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# AUTOSPORT

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# NICO ROSBERG THE REAL DEAL?



- What he did to beat Schuey
- How he's won over Merc
- Why Williams lost patience



**PLUS**

## DAVIDSON WINS AT SEBRING

Brit heads Peugeot whitewash



## THE F1 DEBUT FROM HELL

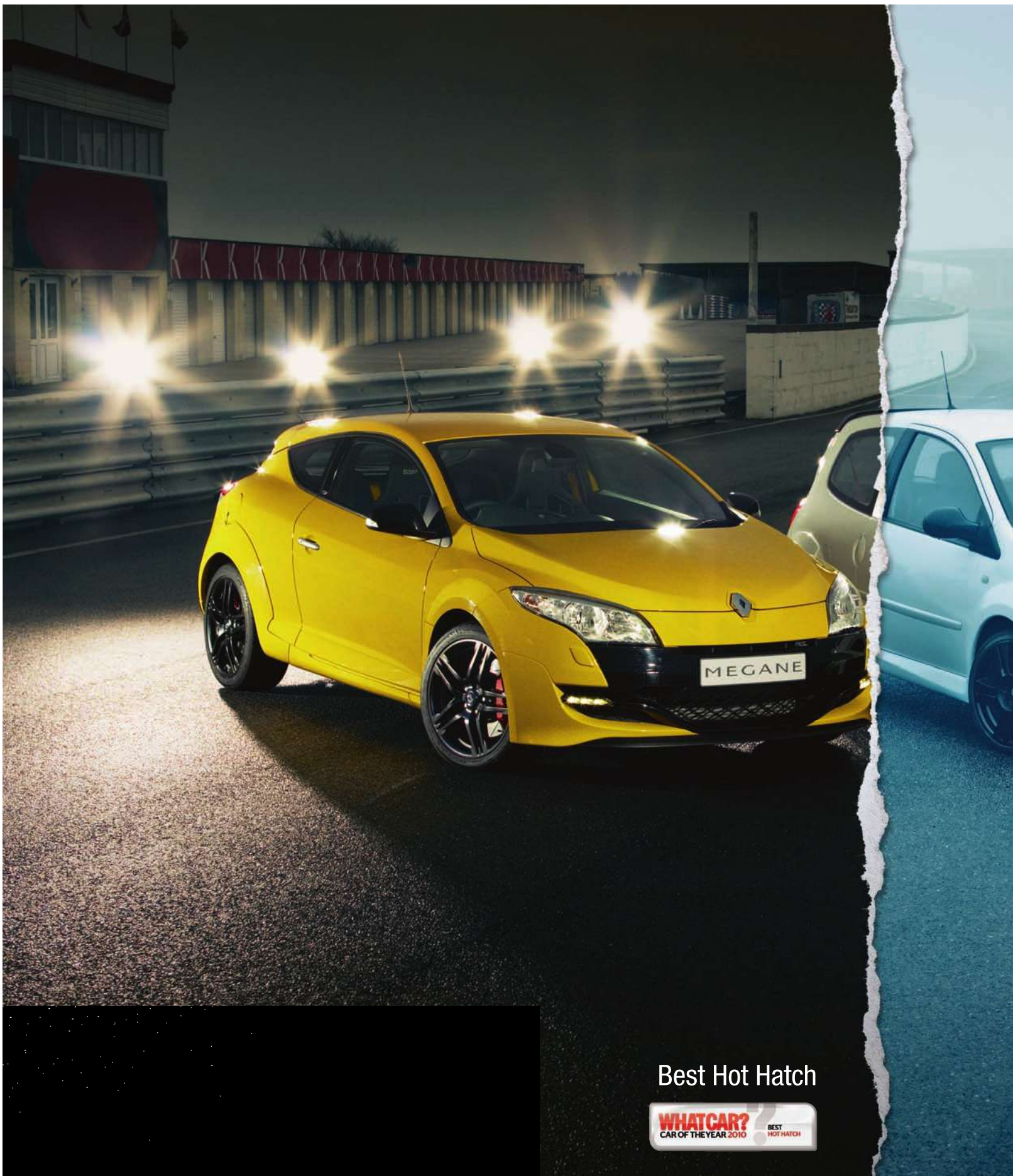
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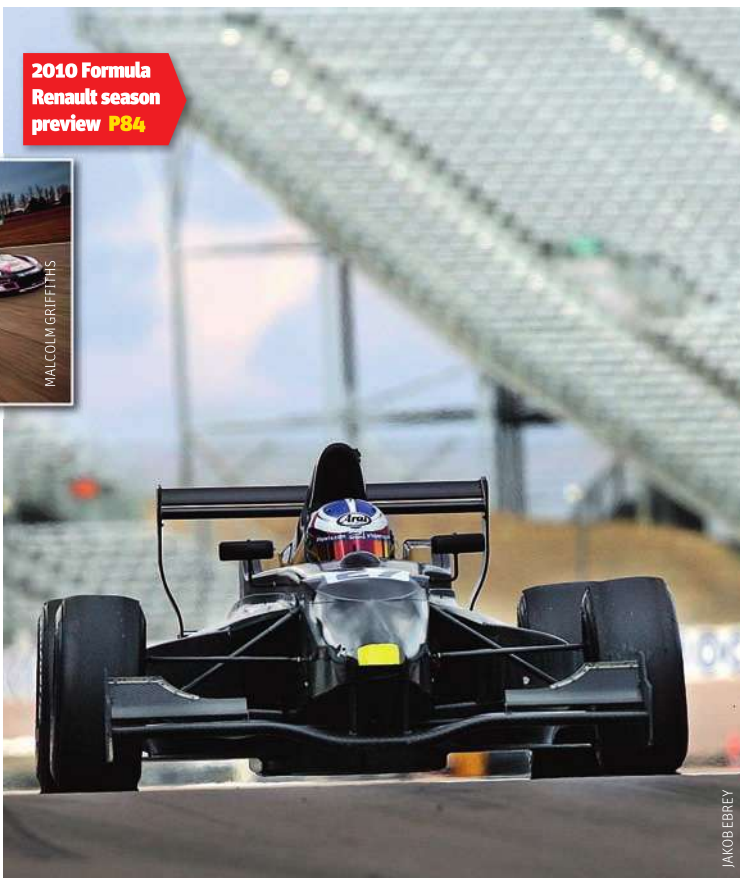
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**EDITOR**  
Andrew van de Burgt  
andrew.vandeburgt@haymarket.com ext.5974

**AUTOSPORT.COM EDITOR**  
Simon Strang  
simon.strang@haymarket.com ext.5093

**DEPUTY EDITOR**  
Charles Bradley  
charles.bradley@haymarket.com ext.5889

**GROUP F1 EDITOR**  
Jonathan Noble  
jonathan.noble@haymarket.com ext.5810

**F1 EDITOR**  
Edd Straw  
edd.straw@haymarket.com ext.5887

**DEPUTY F1 EDITOR**  
Mark Glendenning  
mark.glendenning@haymarket.com ext.5801

**NEWS EDITOR**  
Glenn Freeman  
glenn.freeman@haymarket.com ext.5309

**AUTOSPORT.COM NEWS EDITOR**  
Steven English  
steven.english@haymarket.com ext.5952

**MANAGING EDITOR**  
Peter Hodges  
peter.hodges@haymarket.com ext.3617

**WEB MANAGING EDITOR**  
Pablo Elizalde

**GRAND PRIX EDITOR**  
Mark Hughes  
autosport.editorial@haynet.com

**SECRETARY**  
Joanne Grove  
joanne.grove@haymarket.com ext.5804

**PHOTOGRAPHS**  
LAT Photographic

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
Adam Cooper

**TECHNICAL CONSULTANT**  
Gary Anderson

**TECHNICAL EDITOR**  
Giorgio Piola

**NEWS GRAPHICS**  
Alan Eldridge

**CARTOONIST**  
Jim Bamber

**CORRESPONDENTS**

**ARGENTINA**  
Tony Watson

**AUSTRALIA**  
Phil Brangan

**AUSTRIA**  
Gerhard Kuntzschik

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Gordon McKay

**BRAZIL**  
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**FINLAND**  
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**ADVERTISING**  
Tel: +44 (0) 20 8267 5858  
Fax: +44 (0) 20 8267 5850  
E-mail: autosport.ads@haymarket.com

**SALES MANAGER**  
Pierre Clements, ext: 5820  
pierre.clements@haymarket.com

**DISPLAY ADVERTISING**  
Nyan Amer, ext: 5576  
nyan.amer@haymarket.com

Adam Stimpson, ext: 5244  
adam.stimpson@haymarket.com

Katie Gamble, ext: 5961  
katie.gamble@haymarket.com

**CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING**  
Adam Rutter, ext: 5865  
adam.rutter@haymarket.com

Andrew Barclay, ext: 5027  
andrew.barclay@haymarket.com

Charlotte Norville, ext: 5367  
charlotte.norville@haymarket.com

**ONLINE SALES MANAGER**  
Luciano Candilio, ext: 5179  
luciano.candilio@haymarket.com

**ONLINE ADVERTISING**  
Liz Denin, ext: 5281  
elizabeth.denin@haymarket.com

**ADVERTISING DIRECTOR**  
Matthew Witham

**AD PRODUCTION**  
Tel: +44 (0) 20 8267 5740 Fax: +44 (0) 20 8267 5320

**SPECIAL PROJECTS DIRECTOR**  
Derek Redfern

**LICENSING DIRECTOR**  
Tim Butley

**PRODUCTION MANAGER**  
Caroline Feltham, ext: 5823  
caroline.feltham@haymarket.com

**DISPLAY PRODUCTION**  
Saba Bonser, ext: 5740  
saba.bonser@haymarket.com

**CLASSIFIED PRODUCTION**  
Anna Gray, ext: 5349  
anna.gray@haymarket.com

**SUBSCRIPTIONS**  
UK 08456 777 817  
OVERSEAS +44 (0)1795 592 974  
EMAIL autosport@servicehelpline.co.uk

**US & CANADA** 1-866-918-1446  
**US & CANADA EMAIL** haymarket@imsnews.com

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**BACK ISSUES**  
Tel: 08456 777 817

**DIRECT MARKETING EXECUTIVE**  
Karen McCarthy, ext: 5659  
karen.mccarthy@haymarket.com

**MANAGEMENT**

**PUBLISHING DIRECTOR**  
Peter Higham

**PUBLISHER**  
Rob Aherne

**PUBLISHING MANAGER**  
Samantha Jemson

**WEBSITE PUBLISHING MANAGER**  
David Harris

**SPECIAL EVENTS MANAGER**  
Laura Coppin

**CIRCULATION TRADE ENQUIRIES**  
Frontline Ltd, Park House, 117 Park Road Peterborough, Cambs, PE21 2TS.  
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**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**  
Kevin Costello

**STRATEGY AND PLANNING DIRECTOR**  
Bob McDowell

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## POLE POSITION

# It's time for Rosberg to show what he's made of



Andrew van de Burgt, editor

**BEATING MICHAEL** Schumacher in the same car is hard work, but not impossible, as Martin Brundle, Rubens Barrichello and Felipe Massa have shown. But beating the seven-time champ twice in a row is another matter, as Nico Rosberg is about to discover in Australia this weekend.

Rosberg could scarcely have made a better start to his Mercedes career, but as Mark Hughes observes (p34) the challenge for Keke's boy is to sustain his momentum in the face of the challenge from the most successful F1 driver of all time.

His raw pace has never been in doubt, but Rosberg's application and consistency have been called into question.

That's not always been the case. I was AUTOSPORT's GP2 correspondent when Rosberg took the 2005 title. His relentless pursuit of Heikki Kovalainen that year ended with an emphatic double race victory in Bahrain.

It was one of the many highlights the original GP2 car produced. Those Dallaras have now been pensioned off, so we've looked back at the highs (and lows) of one of the finest single-make racers (p44).

Andrew van de Burgt, editor

## BAMBER'S WEEK



Everyone at AUTOSPORT wishes you a speedy recovery, Jim!

F1 HEADS TO IRELAND

## Coulthard storms Belfast in Irish GP venue try-out

Rumours that the roads around Stormont, the Irish parliamentary building in Belfast, will form the basis of an Irish Grand Prix venue in the future may seem wide of the mark, but no-one told David Coulthard. The Scot nailed a Red Bull racer up and down the main straight to his heart's content.

Photography: Juan Jose Marroquin/  
Red Bull







# Australia set to recover F1's spark

More variables in track and conditions should prevent repeat of Bahrain. By EDD STRAW

Sunday's Australian Grand Prix should provide a dramatic antidote to the mundane Formula 1 season opener in Bahrain because of the Melbourne venue's history of throwing unexpected variables into the mix.

After the negative publicity following the Bahrain Grand Prix, the sport needs a classic race to reignite enthusiasm. Although overtaking is difficult at Albert Park, the track configuration has produced spectacular races in the past.

No changes to the race format – such as the mandating of two pitstops – had been made as AUTOSPORT closed for press. With the rules set to be the same in Melbourne, the sport must rely on the unpredictable nature of the track to give F1 the exciting race it needs to consolidate fan interest.

World champion Jensen

Button is confident that the race will be a better spectacle than Bahrain, although warned that the sport may need to consider making changes if the upcoming grands prix don't deliver more exciting racing.

"There will be more people there, there should be more of an atmosphere in Australia as there always is," said Button. "The track should be more favourable to the cars. It's a street circuit so it's not the easiest place to overtake, but it should be more exciting.

"We just have to see what happens over the next few races and then people have got to start making the decisions if it's not going in the right direction. There are positives, but maybe there aren't enough right now. We've got to hope we get them in Melbourne."

There is every chance of getting just that. Here are five reasons to expect a better race in Australia:

## SAFETY CARS

In recent years multiple safety cars have been the norm in Melbourne, save for the 2007 race that ran uninterrupted.

An early safety car is likely to trigger a rush of pitstops among those starting on the soft option tyre, and could

even lead to drivers having to queue in the pits. This could leave the frontrunners stuck behind drivers starting on the harder prime tyres, who may not want to risk running the majority of the race distance on the

softer rubber.

A safety car later in the race can scramble the order and catch out drivers who have yet to make their pitstops. This happened to Heikki Kovalainen in 2008 after Timo Glock's heavy accident.



