especially after coming so close on my return the previous year. I was leading the race when I got a puncture with two laps to go."

Edoardo Mortara is a fully-fledged Macau legend after adding to his pair of Formula 3 Grand Prix triumphs on the demanding Guia circuit with a hat-trick of GT Cup victories from 2011-13. The Audi driver points out that an event that started back in 2007 was already on the up and reckons it will only continue on that path with the addition of the World Cup title.

"I'm happy to have been part of the evolution of the Macau GT race and that it's now the World Cup," says the DTM racer, who will drive a Phoenix-run second-generation R8 LMS this weekend. "That makes it something quite special, and if I can win it, that would be awesome."

The growth of Macau's GT race on the F3 undercard made it the obvious home for the World Cup when the FIA laid out rough ideas for some kind of premier end-of-season event



Huff has impeccable Macau pedigree

MACAU GUIA

The World Touring Car Championship is missing from Macau for the first time since 2004, but the Guia race for tin-tops lives on. The new-for-2015 TCR International Series will populate the race this year, bolstered by the Asian series grid and a few very familiar faces.

The battle for the inaugural title between 2011 Megane Trophy winner Stefano Comini and Pepe Oriola will take centre stage, with outsider Jordi Gene also in the mix for the crown. But while the three SEAT drivers fight for points, there will be two drivers with illustrious Macau CVs to cheer on.

Rob Huff, who has seven WTCC victories at Macau to his name, will line up for West Coast Racing to drive one of its race-winning JAS-developed Honda Civics. Old Chevrolet team-mate Alain Menu, three times a winner there, will join him on the grid in a Top Run Subaru STi. And another WTCC race winner, James Nash, will race a Campos Racing-run Opel Astra.

The Subaru is so new, with only two race weekends under its belt, that Menu won't be a serious contender. After all, the car was 2.5 seconds off the pace in qualifying on Menu's first outing at Buriram in Thailand last month. But Huff has a winning car under him and has every chance of emerging as a legitimate threat even when thrown in at the deep end.

The format is slightly different to the TCR norm. While there are two races, this time the first race result forms the grid for race two (with no reversed grid), and the Guia title itself is awarded to the winner of the finale, although both races count equally for TCR points.



TCR usurps WTCC on the Macau bill

for GT3 machinery. Just look at the entry for last year's event: there were factory drivers from Audi, BMW, Porsche, Mercedes and Nissan present.

Macau, whose deal with the World Touring Car Championship had come to an end, had to bid for the right to hold the event. It faced opposition from two venues in the Middle East, but quite rightly came out on top and was awarded a three-year deal.

The FIA's idea for the World Cup is to create a showcase for the leading GT3 producers. The governing body wanted seven makes, each represented by three cars, to fight it out for a manufacturers' crown. Plans for the race came together relatively late – Macau won the right to host the event in March and the format wasn't formalised until the summer. That explains why the inaugural event will be fought out by five marques rather than seven, but the entry list is impressive nonetheless.

Audi, Mercedes, Aston Martin, Porsche and McLaren are the five who will do battle this weekend. Each will run three cars, with the exception of Merc, which has two SLS AMGs in the field. There are a further eight cars on the entry that won't compete for World Cup points.

A qualifying race on Saturday on the 3.8-mile

“THE FIA'S IDEA FOR THE WORLD CUP IS TO CREATE A SHOWCASE FOR THE LEADING GT3 PRODUCERS”

Guia circuit will set the grid for the main event lasting 18 laps or a maximum of 60 minutes on Sunday. The top two cars from each of the registered manufacturers will score points towards the manufacturers' crown.

Audi and Porsche's cars are split between different teams, but Mercedes, McLaren and Aston Martin are each represented by a single entrant, Academy/HWA, FFF Racing and Craft-Bamboo respectively. Brit Richard Lyons has joined Aston's line-up after a GT Asia campaign with Craft-Bamboo and is fulfilling a career ambition by finally racing at Macau.

“My first team-mate in Formula Nippon back in 2001 was Andre Couto, who'd won the F3 race in 2000,” says Lyons. “Wherever we were racing, he'd always tell me how the track compared to Macau. Ever since then I knew I had to race there.”

IN A MIXED-UP YEAR

WEHRLEIN STANDS ABOVE THE REST

It was a season during which many drivers tasted success, but the Mercedes junior proved untouchable. By MITCHELL ADAM

The DTM was a lot of things in 2015. Primarily, it was equal parts fiercely competitive and completely random. How else could you finish an 18-race season with 13 of the 24 drivers having won a race?

A total of 14 drivers claimed a pole position, including the driver who finished 23rd in the standings but not the eventual champion. Exactly two thirds

of the field – 18 drivers – stood on a podium, and 17 started a race from the front row of the grid.

Depending on whether you view that variety as good news or bad – the latter school of thought believing it to be confusing for fans – you could never accuse it of being boring.

And if it looked easy to win a race (it was not), it was bloody tough to win a championship.

With such a spread of ‘moments in the sun’, it’s no surprise that the man enjoying the off-season glory is the year’s most consistent driver, Mercedes youngster Pascal Wehrlein. In his third DTM season, Wehrlein stepped up from being the ‘fifth car at HWA’ to lead Mercedes on track. He set the tone with second in the very first race, grabbed a win at Norisring and took the points lead for the first time – in both the season and his career – with another second place on the Saturday at Red Bull Ring.

He later said it was the first time he really thought about winning the title, even if he only held the lead for 24 hours, before the ‘push-him-out’ row in the Sunday race.

“I was leading the championship for the first time,” he says. “I lost it on Sunday, maybe you know why, but after that I think we all realised that this year could be a big year for us.”

Wehrlein regained the lead with a Saturday victory at Moscow Raceway, but again only overnight, before taking control at Oschersleben, finishing the weekend with a 14-point advantage over Mattias Ekström. That became 37 during the Nurburgring round and, with 50 on offer at Hockenheim’s finale, the job was as good as done.

He headed there with an average qualifying position of 6.75 and race result of 5.4. Remarkable stuff, given the massively scattered results. He duly sealed the title with one race to spare, the day before turning 21.

Among the race-format changes for 2015, qualifying reverted to a 20-minute, all-in session for each race. The sessions generally defined the type of race you were going to have, and Wehrlein and his crew usually delivered. “It’s very important to be at the front,” he said after the last race of the year, a rare blip on his radar. “Because you saw today, I had a strong car the whole weekend, but I finished qualifying in P17, and at the end of the race I was last. “Most of the time this year it worked out well for us in

“IF IT LOOKED EASY TO WIN A RACE (IT WAS NOT), IT WAS BLOODY TOUGH TO WIN A TITLE”

qualifying and that was important.”

Of all of the people in the paddock, Wehrlein was one of the least-heard when it came to the contentious ‘performance-weight’ success-balance system. He probably had many reasons to talk about it, regularly having one of the heavier cars, but tended to get on with the job.

“Definitely Oschersleben, but also Zandvoort was very important,” he reflects, when asked about important weekends of his campaign. “At Oschersleben I was one of the heaviest cars. BMW was very light and I still managed to score many points; I was fifth twice and I scored 20 points there.

“These were the most-important races. It’s not about winning once or twice a year, it’s about consistency and scoring points in every race, because now with these rules, the performance weights, sometimes you have a performance difference of four or five tenths, if you get ▶





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Pascal Wehrlein

Mercedes-Benz Arena Stuttgart
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30 DTM
SRU
DTM Hoch

DEKRA
94
ADAC

DEKRA

PFS invest

► 10 kilos in and another manufacturer gets 10 kilos out. It's not possible anymore to win every race and we showed amazing consistency."

After a torrid 2014, Mercedes made a genuine step forward with its rehomologated C-Coupe. It was still not the class of the field, but jumped BMW in baseline performance, fought for podium finishes in dry races, usually behind an Audi, and ultimately helped Wehrlein win the title.

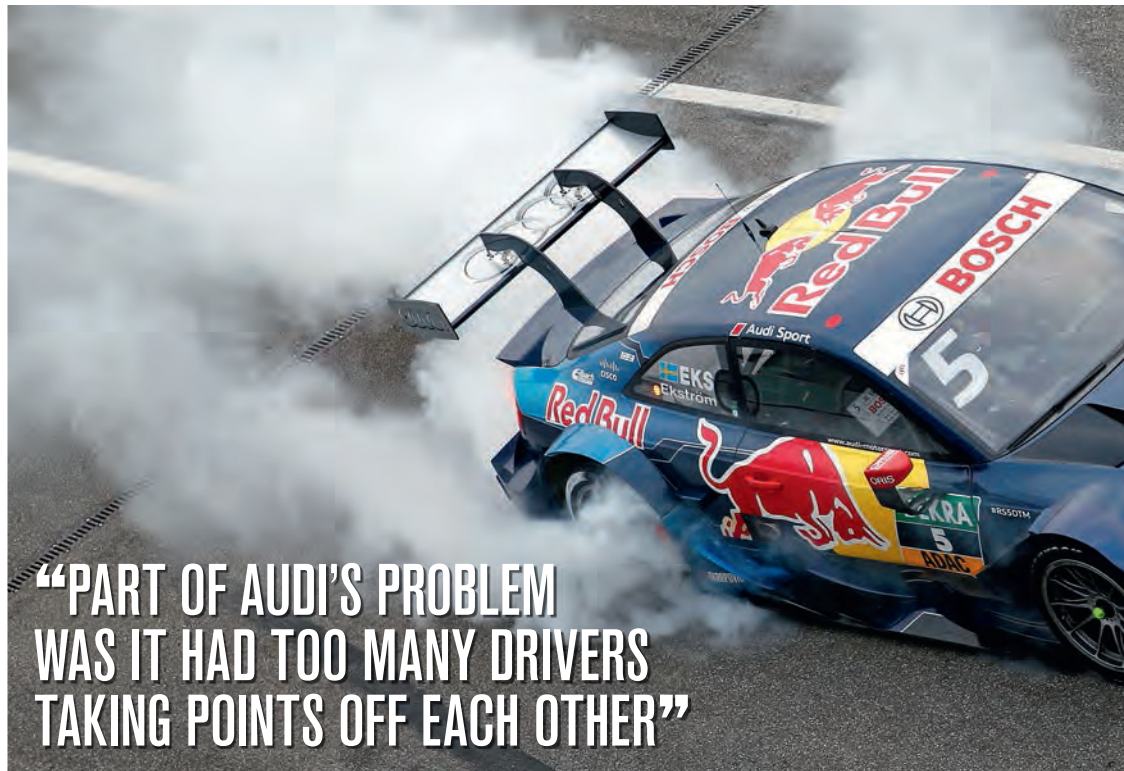
Part of Audi's problem on the latter front was a good one to have in many respects – that it had too many drivers taking points off each other. Six of the manufacturer's eight drivers won a race, compared to five for BMW and two for Mercedes.

Jamie Green was super-fast, especially at either end of the season, but nowhere in the middle, primarily through a combination of unreliability and first-corner incidents. Remarkably, he was only 19 points behind Wehrlein at the end, but he did not consider the year a missed opportunity.

"To be competitive is always tough, and this year I've been very competitive," he says. "You can only do your job as a driver. I'm not responsible for reliability and the things that broke on the car are not even Audi parts... But who knows? Next year might be an even better opportunity."

Ekstrom grabbed the 'lead Audi' mantle through the middle part of the season, swapping outright top spot with Wehrlein during several events, only to fall away shortly thereafter, while Edoardo Mortara was always there or thereabouts.

BMW was not a factor overall. Through a combination of off-season tweaks and the Hankook tyre saga, the M4 was hard work early in the year. That led to favourable performance weights at Zandvoort and ultimately Oschersleben. From four races at the two venues, it took a sweep of the top seven, one of the top five and two of the top four. In fact, 315 of its 602 manufacturers' points came from those two weekends, a major factor in winning that title,



"PART OF AUDI'S PROBLEM WAS IT HAD TOO MANY DRIVERS TAKING POINTS OFF EACH OTHER"

having been 217 behind Audi after the Lausitzring.

It's easy to look at isolated race wins for Timo Glock, Antonio Felix da Costa and Tom Blomqvist and class them as cashing in while running light. But they reinforced the competitiveness of the series, with even a fraction of one per cent out of the set-up window being costly.