Melbourne's first corner is among F1's most treacherous

## FIRST-CORNER CARNAGE

Melbourne has a long history of first-corner incidents, with the most famous coming in 2002 when Ralf Schumacher's Williams was launched into the air at Turn 1.

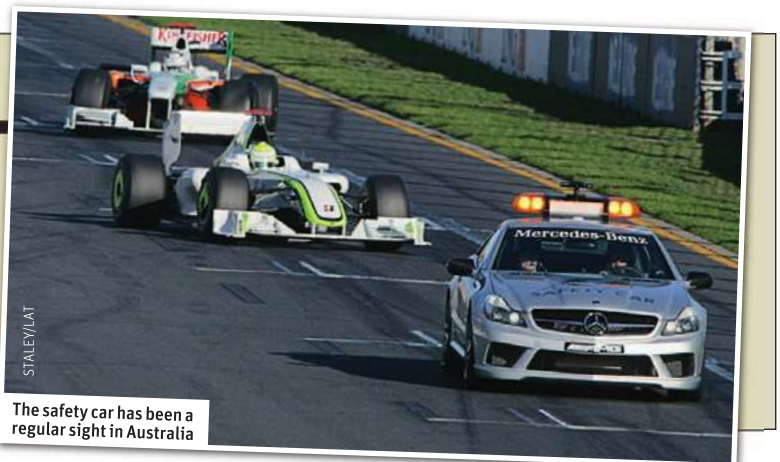
With the field expanded to 24 cars this season, the biggest grid since the

Australian GP switched to Albert Park in 1996, that means there is even more chance of a clash at Turn 1.

That would likely mean that some drivers who are not eliminated are delayed, creating a shuffling in the competitive order and

some being forced into a charge up the field – which means overtaking.

"There is nowhere to be completely safe on the way in," says Williams veteran Rubens Barrichello in AUTOSPORT's track guide (see p18).



The safety car has been a regular sight in Australia



## HARDER ON TYRES

One of the main criticisms of the Bahrain race was that the option tyre did not degrade as much as had been anticipated. By contrast, Albert Park has a reputation for being hard on tyres, meaning that the differential between the two tyre compounds should be bigger over a stint.

Last year, the degradation on the supersoft tyres was so bad that the frontrunners were forced



Tyre strategy worked for Kubica last year

to back off by up to two seconds per lap. This allowed Robert Kubica – who had started on the supersofts and benefited from an early safety car to stay in third – to charge down Sebastian Vettel and Jenson Button, only

to be taken out while battling the German for second.

Although Bridgestone has changed its allocation to soft and hard compounds, degradation could still play a bigger role than it did in Bahrain.

## LESS-CONSERVATIVE STRATEGY

Bahrain was characterised by conservative strategies, but teams may be more willing to take a gamble in Australia.

Only one driver in the top 10 – Adrian Sutil –

qualified on the slower prime tyre in Bahrain, but the high tyre degradation in Melbourne could encourage several drivers to roll the dice in the hope of a timely safety car. It is unlikely

that anyone will risk a two-stop strategy, unless they are struggling with degradation, but an alternative strategy could allow strong midfield runners to get closer to the front.

It's not clear whether teams will choose to gamble, and Melbourne will give a firm indication of how much variation there will be in strategy for the rest of the season.



Only Sutil qualified on the prime in Bahrain

## OVERTAKING

Even though Melbourne does not offer clear overtaking opportunities, races in recent years have featured plenty of wheel-to-wheel action.

In Bahrain, drivers complained of being unable even to attempt to pass, despite the first corner offering what is, on paper, one of the best opportunities of the season.

The surfeit of 90-degree corners, as well as a bumpy track surface that induces more mistakes, means that frustrated drivers should have more opportunities for wheel-to-wheel action around the streets of the Albert Park circuit.

Passing is tough, but possible, in Australia



### MELBOURNE STATS

**11.9**

Average number of classified finishers at Melbourne since the first world championship race at Albert Park in 1996

**9**

Number of times that the safety car has been deployed over the past four Australian GPs

Number of overtaking manoeuvres during last year's Australian Grand Prix

**19**

**P23 MARK HUGHES MPH**



## BUTTON MEETS THE LOCALS

Jenson Button got a different take on Albert Park on Tuesday when he stepped into the Triple 8 Holden Commodore normally occupied by V8 Supercar champion Jamie Whincup. McLaren returned the favour, giving Whincup the opportunity to try out an MP4-23

# Key week for Prodrive plans

Decision over whether to apply for a 2011 Formula 1 grid slot to be made at a board meeting this week

**P**rodrive will decide this week whether to bid for a Formula 1 grid slot in 2011.

The Banbury-based squad, run by ex-BAR and Benetton team boss David Richards, made an unsuccessful bid for a place on this year's grid with backing from Kuwait's Dar Capital and Mercedes engines. Prodrive is understood to be evaluating a fresh bid, now that the FIA has opened up the selection process for the available grid slot for next year.

The possibility of lodging an expression of interest is expected to be discussed at a board meeting this week, although a final pitch would not have to be submitted until the end of June.

A Prodrive spokesman told AUTOSPORT: "Our total attention has been focused on the Sebring 12 Hours over the past week and as this

**"Prodrive has a board meeting this week at which F1 will be discussed"**

**PRODRIVE SPOKESMAN**

situation has only just developed we have not yet had an opportunity to fully consider our position.

"Prodrive has a board meeting this week at which the matter will be discussed."

Prodrive has been close to launching an F1 team for several

years. Prior to last year's selection process, it had been awarded a grid slot for 2008 after beating off competition from 20 other applicants.

But on that occasion Prodrive was forced to pull out after objections from other teams threatened to torpedo its plans to run customer McLaren-Mercedes machinery.

If Prodrive does choose to chase an F1 slot, it is likely that Richards would again need financial support from the Middle East, and the team could consider running with Aston Martin branding at some point in the future if its bid was successful.

Had it gained a slot for this year, it is understood that it was likely to run as Prodrive for the first year or

two, before running as Aston Martin, possibly from 2012.

Prodrive is not the only team evaluating a bid. Basque squad Epsilon Euskadi, currently racing in Formula Renault 3.5, is keen to enter after failing to earn a slot last year, while historic British constructor Lola is also known to be eager to return to F1.

Team US F1, which failed to take up its 2010 grid slot, has also expressed its desire to bid again, while Stefan Grand Prix has been saying for months that it would enter in 2011 if possible.

AUTOSPORT understands that the Austrian Team Superfund project could also be revived to make an application.

# Stefan to keep pushing for entry

**STEFAN GRAND PRIX** is planning to enter the Formula 1 selection process for 2011 after failing in its last-gasp attempt to join the grid this year.

The Serbian team had hoped to be able to compete from April's Chinese Grand Prix onwards, using US F1's entry. But it is believed that, in light of US F1

failing to start the season, this entry was considered invalid by the FIA.

Team owner Zoran Stefanovic previously indicated that he planned to test during 2010 using

the Toyota TF110 design, ahead of a possible graduation to the F1 grid next year.

Now his deal with Toyota has lapsed, meaning that Stefan GP must source a car from elsewhere, produce one in-house under ex-McLaren designer Mike Coughlan, or come to a new agreement with Toyota.

"At the moment we're basically looking to see which direction we will go in the very near future," said Stefanovic.

"Our intention is to start with the FIA and the process, but we have to wait and make a decision."



Stefan GP is back to the drawing board

## AUTOSPORT SAYS...

**EDD STRAW**  
F1 EDITOR

edd.straw  
@haymarket.com



The goldrush is over. Last year, they came to exploit the promised land of budget-capped F1, but those that undertook the journey found grand prix racing to be a far more barren landscape than had been promised. Virgin Racing, Lotus and HRT were the survivors of a journey that dozens of teams gave very serious thought to undertaking – some perishing along the way. Like early-west pioneers, those three operations have claimed their pitch and are working hard to establish themselves; the question is, who will join them?

This time around, expect fewer applicants. Only serious, well-funded teams will have a hope of getting a place on the 2011 grid. The budget cap has long since been scrapped, and FOTA's much-vaunted (and clandestine) resource-restriction agreement provides, at best, cold comfort – especially as it's difficult to be sure of the exact terms unless you're already part of the club. F1 in 2011 is not for the weak-willed.

But that's not necessarily a bad thing. The FIA has set out its stall to be transparent in this process and, given the harsh economic realities of F1, chancers need not apply. Everyone knows where they stand and, with static goalposts, expect some professional teams to take a long, hard look at taking on the epic quest to fulfil their F1 fantasy.

On that basis, whoever makes it should be, in the long-term, well-placed to thrive.

HRT struck gold, by hook or by crook



TEC/LAT



DR return?

## THE LEADING CONTENDERS FOR 2011

### LOLA

F1 project has remained on backburner since losing out for 2010. Declined to comment on its 2011 plans, but owner Martin Birrane and MD Robin Brundle have indicated in the past six months that F1 is still a target. Already has current-spec car design.



Birrane has top facility

### US F1

Principal Ken Anderson insists that US F1 hopes to put a car on track by September. Having failed to make the grid this year, the Charlotte-based squad will surely need to present a watertight case if it is to convince the FIA to give it another shot.



Anderson: second chance?

### EPSILON EUSKADI

The Basque team, run by Joan Villadelprat, was another of 2009's failed applicants. Its base in Azkoitia is well-equipped and has the support of the Basque government. The team needs to raise significant funding in Spain but has been unwavering in its desire.



Villadelprat: F1 experience

### PRODRIVE

David Richards's empire tried to enter F1 with the Aston Martin brand last year. Failed to take up the slot it was awarded for 2008 because the ban on customer cars scuppered its plan to be a McLaren B-team. Has the reputation and the expertise to make it in F1, but also a history of frustrated plans.

### STEFAN GP

Looked a shoo-in for a 2011 slot had it been successful in its plan to spend this year testing with the Toyota TF110 design and engine. The Serbian team, run by Zoran Stefanovic, put a mighty effort into getting onto the grid this year in place of US F1, but came up short. Question marks remain over the team's funding, although it does have support from the Serbian government and was taken very seriously by Bernie Ecclestone.

## F1 SELECTION PROCESS

The FIA last week launched its selection process for teams wanting to join the Formula 1 grid in 2011. From the applicants, it will select those to take up any of the 13 grid slots that are vacant for next season – currently one – and could also appoint one or more reserves.

The deadline for expressions of interest, which must be accompanied by a €1000 administrative fee, is April 15. Each team must submit a final application by the end of June, with the FIA's final decision due in January.

### THE FIA HAS INDICATED FOUR CORE SELECTION-PROCEDURE ELEMENTS:

- (a) The technical ability and resources of the team.
- (b) The ability of the team to raise and maintain sufficient funding to allow participation.
- (c) The team's experience and human resources.
- (d) The FIA's assessment of the value that the candidate may bring to the championship as a whole.

## REMEMBER WHEN...



1988 SEASON

...was the last time there were three new F1 teams in one season? It last happened in 1988, when Rial (pictured), EuroBrun and Scuderia Italia joined the grid. By the end of 1993, all three had disappeared.



# Turvey leads host of new McLaren recruits

Former McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award winner named as part of McLaren's driver-development programme

Turvey got to test for McLaren at Jerez

**F**ormer McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award winner Oliver Turvey has been taken full-time under the McLaren umbrella after being named as part of the team's Driver Development Programme.

Turvey, who turns 23 next week, won the Award in 2006. His prize test in a McLaren Formula 1 car was delayed until last December, when he completed three days behind the wheel of an MP4-24 at Jerez.

His selection as part of McLaren's young driver line-up comes as he prepares for his rookie season in the

GP2 Series with iSport International after finishing sixth in GP2 Asia.

Joining Turvey in the programme will be fellow GP2 driver Giedo van der Garde, kart racers Oliver Rowland, Nyck de Vries and Alex Albon, Formula BMW Europe drivers Jack Harvey and Petri Suvanto, and German Formula 3 Cup driver Kevin Magnussen.

Magnussen's father Jan made a single appearance for McLaren in the 1995 Pacific Grand Prix as a stand-in for Mika Hakkinen before going on to spend two seasons in F1

with the Stewart team.

"I had a really good time at McLaren," Magnussen Sr told AUTOSPORT. "Looking back, I should have stayed on as a test driver. Now Kevin gets a shot at it. I hope he can use my experience and learn from my mistakes. I wanted to be a racing driver, but Kevin wants to be an F1 driver. For Kevin, it's all F1. Nothing else matters."

Participants in the programme, which helped prepare Lewis Hamilton for F1, receive financial help and guidance on matters ranging

from contractual negotiations to training and nutrition.

McLaren CEO Martin Whitmarsh said that it was important that the team helped to develop future talent.

"We appreciate that motorsport is difficult and expensive, and we have a responsibility within motorsport to give guidance and support in order to facilitate talented drivers and help them fully realise their potential," said Whitmarsh.

Turvey and Harvey will remain on the Racing Steps programme that has recently backed their careers.

## TURVEY'S CAREER AT A GLANCE

The Cumbrian driver's route into the McLaren family began in karts, with the switch to cars beginning with the Zip Formula in 2003

Shines in Formula BMW UK despite limited funding, and wins McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award at the end of the year.

2006



Opts to race on continent and contests the Formula Renault Eurocup with Jenzer Motorsport as well as Italian Formula Renault.

2007



Moves to British F3 with Carlin and finishes second behind team-mate Jaime Alguersuari after a late-season surge.

2008



Remains alongside Alguersuari at Carlin but this time in Formula Renault 3.5, winning in Monaco and finishing as top rookie.

2009



## Wirth: Virgin needs to go all the way

**VIRGIN RACING** must concentrate on solving its reliability problems in the Australian and Malaysian grands prix, according to technical director Nick Wirth.

Timo Glock and Lucas di Grassi managed only 18 laps between them in the Bahrain season opener. They retired with a loss of gears triggered by high gearbox temperatures and a broken seal in the hydraulic system respectively. The team will prioritise getting to the finish, and will adopt a conservative approach to upgrades in the next two races.

"We need to get on top of these reliability issues," Wirth told AUTOSPORT. "We've got to balance bringing lots of aerodynamic



Di Grassi hopes to take part, not watch

development parts that we had planned with getting the basics right, which we still haven't done – small little details which are missing all over the car.

"The problems we're having are not major things; they're small things that we need to nip in the bud. We'll get on

top of it and move forward from there."

Wirth was pleased with the pace shown by the car on its debut, in which Glock was the fastest driver from the three new teams in qualifying.

"The positives that we took out of Bahrain were that anybody who doubted the potential

of the car shouldn't do anymore, because we showed flashes of how it can perform," said Wirth.

"Depending on how long it takes us to sort the reliability, I don't think that it will be long before we start applying really serious pressure to the first of the established teams."

## McLaren buys Merc stake

**McLAREN HAS** slashed the size of Mercedes' stake in the team after buying back 29 per cent of the 40 per cent stake owned by the German manufacturer.

McLaren agreed to buy back the marque's share over two years when Mercedes took over Brawn last November. But already McLaren has acquired two-thirds of the stake, with both parties thought to be keen to expedite the process.

Speaking at last week's launch of the McLaren MP4-12C sports car, team principal Martin Whitmarsh said: "I think it is about 11 per cent that is still owned by Mercedes, but it's not an important or significant number."

Despite the buy-back, McLaren will continue to be supplied with Mercedes engines until at least the end of the 2015 season.



## Renault hails 'Schueyesque' Kubica role

**RENAULT TECHNICAL** director James Allison has compared new signing Robert Kubica's ability to influence a team to that of Michael Schumacher.

Allison, who worked with Schumacher at Ferrari from 2000-05, described Kubica as a "top-drawer" driver who galvanises the team in a similar way to Schumacher.

"I worked with Schumacher when I was at Ferrari and one of the things that impressed me was his work ethic," Allison told AUTOSPORT.

"Teams work hard naturally, but he's a driving force in making the team deliver because he sets an example. Robert is very similar because he is absolutely

focused and works hard.

"He spends long hours in there with his engineers and he will pick us up when he feels we're not doing things to the standard that he expects. Not in an overbearing way, but in an understated way that makes you think you need to up your game."

Allison was also impressed with Vitaly Petrov's performance in the Bahrain opener after limited test mileage.

"Vitaly barely turned a wheel [in the dry] in testing," he said. "He didn't have much time to get settled. He probably ran more dry laps in Bahrain than he did in the entire pre-season!"

**P38 RENAULT**

## THIS WEEK IN F1



**MERCEDES** Ross Brawn is confident that his team can make up the gap to the frontrunners. "We have a development plan in place for the next few races, which should bring the required performance improvements to compete at the front," he said.



**RED BULL** David Coulthard demonstrated a Red Bull on the streets of Belfast last Saturday. The Scot drove the car outside the Northern Irish capital's City Hall.



**McLAREN** Jenson Button has not ruled out a switch to V8 Supercars after his F1 career ends. "[V8s] could be a possibility if I get a chance in the future," he said after trying out reigning champion Jamie Whincup's Holden.



**FERRARI** Jules Bianchi, Mirko Bortolotti and Daniel Zampieri took turns behind the wheel of a 2008-spec Ferrari at Fiorano last Friday. The three Ferrari Driver Academy members will participate in a further four tests this year.



**WILLIAMS** Former driver Alex Zanardi is targeting a medal in the 2012 London Paralympics after winning the handcycling category of last weekend's Rome marathon. "Now London is no longer just a dream; it is a real possibility," he said.



**SAUBER** Peter Sauber has confirmed that the team will apply to drop the 'BMW' moniker from its name at some point during this season.



**RENAULT** Reserves Jan Charouz and Jerome d'Ambrosio had their first taste of an F1 car last week. The pair each completed 30 miles at Silverstone behind the wheel of last year's R29.



**FORCE INDIA** Paul di Resta has said he's "not going to try to set fastest times" on his first stint as Friday practice driver in Australia this week.



**TORO ROSSO** Sebastien Buemi is hoping that the team can improve its pitstops. "A pitstop should take two to three seconds [with no refuelling] and with us there are seven or eight seconds, which is far too much," he said.



**LOTUS** Heikki Kovalainen believes that the racing in F1 could be improved by abolishing blue flags, according to Lotus team principal Tony Fernandes. The Malaysian made the comments in an interview last week.



**HRT** Team boss Colin Kolles believes that he can apply the same approach that he used at Force India to make HRT the strongest new team. "I brought Force India up, and someone else is picking up the fruits. So I know how to do it, to be honest," he told AUTOSPORT.



**VIRGIN** Richard Branson is hoping that Virgin's experience of dealing with smaller budgets will help it to speed up the learning curve. "We are hoping [to catch the frontrunners] in three to five years, rather than five years. But who knows?" he said.



# STANDING ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS



Our sincere thanks go to: The Hon. Dato' Sri Mohd Najib bin Tun Abdul Razak, Prime Minister of Malaysia; Tun Dr. Mahathir; HRH The Duke of York; Clive and Hazel Chapman; Bernie Ecclestone; Jean Todt; Max Mosley; our incredible teams in Kuala Lumpur & Norfolk and all our partners:







# Straight talk David Coulthard

Britain's all-time leading F1 points scorer

After all the pre-season excitement, Bahrain gave the first solid pointers to how the season could pan out. We now know the show needs spicing up, and that Red Bull and Ferrari will take some catching in Australia

**A**fter months of speculation we finally got some facts from the Bahrain season opener. Red Bull Racing has picked up where it left off last year with the fastest package – that was a dominant pole position and race performance from Sebastian Vettel until his technical hitch. This handed a dream start to Fernando Alonso at Ferrari, and a small slice of history. Winning your first race with Ferrari – just like Kimi Raikkonen and Nigel Mansell – must be a very special feeling.

After pre-season testing my biggest surprise was that McLaren

#### HOW TO BOOST THE SHOW

We all got very excited before the beginning of the season, but Bahrain didn't really deliver much after the start. Now we've lost the variable of qualifying with race fuel loads, we're back to the fastest car qualifying on pole and running at the front. What we don't yet know is the natural ebb and flow of the racing this year, where different tracks, track and air temperatures and different tyre compounds will suit some cars and not others.

There are plenty of things potentially available that could make the racing better, from a

prix. The first weekend was far from perfect for him, and because his qualifying didn't work out he was mired in traffic throughout the race. He doesn't need me to tell him; he knows he needs a solid weekend to bounce back and deliver a performance.

If he's going to use what looks like a very good car for a championship challenge, clearly he has got to match or beat Sebastian. That won't be lost on him – ditto Renault, which needs to keep on top of its suppliers to avoid a repetition of the spark plug problem that cost Red Bull the race in Bahrain. You

“Schumacher isn't used to a team-mate beating him”

was so far off the pace – a whole second off pole. Lewis Hamilton seemed happy enough with that, and I couldn't believe it when he said he was overwhelmed by the qualifying performance – I think underwhelmed was the word he was looking for! I found that a bit confusing given he is used to winning.

Mercedes looked like it will be there or thereabouts, but has nothing to scare the likes of Red Bull and Ferrari like it did when it was Brawn. Merc is fighting with McLaren for best of the rest, but as always it will be down to who out-develops the competition as the season progresses.

tyre compound point of view, more pitstops, boost buttons to allow the engines to rev over their 18,000rpm limit – there's a host of variables if F1 wants to be proactive about the show. I expected to see much more tyre management required of the drivers in Bahrain, but it looked like the tyres were just too good!

As long as the softer tyre is able to handle the extra 160 kilos of fuel for a decent race stint, there won't be any big differences in the strategies. We need more variation in the tyres to allow for that, and their grip levels should be totally exhausted by the end of a grand prix. A tyre war would inevitably spice that up nicely...

#### WHO NEEDS A BIG WEEKEND

Melbourne is a very important race for Mark Webber, and not just because it's his home grand

prix. Like Mark, Jenson Button will know he's got to get his act together, put himself in a position where he can make his mark in his team, and not allow Lewis to sit in his comfort zone. McLaren also has some work to do in terms of car development, but we saw how much it improved last season and at least it's coming from a far higher level than this time last year.

Finally, Michael Schumacher isn't used to a team-mate beating him comprehensively. Sure there was always going to be some rustiness on his part, but I think Nico Rosberg has certainly earned his respect. It's going to be fascinating to see how he reacts in Melbourne. **✖**



A dream result for Alonso winning on his Ferrari debut

COURTESY/LA

TRACK GUIDE



Circuit length 3.295 miles Laps 58 Race distance 191.110 miles  
Lap record 1m24.125s - M Schumacher (2004)

# Barrichello's inside line

The most experienced driver in F1 history gives his thoughts on this weekend's challenge at Albert Park

**M**elbourne is a track that I love. It doesn't feel so much like a temporary circuit because it is a very fast, flowing and safe circuit. It has a great layout, and although there are a lot of 90-degree corners, many in second gear, they are not 60mph second-gear corners, they're more like 90-100mph. It's a real one-off as a circuit and has a great atmosphere.

It's usually an eventful race in Melbourne because it's not an easy track. There are some bumps that can catch you out and you'll see drivers making mistakes. I'm not sure why there are never so many finishers, but it always seems to be the way in Melbourne. I'd like to see a little bit more overtaking, but as a driver it's still a very enjoyable track.



→ [HTTP://WWW.WILLIAMSF1.COM/](http://www.williamsf1.com/)

EXCLUSIVE



OVERTAKING

It's not an easy place to overtake, but you have a few chances depending on the balance of the car. You have the quick esses on the back straight where it is possible, and also the start/finish line. But realistically it usually depends on a mistake from the driver in front.



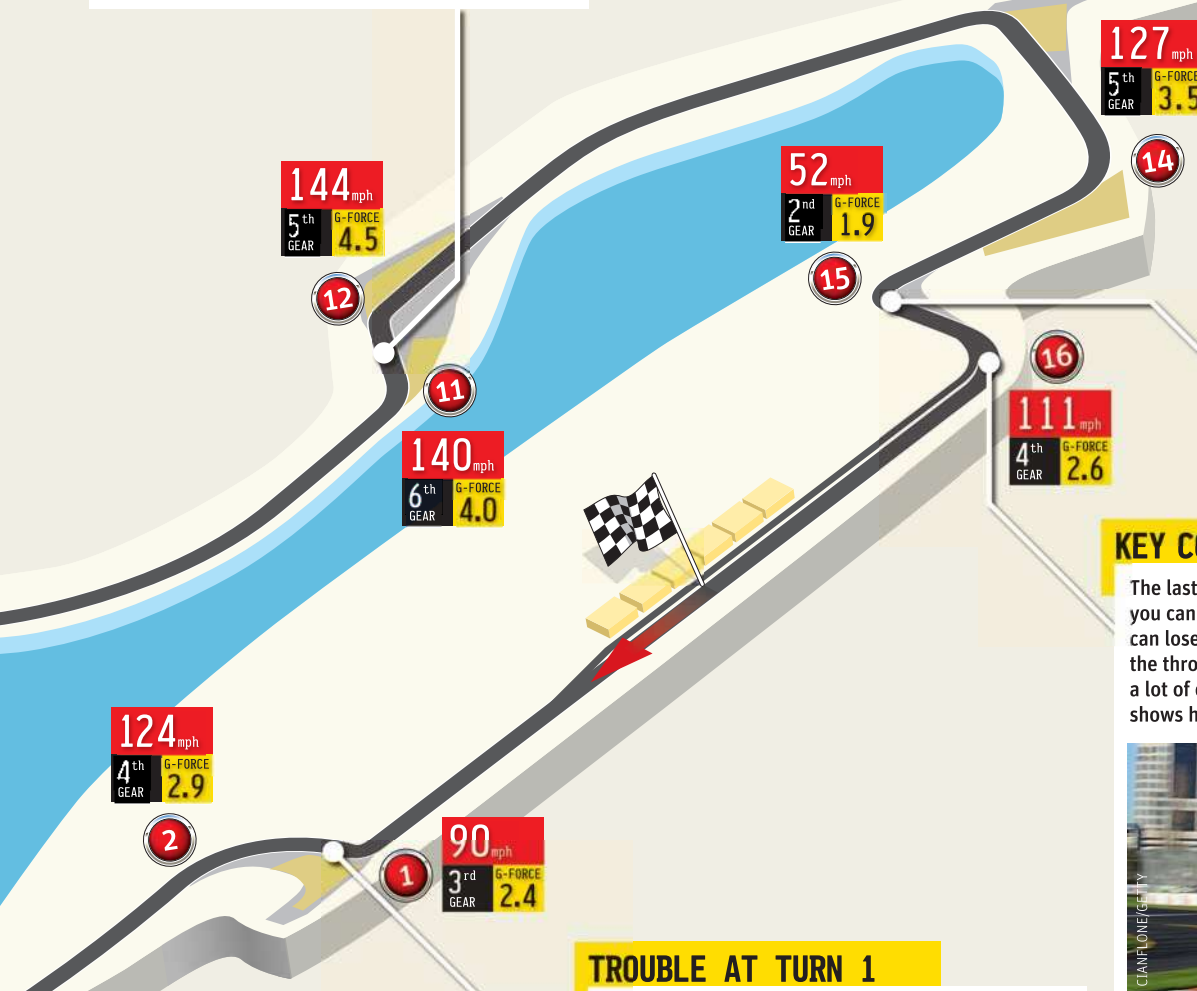
BEST MEMORY 2009

I was in Melbourne for the first race there in 1996 and have always been competitive there. Although I have had some chances to win in the past, finishing second four times, my best memory has to be last year. To have a one-two for the Brawn team after what happened in the winter was amazing and, although it wasn't the easiest race for me with the damage I got from the first corner, it was an amazing day.



## FAVOURITE CORNER TURNS 11/12

This is a very fast left-right and you can carry so much speed through here. You can gain some time, although it's not make or break for the laptime. It's the fastest part of the track and it's great to feel the car changing direction at high speed through here.



OZ GP WEATHER	
	29c FRIDAY CLOUDY
	27c SATURDAY CLOUDY
	28c SUNDAY CLOUDY

TYRE CHOICE			
Super-Soft	Soft	Medium	Hard
Unused	Option	Unused	Prime

## KEY CORNER TURNS 15/16

The last two corners are quite slow, and although you can't gain a lot of time through here you really can lose a lot. You have to be very precise here on the throttle to make or break your lap. We've seen a lot of crashes in the last corner in the past, which shows how small the margin for error can be.



## TROUBLE AT TURN 1

The first corner, which is a right-left, seems quite wide on the run into it, then all of a sudden it closes down. It's not easy to get three cars through side by side – as I saw last year! There is nowhere to be completely safe on the way in; all you can do is be flexible, see how it opens up at the start and work out where is the best place to go.