Maxime Martin, who was one of BMW's more consistent drivers, was a prime example at the Nurburgring. After winning the Saturday race from second, he qualified 16th one day later.

That unpredictability and talk about the merit of the performance-weight system, along with the usual off-track controversies, defined the season.

Audi got the ball rolling after the Hockenheim opener with an engine change it said was due to damage, which would have avoided a penalty. BMW and Mercedes did not agree. Discrepancies among Hankook's control tyres then made headlines after the Lausitzring, and at the Norisring a cooling device inside Blomqvist's BMW was deemed performance-enhancing.

The one that topped them all, though, came on a rainy Sunday at the Red Bull Ring. Audi's Timo

Scheider was chasing Mercedes driver Robert Wickens in the last laps, and Wickens's defence enabled Wehrlein to close and pass both of them.

Moments later, Scheider punted Wickens into Wehrlein at Turn 3 on the final lap, after receiving the message "schieb ihn raus" ("push him out") from Audi motorsport boss Wolfgang Ullrich.

Wehrlein copped a lot of flak for his comments after the incident, including to AUTOSPORT that "if Audi has to win a championship like this, I would say they've started a big war today".

But, if anything, he actually came out of his shell afterwards, even when Mercedes was dragged into a team-order row for supporting him at the Nurburgring.

Wehrlein is being groomed for Formula 1 by Mercedes, and has been linked to a 2016 Manor seat. If that happens, his last weekend in the series at Hockenheim was where he looked the most relaxed, even before winning the title.

What followed was not his best weekend and, if he departs, his last act on track in a DTM season will be beaching his Mercedes on a kerb while celebrating. It was that kind of season. ❧



Rookie Blomqvist took his first win

DRIVERS' STANDINGS

POS	DRIVER	TEAM & CAR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1	Pascal Wehrlein (D)	HWA Mercedes C63 DTM	2nd	8th	5th	13th	1st	5th	10th	6th	2nd	21st	1st	10th	5th
2	Jamie Green (GB)	Team Rosberg Audi RS5 DTM	1st	13th	1st	1st	7th	18th	DNF	13th	DNF	17th	4th	5th	DNF
3	Mattias Ekstrom (S)	Abt Sportsline Audi RS5 DTM	12th	1st	3rd	2nd	17th	4th	13th	7th	5th	1st	DNF	3rd	14th
4	Edoardo Mortara (I)	Abt Sportsline Audi RS5 DTM	4th	2nd	2nd	5th	11th	15th	DNF	DNF	1st	3rd	6th	8th	19th
5	Bruno Spengler (CDN)	MTEK BMW M4 DTM	11th	9th	11th	19th	5th	3rd	5th	3rd	15th	15th	3rd	2nd	2nd
6	Marco Wittmann (D)	RMG BMW M4 DTM	9th	5th	13th	17th	9th	13th	1st	5th	9th	11th	2nd	7th	6th
7	Maxime Martin (B)	RMG BMW M4 DTM	7th	14th	7th	8th	DNF	10th	3rd	17th	14th	19th	18th	4th	11th
8	Paul di Resta (GB)	HWA Mercedes C63 DTM	3rd	22nd	14th	15th	DNF	6th	DNF	14th	3rd	9th	14th	15th	13th
9	Gary Paffett (GB)	ART Grand Prix Mercedes C63 DTM	DNF	3rd	23rd	DNF	3rd	7th	11th	10th	7th	2nd	7th	6th	DNF
10	Mike Rockenfeller (D)	Team Phoenix Audi RS5 DTM	5th	6th	9th	10th	14th	DNF	8th	11th	8th	4th	10th	1st	DNF
11	Antonio Felix da Costa (P)	Team Schnitzer BMW M4 DTM	13th	20th	19th	14th	12th	12th	2nd	1st	13th	10th	11th	22nd	3rd
12	Augusto Farfus (BR)	RBM BMW M4 DTM	10th	21st	DNF	DNF	8th	DNF	4th	2nd	6th	18th	15th	11th	4th
13	Robert Wickens (CDN)	HWA Mercedes C63 DTM	DNF	7th	6th	18th	2nd	1st	DNF	19th	DNF	20th	12th	23rd	DNF
14	Tom Blomqvist (GB)	RBM BMW M4 DTM	DNF	17th	22nd	DNF	DNF	EXC	7th	18th	17th	22nd	8th	12th	7th
15	Timo Glock (D)	MTEK BMW M4 DTM	8th	10th	18th	12th	13th	DNF	6th	4th	19th	14th	DNF	17th	1st
16	Christian Vietoris (D)	HWA Mercedes C63 DTM	14th	11th	17th	7th	4th	2nd	12th	8th	4th	8th	DNF	20th	18th
17	Miguel Molina (E)	Abt Sportsline Audi RS5 DTM	DNF	18th	4th	3rd	20th	17th	DNF	12th	18th	13th	DNF	14th	9th
18	Timo Scheider (D)	Team Phoenix Audi RS5 DTM	DNF	12th	8th	4th	16th	16th	14th	15th	16th	EXC	-	-	12th
19	Martin Tomczyk (D)	Team Schnitzer BMW M4 DTM	DNF	4th	12th	11th	6th	11th	DNF	DNF	DNF	12th	17th	DNF	8th
20	Daniel Juncadella (E)	Mucke Motorsport Mercedes C63 DTM	DNF	15th	10th	6th	10th	8th	16th	DNF	11th	23rd	5th	13th	10th



Ekstrom staged strong title bid



SUPERGRID

Based on average qualifying position, pre-grid penalties. Session in which drivers did not set a time disregarded. Does not include one-round starter Giovanazzi.

7.0	Green	7.8	Wehrlein
9.2	Molina	9.7	Martin
9.8	Farfus	9.9	Paffett
10.0	Mortara	10.2	Ekstrom
10.3	Spengler	10.4	Wittmann
11.1	Rockenfeller	11.2	di Resta
11.6	Blomqvist	13.1	da Costa
13.9	Wickens	14.1	Muller
14.5	Scheider	14.5	Juncadella
14.5	Glock	15.4	Vietoris
15.4	Tambay	16.6	Gotz
16.8	Auer	17.0	Tomczyk

RACE BY RACE



1 Hockenheim

RACE 1 Jamie Green
RACE 2 Mattias Ekstrom

Green converted race-one pole into his first Audi win ahead of resurgent Mercedes, with Wehrlein and di Resta rounding out the podium. Ekstrom mastered dry and wet conditions to win race two by seven seconds, despite Mortara getting ahead by pitting a lap earlier – which proved ideal – when rain arrived.



2 Lausitzring

RACE 1 Jamie Green
RACE 2 Jamie Green

Green claimed a double victory. In race one he passed Molina with eight minutes to go, despite having suffered a DRS failure, to head the first of the year's 'block results' as Audi swept the top four. Green slipped behind Ekstrom at the start of the second race, but passed him 10 minutes in.



3 Norisring

RACE 1 Pascal Wehrlein
RACE 2 Robert Wickens

Wehrlein led a Mercedes top-four sweep in the first race. Rain before the start made tyre choices tough, with Wehrlein's engineer gambling correctly on slicks so he took the lead when the wet starters pitted. Wickens led Vietoris home in race two, with the latter claiming BMW's first podium after a late pass on Ekstrom.



4 Zandvoort

RACE 1 Marco Wittmann
RACE 2 A Felix da Costa

BMW dominated the weekend, blocking out the top seven in race one and the top five in race two. Wittmann won race one after polesitter Farfus was shuffled down to fourth place at the start, while da Costa converted his maiden DTM pole into his first victory after holding off the Brazilian.



5 Red Bull Ring

RACE 1 Edoardo Mortara
RACE 2 Mattias Ekstrom

Mortara won race one after leader Green suffered an early gearbox failure. But race two is the one you'll remember for expanding your German vocabulary, with "schieb ihn raus". Scheider punted Mercedes pair Wickens and Wehrlein on the final lap, moments after the infamous radio message was broadcast.



6 Moscow Raceway

RACE 1 Pascal Wehrlein
RACE 2 Mike Rockenfeller

Wehrlein harassed and ultimately passed polesitter Wittmann at the final corner with four minutes remaining in race one. Ekstrom collided with Glock early on, helping Wehrlein reclaim the points lead. Rockenfeller won a quiet second race, ahead of Spengler and Ekstrom, the Swede retaking the points lead.



7 Oschersleben

RACE 1 Timo Glock
RACE 2 Tom Blomqvist

Glock turned his first DTM pole position into his second victory, leading an all-BMW top four. Wehrlein was the best of the rest, in fifth, despite losing power steering, and took the points lead. Rookie Blomqvist became the 10th winner of the season in race two, jumping Farfus at the start to win by eight seconds.



8 Nurburgring

RACE 1 Maxime Martin
RACE 2 Miguel Molina

Martin claimed BMW's third straight win in race one, despite a Turn 1 clash with Wehrlein, who would finish third. Mortara made a contentious pass on Spengler for second, ending the Canadian's race. On Sunday, Molina took his first DTM win in his sixth season from pole as Mercedes team orders infuriated Audi.



9 Hockenheim

RACE 1 Timo Scheider
RACE 2 Jamie Green

With Ekstrom, Mortara and Spengler all in the wars, eighth was enough for Wehrlein to seal the championship, despite dropping from 13th to 16th early. Scheider took his first win since 2010. In race two, Audi swept the top three, led by Green, who jumped Ekstrom and Mortara to seal the runner-up spot.



WINS

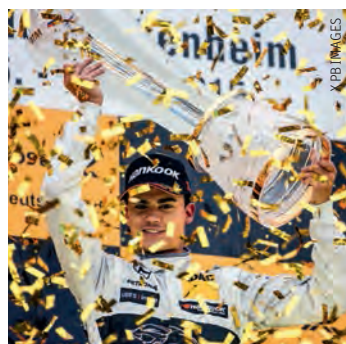
GREEN	4
EKSTROM	2
WEHRLEIN	2
WICKENS	1
WITTMANN	1
DA COSTA	1
MORTARA	1
ROCKENFELLER	1
GLOCK	1
BLOMQVIST	1
MARTIN (above)	1
MOLINA	1
SCHEIDER	1

POLES

GREEN	2
ROCKENFELLER	2
FARFUS	2
MOLINA	2
VIEORIS	1
SPENGLER (below)	1
DA COSTA	1
MORTARA	1
EKSTROM	1
WITTMANN	1
GLOCK	1
AUER	1
MARTIN	1
PAFFETT	1



	14	15	16	17	18	PTS
	5th	3rd	5th	8th	20th	169
	8th	DNF	17th	2nd	1st	150
	11th	10th	11th	9th	2nd	147
	DNF	2nd	DNF	DNF	3rd	143
	10th	19th	3rd	19th	8th	123
	3rd	7th	18th	6th	DNF	112
	9th	1st	13th	3rd	6th	94
	6th	12th	2nd	4th	4th	90
	13th	4th	DNF	DNF	9th	89
	19th	11th	7th	5th	15th	83
	4th	9th	15th	11th	7th	79
	2nd	18th	8th	DNF	14th	77
	16th	8th	DNF	DNF	18th	61
	1st	DNF	4th	7th	17th	59
	7th	13th	20th	18th	21st	56
	21st	15th	14th	12th	DNF	56
	DNF	DNF	1st	17th	11th	54
	12th	DNF	DNF	1st	5th	51
	20th	DNS	9th	15th	10th	27
	15th	17th	10th	13th	12th	26



21 Nico Muller (Team Rosberg Audi RS5 DTM), 26; 22 Maximilian Gotz (Mucke Motorsport Mercedes C63 DTM), 25; 23 Lucas Auer (ART Grand Prix Mercedes C63 DTM), 18; 24 Adrien Tambay (Abt Sportsline Audi RS5 DTM), 3; 25 Antonio Giovanazzi (Team Phoenix Audi RS5 DTM), 0. Constructors' championship 1 BMW, 602; 2 Audi, 595; 3 Mercedes, 534.