AUSTRALIAN GP PREVIEW 

# MARK HUGHES



Bahrain raised a lot of questions, but how many of them will be answered in Australia?

**B**ahrain posed more questions than it answered. Such as: are the Red Bull and Ferrari really that far clear of the pack? Or was that qualifying picture skewed by the heavy demands made of the super-soft tyres on what was a very long lap? Was it only those two cars that could complete a flying lap without the tyres overheating? With the much more benign layout of Albert Park, might we see the McLarens and Mercs challenging harder for the top grid places?

The focus on grid places is even more intense than before, given how difficult overtaking seems to be with the 2010 generation of cars. Drivers were saying getting close to another car gave even greater grip wipe-out than before, and the buffeting takes a lot out of the tyres you're trying to preserve.

There's hope of a livelier race than Bahrain, but probably only because of the higher probability of safety cars to jumble things up. An early safety car will present the front runners with quite a conundrum: do they pit and get onto the harder tyre, or does that put them too far behind for too long? Do you pit one car and leave the other out? You cannot know in advance what the right answer might



turn out to be. There's scope therefore for race results based on luck rather than merit.

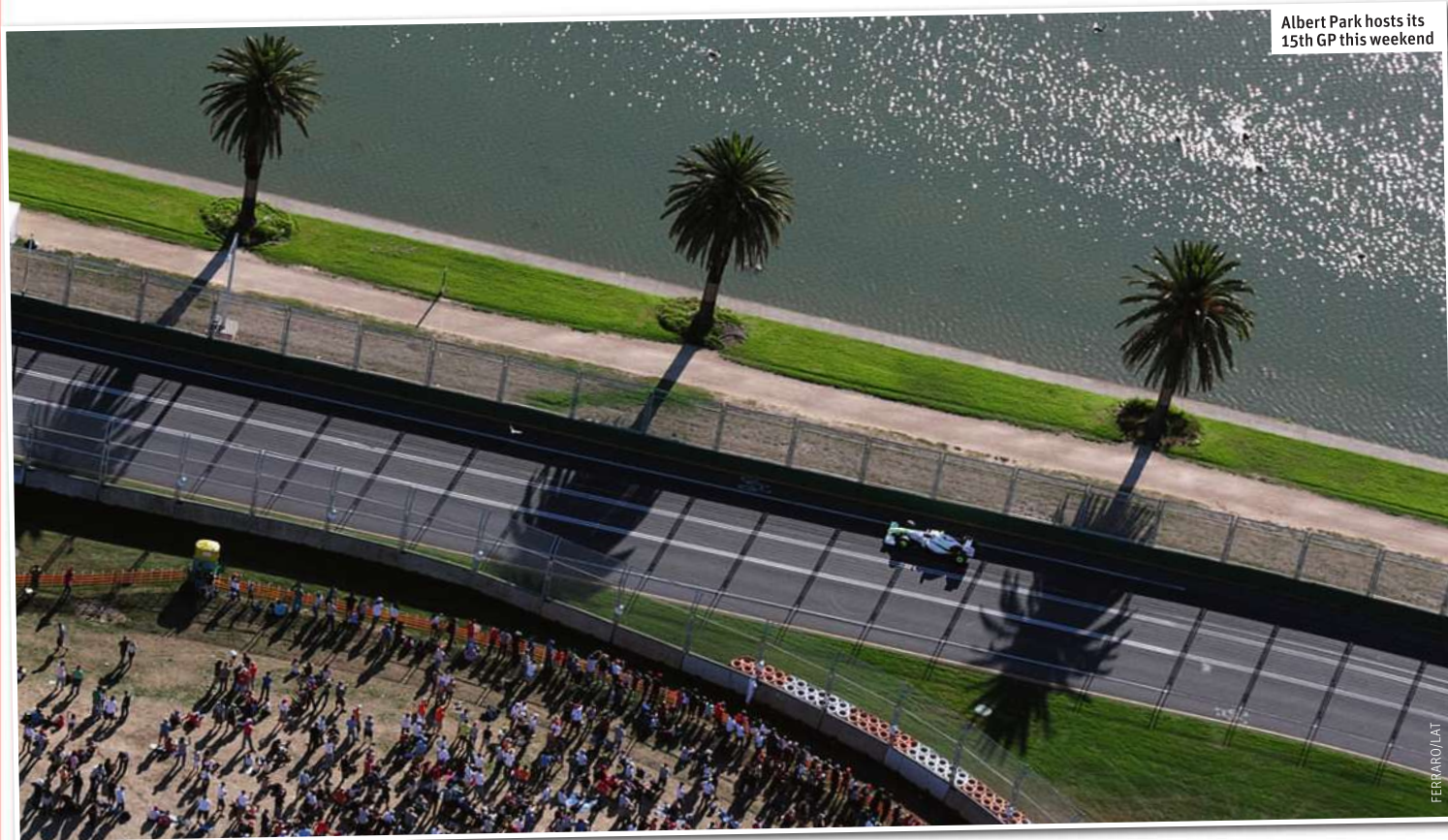
If we get through to the first stops without the influence of the safety car, it's going to be interesting to monitor what happens up front. In Bahrain Vettel had built himself enough of a lead over Alonso that he could afford the luxury of just reacting to the Ferrari's stop a lap later. He knew he'd lose time, but not enough to lose position. If the leaders are tighter together as the stops approach this time, there's every chance that whichever of them pits first will be leading afterwards.

 **P34 HUGHES ON NICO ROSBERG**

## Key questions

### What the Australian Grand Prix will tell us

- How dominant are Red Bull and Ferrari in reality?
- Will the Melbourne layout help McLaren and Mercedes?
- What impact could an early safety car have on strategy?



Albert Park hosts its 15th GP this weekend

## GARY ANDERSON TECHNICAL CONSULTANT



### SET-UP GUIDE

Albert Park is a temporary circuit, and with that comes changing grip levels as the weekend progresses. A team needs to go there and believe in its past history on set-up and whatever simulation it can do, as it is very easy to start screwing with the cars during the Friday sessions and be lost come qualifying on Saturday. It is not a circuit that offers many opportunities for overtaking, as it is dominated by slow corners in which you require a good front end with minimum understeer, and also good traction coming off the corner. Getting both of these at the same time is never easy.

### TV AND RADIO LISTINGS

#### FRIDAY, MARCH 26

0125-0305 Free practice 1 LIVE (BBC Red Button)  
0525-0705 Free practice 2 LIVE (BBC Red Button)

#### SATURDAY, MARCH 27

0255-0405 Free practice 3 LIVE (BBC Red Button)  
0500-0730 Qualifying LIVE (BBC1 and Radio 5 Live)

#### SUNDAY, MARCH 28

0600-0900 Grand Prix LIVE (BBC1 & Radio 5 Live)  
0900-1000 Grand Prix forum (BBC Red Button)  
1300-1455 Grand Prix re-run (BBC1)  
1900-2000 Grand Prix highlights (BBC3)

## AUTOSPORT TIPSTERS

Four AUTOSPORT journalists have been given an imaginary £50 and carte blanche to bet their way through the season. AUTOSPORT's faith in the points-scoring potential of Sauber meant that all four of our pundits took a hit in Bahrain, with only Edd Straw emerging in credit – a princely sum of £1 – after backing Fernando Alonso to win.



At 16/1 Nico Rosberg is well worth a flutter



**JONATHAN NOBLE**  
GROUP F1 EDITOR  
£5 each way on Hamilton 13/2

CURRENT TALLY  
**£45**



**EDD STRAW**  
F1 EDITOR  
£15 Vettel to win 5/2  
£10 Rosberg to finish top six 6/5

CURRENT TALLY  
**£51**



**ANDREW VAN DE BURGT**  
EDITOR  
£10 Webber to make the podium 15/8

CURRENT TALLY  
**£30**



**MARK GLENDEENING**  
DEPUTY F1 EDITOR  
£5 on any Brazilian to win 15/4  
£5 on a safety car period 8/15

CURRENT TALLY  
**£39**

### RACE ODDS

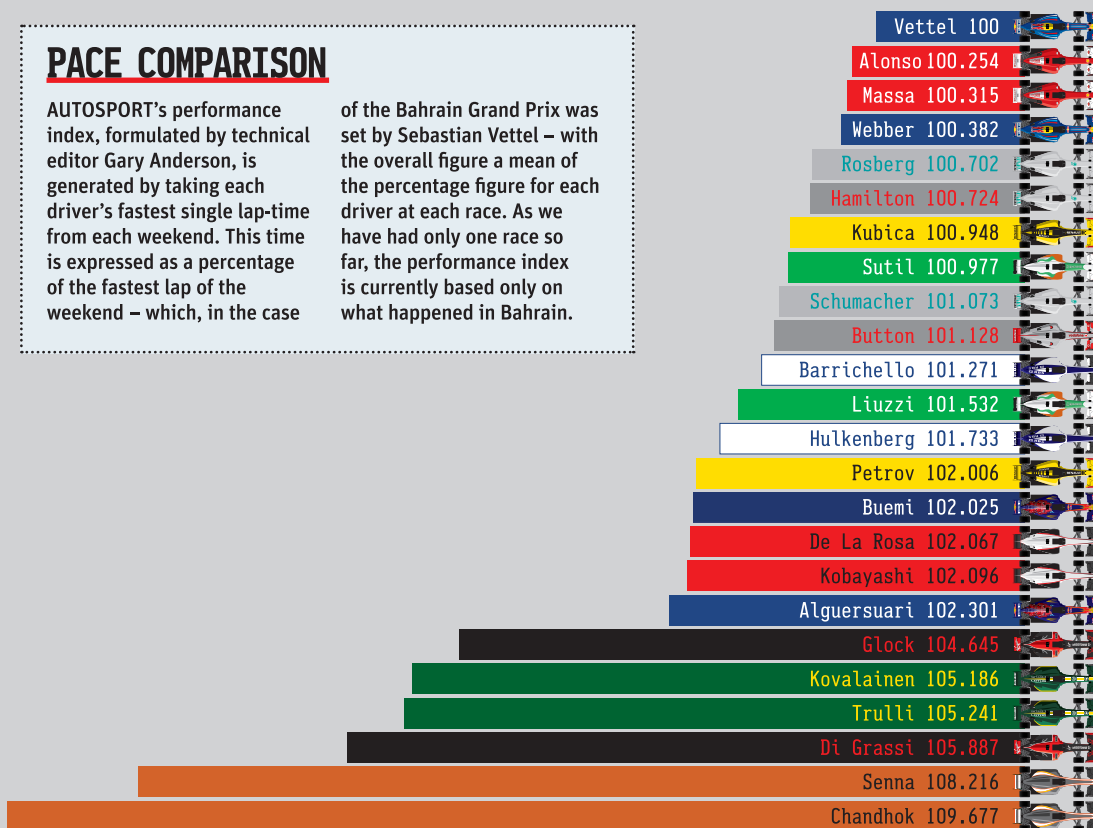
Alonso	9/4
Vettel	5/2
Massa	9/2
Hamilton	13/2
Webber	15/2
Schumacher	16/1
Rosberg	16/1
Button	18/1
Kubica	66/1
Sutil	66/1
Barrichello	80/1
Kobayashi	100/1
Liuzzi	100/1
Hulkenberg	125/1
de la Rosa	200/1
Petrov	200/1
Buemi	250/1
Alguersuari	400/1
Kovalainen	400/1
Trulli	500/1
Glock	500/1
Senna	750/1
di Grassi	1000/1
Chandhok	1000/1

Odds supplied by William Hill

## PACE COMPARISON

AUTOSPORT's performance index, formulated by technical editor Gary Anderson, is generated by taking each driver's fastest single lap-time from each weekend. This time is expressed as a percentage of the fastest lap of the weekend – which, in the case

of the Bahrain Grand Prix was set by Sebastian Vettel – with the overall figure a mean of the percentage figure for each driver at each race. As we have had only one race so far, the performance index is currently based only on what happened in Bahrain.



### 2009 RESULTS

POS	DRIVER	TEAM
1	Jenson BUTTON	Brawn-Mercedes
2	Rubens BARRICHELLO	Brawn-Mercedes
3	Jarno TRULLI	Toyota
4	Timo GLOCK	Toyota
5	Fernando ALONSO	Renault
6	Nico ROSBERG	Williams-Toyota
7	Sebastien BUEMI	Toro Rosso-Ferrari
8	Sebastien BOURDAIS	Toro Rosso-Ferrari

POLE Jenson BUTTON (Brawn) 1m26.202s

Brawn GP took a dominant one-two on its debut, while Jarno Trulli was awarded third after late-race confusion with Lewis Hamilton behind the safety car.

### 2008 RESULTS

POS	DRIVER	TEAM
1	Lewis HAMILTON	McLaren-Mercedes
2	Nick HEIDFELD	BMW Sauber
3	Nico ROSBERG	Williams-Toyota
4	Fernando ALONSO	Renault
5	Heikki KOVALAINEN	McLaren-Mercedes
6	Kazuki NAKAJIMA	Williams-Toyota
7	Sebastien BOURDAIS	Toro Rosso-Ferrari
8	Kimi RAIKKONEN	Ferrari

POLE Lewis HAMILTON (McLaren) 1m26.714s

Hamilton got his title challenge off to a perfect start with a comfortable victory in a race where only six cars made the finish, while Ferrari had a disastrous day.

### 2007 RESULTS

POS	DRIVER	TEAM
1	Kimi RAIKKONEN	Ferrari
2	Fernando ALONSO	McLaren-Mercedes
3	Lewis HAMILTON	McLaren-Mercedes
4	Nick HEIDFELD	BMW Sauber
5	Giancarlo FISICHELLA	Renault
6	Felipe MASSA	Ferrari
7	Nico ROSBERG	Williams-Toyota
8	Ralf SCHUMACHER	Toyota

POLE Kimi RAIKKONEN (Ferrari) 1m26.072s

While Raikkonen's Ferrari cruised to victory, reigning champion Alonso ran third behind rookie team-mate Hamilton until the final round of pitstops.

### 2006 RESULTS

POS	DRIVER	TEAM
1	Fernando ALONSO	Renault
2	Kimi RAIKKONEN	McLaren-Mercedes
3	Ralf SCHUMACHER	Toyota
4	Nick HEIDFELD	BMW Sauber
5	Giancarlo FISICHELLA	Renault
6	Jacques VILLENEUVE	BMW Sauber
7	Rubens BARRICHELLO	Honda
8	David Coulthard	Red Bull-Ferrari

POLE Jenson BUTTON (Honda) 1m25.229s

Alonso led most of the way in a race that featured four safety-car periods, while pole-sitter Button struggled all race before his engine blew on the last lap.

### 2005 RESULTS

POS	DRIVER	TEAM
1	Giancarlo FISICHELLA	Renault
2	Rubens BARRICHELLO	Ferrari
3	Fernando ALONSO	Renault
4	David COULTHARD	Red Bull-Cosworth
5	Mark WEBBER	Williams-BMW
6	Juan Pablo MONTOYA	McLaren-Mercedes
7	Christian KLIEN	Red Bull-Cosworth
8	Kimi RAIKKONEN	McLaren-Mercedes

POLE G.FISICHELLA (Renault) 3m01.460s (agg)

Fisichella took advantage of a mixed up grid to win first time out for Renault, while Barrichello and Alonso climbed from 11th and 13th respectively.

# SCOTTISH FORMULA FORD FESTIVAL

Knockhill Racing Circuit - 27th June 2010

Awards on the day include the David Leslie Memorial Trophy, Sir Jackie Stewart Trophy and the Angel Burgueno Trophy, presented to the drivers of the day and fastest lap.

The overall winner will be the first name to be added to the Scottish Formula Ford Festival Trophy along with a test in a Formula Ford Duratec courtesy of Fluid Motorsport. There are also two sets of Avon race tyres up for grabs, along with prize money and trophies for the two semi final races.



[WWW.SMRC-UK.COM](http://WWW.SMRC-UK.COM)

Race entry info contact:  
c.edwards@smrc-uk.com

[WWW.KNOCKHILL.COM](http://WWW.KNOCKHILL.COM)

Event & testing info call 01383 723337  
or email: joet@knockhill.co.uk

# ChequeredFlagMedia

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# MPH Mark Hughes

AUTOSPORT grand prix editor

The detrimental effect of F1's new rules on the quality of the racing in Bahrain leads to one conclusion: downforce is the enemy of overtaking

**E**ven Formula 1's mouth-watering array of talent couldn't disguise a horribly uncomfortable truth in the opening race of the season: the refuelling ban has given us a format that's made overtaking even more difficult than before. On a circuit previously quite conducive to passing, the few moves made in Bahrain were the almost exclusive preserve of the backmarkers.

In reality, this is not too surprising. In banning refuelling the sport surrendered one of the few mechanisms that disguised what has long been a reality: that cars with downforce are not generally able to overtake each other – short braking distances, turbulent airflow.

The more downforce, the worse the problem becomes. For proof of that, refer to the great dice Heikki Kovalainen and Timo Glock were having in cars with a fraction of the downforce of the front-running cars.

Refuelling was a contrived way of introducing variation and place changes,

by inducing differing strategies and having cars of wildly varying weights and performance competing together. Many purists decried it, believing that the tactical game it created dissuaded drivers from overtaking on track. Bahrain showed the folly of that belief. They

don't overtake because they can't.

Making the cars start the race with 160kg of fuel on board and on delicate tyres has made F1 endurance racing rather than a series of sprints. Drivers could not afford to risk damage to their tyres with an optimistic passing move. Flat-spot the tyres under the old format and you'd be at or near your refuelling window soon enough, when you could get the rubber replaced. Do it now, with the favoured single-stop strategy, and your race will likely be ruined. The grip wipe-out when you get under the gearbox of another car is more extreme than ever, the narrower tyres less able to compensate for the lack of downforce than before. A tyre war would have helped here, by ensuring ever grippier rubber, but F1 surrendered that just as it did refuelling.

Sebastian Vettel admitted that for most of his race-leading performance, with Fernando Alonso tracking him closely, he was not driving at anything like the pace he could have done, because of the need to preserve his tyres. He was secure in the knowledge that Alonso couldn't pass. This and the heavy fuel loads resulted in early race laps around 8-9s slower than qualifying. 'Come and watch drivers conserve their tyres' is not a very appealing marketing ploy.

Why wasn't it like this before refuelling reappeared after a 25-year absence in the early '80s? Because there was less perfection in design

and manufacturing. Drama would be created by exploding engines, turbos or tyres. The electronics were primitive, there was a bigger gap in the performance of the cars. But you can't legislate – in a lack of knowledge and return to those days, can't unlearn what the vast research and development budgets of the last couple of decades have taught the sport. Some downforce is okay, but if we've learned anything from the last few years, it's that if you allow some in, you allow it all in – the technology and the aerodynamicists are smart enough in combination to work out how to grab back what the wording takes away.

Unless the sport is willing to embrace the idea of a total removal of downforce – which would have to be applied to the whole racing ladder if F1 was to retain its place as the premier category – this is a problem that is not going away. If we want lots of place changes in a downforce category it can only happen with some contrivance. One of the most way-out suggestions I've heard is a 'right to the line' rule whereby if a following car can stay at, say, less than 1s behind for three consecutive laps, then the car in front must surrender the line at the next corner. Horribly artificial? Yes, just as is Bernie's suggestion of an 'overtaking lane' each driver can use once. Come on, if it's got to the stage where such ideas are even being contemplated, we need to give our collective heads a serious shake. Repeat after me: 'downforce is bad!'



Instant drama: in the old days engines went pop

**“The refuelling ban makes overtaking more difficult”**



Lewis Hamilton got to try the MP4-12C

## SPORTSCARS

# ACO and FIA back McLaren

New McLaren road car would be welcomed into sportscar racing despite not meeting GT2 requirements

**P**lans for the new McLaren MP4-12C to race against Ferrari and Porsche in sportscar racing's GT2 class have been backed by the organiser of the Le Mans 24 Hours and the FIA.

McLaren re-iterated its desire to pitch the high-tech MP4-12C against Ferrari on the race track at the official launch of the car last week. That would need a change of regulations

because carbon-chassis cars such as the McLaren are not allowed under GT2 regulations at present.

The Automobile Club de l'Ouest, which sets the regulations for Le Mans, suggested that it would allow in the McLaren if it was made in sufficient numbers.

Vincent Beaumesnil, sporting manager at the ACO, said: "We have had no contact with McLaren so far, but it would be logical to accept this car if it is a true production car."

FIA technical consultant Peter Wright said that he'd had "general discussions" with McLaren and explained that a waiver could be issued to allow a carbon-chassis car.

McLaren is aiming to build 1000 V8-engined MP4-12Cs in 2011. That

would mean it easily meets the production criteria for GT2 laid down by both the ACO and the FIA.

McLaren Formula 1 boss Martin Whitmarsh said he had already had talks with Ferrari about racing against the Italian manufacturer.

Whitmarsh said: "Our message was, 'We want to race with you. Where are you going to go? Why don't we go together?'"

It appears that McLaren would follow the model it created when it went racing with the F1 GTR in the mid-1990s. It set up a department to develop and service the car for customer teams.

Ron Dennis, who now heads up McLaren's automotive division, said that the company "recognises that

some of our customers will want to race this car" and that "at an appropriate time we will form a department to service that". He stressed that suggestions that McLaren could run a factory team were premature.

The current GT2 rules are now likely to be in place until the end of 2013. That was the proposal from Porsche that met with approval from the manufacturers who attended a meeting during the Sebring 12 Hours last week.

Beaumesnil explained that the ACO supported the move.

"We think it is a good idea in the current economic context," he said. "We have a lot of cars built to the current rules, so why change them?"

Dennis heads up McLaren project



COATES/LAT

## ALMS

## Panoz targets Petit for new car

**THE NEW** Panoz that will join Ferrari, Porsche, Chevrolet and BMW in the ultra-competitive GT class in the American Le Mans Series is scheduled to make its race debut in this year's finale at Road Atlanta.

The Abruzzi road car on which the GT2-spec racer is based will be launched at the Le Mans 24 Hours in June. Marque founder Don Panoz said that he hoped

the car would be "ready to race by the end of the season, which means Petit Le Mans at Atlanta".

Panoz revealed that the Abruzzi will be built around an aluminium chassis derived from that of the outgoing Esperante model and will be powered by a front-mounted V8 engine "like all Panoz should". He also promised "some innovative features, particularly in the

cooling department".

Development of the Abruzzi racing car will be given over to an independent team, Panoz revealed. He refused to confirm that this would be Tom Milner's Prototype Technology Group team, which masterminded the marque's ALMS campaigns in 2007-09.

Panoz: Petit Le Mans is target for Abruzzi





**GT2**  
**New drivers evaluated by Corvette squad**

CORVETTE RACING tested three new drivers with a view to the future at Sebring this week.

IndyCar star Graham Rahal, Grand-Am driver Paul Edwards and sportscar stalwart Butch Leitzinger were all due to try out in one of the factory Chevrolet Corvette C6.Rs early this week as part of an endurance test.

Programme manager Doug Fehan explained that the reason for the test was two-fold.

"We got caught out when Marcel [Fassler] signed for Audi," he said. "Fortunately Emmanuel Collard [who replaced him] had tested with us in the past, so he was plug and play as far as

we were concerned.

"We are trying to get a catalogue of drivers who might be available in the future. Right now we don't have anyone in the wings as back-up."

Fehan said that the second reason for the test was a likely expansion of

Chevrolet parent General Motors' motorsport activities "once the automotive industry emerges from the doldrums". He suggested that a Grand-Am programme or more support of Chevrolet's customers in Europe

were possibilities.

Rahal, who is presently scheduled to contest only two IndyCar Series events this year (see p27), was invited to the test after "expressing interest" in trying one of the Corvettes, according to Fehan.



Corvette is considering its future GT line-up

**ALMS**  
**Riley joins Jaguar GT2 programme**



RSR struggled with Jaguar at Sebring

THE COMPANY behind the dominant Riley Daytona Prototype chassis has been brought in to boost Jaguar's attack on the American Le Mans Series.

Riley Technologies has been signed to work on the XKR GT2 contender developed by Paul Gentilozzi's RSR team for the ALMS and the Le Mans 24 Hours. It was signed up in the week leading up to last week's Sebring 12 Hours after the XKR proved to be uncompetitive in pre-season testing.

Gentilozzi said: "The last time we won at Sebring, in 1992, Riley designed the car, an Oldsmobile Cutlass. I can't think of a better consultant to our Jaguar programme."

Riley technical director Bill Riley engineered the solo Jaguar at Sebring and has been retained to work with the team at the races for the first half of the ALMS season.

**IN BRIEF**



**BOUCHUT GETS LMP1**

Former Le Mans 24 Hours winner Christophe Bouchut will race a prototype at Le Mans for the first time since 1999 this June. The Frenchman, who raced for Mercedes in 1999 (above), will share a Kolles-run Audi R10 with amateur drivers Scott Tucker and Manuel Rodrigues.

**GTC CHANGES POSSIBLE**

A proposal to allow more cars into the new GTC class, currently open only to various specifications of Porsche's 911 Cup car, in the American Le Mans Series was discussed by the manufacturers at Sebring last week. The Ferrari 430 Challenge car was cited as a suitable addition, but there are no plans to open up the division to GT3 cars.

**ACO GIVES NOD TO CHINA**

The Asian round of the Automobile Club de l'Ouest's Intercontinental Cup will take place in China in November. The ACO has revealed that it is still talking to several tracks and plans to announce the venue and date at the end of April.

**MORE TITLES FOR CUP**

The remit of the Intercontinental Cup has been extended to include a GT2 manufacturers' title in addition to a prototype classification. A Teams Cup will also be awarded in each of the Le Mans classes, LMP1, LMP2, GT1 and GT2.

**FIELD SHUNT EXPLAINED**

ALMS veteran Jon Field's shunt in testing for the Sebring 12 Hours was caused by rear suspension failure, Intersport Racing has determined.

**WERNER JOINS HIGHCROFT**

Three-time Le Mans 24 Hours winner Marco Werner is joining Highcroft Racing for this year's edition of the French enduro. The former Audi driver will get his first taste of the Highcroft HPD ARX-01C at Sebring on Monday.

**BMW REVEALS GT3 RACER**

BMW has launched its V8-engined Z4 GT3 challenger (below). The first 480bhp Z4 racers have been delivered to customers for use in the FIA GT3 European Championship and various national series.



**AUTOSPORT SAYS...**

**GLENN FREEMAN**  
NEWS EDITOR

glenn.freeman  
@haymarket.com



**A**s the early weeks of Randy Bernard's reign over the Indy Racing League tick by, there seems to be a growing feeling of optimism towards him.

That was by no means a guarantee when the former Professional Bullriding boss was brought in to replace Tony George – as proved by the number of nicknames he acquired very quickly.

But he's managed to silence the doubters with little fanfare. When he's pushed on his lack of knowledge about the sport he holds his hands up, and his idea to form a committee to help him decide which chassis concept should be used from 2012 (p26) is further evidence of common sense prevailing.

And it appears that Bernard is learning fast. While he'll have all of the usual suspects from inside the sport acting as his advisors, he's already worked out that they can't be trusted entirely. So, much like the Indianapolis board members brought Bernard in from the outside, he's done the same with the chairman of his committee. General Looney (yes, really) is likely to get even more nicknames than his boss, but they will soon be forgotten if the IRL makes the right call on what Bernard has described as "the defining decision of this decade".



Indy and the IRL are counting on Bernard

**MILESTONES**



JOHNSON: 50 CUP WINS

Four-time NASCAR Cup champion Jimmie Johnson took his 50th win in stock car racing's top tier at Bristol last weekend. His first came at Fontana in 2002 (above)

# INDYCAR 2012

# Group formed to make Indy decision

IRL chief to appoint experts to guide progress on crucial chassis-choice question

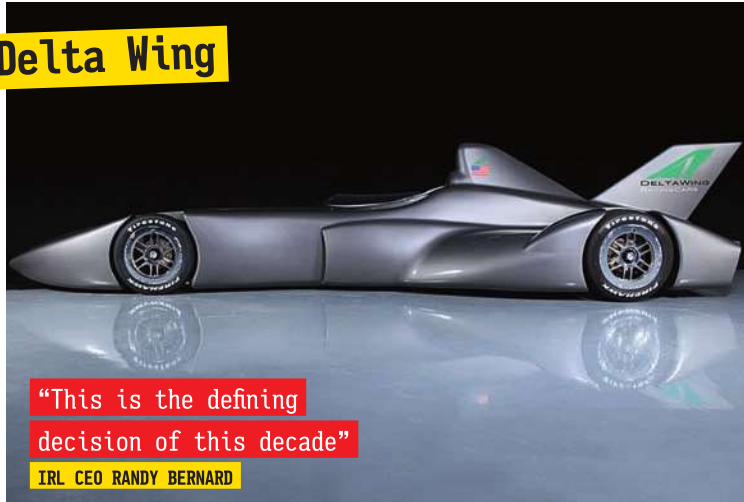
**N**ew Indy Racing League CEO Randy Bernard has formed an advisory committee to help make the crucial decisions to determine the car concept for the series from 2012.