AUTOSPORT'S TOP 10 DRIVERS



60



1 PASCAL WEHRLEIN

It sounds boring, but consistency really was the key to winning the DTM title. And Wehrlein was Mr Consistent on his way to becoming the series' youngest-ever champion. He racked up 15 points finishes (would have been 16 but for "push him out") in the 18 races; the next best driver had 12. The Mercedes was rarely the fastest car, and Wehrlein's was often among the heaviest, but he kept on dragging results out of it. Oschersleben is where the title was won, finishing fifth each day behind the BMWs. That gave him 20 points, as Green, Ekstrom and Mortara scored zero.



2 JAMIE GREEN

Could Green have won the championship? Yes. Should he have won? Probably. After two winless seasons, he was 2015's fastest driver, summed up by a supreme Lausitzring pole lap – half a second clear, with the same margin then covering the rest of the field. Ultimately, a mid-year return of 32 points from 12 races, as Wehrlein scored 133 of his 169, proved costly. That included rotten luck such as a gearbox failure while leading in Austria and a handbrake problem when starting third at the Nurburgring. In terms of performance, Green loses marks for wet-weather form but not much else.

3 EDOARDO MORTARA

Mortara made it two strong seasons in a row, even though he was shuffled from second to fourth in the standings during Hockenheim's "disappointing" finale. His sole race win came as a result of Green's misfortune on the Saturday in Austria, but it was just one of six visits to the podium during the year, equal top with Ekstrom and Spengler. The Italian raced better than he qualified, and his average finishing position was pretty much on par with Wehrlein. But there were five DNFs due to collisions, including three first-lap melees after qualifying in the midfield.



4 MATTIAS EKSTROM

Two thirds of the way through the DTM season, after taking his second win of the campaign in Austria, Ekstrom led Wehrlein by 13 points at the top of the standings. From there, the smart money would have been on the Swede's third DTM title, but what followed was a very un-Ekstrom run. He came together with Timo Glock in Russia, when a Saturday podium was on the cards, then qualified 23rd, 18th, 17th and 17th at Oschersleben and the Nurburgring. In those four races he scored one point, while Wehrlein (also running heavy) collected 45. Quick and canny when it clicked and was masterful in the wet.

5 BRUNO SPENGLER

Despite being one of only three of BMW's eight drivers to not win a race this year, Spengler dragged himself into the title fight and stayed there. That he was still in contention (admittedly barely) going to the Hockenheim finale spoke volumes for the fact that he just kept on getting results. Case in point? A nine-race run mid-season, during which he claimed five podiums and two more top-fives. That stretch included third at the Norisring, earned through a fine late pass on Ekstrom. Despite BMW's overall step back in performance, it was a welcome return to form for the 2012 champion.



6 MAXIME MARTIN

Martin avoided 'second-year syndrome' with another strong campaign, matching the seventh of his rookie season, but flew under the radar – did you know he was the fourth-best qualifier of the year? He missed out on big hauls when the BMWs were running light – forced wide early in the Sunday Zandvoort race after qualifying third, for instance – but performed when conditions were not favourable. He started the year with points in three of the races at Hockenheim's opener and Lausitzring, then got a win at the Nurburgring on the run home.

7 GARY PAFFETT

After his toughest-ever season, a change of scenery and the improved C-Coupe worked a treat. Paffett helped DTM newcomer ART Grand Prix get up and running, but was hurt by some operational mishaps in the process. His experience showed in the races, generally in the points when he greeted the flag, and he was one of a few drivers able to turn a bad qualifying into a good result. Like Ekstrom, he was mega in the wet and his drive from the back of the grid (for an ART qualifying infringement) to third on the Sunday of Hockenheim's opener was a clinic.

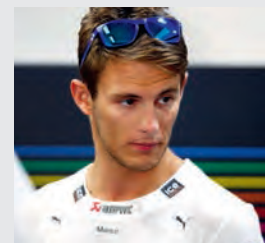


8 TOM BLOMQVIST

The Formula 3 graduate is the one interloper in this list, appearing well above his 14th place in the standings. Blomqvist was easily the best rookie of the season, maintaining BMW's rookie record following Farfus, Wittmann and Martin in 2012-14. He was quick from the start, qualifying eighth for his first race at Hockenheim. Meaty, touring car racecraft took a little longer to master, as did keeping a car moving over a race distance, both of which he admitted to, but also corrected. Including a dominant maiden victory, he scored points in five of the last eight races.

9 PAUL DI RESTA

After his 2014 return from F1 coincided with Mercedes' DTM nadir, di Resta enjoyed a much more fruitful year. On the good days he led the line with Wehrlein, and his three podium finishes were all pure results, in dry races. Like Martin, di Resta's tally was not boosted by a big haul when his manufacturer dominated – at the Norisring – but he accumulated the points well, and spoke about getting "back into the groove" in the second half of the season. But that was tempered by missing out in qualifying and starting down the order too often, such as his Saturday morning crash at the Nurburgring.



10 MARCO WITTMANN

Last year Wittmann was BMW's undisputed top dog. He finished a 10-race season as champion, the equivalent of four wins clear of its next-best driver. So this ranking is more a reflection on the fact that he was hauled in by his stablemates, rather than as a result of any particular shortcomings. In fact, BMW's off-season focus was on getting a more even spread of results across its drivers... Munich's early-season struggles meant his title bid never got going, but he did record BMW's first victory and grabbed a couple of podiums in another consistent season.



HARTLEY



MAUGER/LAT



EBREY



EBREY



HARTLEY

BEST SUPPORTING ACTS

We run the rule over the stars of the BTCC's dramatic support bill. By **STEPHEN LICKORISH**

MSA FORMULA



Norris (#31) often led from the front

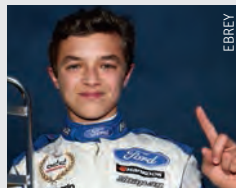
EBREY

The tone for the inaugural MSA Formula Championship was set right from the start, with victories shared between Ginetta Junior graduate Lando Norris and ex-Formula Ford racer Ricky Collard at the Brands Hatch opener. This duo would become title rivals, with Norris eventually prevailing back in Kent for the finale.

Their battle was intriguing as Norris maximised his strong qualifying record in races one and three of each weekend, while using older tyres for the reversed-grid middle race.

"I never qualified outside of the top two, which was a great achievement, and that meant I took a good number of race-one wins," says the Carlin-run champion. "Race two was always hard, but we

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Lando Norris	413
2	Ricky Collard	371
3	Colton Herta	355
4	Sennan Fielding	300
5	Matheus Leist	273
6	Daniel Ticktum	242



EBREY

tried to maximise races one and three as they were our biggest opportunities."

The majority of Collard's wins came in race two, as a mixture of bad luck and a lack of single-lap pace meant the Arden driver failed to take a time-based pole all year. He therefore had to fight his way through to podiums,

which was interesting to watch, while Norris generally made fewer mistakes and regularly led from the front.

Often the racing was relatively dull – with some notable exceptions, such as a chaotic and ridiculous race three at Silverstone. Unfortunately, that's probably what the inaugural season of MSA Formula will be remembered for: a moment of madness from Dan Ticktum ended with a 30-day racing ban as he passed a line of cars under the safety car to nerf Collard off. He had been excluded from the Croft meeting too after punting out Norris.

That wrecked Ticktum's title challenge. His misdemeanours also meant he missed out on the rookie title, which instead went to Enaam Ahmed.

RENAULT UK CLIO CUP

To win a championship as competitive as the Clio Cup in your rookie year is an impressive achievement – the last time anyone matched Ashley Sutton's feat was 2003.

The ex-Formula Ford racer's path to the title was far from straightforward, as he had a fascinating fight with Pyro team-mate Ash Hand and Ant Whorton-Eales, with Sutton emerging at the top of the points only at the Brands Hatch finale.

The second round at Donington Park was the season in a nutshell, with some of the best Clio racing for years on show as all three races featured frenetic fighting between a lengthy lead train. That Sutton, Whorton-Eales and Hand took a win apiece was fitting.

Hand then stamped his authority on the championship with a run of six wins in eight races that resulted in him taking the points lead from Whorton-Eales, who endured the turmoil of switching from SV Racing to new squad Maximum Motorsport mid-season. But then a track-limits penalty in the



Sutton triumphed in his rookie season



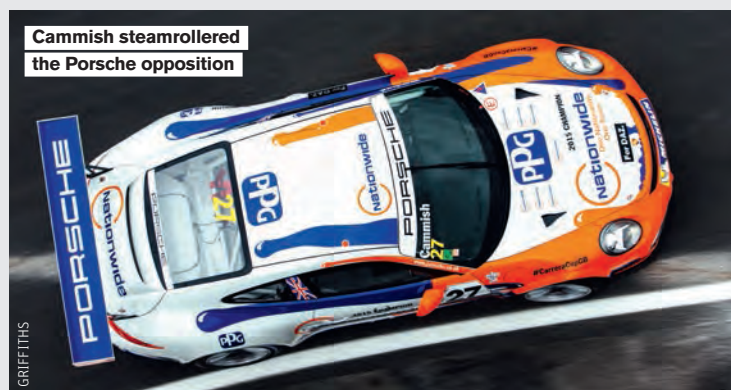
POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Ashley Sutton	459
2	Ash Hand	454
3	Ant Whorton-Eales	426
4	Paul Rivett	355
5	Charles Ladell	236
6	Roy Collingbourne	210

penultimate round at Silverstone dropped Hand from third to sixth (arguably costing him the title), and then came controversy at the Brands finale: Hand claimed Pyro sabotaged his car for the final race, something the team and Sutton deny. "We both made a set-up change for the

last race that wasn't quite right, but I dealt with the situation better than he did," says Sutton.

It was a disastrous weekend for Whorton-Eales and Paul Rivett – still in mathematical contention after another strong season – as both endured a double retirement.

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB



Cammish steamrollered the Porsche opposition



POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Dan Cammish	324
2	Michael Meadows	226
3	Josh Webster	203
4	Tom Sharp	192
5	Stephen Jelley	191
6	Dino Zamparelli	180

The field was thought to be too strong for any driver to dominate, but Dan Cammish proved utterly unstoppable – the Redline Racing driver won 11 times and never finished lower than second.

Ex-champions Josh Webster and Michael Meadows had to be content with a battle for second in the points and only took a win apiece. A crash for Webster in race one at the Brands finale after a tyre blowout and a scruffy second race meant Meadows finished runner-up.

Ginetta GT4 graduate Tom Sharp scooped the rookie prize and £50,000 cheque with his maiden win in the season finale, while GP3 convert Dino Zamparelli was rookie runner-up after a strong end to the year.

Ignas Gelzinis won the Pro-Am 1 title, with Redline's John McCullagh taking Pro-Am 2 honours.

GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

Momentum is a major factor in title battles, and once it had swung in Tom Oliphant's favour there was no stopping him.

HHC Motorsport team-mates Carl Breeze and Jamie Orton led the way to begin with, winning eight of the first 11 races. But then Century Motorsport driver Oliphant went on a winning streak and seized control.

While Oliphant improved, Breeze had a nightmare. Two driveshaft failures at Croft, an unfortunate collision with team-mate Will Burns at Snetterton and a tangle with Tom Wrigley at Knockhill left him on the back foot. A late upsurge in form wasn't enough for the 2012 champion to gain another crown.

Orton also struggled and fell out of contention after missing Rockingham. With a small grid, there were few others to take the fight to Oliphant, although Wrigley picked up two wins mid-season, the first coming just days after his regular car was destroyed in a fire.



POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Tom Oliphant	740
2	Carl Breeze	705
3	Jamie Orton	603
4	Michael Caine	484
5	Will Burns	476
6	Tom Wrigley	429



Title fight swung in Oliphant's favour

GINETTA JUNIORS



Caroline took impressive 10 wins

Ginetta Junior racing is inherently unpredictable. But no one could have expected the kind of drama at the Brands Hatch finale that resulted in the champion finally being confirmed almost three weeks later.

Jamie Caroline could have been crowned champion much earlier. He was the class of the field, securing 10 wins – more than double the next best – but endured a tough start to the season with suspected exhaust

trouble on his Pirtek-backed HHC Motorsport car. It was on his seventh attempt that Caroline first took a win.

Then a few mistakes, such as a poor start in race two at Knockhill that resulted in contact, and a messy race two at Silverstone, meant the title went down to the wire. The dramas over jumped starts in the final race are well documented now, culminating in JHR Developments ace Senna Proctor thinking he was champion until an appeal had been heard.