The former Professional Bullriding boss, who replaced IRL founder Tony George last month, announced on Sunday that he will put together a seven-member committee to help ensure that the IndyCar Series makes the right decision for its future.

"This is the defining decision of this decade," Bernard said. "Knowing that my knowledge is very limited in open-wheel racing, I am going to pick seven advisors. I think it's really important that we work as a team on this — I don't want to make a mistake."

The committee will include an IRL representative (likely to be competition president Brian Barnhart), engine and chassis experts, a promoter and a team boss.

Bernard also admitted that the



**Delta Wing**

**"This is the defining decision of this decade"**

**IRL CEO RANDY BERNARD**

series could move back to a multi-constructor formula if his committee backed the idea.

"They need to sit down and understand everything from the economic impact of having a sole source as opposed to an open source," he said. "The fans would love the idea of an open source."

If it is not an economic hindrance to the team owners, I think it's important to try that. But that will be decided by the committee."

Bernard has already confirmed that William Looney III, a former general in the US Air Force without any racing background, will chair the group.

"I want to select a chairman that understands the process — someone who understands safety, technology, has high integrity and helps me articulate a process,"



**Lola**



**New Indy boss is preparing for 2012**

Bernard added. "General Looney was responsible for the modernisation of all US aircraft — I thought there were a lot of similarities with that."

Bernard has also had the IRL send out 6000 surveys to fans to try to gain an understanding of what single-seater fans in America want to see. "I think the fan will be an important part of this process as well as the team owners, drivers, and experts," he added. "We really need to understand the pulse of the fan out there and what they want."

The manufacturers that have submitted chassis concepts are expecting a decision in early June, but Bernard is prepared to delay that deadline.



**Dallara**



**BAT**



Briscoe made a V8 appearance in 2006

HORSBURGH/LAT

**V8 SUPERCARS**

## Indy stars lining up V8 Supercar drives

**THE TOP** three drivers in last year's IndyCar title race are on the verge of finalising deals to run in Australian V8 Supercar enduros this year.

Ryan Briscoe is expected to join the Holden Racing Team for

Surfers Paradise and Bathurst in what will be his second stint with the squad after co-driving with Jim Richards in 2006.

"Having raced with [HRT] before, they became number one

on my list," Briscoe told Australian publication *Motorsport News*.

Briscoe could be joined on the grid for the Surfers 'semi-enduro' by Dario Franchitti and Scott Dixon, both of whom are thought to be in

advanced discussions that would put them into a V8 Supercar for the first time. Franchitti could co-drive James Courtney in a Dick Johnson Racing Ford, with Dixon expected in Kelly Racing Holden.

**INDYCAR**

## Rahal looks to earn more races

**GRAHAM RAHAL** believes that his two-race deal with Sarah Fisher Racing can lead to more drives in this year's IndyCar Series.

The 21-year-old was left without a drive for 2010 when Newman/Haas/Lanigan Racing lost its sponsorship deal with McDonald's over the winter, and he was forced

to sit out the season opener in Brazil. But team owner/driver Fisher announced at the first race that she will give up her car for the next two races to get Rahal on the grid.

"I know we're only signed for St Petersburg and Barber, but who knows what's to come?" said Rahal. "I think this

is a starting point, and hopefully we can go out there and open some eyes and ears over the next couple of races."

The American added that he came close to several deals to continue racing full-time.

"Obviously for the first four months of the off-season I thought I had a

deal in place at Newman/Haas," he said. "Then there were a lot of seats I thought I was going to have on a full-time basis, and then at the last minute someone else jumped in, or a sponsor disappeared. So it was a frustrating off-season because we were so close to so many things."

**GP3/FORMULA 2**

## Stoneman keen to add GP3 to F2

Brit wants to race in two series



**DEAN STONEMAN** is still working on a drive in GP3 for this season after last week being confirmed on the grid for the FIA Formula 2 Championship.

The 19-year-old Briton, who has finished fourth in Formula Renault UK for the past two years, had hoped to graduate to GP3 this year. He was sixth fastest in the series' inaugural test at Paul Ricard earlier this month, but did not have the budget for a drive this year, so opted for a place in F2 instead.

Now Stoneman, who also considered a third season in FR UK, says he is receiving more offers from GP3 teams and is considering a dual campaign.

"At the minute, we haven't got the funds to do GP3 so we've signed up for F2," Stoneman told AUTOSPORT. "But three teams keep coming back with better and better offers."

Stoneman admitted that GP3 would have been his priority, but he sees benefits to racing in both series.

"If you win F2, you get the Formula 1 test with Williams. In GP3, you go round with F1 all year but at the end of it you don't get anything," he said. "I was quick in the GP3 test, and when I tested the F2 car at Bedford a week ago I was there or thereabouts within about 15 laps."

"Jonathan [Palmer, F2 boss] has done so much for us in the last week to make F2 happen – he even picked me up from my house in his helicopter to take me to the test – but if we can work something out maybe I can do both. If not I think I'll just do F2."

### IN BRIEF



**SUPERLEAGUE GRID FILLS UP**

Ex-Formula 1 drivers Franck Montagny and Robert Doornbos will race in Superleague Formula this year, starting from the opening round at Silverstone on April 4. The Frenchman will race for Superleague newcomers Bordeaux (above), while Dutchman Doornbos will represent Brazilian club Corinthians.

**TRACK CHANGES IN MOROCCO**

The Marrakech street circuit has been upgraded to meet the FIA's Grade II requirements to enable it to host Formula 2 at this year's event. Changes include extended run-off areas, modified barriers and kerbs, and widening of the track at Turn 7.

**WINSLOW GETS LIGHTS DEAL**

Briton James Winslow will switch from Atlantic to race for multiple Indy Lights title-winning squad Sam Schmidt Motorsports in the IndyCar feeder series this year.

**FORESTI SWITCHES F3 TEAMS**

Brazilian Lucas Foresti has made a late

switch from Hitech Racing to rival squad Carlin for his move into British Formula 3 this season. Carlin's line-up of Dallara-Volkswagens will expand to six cars to accommodate the 17-year-old.

**CHARITY RUN FOR SURTEES**

A charity run has been organised in memory of Henry Surtees for the Saturday (April 3) evening of the Easter weekend British F3 meeting at Oulton Park. The run, organised by Carlin mechanic Dan Hale, will raise money for Headway, a charity set up to help and support people affected by brain injury. Donations can be made at [www.justgiving.com/carlinraceforhenry](http://www.justgiving.com/carlinraceforhenry)

**MORTARA SETS EURO F3 PACE**

F3 Euro Series returnee Edoardo Mortara (below) set the pace in the first official pre-season test at Barcelona last week in a Signature Dallara-VW. The Macau Grand Prix winner was 0.4s ahead of Roberto Merhi (Mucke Motorsport Dallara-Mercedes), while ART's Alexander Sims was third fastest.





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## IN BRIEF



## MOTORBASE LINE-UP COMPLETE

Motorbase Performance will field a new line-up in its pair of BMW 320si machines in the British Touring Car Championship. Ex-McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award winner Steven Kane (above) returns to the team after a year on the sidelines, while Mat Jackson moves from RML.

## BTCC TESTING CHANGE

The deadline for pre-season BTCC testing has been moved back to March 31 to give teams extra time to prepare their cars. From April onwards, teams will only be permitted to attend the two official championship tests during the season.

## JOHNSON BACK WITH ASTRA

Martin Johnson will remain in the BTCC this season with his family-run Boulevard Team Racing outfit. Johnson, 46, will once again race a Vauxhall Astra Coupe.

## ARENA MAKES LPG SWITCH

Team Aon, the Arena-run squad that fields Ford Focus STs in the BTCC, has switched from petrol to LPG power for 2010. The team confirmed last week that Tom Onslow-Cole, who drove for Arena in late '09, will partner Tom Chilton.

## BAGUETTE HEADS FOR INDYCAR

Reigning Formula Renault 3.5 champion Bertrand Baguette will switch to the IndyCar Series this season. The Belgian will join Conquest Racing from the third round of the series at Barber Motorsports Park next month.

## KARTHIKEYAN GETS TRUCK DEAL

Ex-Formula 1 driver Narain Karthikeyan will make his NASCAR Truck series debut at Martinsville this weekend, after signing a part-season deal for new team Starbeast Motorsports. The Indian will also race in Superleague Formula for PSV Eindhoven.

## CUP SPOILER RETURNS

NASCAR officials have confirmed that Cup cars will run a spoiler (below) for the first time on the Car of Tomorrow at Martinsville this weekend, following tests at Talladega and Charlotte during the past two weeks.



BTCC

## BTCC boss hails big field

Works-backed Chevrolet and Honda efforts for Plato and Neal as grid grows to 23

Yikes, it's Neal, Plato and Collard. Stand back



British Touring Car Championship chief Alan Gow says that the series is stronger than it has been for many years after works teams from Chevrolet and Honda were included on a 23-car entry list unveiled earlier this week.

RML, which will run the Silverline Chevrolet squad, has replaced the Lacettis it fielded last year with a pair of ex-World Touring Car Championship Cruzes. They will be driven by 2009 BTCC runner-up Jason Plato and teenager Alex MacDowall, who steps up

from the Renault Clio Cup.

Team Dynamics will run Team Honda, ending a wait of almost 20 years for the Steve Neal-run team for factory recognition. Two-time champion Matt Neal and Gordon Shedden will race the Civics.

Gow said: "I don't think there's any other touring car championship in the world that has an increased entry list for this year over last. It says a lot about the strength of the BTCC that this has been achieved."

Reigning champion driver Colin Turkington has yet to sign a race

deal for the coming season, and 2007/08 champ Fabrizio Giovanardi is also virtually certain to stay away, but Gow does not believe that this is cause for concern.

"This time last year we didn't have a Plato or a [James] Thompson, and they both came in, so where's the worry?" he added. "And anyway, when Colin and Fabrizio started in the BTCC, few people knew who they were in the UK. They became stars through the BTCC, not the other way round. We have a good bunch of young drivers ready to take that next step now."

BTCC

## Triple 8 enters duo

TRIPLE 8 ENGINEERING is closing in on a British Touring Car Championship campaign after lodging two entries for this year's series.

The multiple championship-winning team has entered its two ex-works Vauxhall Vectras, although team principal Ian Harrison said that his squad's participation has not yet been rubber-stamped.

"We've entered, and that's as far as it's got," Harrison told AUTOSPORT. "We're not 100 per cent sorted."

No drivers have been named for the team, although Clio Cup champion Phil Glew has held talks with Triple 8 since testing at Rockingham earlier this month. "He's a good guy and I'd love to run him," Harrison added.

BTCC

## Champ won't defend title

COLIN TURKINGTON is highly unlikely to defend his British Touring Car Championship title this year.

The 28-year-old Northern Irishman, who won the crown in a WSR-run BMW in 2009, did not appear on the 23-car entry list unveiled at the BTCC's official launch, and has yet to finalise a deal to race in any series this season.

WSR team principal Dick Bennetts said: "We still don't have anything to offer Colin at the moment, which is a real shame. We've approached a lot of sponsors to try and put a deal together – and so has Colin – but it's just not happening."

Bennetts said that although both parties are working hard to put a deal together for a tin-top programme, it is now almost certain not to include a full BTCC campaign alongside new WSR drivers Rob Collard and Andy Neate.

Is Turkington continent-bound?



WOOD/LAT

"We have a third car, which is about 50 per cent complete at the moment, and it would be really cutting it fine to get it ready for Thruxton [the first BTCC round, on April 4]," he added.

It is understood that Turkington's preference is to race for WSR in all European rounds of the World Touring Car Championship, starting at Monza on May 23. He was unavailable for comment as AUTOSPORT closed for press.



LMP1

## 'ROCKY' SHUNTS R15

Audi's development programme with the 2010 R15 plus LMP1 car was interrupted by this shunt at Sebring on Monday. Mike

Rockenfeller crashed at Turn 17 on the first of four days' testing. The Sebring test followed five days of aero trials at Homestead last week

DPPI

DTM

# Coulthard closes on DTM decision

**EX-FORMULA 1** World Championship runner-up David Coulthard will only decide whether he will race in this year's DTM series following a make-or-break test at Valencia this week.

Coulthard, who tested a Mücke Motorsport-run Mercedes C-class for a third time at the Spanish venue last week, will make his decision while he travels to Melbourne for this weekend's Australian Grand Prix. He was scheduled to take part in the first day of the official group test at

Valencia yesterday (Wednesday) and will base his decision on the outcome of this run.

"At every test I've learnt something new," Coulthard told AUTOSPORT. "I'll make my decision after testing on Wednesday as to whether it's realistic for me to go racing in the DTM this year. I have a genuine desire to explore whether I can adapt to this type of car, because it's taking me out of my comfort zone. I'm a single-seater guy, and I realise this is a big challenge."

AUTOSPORT understands that Coulthard's test in the year-old C-class in Spain last week, alongside the new cars of Gary Paffett and Paul di Resta, did not go as well as his previous two tests, at Montebelco and the Algarve.

"The best time to make a decision is when you've got the maximum amount of information at your disposal to decide whether to jump into it," he added. "That will be after this final test."

Coulthard's potential DTM deal will not adversely affect his BBC

TV or AUTOSPORT F1 columnist roles. The first DTM round is held on April 25 at Hockenheim.

DC could be third DTM Scot for Merc



A1GP

## Interest grows for A1GP assets

THERE ARE a number of parties interested in buying the assets of A1GP to relaunch the series.

The company handling the sale of the

fleet of Powered by Ferrari single-seaters and other equipment has said that it has already shown the cars to two groups looking to revive A1GP. GoIndustry

DoveBid is expecting further viewings of the assets, which have been laid out at Dunsfold Aerodrome in Surrey.