Lewis Brown was third in the points from Dan Zelos, while other race winners were Billy Monger, Jonathan Hadfield, Dane Patrik Matthiesen and 14-year-old German Sophia Floersch, who later quit to focus on a switch to Formula 4 for 2016.

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Jamie Caroline	473
2	Senna Proctor	473
3	Lewis Brown	387
4	Dan Zelos	365
5	Billy Monger	325
6	Patrick Matthiesen	309

AUTOSPORT'S TOP 10 DRIVERS

BASED ON ALL TOCA SUPPORT CHAMPIONSHIPS



GRIFFITHS

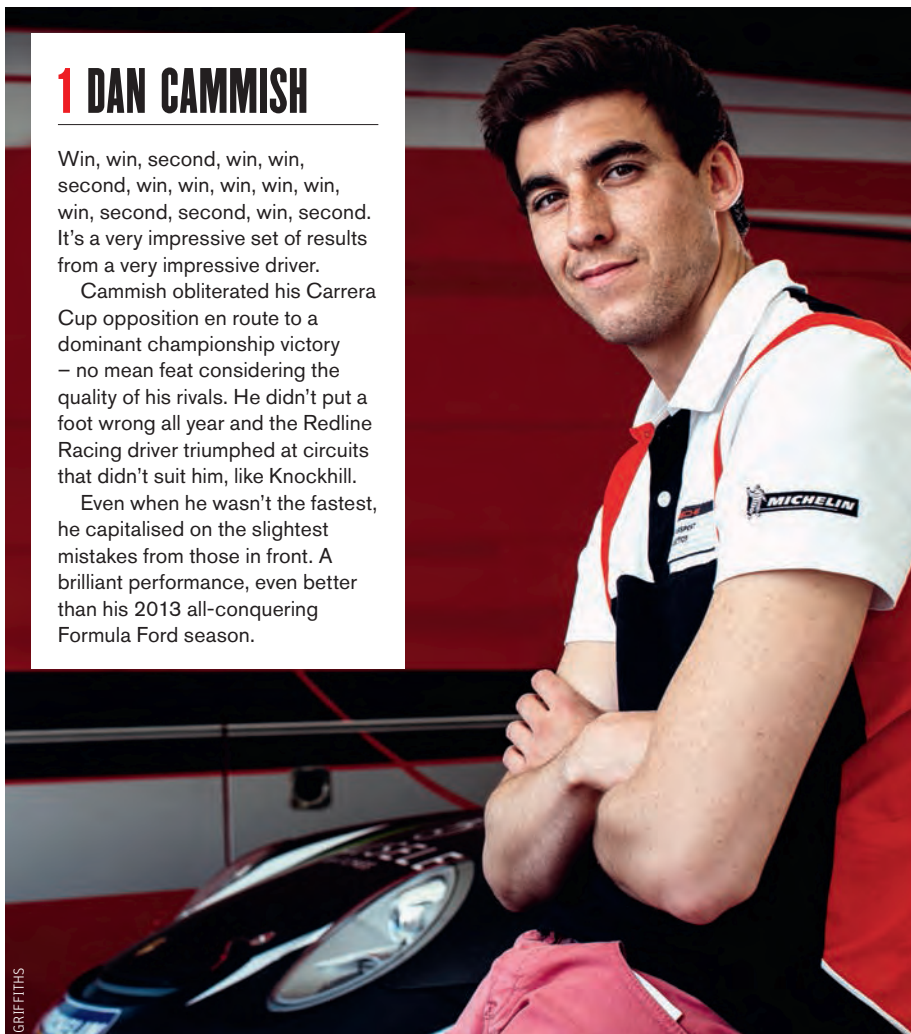
64

1 DAN CAMMISH

Win, win, second, win, win, second, win, win, win, win, win, win, second, second, win, second. It's a very impressive set of results from a very impressive driver.

Cammish obliterated his Carrera Cup opposition en route to a dominant championship victory – no mean feat considering the quality of his rivals. He didn't put a foot wrong all year and the Redline Racing driver triumphed at circuits that didn't suit him, like Knockhill.

Even when he wasn't the fastest, he capitalised on the slightest mistakes from those in front. A brilliant performance, even better than his 2013 all-conquering Formula Ford season.



GRIFFITHS



EBREY

2 ASHLEY SUTTON

Sutton's year got off to a very good start when he almost won his first tin-top race, losing out to a forceful Ant Whorton-Eales late on. That was a good introduction to the closely fought world of Clio racing, as Sutton improved throughout the year and showed better racecraft than his more experienced rivals. There were some disappointing results along the way – striking a dislodged tyre stack at Oulton Park was a low point – but by the end he had found the sweet spot. The Pyro driver defended excellently from Paul Streather to win the season finale and clinch the title.



3 LANDO NORRIS

The Carlin driver was not only the fastest, but also the most consistent of all the MSA Formula racers. His outstanding qualifying record is evidence of that.

He didn't get involved in as many crashes or suffer as many car troubles as his rivals and was a convincing champion. Norris had a clear strategy to prioritise races one and three, which worked very well. His fight through the field to win race one at Knockhill after an early spin was a particular highlight.

Yes, he benefitted from racing an F4 car most weekends, but Norris still delivered when it mattered.



4 ASH HAND

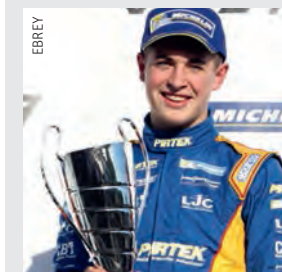
The statistics suggest Hand was the fastest of the evenly matched trio of Clio title rivals. He took an unmatched eight poles, six fastest laps and seven wins, and had an impressive mid-season winning streak. This meant the Pyro driver looked relatively comfortable going into the final rounds at Silverstone and Brands Hatch.

However, he didn't seem capable of handling the pressure, receiving a crucial track-limits penalty in Northamptonshire and then struggling in Kent. Accusing his team of sabotage so publicly after the final race was perhaps not the smartest move either.

5 RICKY COLLARD

Collard refused to give up until the very end despite the single-lap pace advantage the Lando Norris/Carlin combination had over his Arden. While Norris targeted qualifying, Collard struggled and instead relied on his impressive overtaking skills – his move on Sennan Fielding for the Silverstone race-two win was a stand-out.

The reversed-grid second races proved his best victory opportunities. There were also a number of 'Collard specials' off the line, as he emulated his fast-starting touring car father Rob. Ultimately it wasn't enough, as mistakes and car troubles enabled Norris to prevail.



6 JAMIE CAROLINE

The HHC Motorsport driver was just 1.1 seconds away from missing out on the Ginetta Junior championship by a single point.

Caroline's jump-start dropped him down the order in the season finale and brought him perilously close to losing a title that had seemed impossible to lose.

Starts proved to be one of his few weak points, as another blunder at Knockhill, when he failed to see the lights change, almost cost him dear. He had the pace and skill to be a far more comfortable champion, with 10 wins in the last 14 races showing his advantage.

7 TOM OLIPHANT

The Ginetta GT4 Supercup champion is the lowest ranked title-winner purely because he had less opposition than those in the other categories.

While Carl Breeze and Jamie Orton were initially ahead, their difficult mid-seasons left Century Motorsport racer Oliphant free to take control of the championship race. Yes, he still had to deliver the wins, but a small grid meant this wasn't always especially hard.

This takes nothing away from Oliphant, who was a very worthy champion and delivered some strong performances. His fightback in race three at Croft was particularly impressive.



8 ANT WHORTON-EALES

Started the Clio season very strongly, and a consistent run of podiums gave him the early initiative. A qualifying shunt at Croft put him on the back foot for the rest of the weekend, and the withdrawal of his SV Racing team, meant for a turbulent and disrupted mid-year.

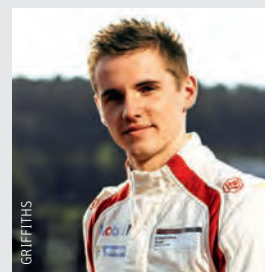
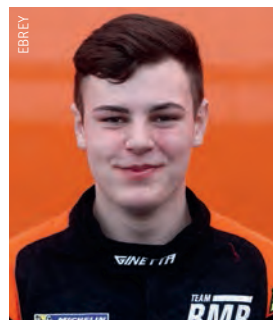
Whorton-Eales bounced back strongly with new outfit Maximum Motorsport, but by the time he ended his nine-race winless streak there was too much to do to reclaim the points lead. Nonetheless, it was still a strong and character-building season and he could finally triumph next year.

9 SENNA PROCTOR

Considering that Jamie Caroline won half of the Ginetta Junior races, Proctor delivered a remarkable performance to only lose out in the title fight on a controversial countback.

The post-race penalty for Stuart Middleton in the final encounter provided a heartbreaking end to 2015 for the JHR Developments driver when it looked like his consistency had landed him the title.

It was still a good year for Proctor, with his four wins the next best behind Caroline. Given his considerable height, the extra weight this adds to the G40 makes his performances even more impressive.



10 JOSH WEBSTER

Webster finished behind his 2014 rival Michael Meadows in the points, but the Team Parker Racing driver gets the last spot as he was the only Porsche man to challenge Cammish's supremacy on a regular basis. He managed to beat Cammish to pole on three occasions and secured his sole victory at the notoriously tough Spa-Francorchamps track.

However, errors crept into the reigning champion's driving and he threw away a win at Knockhill when he spun off. A messy final weekend at Brands Hatch meant he had to settle for third in the standings.



THEY ARE THE CHAMPIONS...

The Race Of Champions is in London for the first time since 2008. **DAN PADDOCK** looks ahead

Twenty drivers, all racing in identical cars, in a head-to-head knockout competition staged in London's Olympic Stadium on Friday and Saturday (November 20-21). No under-powered engines to fret about. No grid penalties to speak of. Just each racer, even machinery a twisty challenging track and a packed crowd of fans to cheer them on to victory.

That must sound right up Daniel Ricciardo's street, especially given that he's spent his 2015 season fighting for results in a car unable to match Formula 1's dominant force – Mercedes. The Australian, a first-timer at this weekend's Race Of Champions, joins 19 other stars from the world of motorsport to battle for outright glory, as well as a team win in the Nations Cup.

"It's really exciting for my first time to come here. I've watched it for years, especially as a kid, so it's nice to be part of it," says Ricciardo, who will have to pass through a series of groups and



heats if he is to take top honours on his first try.

"You come here with the whole intention of having a good time, which I'm sure we all will, but there's always that bit of competition that runs through you. Sure, if I don't win I'm gonna punch someone in the face. That's how it is going to go..."

He's joking – we think.

THE DRIVERS

The Race Of Champions is an event unlike any other in the motorsport world. Where else can

you see stars of F1 measure up against the best of MotoGP, rallycross and IndyCar all in a huge variety of unfamiliar machinery?

David Coulthard, last year's overall winner in Barbados, and back for his ninth Race Of Champions, says it straight when he explains the principal draw of the event.

"We don't need to put any sugar-coating on why we are here, we are here for the camaraderie and the competition, and the charitable element as well which is important to all of us," explains the 13-time grand prix winner.

"We share the dressing room together, we hang out at the hotel together, we get to share competition in a way you can't do in your professional sport, which is really special. You high-five the guy before going out to compete, then win or lose you give them a high-five when you come back. That's the very nature of this."

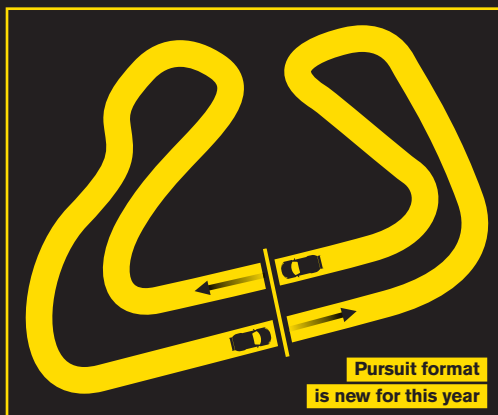
Ricciardo will face off against four-time F1 champion Sebastian Vettel in the Nations Cup on Friday, as Team Australia takes on Germany, and while he is looking forward to the low-pressure atmosphere, he is relishing the prospect of beating his former team-mate.

"When we race in F1 it's pretty intense. We



“IF I DON’T WIN I’M GONNA PUNCH SOMEONE IN THE FACE. THAT’S HOW IT IS GOING TO GO”

DANIEL RICCIARDO



mingle a little bit but not that much, so it’s great to just be able to mingle and share something with everyone in a low-pressure environment,” says the Australian. “But to see Seb jump ship [from Red Bull] this year and win races, I’ve got to get some sort of redemption in 2015. Here will be the best place for it.”

THE CARS

This year drivers will get a run of eight different cars, ranging from the stylish Mercedes-AMG GT S to the tricky Ariel Atom.

For Coulthard, the difference in the cars, and the challenge that each presents, is one of the major elements that keep pulling him back to the annual competition.

“That’s part of the appeal and the challenge, jumping into different cars,” he says. “I’ve always enjoyed the chance to jump into the rally-type cars because they are so different, and the four-wheel drive makes you feel talented.

“I personally enjoy getting the chance to drive cars I usually wouldn’t get to do. Racing in Formula 1 was fantastic, of course, but to jump in a rally car, or a GT car, and be able to race it at speed makes it a really challenging and fun event.”

That’s the key word here; fun. While the competition aims to crown a champion, the event

is marked more by its fun, competitive nature.

Susie Wolff will pair with Coulthard as half of Team Scotland, and says she is simply looking forward to throwing a car about on her last competitive appearance before retiring at the end of the year.

“It is a huge challenge but it’s also great fun,” she jokes. “I don’t get to go sideways that much any more in the racing I do, so to go out in the Ariel Atom and spend half the lap practically sideways is really good fun.”

THE VENUE

The Race Of Champions is back in Europe, returning to London for the first time in seven years. Stratford’s former Olympic Stadium, the heart of the 2012 Summer Games, will play host to the Nations Cup on Friday night before the main event on Saturday as the competitors go for all-out individual glory.

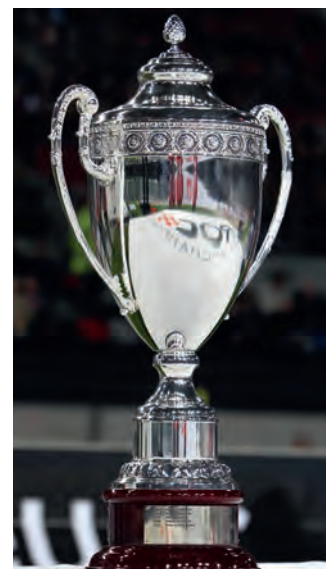
The stadium itself will be turned into a tricky mini-circuit, lined with barriers and, most importantly, packed with cheering fans. New for this year is that rather than a two-lane format, it has switched to a pursuit-style format. There is one lane, with the cars starting side by side but facing in opposite directions.

The chance to take in the crowd is key to the experience, says Coulthard: “Although I was aware of the crowd when racing [in F1] it wasn’t really in the heat of the moment.

“Whereas with the Race Of Champions you’re constantly aware of the crowd because you can hear them above the noise of the cars, and you can see them as well, which is really something quite special.”

It will be Ricciardo’s first time racing inside a stadium setting, an experience the F1 star is keen to immerse himself in.

“For me one of the best parts of a race weekend is the driver parade because you can soak up the crowd,” he says. “Otherwise, you know there are lots of people around the track, but you’re focused on what’s going on in the car so you don’t really pay too much attention. It’ll be cool to absorb some of that in London.”



PREVIOUS WINNERS

YEAR	WINNER
2014	David Coulthard
2013	Cancelled
2012	Romain Grosjean
2011	Sebastien Ogier
2010	Filipe Albuquerque
2009	Mattias Ekstrom
2008	Sebastien Loeb
2007	Mattias Ekstrom
2006	Mattias Ekstrom
2005	Sebastien Loeb
2004	Heikki Kovalainen
2003	Sebastien Loeb
2002	Marcus Gronholm
2001	Harri Rovanpera
2000	Tommi Makinen
1999	Didier Auriol
1998	Colin McRae
1997	Carlos Sainz
1996	Didier Auriol
1995	Francois Delecour
1994	Didier Auriol
1993	Didier Auriol
1992	Andrea Aghini
1991	Juha Kankkunen

EVENT INFORMATION

The Race Of Champions takes place at London’s Olympic Stadium on Friday and Saturday November 20-21. The team-based Nations Cup starts proceedings on Friday, with doors opening at 1700 and the show starting at 1830. Saturday is all about the Race Of Champions itself, with doors open at 1230 and the show starting at 1400. Some tickets are still available from £21 via www.raceofchampions.com.



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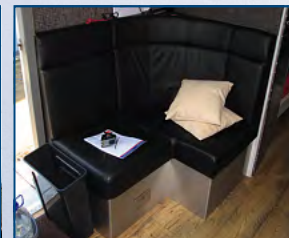
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Century GT4 will be run by students

Students to run British GT team

Nathan Freke in GT4 title assault as Century launches university tie-up

FORMER BRITISH GT4 champion Century Motorsport will enlist the help of engineering students from the University of Bolton as it attempts to win back its crown next season.

The Warwickshire-based team will return to British GT running a two-car entry in the GT4 division and confirmed its first driver line-up last week. Team boss and former British Formula Ford and Ginetta G50 Cup champion Nathan Freke will share the first Ginetta G55 GT4 with Anna Walewska.

The car will be run by 2014 British GT4 Teams' champion Century, but will also be used as a learning tool for students studying Motorsport Technology or Automotive Performance Engineering at the University of Bolton. As part of the deal, Century will create a satellite facility within the university's campus, and will

also bring students to work on the cars at its Fenny Compton base. Students will work on race preparation as well as gain experience of running a GT4 car during live race weekends.

Century co-founder Clive Freke said: "The collaboration with the University of Bolton is going to be an exciting new chapter for Century Motorsport. I'm confident we can bring a lot of value to the university's education programme. Anna showed great promise in races this year and, together with Nathan, I am confident we'll be challenging for the GT4 title."

Nathan Freke said: "It's been a long time since I did a full championship [the 2009 Ginetta G50 Cup] and I'm looking forward to teaming up with Anna. We tested together recently and got along very well, so I know we'll be a strong driver pairing."

"As a team, we will be working with the students away from the track as well as at British GT events, and we'll have experienced staff on-hand to help to prepare them for the challenges of a race weekend. It's great to be able to work with such enthusiastic people and help them carve a future in the sport."

The University of Bolton will also continue its association with RLR Motorsport, which gives the students access to an LMP3 chassis.

Rory Perrett, director of the Centre for Advanced Performance Engineering at the University of Bolton, added: "We are delighted to welcome Century Motorsport. They will bring additional expertise, experience and opportunities for the students studying at the Centre for Advanced Performance Engineering. We are proud to offer an unrivalled experience for anyone wanting to pursue a career in motorsport."

Aston Martin hands young Brits WEC test

Aston Martin will give six British drivers the chance to sample its Vantage GTE later this month as it looks to award a factory contract.

British GT4 champions Ross Gunn and Jamie Chadwick and race winners Matt Bell and Jody Fannin were all selected to take part in the World Endurance Championship rookie test on

November 22, as were Daniel Lloyd and Devon Modell.

The six were chosen from the marque's Evolution Academy young driver scheme, with the marque set to hand a drive to the most impressive driver over the course of the year and the test.

"These are the ones who have impressed us this year, and it

has not just been about what they have done on the track," AMR team principal John Gaw told Autosport.

"We won't be putting them straight into the WEC, but they will be placed with one of our customer teams with a view to moving up to our GTE Pro line-up in the future."

ROB LADBROOK
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EDITOR

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A famous TV football pundit

once said that you can never win anything with kids.

That was quite a few years ago, back when perhaps the junior slopes for that particular sport weren't as well nurtured or catered for. But times have changed.

I've always been interested in engineering, and considered a university degree to pursue that interest but, at the time, I struggled to find something that truly enticed and excited me.

Century Motorsport's new tie-up with the University of Bolton is a game-changer. Students working on race cars is nothing new – establishments like Myerscough and Wiltshire colleges run Formula Ford and rally cars regularly – but this represents a superb chance for students to get involved with a leading team and actively fight for a prestigious British championship. Something like that doesn't come along every day.

Century will mix those involved in Bolton's engineering courses with its own experienced staff both at the university and at the race tracks. That arrangement will benefit everybody, as students get to learn from top class engineers, and Century gets a wave of fresh thinking and enthusiastic new recruits.

With the reliable Ginetta G55 at hand, and Nathan Freke behind the wheel, Century is more than capable of winning big next year.

What an opportunity that is for students to further their education on real, highly competitive – and not to mention sexy – racing cars. It is also British GT's chance to play a key role in helping to mould the next generation of engineers.



Freke: putting faith in youth



The Compact Cup will switch clubs

Compact Cup

BRSCC switch for Compact Cup in 2016

THE POPULAR BMW COMPACT Cup will run with the British Racing and Sports Car Club from next year.

Series organiser, BMW Race Days, last week confirmed a deal to move its growing portfolio of championships across to the BRSCC, having spent four years with the 750 Motor Club.

The Compact Cup was founded for 2011 to cater for the 1.9litre 155bhp E36 Compact. This year it featured

over 80 registered drivers and an average grid of 40 cars per round.

The compact Cup did run a sample event with the BRSCC when it joined a meeting at Oulton Park back in July and attracted a capacity grid and reserves.

"It was a tough decision to leave the 750MC as they've been instrumental to the championship's development in the early seasons, but in truth, we felt we needed a change," said BMW Race

Days head Paul McElean. "We've been in the same paddock with the same content for four years. Joining the BRSCC gives us access to a wider variety of circuits and also lets us race alongside different content throughout the year.

"The drivers loved the round we did at Oulton Park – it was a new and exciting challenge for them. This deal gives us a very attractive platform that

the drivers are very in favour of."

The BRSCC will also nurture the new 330 Challenge for the three-litre 250bhp E46 330ci model. An initial five-round calendar is planned to start next June, running mostly on the Saturdays of Compact Cup weekends allowing teams to do both classes.

The 750MC will continue to run a form of BMW racing as it is launching its own M3 Cup contest for 2016.

Britcar

Britcar considers Spa visit as non-championship race

THE ORGANISERS OF THE Dunlop Endurance Championship are working to introduce a four-hour race at Spa-Francorchamps next season.

The event will be offered in addition to next year's championship calendar, and will not count for championship points. The organising Britcar Endurance company has been offered the weekend of October 8/9 to stage the race and is already in talks with the Dutch Supercar Challenge, which will hold a championship round that weekend.

"We're looking at different ways of growing the championship for next year and having a race at Spa was something that got a lot of interest when we suggested the idea to teams," said new Britcar boss Claire Hedley.

"Racing at Spa is more expensive than running in the UK, but by having it as a non-championship event means it isn't compulsory and won't affect the budgets. With the Dutch Supercars going also, we can easily run a combined grid to limit entry costs."



BRDC F4

Snetterton hit forces Fielding out of Brands Trophy races

SENNAN FIELDING WAS forced to sit out the second BRDC F4 Autumn Trophy meeting at Brands Hatch after a crash at Snetterton.

Fielding went off while testing on the Thursday prior to last weekend's first Trophy weekend, damaging his Tatuus-Cosworth F4-016.

The 20-year-old did compete in the meeting, however, and finished that weekend second to Harrison Scott in the points standings, ahead of eventual Trophy winner Ben Barnicoat.



But with budget issues following the impact, both Fielding and his HHC Motorsport team decided it was in their best interests to withdraw his entry from the Brands weekend.

"In testing we were very quick in the tricky conditions but unfortunately I went that step too far finding the grip," said Fielding of his Snetterton off.

"I think everyone knows that we are racing on a limited budget and something very small can have a huge effect on me, unfortunately."

In brief

Caudle's bid for history

Double Mini Challenge champion Luke Caudle will return to the class next season in search of a historic third crown. Caudle, who has won three races as a guest driver this year, has confirmed a two-year deal.