Dave Hampson of GoIndustry said: "The sale process has started and we are in contact with quite a few people, a number of which are interested with a view to buying the assets to run the series going forward."

"We have been speaking to a significant

number of people for a few weeks and we are sure all have adequate finance to relaunch the series."

Hampson would not reveal how many parties have shown an interest. It is understood that one group is from the Middle East, and one is from India.

GoIndustry hopes to sell cars and equipment as a job lot within four weeks. If not, it will likely go to auction.

DTM

## Ralf stays put

SIX-TIME grand prix winner Ralf Schumacher will remain in the DTM for a third season, Mercedes announced on Tuesday.

The German will remain in a top-specification C-class with the crack HWA squad for a second year, during which he will hope to better his current best finish of fifth place, which he achieved towards the end of last year at Dijon.

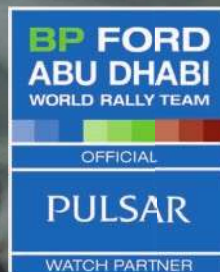
Schumacher said at the end of last season that, while his progress had been slower than expected in his first season in a new car, he felt he was getting to grips with the DTM in the last couple of races. Mercedes motorsport boss Norbert Haug hopes that the 34-year-old can carry that into 2010.

"Ralf has become one of the favourites of the fans of the series," said Haug. "I am sure that in 2010, after the necessary learning time everybody needs in the DTM, he will further improve in sporting terms."



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## MEEKE: I'M DOWN BUT NOT OUT

INTERCONTINENTAL RALLY Champion Kris Meeke has admitted last weekend's Rally Argentina was his worst ever for Peugeot.

Meeke led the event after the opening stage, but retired from a distant third after the penultimate test with a suspension problem aboard his Peugeot UK car. After two no-scores from three rounds, Meeke is 14 points adrift of IRC leader Juho Hanninen, who dominated last weekend in his Skoda.

Meeke said: "In the 12 rallies I've done in the Peugeot, this is the first time I've ever, ever had a mechanical problem with the car. But I have to say, we seem to have had 12 rallies' worth of problems on this event.

"I'm not massively concerned about the championship. Look at it this way, you have to drop two scores and if you do that, we're still joint leaders of the championship. But we have to make up some ground on the Skodas in Sardinia next time out."



WRC

# Chandler furious over cost rise

WRC Commission president Morrie Chandler highly critical of World Council U-turn on next-generation WRC costs

World Rally Championship Commission president Morrie Chandler has admitted he is concerned that the door has been left open for the next generation of cars to be just as expensive as the current ones.

Chandler is angered by a raft of technical regulations that were ratified at the recent World Motor Sport Council meeting, with those changes flying in the face of the FIA's original proposal for the 2011 cars.

The meeting of the WMSC last year laid out the future for the cars, stating that "The [2011] World Rally Car will be based on Super 2000 with the addition of a specified kit restricted to modifications to the bodywork, being removable aerodynamic devices".

A 1.6-litre turbocharged engine has now replaced the two-litre motor originally planned, but allowing parts like paddleshifts for the gearbox and water-cooled brakes were not part of the original kit. Those parts were all said to have been rubber-stamped this month.

Chandler said: "We're being fed bullshit – and that's the only language I can use – about the cost [of the next WRC]. Everybody's hiding it but, sorry, it's there and we know it's there. And if we're not careful the sport will be back to what we were trying to get away from four years ago. We gave plenty of notice that 2010 would be the end of the current WRC car and 2011 would be the start of the new cheaper car. So, we've got the new cheaper car,

which, in the meantime, has got more expensive and I suspect that when 2011 comes the top-running S1600-based WRC will be almost the same cost as a current WRC."

Ford's technical director Christian Loriaux agreed with Chandler, adding: "The new World Rally Car definitely became more expensive a couple of weeks ago when these

rules were agreed. I admit, at the start I said we needed the auto-shift on the gearbox, but seeing the way our 'box has lasted in the Super 2000 car, I was wrong. We don't need it. It doesn't add to the spectacle, and neither does an extra water-cooled calliper on the brakes. We should have stuck with what we had, which was more achievable."



2011 cars may cost as much as current WRCS

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Meeke took another DNF in Argentina

**AUTOSPORT SAYS...**

**DAVID EVANS  
RALLIES EDITOR**

david.evans  
@haymarket.com



**A** year ago, it seemed like common sense had prevailed. We had a sensible solution to the question of which cars for the next generation of world rallying. We had souped-up Super 2000.

The major benefit of this plan was the number of cars we would have seen on the stages. Then came the world-engine idea, which diverted us off to a 1600cc turbocharged motor. It's a nice idea, but the rest of the world – outside the WRC – does seem to have forgotten about it.

But, even with the new engine, things were still looking okay: costs were just about making sense.

Not anymore. Morrie Chandler is absolutely right in his statements about costs elsewhere on this page. After talking to Chandler, I called Ford's technical director Christian Loriaux, fully expecting the Belgian to ridicule our WRC Commission president for spoiling his fun. I was staggered to hear Loriaux agreeing wholeheartedly. The talk of fitting paddleshifts and water-cooled brakes to next year's cars is crazy.

Those ideas are bad enough, but the thing that is really going to hit the manufacturers' budgets is the decision to use a direct-injection engine.

Forcing teams into this solution means massive development costs for little more than lip service on the environmental front. Not to mention the safety implications of humping fuel into cylinders at 200 bar pressure with a white-hot turbo alongside.



**IN BRIEF**



has been drafted in and will run from April 28-May 1.

**RAUTENBACH EYES 2011**

Conrad Rautenbach has set his sights on a full-time return to the World Rally Championship next season. In an effort to acquaint himself with the style of next year's all-new World Rally Cars, the former Safari Rally winner will tackle as many as 20 rallies in a Ford Fiesta S2000 this season.

**OPIK OF THE BUNCH**

Arguably best known for his relationship with a Cheeky Girl, MP Lembit Opik will present the trophies to the winners of the opening BRC round of the season, the International Rally North Wales, this weekend.

**MEEKE PRESENTS CHEQUE**

Kris Meeke took time out of his Rally Argentina preparations to join the late Colin McRae's wife Alison to present a cheque for 74,000 pesos (£12,763) to the Villa Carlos Paz Hospital from Colin McRae Vision.



**PIRELLI STARS ON COURSE**

This year's Piorelli Star Drivers (Nick Georgiou, Peter Horsey, Ott Tanak, Alex Raschi and Hayden Paddon) gathered for the first time in Edinburgh last week. After three days of training with Robert Reid, the drivers left Scotland bound for Italy where they drove a Mitsubishi Lancer Evo X on gravel and asphalt.

**LOEB SHAKES DOWN PEUGEOT**

PH Sport team part-owner Sebastien Loeb tested a Peugeot 207 S2000 for one of his new customers, Mads Ostberg, in France last week. Ostberg is expected to make his S2000 debut on Rally New Zealand. The Norwegian was impressed with Loeb, saying: "We did four runs together and it was interesting to sit with the best driver. It made me think I need more practice."

**ASTURIAS LOSES IRC SLOT**

September's Asturias Rally has dropped out of the IRC schedule, after it failed to find the funding for its spot. The Rally Canary Islands

**WRC**

**Ford to test Fiesta WRC clone again**



Fiesta is being developed by Ford

**FORD IS** expected to continue testing its Fiesta RS WRC with a Focus engine after a successful first attempt in Sardinia last week.

In the absence of the 1.6-litre turbocharged engine, which will power the first-ever Fiesta World Rally Car next season, Ford elected to run with the motor from the current Focus RS WRC 09 in a two-day test near Cagliari, in the south of Sardinia last week. Mikko Hirvonen drove the car in this specification, and sources said Ford was pleased and would continue testing the Focus-engined Fiesta.

The source said: "From what we could see, the test went well. The data gained from how the transmission and suspension cope with the extra torque loads will help the team until they can get the right engine fitted. The next step will be to run this car on asphalt."

The 1600cc engine is expected to be in the car and running from late August.

**BRC PREVIEW**

Event	Bulldog International Rally North Wales
Round Based	1/6
Date	Welshpool March 27
Stages	8
Surface	gravel
Competitive miles	100
Last year's winner	Keith Cronin

Cronin took BRC glory in 2009





# APPRENTICE IN SILVER, OR GOLDEN



**‘N**ico Rosberg: Schumacher slayer? It’s easy to anticipate the headlines if the more-junior member of the Mercedes Formula 1 team continues to hold the edge over his legendary team-mate. Over the Bahrain Grand Prix weekend, Rosberg was consistently 0.3-0.4s faster than Michael Schumacher over a single lap, qualified three places ahead, and kept in front throughout the race.

It was almost certainly not what Schumacher had in mind when he made the decision to return. When the seven-time champion’s comeback was announced, it was generally seen as bad

news for Rosberg. Here he was, aged just 24, signed to the world championship-winning team, after four years of solid grounding at Williams. The world was apparently at his feet, the future almost limitless...

Then, suddenly, he was to be demoted to that unenvied position – played over the years by Johnny Herbert, Eddie Irvine, Rubens Barrichello and Felipe Massa – of Michael’s stooge. The pattern was unvarying: a slightly slower team-mate who didn’t penetrate through to the inner sanctum of the team like Schumacher, who was treated as a mere employee, not a partner. That would then be underlined by Schumacher’s

“Schumacher is not yet the driver he was. If he becomes so, Rosberg needs to already be at that level, or this will become Michael’s team”

devastating speed, the results that followed justifying the whole approach.

Except that Nico is in at the beginning, before that *modus operandi* has been established. There is still real – and huge – opportunity there for him if he can prevent that dynamic from forming. The only possible way of doing that is to drive consistently as fast, or faster, than the most successful

# BOY?

Nico Rosberg had the measure of comeback man Michael Schumacher in the intra-team Mercedes battle in Bahrain. But he'll need to dig deep to retain his edge. *By MARK HUGHES*



FERRARI/LAT

F1 driver of all time. The prising-open of that opportunity will only come in these early days. Schumacher is not yet the driver he was but, if he ever becomes so, Rosberg needs to have already got himself to that level, otherwise this will become Michael's team. It's not planned this way, just tends to evolve by Schumacher's force of personality and talent.

Which begs the obvious question: is Rosberg good enough to go bat to bat with a fully-restored Schumacher? It's one thing having an edge on the guy in his first race back after three years away, quite another to maintain at least parity if the magic returns. So, just how good is Nico Rosberg?

## SONNY SPELLS



**Keke and Nico Rosberg could become the third father-son pairing in F1 history to both be GP winners. Others are Gilles/Jacques Villeneuve and Graham/Damon Hill (above).**

Predictably, his current team thinks he's the real deal. His race engineer Jock Clear, whose CV includes the world title with Jacques Villeneuve in 1997 and stints with David Coulthard, Takuma Sato and Rubens Barrichello, likes what he's seen so far: "He's a very impressive little guy, very hard-working, very scientific, very intelligent. He knows his strengths and weaknesses and he works hard on his weaknesses — and that's a trait I'm sure he shares with Michael. Working with him is quite different to how it was with Rubens — who was incredibly similar to Jacques. They both had this very intuitive way of feeling something. They could tell you 'there's something

not quite right in the engine' and it wouldn't be showing up on the data, but invariably the engine would then develop a problem. They would say, 'You can look at the data if you want', whereas Nico is much more scientific — he wants to plough through the data with you and understand everything."

But, if Schumacher gets access to the sort of form he used to exhibit, Rosberg will need to be more than just an averagely-good F1 driver. "I don't know what Michael was like at his best or how far away he is from that now, or how much more there might be to come," says Clear. "But what I see is two guys with very similar levels of basic talent and a team structure that ▶



GILHAN/GETTY

Nico will need to dig very deep to stay ahead of Schu



Rosberg stepped ably into Button's shoes at 'Brawn'

THOMPSON/GETTY



Rosberg with Jock Clear, his race engineer



COOPER/AT

◀ wouldn't really allow for one guy who is fundamentally of similar performance developing a special thing that would allow him and his engineer to have themselves a built-in advantage. This team is so open, there are not two sides competing against each other at the engineering level. 'Shov' [Schumacher's engineer Andrew Shovlin] and I are best mates, and I think you saw that openness here last year with Jenson and Rubens. The sort of situation Michael had at Ferrari I cannot see developing here."

The advantage enjoyed by Rosberg in Bahrain was to do with how each driver coped with the Mercedes' stubborn understeer balance. There is a sharply-defined limit to how much load these new, narrower front Bridgestones will accept; once past a certain slip angle, if you apply more steering lock their grip just falls off a cliff face – a real problem if the car has an understeer bias. In Bahrain Rosberg was driving consistently just within that point, accepting the limitation. Schumacher seemed to be frustrated by the trait and

would try to carry too much speed in, then be forced into the zone where the front-grip fall-off was triggered. Understeer is not the natural way with either of these drivers, but Rosberg adapted better in Bahrain qualifying.

Afterwards Schumacher was uncharacteristically downbeat. Quiet and reflective, he seemed genuinely shocked that he had struggled and seemed almost embarrassed about having to face questions from the media, relieved whenever the questions were directed to Rosberg. For his part Nico seemed to revel in it, very assured and confident, as if this didn't surprise him one bit.

It's highly unlikely that a) the car's understeer balance will not be improved and b) that Schumacher will continue to struggle with it even if it's not. Rosberg did a perfect job of making hay while the desert sun was shining in Bahrain, with a mature performance that never asked for more than the car had to give, and not a single wheel out of line the whole weekend. Had there been a less-accomplished pilot than Rosberg in the

car, the extent of Schumacher's struggle might not have become apparent.

But that won't always be enough, especially if, when the car's sweet spot is found, it allows Schumacher access to the zone. Rosberg is quick, but his

“It wasn't that Williams didn't believe in Rosberg's talent or intelligence, but there was a feeling that he didn't apply them relentlessly enough”

racing CV shows he's met his match within a team before. It happened in karting in European Formula A, when he was beaten by team-mate Lewis Hamilton. It happened in his rookie year of F1, when he was usually overshadowed by Mark Webber. That doesn't necessarily mean anything definitive, doesn't mean he has not continued to develop, but it does suggest he might need to be digging very deep, very soon – and this is where the question marks arise.