Young finalists revealed

The three finalists for this year's Dunlop Motorsport Ireland Young Racing Driver of the Year Award have been named. Jordan Dempsey, James Roe and Jake Byrne will go head-to-head for the prestigious Sexton Trophy and a fully funded season in both Ireland and the UK in FF1600 worth over £35,000.

No Hillspeed at Brands

Hillspeed Racing did not compete in the second BRDC F4 round at Brands Hatch last weekend after Struan Moore crashed during the first meeting at Snetterton. The team ran Moore and Ameya Vaidyanathan – who was contracted for one round – at the Norfolk circuit, but decided not to race at Brands as a result of Moore's incident.

Proctor has Clio test

Ginetta Junior runner-up Senna Proctor is set to step up to the Renault UK Clio Cup next season after a successful recent test.

Proctor, 17, drove a Clio for the first time at Snetterton with WDE Motorsport and is now considering which team to join in 2016.

Historics

Audi R8 tops Daytona again after 190-car Classic entry

AMERICAN DOUG SMITH, SHARING his Champion Audi R8 LMS this year with Butch Leitzinger, repeated 2014's HSR Classic 24 Hours at Daytona Group E victory last weekend.

Following a fine tussle with Smith, David Porter (Pescarolo-Judd) triumphed in the opening leg, but finished a close second over the four races.

Dean Baker (Riley-Judd MkIII) claimed

Group D honours, but water pump problems in round three saw Britons Tommy Dreelan/Aaron Scott, last year's Group C winners, cede victory to fellow Porsche 962 pair Christian Zugel/Mark Patterson. Mechanical problems precluded triple Daytona 24 winner Derek Bell from racing a Löwenbrau 962.

Bobby Rahal and Jim Farley (Porsche 911 RSR) scored a superb class win within Group B, won outright by American Robert Blain and Briton Ron Maydon (March 75S). Gray Gregory/Randy Buck (Chevron B16) and Robert Spence/Scott Jachthuber/Cody Ellsworth (Porsche 911 S/T) took Groups A and F respectively.

Competitors from 15 nations were among 190 entries, up from 128 in 2014. The retrospective is set to continue in alternate years.



Smith took top honours

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The voice of club racing



R4D won at the 2011 Revival

BLOXHAM/PA

“ERA CUSTODIANS PASS THE TORCH AS R4D MOVES HOME”

English Racing Automobiles' history is well documented, thanks to the ERA Club, for which Adam Ferrington continues his predecessors' documentary work with fanatical detail. My love of Raymond Mays and Peter Berthons' gallant cars is profound, thus it was my pleasure to address club members at their annual dinner at Chateau Impney on Saturday.

The Spollon family – which owns the Droitwich venue and re-introduced speed hillclimbing to it this July after a 48-year break – is steeped in ERA history. The late Bruce Spollon acquired R8C, raced by Earl Howe from 1938, in '77. On Bruce's passing in 2013, son Guy became its ninth owner. Seventh in the 1950 British GP with Cuth Harrison up, R8C sat in the chateau's foyer as the function's 'gate guardian'.

The evening's big news was that after 15 years – the longest custodianship on its log – 'Mac' Hulbert has parted with his beloved works development ERA, R4D. "A sad day for me but a happy one for somebody else in this room," said Mac, introducing VSCC stalwart Brian Fidler to whom he has passed the torch.

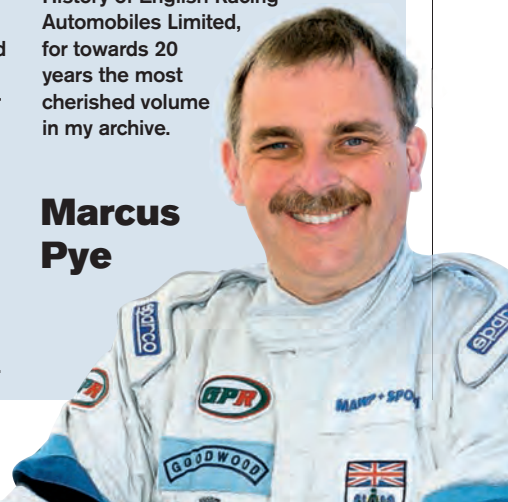
Fidler and son Ben, who has raced AJM 1 (built by Tony Merrick, largely from original ERA parts, in the '80s) since 2008, are popular in marque circles and will keep the legendary machine in Great Britain.

Owned post-works by Mays, Ron Flockhart, Ken Wharton, Tom Norton, Jim Berry, Peter Brewer, Neil Corner, Nigel Moores, [Sir] Anthony Bamford, Anthony Mayman, [Force India F1 team owner] Vijay Mallya and Michael Steele, the warhorse has a phenomenal competition record in races, hillclimbs and sprints.

Since 2000, Hulbert has added to this history proudly, his phenomenal 2011 Goodwood Revival Meeting victory, in tricky conditions – among the greatest drives of the circuit's new era – mirroring Flockhart's win there on April 6, 1953.

Fabled academic Hulbert is now putting the finishing touches to his book about R4D. To be published by Porter Press next summer, it is eagerly awaited by the ERA fraternity. It will certainly partner David Weguelin's magnificent History of English Racing Automobiles Limited, for towards 20 years the most cherished volume in my archive.

Marcus Pye



Ginetta Junior

Middleton eyes main title

STUART MIDDLETON HAS SET his sights on winning the Ginetta Junior title next season after extending his stay in the series.

Middleton, who raced in 2015 after winning the series' scholarship fund, will continue with Douglas Motorsport after a successful first campaign.

The 16-year-old also won the Winter Series at Snetterton earlier this month in commanding fashion, taking three wins from four races.

"I'm happy to have my plans in place so early," said Middleton. "I learnt a lot in my first season last year and I think last weekend showed that both Douglas Motorsport and I will be a force to be reckoned with in 2016."

"A few teams were trying to pinch him," team principal Wayne Douglas told Autosport. "I'm really pleased that he is staying with us... If he went and had done it with another team we'd have probably had egg on our faces."



Middleton will remain with Douglas

EBREY

TIM GIBSON: 1985-2015

DUNLOP TRACK ENGINEER AND club racer Tim Gibson has died suddenly at the age of 30.

Gibson raced for fun in karts and a variety of categories, but he made his mark in motorsport as an engineer with Dunlop in sportscar racing.

He played a key role in Jota Sport LMP2 squad's comeback victory at the 2014 Le Mans 24 Hours with the Harry Tincknell, Oliver Turvey and Simon Dolan Zytex-Nissan Z11SN.

"Tim was very important in our success and our results in the years that he was with us," said Jota race engineer Tim Holloway. "He was very good technically – he brought a lot to the party."

Gibson, who underwent a heart transplant at the age of 15, competed in Formula Ford, was a BMW Compact Cup one-make racer and, starting last year, raced in a Legends car he shared with his brother Will.

Barnicoat (14) pips
Norris by 0.104s



BRDC F4 AUTUMN TROPHY BRANDS HATCH NOVEMBER 14-15 MSVR

Inspired Barnicoat snatches F4 Trophy

A FLAWLESS RUN ON SUNDAY FROM Ben Barnicoat allowed the Fortec Motorsport driver to secure an unlikely **BRDC Formula 4 Autumn Trophy** crown, as he recovered from a 45-point deficit to deny Harrison Scott in the final race of the series.

Riding high after his confirmation as a European Formula 3 driver with Prema for 2016 [see Racing News], Barnicoat, who made a 'last-minute' decision to compete in the second trophy weekend, completed a clean sweep on Sunday – with two poles, two wins and two fastest laps – to pip Scott to top honours.

Barnicoat's run was imperious,

and as such deserving of the crown, but it was arguably a mistake from Scott on Saturday that swung the initiative away from the Douglas Motorsport driver and into Barnicoat's welcoming hands.

Scott had been leading the five-car field – with Sennan Fielding absent from the meeting and Hillspeed deciding not to continue after Snetterton – during Saturday's moist opening encounter, before disaster struck on lap nine when he binned his car between McLaren and Clearways, with his stranded machine requiring the presence of the safety car.

Promoted to third, Barnicoat still had work to do on the restart, but he made the most of his second chance as he timed a pass on Sisa Ngebulana perfectly to secure second behind a rampant Lando Norris, who won by 13.550 seconds.

Barnicoat repeated that result in race two, this time with a fine defensive drive to keep Scott at bay and reduce his arrears to 11 points, ahead of the final day of racing. He again trailed Norris at the flag – a remarkable feat given that the HHC Motorsport driver had only sampled the car for the first time on Friday as he celebrated his 16th birthday.

On Sunday it was Barnicoat who drew first blood as he secured pole for race three to intensify the battle.

There was not a single change of position in a cagey affair, but it nevertheless proved to be arguably the most entertaining race of the two-weekend series.

Barnicoat made a decent start from pole but had to fight to keep his lead when Norris attacked at Paddock Hill, eventually emerging unscathed before building a small cushion at the head of the field.

In an intriguing affair, the gap between the two leaders fluctuated with Norris first closing back in, only to slip back before reducing Barnicoat's advantage once more into the closing stages of the race.



Norris landed brace
of victories on F4 debut

The pair started the final lap split by a mere 0.330s but, despite drawing alongside his rival over the line, Norris was unable to usurp Barnicoat, who won by the slimmest of margins to draw level on points with Scott, who was a close third.

That set up a final race showdown – with whichever of the pair finishing highest taking the crown – but for all the anticipation, Sunday's finale was fairly anticlimactic with the direction of the trophy being effectively decided at the first corner.

Starting from pole once more, Barnicoat again kept Norris at arm's length into Paddock Hill Bend as Scott failed to advance from fourth on the grid. A measured drive thereafter allowed Barnicoat to gradually ease clear to score a third



Barnicoat and
Fortec celebrate



Charging Charsley marches clear for convincing Champion of Brands double

ANDY CHARSELEY ENDED HIS comeback season in Formula Ford with two wins in the first double-header since James Becket revived the **Champion of Brands** name. Charsley last won the CoB when it was a season-long affair in 1992, a fact which prompted fellow podium finisher Ashley Dibden to point out that he wasn't even born then.

On another soggy Saturday, Charsley was fastest qualifier and headed both races throughout. Dibden applied plenty of pressure in race one and achieved a season's best second. Enigma Motorsport boss Linton Stutely returned to the cockpit and, along with Jason Cooper, was right in the mix. He was third in race one and pipped Dibden in race two after contact.

Cian Carey and Robbie Watts each won a **Monoposto Indy** race in the wet. Carey's success was helped by Watts having a

triple spin on Brabham Straight, but he stopped at McLaren in race two and caused another caution period. A dawdling backmarker held up a long queue, enabling Watts to streak clear on a final green flag racing lap.

Watts completed a double by lapping everyone up to third man Nigel Davers in the dry on Sunday, despite slowing with temperatures off the clock and a suspicion that his engine was close to failing.

The sadly diminished **Formula Vee Festival** drew an entry in the teens. Ian Jordan won the first race after trading the lead with Gavin Buckley and James Harridge. Harridge won race two after forging up the order from eighth, the top ten from race one being reversed on the grid. James Jones, Buckley and Adam Macaulay were next.

Harridge put in a commanding performance to win the final from Macaulay and Jordan. Fourth was a rather lucky Tim Probert after

recovering from a lap one spin at Clark Curve.

Wins in the traditional **Victor Meldrew Trophy** handicap races were taken by Don Hughes (Peugeot 306) and Peter Osborne (Astra VXR). In traditional style, neither had any idea he'd won until called to the podium. It only remained for John Willcocks to apply his secret formula to the race results before Nigel Innes was declared winner after finishing sixth and seventh in his BMW M3.

Gary Feakins was the final race winner of the Brands Hatch 2015 season when he completed a double in the **Production BMW versus Golf GTi challenge**. Golfs were top three qualifiers, but Chris Sanders' pole car didn't appear and Tim Hartland and Alistair Miles crashed at Druids after Feakins delivered a chop to Hartland up the hill.

● Brian Phillips

victory in the series, sealing the trophy in so doing.

"It's a great feeling!" said Barnicoat. "I'm extremely happy that I came back and it [his fortune] turned around. I was a bit down that I'd made a few mistakes at Snetterton, but managing to come here and bounce back was great."

Incredibly, race three was the only time Scott – magnanimous in defeat – failed to make the podium, his Saturday exit aside. He was kept off the podium by Ngebulana, who turned in his best performance of the fortnight with a fine drive to third, behind Barnicoat and Norris.

● Jack Cozens

RESULTS

BRDC F4 (25 LAPS) 1 Lando Norris 23m50.663s (75.98mph); 2 Ben Barnicoat +13.550s; 3 Sisa Ngebulana; 4 Faisal Al Zubair. No other finishers. **Fastest lap** Harrison Scott 52.512s (82.81mph). **Pole** Norris. **Starters** 5. **RACE TWO (25 LAPS)** 1 Norris 22m35.813s (80.18mph); 2 Barnicoat +10.530s; 3 Scott; 4 Ngebulana; 5 Al Zubair. No other finishers. **FL** Norris 53.464s (81.33mph). **P** Scott. **S 5.** **RACE THREE (25 LAPS)** 1 Barnicoat 18m22.151s (98.63mph); 2 Norris +0.104s; 3 Scott; 4 Ngebulana; 5 Al Zubair. No other finishers. **FL** Barnicoat 43.322s (100.37mph) **RECORD.** **P** Barnicoat. **S 5.** **RACE FOUR (25 LAPS)** 1 Barnicoat 18m15.457s (99.24mph); 2 Norris +2.191s; 3 Ngebulana; 4 Scott; 5 Al Zubair. No other finishers. **FL** Barnicoat (100.28mph). **P** Barnicoat. **S 5.** **POINTS** 1 Barnicoat 211; 2 Scott 197; 3 Ngebulana 162; 4 Al Zubair 157; 5 Norris 128; 6 Senan Fielding 95. **CHAMPION OF BRANDS FF1600 (13 LAPS)** 1 Andy Charsley (Ray GR15) 15m 02.371s (62.64mph);

2 Ashley Dibden (Mygale SJ01) +0.631s; 3 Linton Stutely (Mygale SJ08); 4 Jason Cooper (Swift SC10); 5 Adam Quartermaine (Van Diemen RF99); 6 Glenn Finn (Swift SC92). **Fastest lap** Cooper 1m 01.336s (70.89mph). **Pole** Charsley. **Starters** 14. **RACE TWO (14 LAPS)** 1 Charsley 15m32.219s (65.30mph); 2 Stutely +3.347s; 3 Dibden; 4 Cooper; 5 Luke Rosewell (Ray); 6 Jason Down (Getem Mygale GD515). **FL** Charsley 1m 01.769s (70.40mph). **P** Charsley. **S 13.** **MONOPOSTO INDY (15 LAPS)** 1 Cian Carey (Formula Renault) 15m 28.688s (70.23mph); 2 Robbie Watts (Dallara) +18.050s; 3 Nigel Davers (Mygale); 4 Chris Lord (Formula Vauxhall Lotus); 5 Julian Hoskins (Vector TF93Z); 6 Robbie Allen (Formula Sheane). **FL** Watts 55.127s (78.88mph). **P** Carey. **S 13.** **RACE TWO (14 LAPS)** 1 Watts 15m 41.095s (64.69mph); 2 Lord +35.550s; 3 Davers; 4 Allen; 5 George Fowler (Reynard SF84); 6 Jordan Sanders (MSV F4-013). **FL** Watts 54.244s (80.16mph). **P** Carey. **S 14.** **RACE THREE (19 LAPS)** 1 Watts 15m 11.026s

(90.69mph); 2 Kevan McLurg (Dallara) +24.759s; 3 Davers; 4 Lord; 5 Allen; 6 Fowler. **FL** Watts 44.958s (96.72mph). **P** Watts. **S 12.** **VEE FESTIVAL (13 LAPS)** 1 Ian Jordan (Sheane) 15m 56.490s (59.10mph); 2 Gavin Buckley (Sheane) +0.703s; 3 James Harridge (Maverick); 4 Adam Macaulay (Sheane); 5 James Jones (Sheane); 6 Michael Sammon (Sheane). **FL** Macaulay 1m 07.843s (64.09mph). **P** Macaulay. **S 15.** **RACE TWO (14 LAPS)** 1 Harridge 16m 03.972s (63.15mph); 2 Jones +0.180s; 3 Buckley; 4 Macaulay; 5 Jordan; 6 Sammon. **FL** Jones 1m 07.286s (64.62mph). **P** Colin Gregory (Sheane). **S 13.** **FINAL (17 LAPS)** 1 Harridge 15m 34.694s (79.09mph); 2 Macaulay +10.388s; 3 Jordan; 4 Tim Probert (Sheane); 5 Buckley; 6 Jones. **FL** Harridge 54.038s (80.47mph). **P** Harridge. **S 15.** **VICTOR MELDREW TROPHY (15 LAPS)** 1 Don Hughes (Peugeot 306) 13m 53.093s (73.07mph); 2 Ambrogio Perfetti (BMW E30) +2.650s; 3 Ken Angell (BMW E36); 4 Rod Birley (Honda Integra); 5 Tony Absalom (VW Golf);

6 Nigel Innes (BMW E36 M3). **FL** Barnaby Davies (Toyota Starlet) 54.192s (80.24mph). **P** Tom Bridger (Rover 220 Turbo). **S 29.** **RACE TWO (15 LAPS)** 1 Peter Osborne (Vauxhall Astra VXR) 14m 00.434s (72.43mph); 2 Bridger +3.072s; 3 Daniel Adams (Proton Satria); 4 Colin Halls (Toyota MR2 Mk2); 5 Birley; 6 Robert Taylor (Ford Fiesta XR2i). **FL** Davies 53.971s (80.57mph). **P** Glen Rossiter (Renault Clio). **S 27.** **PRODUCTION BMW VERSUS PRODUCTION GTI CHALLENGE (10 LAPS)** 1 Gary Feakins (BMW E30) 9m 59.911s (72.48mph); 2 Edwin Scott (BMW E30) +3.878s; 3 Karl Graves (BMW E30 320i); 4 Ambrogio Perfetti (BMW E30); 5 Andy Whyte (BMW 320i); 6 Mark Hodder (VW Golf). **FL** Feakins 58.917s (73.80mph). **P** Chris Sanders (VW Golf) – absent. **S 9.** **RACE TWO (21 LAPS)** 1 Feakins 20m 49.540s (73.08mph); 2 Scott +17.337s; 3 Graves; 4 Perfetti; 5 Whyte; 6 Senna Osman (BMW E30). **FL** Feakins 58.852s (73.89mph). **P** Feakins. **S 7.**

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THIS WEEK

LETTERS • ON TRACK • TV PICKS • FROM THE WEB • AUTOSPORT.COM

What you think of the motorsport news of the past week



Glorious mud: battle with the elements a big part of Rally GB

Rally success is true team effort

If rallying is about man, machine and the elements, then last week's Wales Rally GB had it all. Legendary stages, amazing performances and a home podium – but the story of the week was the dedication and resolve of those who battled the elements to play their part in creating an incredible rally.

The heroes of this year's event were not just in the cars; they were on the stages, at the controls and in the organisational teams. More than 2000 people gave up their time to ensure that the atrocious conditions could not stop the rally or dampen the brilliant atmosphere. We cannot thank

them enough for their extraordinary efforts.

This year we really had to call upon the specialists within Natural Resources Wales, who played a huge part in keeping the forests and stages accessible. We are grateful for their invaluable support and that of our ever-increasing number of partners, particularly the Welsh government and Conwy County Borough Council.

Finally a thank you to the competitors who thrilled us and the fans who cheered them.

Ben Taylor, managing director, International Motor Sports; **Rob Jones**, chief executive, Motor Sports Association

I was interested to read that

Jean Todt has apologised over the date clash of the Baku European Grand Prix with Le Mans. This comes on top of several other unfortunate changes to next year's calendar.

However, I feel not enough has been made of our own British Grand Prix date change (from June 28 to July 10):

I have read that Bernie Ecclestone feels the grand prix should warrant government funding. So, one wonders, what would the government think on discovering that it now clashes with one of the premier British sporting events: the Wimbledon men's finals?

Also, one wonders what the BBC would about having two of its remaining 'crown jewels' being held on the same day!

Surely if Mr Ecclestone wants to attract the maximum attention for our premier motorsport event, he should check the sporting calendar more thoroughly to avoid such a clash.

Rob Parr
By email

So the AUTOSPORT Hamilton PR machine rolls on. In last week's issue, why was there no mention of the 2007 'spygate' scandal where McLaren obtained Ferrari's car info, or no mention in 2008 of how the then Renault team cheated by deliberately crashing so its other car could win, thereby causing false points to be awarded and preventing Massa from rightly being world champion in 2008 and not LH? For me, LH is a double world champion

driving what is by far the best car on the grid.

Mike Kelly
London

You talk of Lewis Hamilton

being a legend. He isn't close! Edd Straw in his editorial says nobody is perfect, not even Jim Clark. Well I beg to differ: I am old enough to remember 1965 when Clark was perfect: Tasman champion, Indy 500 winner, Formula 2 champion and not forgetting Formula 1 champion.

He was also a true gentleman who left his dog at home on the farm, not needing to strut the paddock like a Rafterman enforcer!

Peter Wareham
Stourbridge

TITLE DECIDER

Mark Webber, Brendon Hartley and Timo Bernhard head into the WEC finale as favourites for the title. They have a 12-point lead over the Benoit Treluyer/Andre Lotterer/Marcel Fassler Audi

BIG NUMBER

485

The number of racing laps completed at Macau by two-time Grand Prix winner Edoardo Mortara, who has also won in the GT3 race and the Audi R8 LMS Cup. Add to that number 26 recon/green flag laps



WHAT'S ON TRACK IN THE UK

EVENT OF THE WEEK



Caterhams bound to thrill at Anglesey

ANGLESEY BRSCC

November 22

The BRSCC's winter race day includes races for Caterhams, Sports/saloons, Formula Ford 1600 and the Irish Global Lights and Supercars fields. There is also a 45-minute, two-driver endurance race. The first of eight scheduled races is set to get underway at 1055.

FF1600



BOURNE

WHAT'S ON TRACK AROUND THE WORLD

WORLD ENDURANCE

Rd 8/8
Bahrain International Circuit
November 21
fiawec.com

GP2 SERIES

Rd 10/11
Bahrain International Circuit
November 20-21
gp2series.com

GP3 SERIES

Rd 8/9
Bahrain International Circuit
November 20-21
gp3series.com

MACAU GRAND PRIX

Macau, China
November 21-22
macau.grandprix.gov.mo

V8 SUPERCARS



KALISZ/LAT



STALEY/LAT

GT WORLD CUP

Macau, China
November 21-22
macau.grandprix.gov.mo

TCR INTERNATIONAL

Rd 11/11
Macau, China
November 22
tcr-series.com

NASCAR SPRINT CUP

Rd 36/36
Homestead, Florida, USA
November 22
nascar.com

V8 SUPERCARS

Rd 13/14
Phillip Island, Victoria, Australia
November 21-22
v8supercar.com.au

MACAU GRAND PRIX



F3 lines up for 62nd Macau GP

FROM THE SOFA

WHAT'S ON TELEVISION



Presenter Griffiths has to be "the glue"

TV pick of

Edited by Aaron Rook and



MACAU F3 GP - LIVE

BT Sport 1

Sunday 0715-0900

The Macau street circuit is ludicrous. And brilliant. It's perhaps not as reliable a launchpad to stardom as it used to be, but whether the victor goes on to a career as successful as Michael Schumacher or as obscure as Keisuke Kunimoto, their triumph will be supremely hard-earned.

BT is showing the qualifying and main races live for the F3 GP and the GT World Cup, or head to Motors later on Sunday for delayed broadcasts of both plus the TCR-based Guia race.



NASCAR FINALE - LIVE

Premier Sports

Sunday 19000-0000

Logically, Jeff Gordon doesn't deserve to be 2015 NASCAR Sprint Cup champion, with just one win and three other top-three finishes in 35 rounds. And yet... wouldn't it be lovely if Gordon, in the final race of his glorious career, *did* win the title?

The purist-enraging winner-takes-all Chase format has certainly thrown up some intrigue, as Gordon takes on reigning champion Kevin Harvick, Kyle Busch – despite his long absence with leg injuries – and underdog Furniture Row driver Martin Truex Jr for the crown at Homestead, live on Premier Sports.

Backstage at BT Sport's big day

HOW DO YOU SMOOTHLY

co-ordinate the chaos of reviewing 15 race categories, interviewing a dozen studio guests and interspersing live segments from a soggy Welsh rally into a four-and-a-half-hour live show? BT Sports' Motorsport Weekender last week managed just that.

The station has taken motor racing to its heart, with 15 categories including IndyCar, MotoGP and the World Series by Renault in its portfolio. Motorsport is second only to football in terms of hours across its various channels, which also include seven red-button feeds.

The weekend's bumper studio programme presented challenges far removed from paddock broadcasts, as producer Nick Kennerley attests.

"Trying to script and cut season reviews is the hardest thing," he says. "It's getting your facts together, and getting everything written. I am surrounding myself with people I can call on to work things through. A couple of our commentators, Ben Evans and Keith Collantine, help script and write some of the reports we then cut the pictures to."

For presenter Abi Griffiths, the task is more about managing the show's pace. "With this kind of programme I have to be the glue," she says. "There are so many championships we are reviewing, we have got so many great guests coming in, the challenge is to keep it all



Ready for action in the gallery

"The times when you don't have all the voices in your ear are nerve-wracking"

flowing, but making sure you are getting the best out of everyone here."

Rehearsals, building a rapport with guests and pundits, and keeping abreast of current motorsport news are key to keeping the production seamless. Before going on air, the production studio seems organised chaos, beginning with a pre-production briefing, before make-up and rehearsals, while microphones are attached to guests and final prop tweaks are made.

Kennerley says it's not uncommon for last minute issues to come up, and Saturday's broadcast was no different, with debates taking place over whether

a Scalextric feature was clear enough for the cameras to see on the black floor. "It does happen quite often, but it's the ability to make a decision on the go like that which you need," he adds.

The large studio allowed room for Strakka's LMP2 car and Fortec's Formula Renault 3.5. While an additional challenge for the crew, having the cars on set makes a big difference.

During the recording, it is a frenzy of activity in the gallery, where the show's production team monitor the cameras and speak to the guests and presenters through their earpieces. Surprisingly, this constant earpiece chatter is less of a distraction than a comfort.

"Bizarrely, it's a crazy challenge that becomes a huge support," Griffiths says. "When you start it's a minefield, especially if there are lots and lots of voices, but actually the times when you don't have the voices become the more nerve-wracking because all those people in the gallery are making it all happen."

For driver pundits such as Johnny Mowlem, it's an enjoyable adrenaline fix. "I was looking for something to give me a bit of excitement outside of racing," he says. "Live television doesn't match racing but it is exciting in that you know if you mess up, you are going to look an idiot in front of a lot of people. You get that nervous excitement before doing it." Jason Noble

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ONLINE

Top stories on AUTOSPORT.com in the past week

ROSSI: LOSS WILL TAKE 'MONTHS' TO HEAL

The MotoGP title-war fallout has continued to absorb readers, and the defeated Valentino Rossi is still struggling to come to terms with the events of Sepang and Valencia.

BOTTAS UNFAZED BY FAN BACKLASH

Two crashes with Kimi Raikkonen in three grands prix made Valtteri Bottas the target of some fury from Iceman fans, but the Williams driver was far from bothered by the criticism.

WOLFF: ENGINE PLAN 'DOES MY HEAD IN'

Mercedes motorsport chief Toto Wolff is emphatically not a fan of the FIA's proposal independent Formula 1 engine, and insists having two power unit types side-by-side will not work.

ALONSO'S FRUSTRATION LEVELS GETTING 'HIGH'

Lounging in a deckchair after his car stopped in Q1 and posing on the podium was one thing, but Fernando Alonso was feeling the pain too.

AUTOSPORT+

MERCEDES' S-DUCT TRIAL EXPLAINED

Intriguing experiments at Mercedes were the centre of tech focus in Brazilian Grand Prix practice.

HAMILTON: 'HEAVY PARTYING' LED TO CRASH

Lewis Hamilton had a troubled build up to the Brazilian Grand Prix, with a minor car crash and an illness, and an unusually frank explanation for both.

the week

Mitchell Adam



RACE OF CHAMPIONS - LIVE

Sky Sports F1
Fri 1930-2300/Sat 1500-1800
 Six current Formula 1 drivers, two current F1 test drivers, the MotoGP champion, the Formula E champion, the World Touring Car champion, the World Rallycross champion, the DTM champion, a Blancpain Endurance champion... The Race of Champions recruiters have done very well this year for its return to London.

There are multiple ways to watch it if you're not attending - it's live-streamed on Autosport.com, Sky Sports F1 is showing both days, and there are highlights on Eurosport afterwards.

WEC BAHRAIN - LIVE

Motors TV
Saturday 1130-1835
 Porsche has won the WEC manufacturers' crown, but its lead trio Mark Webber, Brendon Hartley and Timo Bernhard haven't quite secured the drivers' title yet and can still be pipped by Audi's Benoit Treluyer, Andre Lotterer and Marcel Fassler in Bahrain. This will be Alex Wurz's final race.

The fractious LMP2 battle is still to be resolved, although the GT contests are pretty much settled. Motors TV will show all the race live, with the beginning and end on Eurosport too.



GP2/GP3 BAHRAIN - LIVE

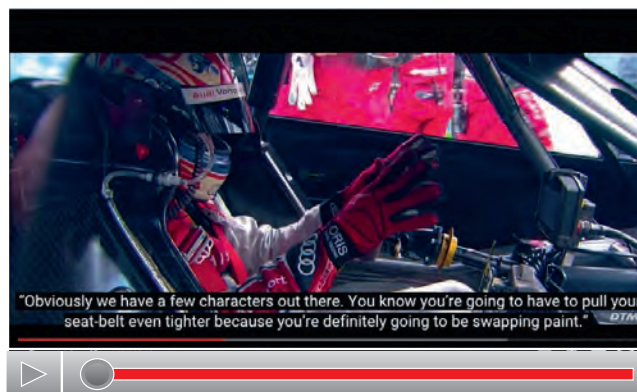
Sky Sports F1
Fri 1015/1225, Sat 0555-0855
 GP2 returns to Bahrain in place of the cancelled German round to support the WEC, and Sky's usual live service continues even though F1 is absent. Although McLaren protege Stoffel Vandoorne has already been crowned there's still plenty to look out for, not least the return of Formula Renault 3.5 champion Oliver Rowland after his star cameo in the summer. As for GP3, the title is still very much up for grabs. Trident driver Luca Ghiotto leads Mercedes junior Esteban Ocon, who has the unenviable record of nine consecutive second-place finishes, by just two points.

V8 SUPERCARS - LIVE

Sat BT Sport 2 0345/0545
Sun BT Sport 1 0245-0445
 Prodrive entered V8 Supercars in 2003, nearly one year before Triple Eight, but while the latter has won six drivers' titles with Jamie Whincup, the Ford squad is still searching for its first. Both are now only associated with Europe by name, but Mark Winterbottom could secure Prodrive's first V8 crown this weekend. He leads team-mate David Reynolds by 239 points and Bathurst winner Craig Lowndes by 240, and a good run could mean Winterbottom leaves Phillip Island with an unassailable 300-point lead. BT shows the races live, Motors has repeats.

HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

YouTube DTM GOES 'HOLLYWOOD' FOR 2015 SEASON REVIEW



SEARCH FOR: Welcome to the Truth - DTM Season 2015: The Movie
 The DTM has pulled a bit of a blinder with its 2015 season review: pukka production values, stirring cinematic soundtrack and an engaging mix of talking-head footage and on-track action. Hockenheim 2016 suddenly seems a long way away.

AUTOSPORT TWEETERS

-  **Edd Straw**
@eddstrawF1
-  **Glenn Freeman**
@glenn_autosport
-  **Marcus Simmons**
@MarcusSimmons54
-  **Ian Parkes**
@ianparkesf1
-  **Ben Anderson**
@BenAndersonAuto
-  **Matt Beer**
@mattofautosport
-  **Stuart Codling**
@CoddersF1
-  **David Evans**
@daveevansrally
-  **Scott Mitchell**
@ScottMitchell89
-  **Gary Watkins**
@gazzasportscars
-  **Mark Glendenning**
@m_glendenning
-  **Mitchell Adam**
@DrMitchellAdam
-  **Lawrence Barretto**
@lawrobarretto
-  **Rob Ladbrook**
@LaddersMN
-  **Autosport**
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Dull DTM liveries

Why do they so often get warpaint to reflect a drab day at Lausitzring, asks **MARCUS SIMMONS**

Has any man ever read *Fifty Shades of Grey*? Well, we can think of some who probably have: those who work alongside their female colleagues in DTM

manufacturers' marketing and graphics departments.

Eight decades on from the 1930s, the Germans are struggling to come up with anything to match the

happy accident of the Silver Arrows, when they decided that unpainted sheet metal gave lighter weight and therefore greater performance. Now, the world's fastest, most-advanced

and sexiest-looking touring cars are frequently almost-apologetically draped in drab liveries.

Here we have a look at some of the dulllest...



1 Nico Muller 2015

As a sponsor and logo, Audi Financial Services doesn't really get petrol flowing through your veins. By the looks of this, the division's top brass are clearly fans of early '80s synthpoppers Visage's *Fade to Grey*. Although, actually, that was a terrific tune.

2 Timo Scheider 2015

OK, we know 'Auto Test' is the name of a magazine, but most of us here at AUTOSPORT can't look at Scheider's Audi without thinking of Minis with cut-off roofs reversing between cones in Sainsbury's car parks. And it's just a big red logo on a black car.

3 Adrien Tambay 2012

Oh dear, Audi is doing rather well in this list... We're sure Patrick's boy appreciates the benefits of Audi ultra lightweight technology, but when it's modestly written on a DTM car you hardly notice it beyond the overwhelming silvery-grey-and-whiteness.

4 Roberto Merhi 2013

The Thomas Sabo font on this Mercedes is quite stylish, but at the end of the day it's just white writing on a very, very black car. A nice touch to have the watch on the roof, but without Merhi barrel-rolling that wasn't going to be noticed much.

5 Paul di Resta 2014

Any Formula 1 driver switching to the DTM (in this case reverting) is big news, but Mercedes can't have tried very hard on this look. Having marque motorsport division AMG written very large on a white background can't even have excited di Resta.



6 Filipe Albuquerque 2013

Oh look, here's Audi Financial Services again. The livery warmed up quite nicely with this, exhibiting more tones of grey than a Yardbirds tribute band, but it wasn't until the white at the rear end was lost that it shot to the top of the charts.



7 Alexandre Premat 2008

And now here's Audi Bank. We think they've tried for bling by merging gold and silver, but really it looks like a DTM-shaped variation of the bottle tops on the milk deliveries you'd spot outside your neighbours' houses when you rode past on your Grifter.



8 Ralf Schumacher 2009

There are some fantastic bits on Ralf's old Mercedes, specifically the spotted lights over the rear wheelarches, which look a bit like an old Spacemen 3 album cover. But then it all goes a bit anonymous and the Trilux logo is just big and clunky.



9 Manuel Reuter 2000

We mustn't forget the old fave marque of the DTM's blue-collar fans. Hordes of mulleted enthusiasts will have cheered on Opel hero Reuter, before using Opel Service Fit – with its blokey trad Russelsheim livery – for their souped-up Mantas.



10 Andy Priaulx 2012

BMW usually does quite well on liveries. We nearly put Bruno Spengler's black, black and black BMW Bank car here, but then we thought we'd add some colour. The Crowne Plaza look has purple, but it's the kind of purple from your gran's cardigan.

NEXT WEEK F1 FINANCES EXPOSED
Macau F3; WEC Bahrain; NASCAR season finale



Ever thought about the morning after?

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** 17.1% of drink drive accidents are between hours of 5am and 1pm (Source: Dept. for Transport, Road Accidents and Safety Annual Report 2010)

* 4 Pints of Abbot Reserve contain 14.8 units of alcohol (Source: Greene King) and each unit takes 1 hour to leave the body (Source: NHS). Therefore 14.8 hours after 9pm the alcohol will have passed from the body.

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