'Sleeping' Rosberg lost places in Monaco 2009

## Rosberg's brilliant Bahrain debut

**Four years ago he seemed to have the world at his feet. Jackie Stewart certainly thought so**

There have been frequent flashes of brilliance in Nico Rosberg's four-year F1 career to date, but the most impressive performance of all remains his grand prix debut in Bahrain in 2006. The pace he displayed in coming back from a pitstop to replace a wing he damaged at the first corner suggested he could have scored a sensational debut victory had he not had the incident. It was a drive described by Jackie Stewart at the time as "possibly the most impressive grand prix debut I've ever seen".

A clash with Nick Heidfeld's BMW at the first corner did the damage to the Williams's nose and, after pitting for a replacement, he was a solid last, over a minute behind team-mate Mark Webber. With a wonderful charging drive, during which he overtook Montoya and Heidfeld, he had clawed back over 40 seconds of the deficit to Webber. During this time he set the race's fastest lap, one of only four drivers to do so on their F1 debuts, on his way to seventh place.

Rosberg's pace and consistency in his comeback drive was actually superior to that of the two guys

fighting it out for victory at the front: Michael Schumacher and Fernando Alonso. It was partly explained by a new, previously-untried construction of tyre from Bridgestone that Ferrari had opted against, one that proved to have much lower degradation over a stint, meaning that the Williams was the car that best combined tyre performance with a low fuel load at the end of the stints. But that didn't explain his advantage over Webber that day, one that was not subsequently repeated. *ES*



Broken wing in Bahrain '06 preceded fightback



Few thought the focus would be on Rosberg



Rosberg, a Merc protege in karting, is back in fold

The Williams team is run by hard taskmasters, but they had already decided they were letting Rosberg go by the time Mercedes came along. It wasn't that they didn't believe in his talent or intelligence, but there was definitely a feeling there that he didn't apply them relentlessly enough. In Monaco last year Frank Williams asked him what had gone wrong in the second stint, and Nico's reply along the lines of 'this is Monaco; you cannot stay flat-out the whole time' rather finished off his chances there. To the team, it appeared as if Massa and Webber – who had both been behind the Williams for a time – had indeed 'stayed flat out the whole time' and that was why they'd beaten Rosberg. It tallied with stories they were hearing from elsewhere in the team about his application: he was strong-minded and super-confident, but sometimes those traits were used to justify less-than-full effort.

It would be wrong to take such impressions as definitive. There was undoubtedly dissatisfaction on both

### ROSBERG F1 CV



**Starts: 71**  
**Best finish: 2nd**  
**Podiums: 3**  
**Best qualifying: 3rd**  
**Fastest laps: 2**  
**Points: 85.5**  
**Best championship: 7th (2009)**

sides of the relationship, and it could be that Rosberg was simply reacting. But, when the time comes to dig deep, there needs to be a steely inner core. That's something that Rosberg has yet to really display. Talented, born into a racing family with money and connections never an issue, he scaled the racing ladder very quickly. Graduating to F1 in less-than-fully-competitive circumstances, but competitive enough to display his talent, he may have had a relatively easy ride so far. A returning Alex Wurz and rookie Kazuki Nakajima didn't provide the sort of tough team-mate comparison that Webber had done in 2006. So Rosberg's ultimate standing within the F1 paddock is still a far-from-accepted thing.

If Schumacher never does redial himself back into the special place he used to find, and Rosberg continues to do just enough to be competitive with him, it might enhance his reputation. But to compete on level terms with Alonso's Ferrari, Vettel's Red Bull and Hamilton's McLaren,

just doing that will not be enough. And, if Michael rediscovers his magic too, then Nico is going to have nowhere to hide. If he can use this to motivate himself to dig ever-deeper and draw harder upon what is clearly a pretty deep well of ability, then the world really will be at his feet.

"If we were to win the world championship, with Michael in the other car," says Clear, "it would in many ways be the crowning glory on my CV, but realistically it's about working together to progress the whole. I'm pretty sure what you're going to see is the advantage swinging one way and the other between them throughout the season. I don't see either one of them developing half a second's advantage over the other, but I'm sure you'll see one of them a couple of tenths ahead, then it swinging back – and if it happens that Nico is ahead at the end of the season, I'm pretty sure it won't be because Michael isn't what he was. I'm sure he wouldn't see it like that either, and would recognise that the guy is genuinely very talented." *ES*

# COMEBACK KINGS OF 2010

Renault's phoenix act is more striking than Schumacher's. *By EDD STRAW*

Name Formula 1's 'big four' teams. Red Bull, Ferrari, McLaren and Mercedes, right? As for the strongest of the midfield teams, race results suggested Force India and Williams, which picked up the final two points finishes in the Bahrain Grand Prix. But, based on qualifying, the car most likely to gatecrash the frontrunners' party doesn't hail from Silverstone or Grove. Born in West Oxfordshire with a dash of *va va voom*, the Renault R30 might just be this year's surprise package.

Star driver Robert Kubica's race was ruined by contact with Adrian Sutil, triggered by Mark Webber's smoke-billowing Red Bull stuttering out of Turn 2 in the race in Bahrain. Even then, he charged to within seven seconds of the final points position.

Had Kubica repeated his best time from free practice, he wouldn't have been ninth on the grid, and therefore in a position to clash with Sutil. Instead, he'd have been seventh, and within 0.1s of fifth on the grid.

For a team coming off the back of a dismal 2009 season, dominated by the shame of the emergence of the 2008 Singapore Grand Prix scandal and uncertainty over its future, that's a remarkable turnaround. Oh, and the squad had no wind-tunnel for four weeks during the off-season for good measure (see panel, far right).

Winning F1 teams aren't built, or rebuilt, in a day, but this was

probably as good a start as Renault, now majority owned by Genii Capital, could have hoped for. It's also Renault's strongest start-of-season package since its title-winning days of 2005 and '06.

"Qualifying ninth and being more than a second from pole are not things that you normally associate with being happy, and this is nowhere close to our ambitions for the team," says technical director James Allison. "Compared to our position last year, where we were dead last on pace and had a lousy year in so many ways, it's a huge relief to have delivered a starting point that we thought was realistic.

"There has been a very conscious effort with this car to push in a way that leaves all of our previous efforts trailing in terms of the intensity. We're just hoping that this is going to get us back to where we need to be. It won't be the job of a race or half a season; being properly competitive means winning the championship. That's going to take a little longer."

After three seasons during which, save for a brief renaissance in the final third of 2008, Renault has been in gradual decline, this is big news. Chat to team personnel, and there's palpable sense of a new beginning with Genii and new team principal Eric Boullier on board. It even manifests itself in the R30, which features intricate detailing not seen on Renault's cars in recent years. Where its boxy, unwieldy



Renault technical director James Allison first joined the Enstone-based team in its Benetton guise in 1991. He worked as aerodynamics chief for the Larrousse team in '94 before returning to Benetton in '95. He joined Ferrari in 2000, before returning for a third stint at Enstone in 2005. He was promoted to technical director over the winter.

predecessor was more elephant, this year's car is all elegance.

"In some ways, it's frustrating when people talk about what cars look like, but I have got some sympathy with that view," says Allison. "Last year's car didn't look like a winner and it wasn't a winner. This car does have a lot more detail on and under the surface – it has had a lot of attention lavished on it. It's nowhere near where it needs to be, but it's a massive tribute to everyone in the factory to have got it here. To drag yourself back up from a low position is hard and it has taken a ridiculous amount of commitment.

"F1 people are naturally optimistic and they want their team to do well and be proud of it. The controversy of last year was a bodyblow for all of us, and it made a lot of people deeply, deeply unhappy. From there, our only route to redemption is to show that we're a good team, that we can put a creditable car on the grid and then develop every race. Once people got over the crushing blow of that awful mess last year, they focused on making this car the one to restore the confidence."

Before the season, few anticipated a Renault revival. But if the ex-Benetton team can follow up its good start with the kind of in-season development we saw in 2007 and '08, perhaps Allison's ambition of being a title contender in 2011 is not so fanciful. Move over Schuey: Renault could be F1 2010's star comeback. ❧



Kubica is leading attack of 'revived' Renault



TEE/LAT

## THE CHANGE OF WIND

FOR JUST under four weeks in November, the Renault F1 team's windtunnel was closed down for the polyester rolling road to be upgraded to steel.

Completed in double-quick time, the upgrade broadens the scope and precision of the development that can be done in the tunnel, and technical chief James Allison is confident that it will pay dividends. "We felt that the

Tunnel closed for a month



best thing to do was to concentrate on making the shutdown as short as possible, getting it done properly and accepting the hit," says Allison.

"The hit we're talking about, given the rate of aerodynamic

development, is probably about 0.2 seconds. We'll recover it quickly. The investment we've made will pay off over the course of the season and we will be very healthily in credit for next season."



Rookie Vitaly Petrov did sound job in second car

BONGARTS/GETTY

TEE/LAT

# THROWN IN AT THE DEEP END

Karun Chandhok had just four timed laps under his belt in his HRT before making his F1 debut. *CHARLES BRADLEY* listens to his tale

**I**magine the scene: you're about to make your Formula 1 qualifying debut, but you've never driven the car you're sitting in. The session goes green and, just as eventual polewinner Sebastian Vettel trundles past your garage, you feel a worrying rumble from your backside. Pre-session nerves? Not for Karun Chandhok in Bahrain the weekend before last. It was something else: "I could feel the mechanics putting the floor on underneath me!"

Welcome to his crazy race-weekend debut, where the clinical veneer of F1 was stripped bare into one last-minute engineering panic after another, as the lateness of the Hispania Racing Team's deal took its toll. After losing the entire day of running on Friday, Chandhok was assured he'd be good to go on Saturday morning...

"I thought at least if we did free practice on Saturday I'd be fine and get some mileage ahead of qualifying," he says. "I arrived at the track just before 8.30 and the boys said everything looked okay, they'd run it up overnight and it was fine. So I got ready, got in the car at about 10.45 – and there were no gears. Again, it was a problem with the clutch – the sensor this time – so I couldn't select first gear. The gearbox had to come off again, so that was that."

#### CHANDHOK CV

**Born** January 19 1984  
**From** Chennai, India  
**2009** 18th in GP2 (one podium)  
**2008** 10th in GP2 (one win)  
**2007** 15th in GP2 (one win); Red Bull F1 test  
**2006** Formula V6 Asia champion  
**2005** World Series by Renault; A1GP  
**2004** British F3; World Series by Nissan  
**2003** Third in British F3 Scholarship Class  
**2002** British F3 Scholarship Class  
**2001** Formula 2000 Asia champion  
**2000** Formula Maruti champion

The HRT mechanics now faced another race against time, with qualifying just a couple of hours away. It was a race they won – a great effort after just 10 hours of sleep over the previous four days.

"They literally dropped the car onto the deck off the highstand, I hooked first gear, and off I went out of the garage – straight into qualifying! It hadn't left me with much time to sit, think and plan what I was going to do – it wasn't the most relaxing way to go into my first qualifying run. We decided to put a decent fuel load in... put it this way, we'd have gone quite a long way into a stint in the refuelling days, so we just planned to run as much as possible during the session."

Chandhok got four timed laps in, qualifying 1.664s slower than teammate Bruno Senna, who had run in two practice sessions. A highly respectable performance, considering he'd never driven the new section of track before.

"My main objective, besides making sure I qualified for the race, was to not piss any of the quick guys off! In these circumstances, this was the last thing I wanted to do. Obviously it's a high-pressure season for everyone at the top end of the pitlane this year, so the last thing I wanted was to trip any of them up on my first weekend. In fact, I ended up getting so much pick-up on my

tyres making sure of that in qualifying that they were pretty shitty by the end."

Chandhok was pleased with the reception he got from his new peers: "I knew quite a lot of the drivers before, and on Thursday guys like Jarno [Trulli], Rubens [Barrichello] and Mark [Webber] were saying congratulations on getting here, welcome to the club sort of thing. I met Michael [Schumacher] at the drivers' photograph, and everyone was quite nice and knew who I was. Nobody said 'Who's this wanker?' anyway!"

So little prepared was Chandhok that he had an unusual question for his race engineer, Richard Connell (ex-Super Aguri and Renault test team), immediately before the start...

"I said, 'I'm not being funny, but I've never gone into a race expecting to be lapped before – what do I do?' I didn't know! So he was able to give me some advice from his Super Aguri days of how to do it and lose the minimum of time. I don't think I've ever been lapped before in my life in a proper race."

Sadly, he didn't get the chance. After completing the opening lap without drama, Karun's adventure would end at Turn 12 of lap two, in a juddering halt against the barriers.

"Even on Sunday, we weren't racing



Debut in Bahrain GP lasted less than two laps







Chandhok with engineer Richard Connell

Snappers had to be sharp to catch Chandhok action

**“The last thing I wanted to do was trip anyone up. I ended up getting so much pick-up on my tyres in qualifying that they were pretty shitty by the end”**

really, we were testing,” he admits. “We started the cars from the pitlane with about 20 seconds between us; we certainly didn’t want to race between ourselves. My engineer Richard has been a big plus. He advised me how to build up the tyre, and I wasn’t pushing very hard, but the new part of the circuit is bloody bumpy.

“I’d never hit that bump in Turn 12 before, and it just spat me onto the kerb. I had no steering there, so I was a passenger after that really. It was unfortunate, but it was the knock-on effect of the lack of running I had on Friday and Saturday.”

Looking ahead, Chandhok has genuine optimism about the potential of the Dallara-built chassis if the mechanical reliability side can be sorted.

“We can’t optimise anything we have until we have reliability,” he says. “The baseline package is not bad; we have some potential there. We did no set-up work in Bahrain, and we’re running default settings on everything. I even ran installation-lap settings in qualifying. We haven’t gone into anything like aero balance yet; we just want to get some serious running.

“Speaking to Geoff Willis [the team’s highly experienced technical consultant], our aim for Australia [this weekend] is to do 20 laps in every practice session. That would give us a platform to build upon. But the bottom line is we have to get some reliability.”

Target one is to get the hydraulic system updated in time for Australia, to try to cure the gremlins that blighted his grand prix debut, but Chandhok is realistic about how much progress the team can make, given the flyaway nature of the start of the season.

“In all honesty I expect that to be a difficult weekend,” he admits. “If we get to half distance, that’ll be a step forward. It’ll probably be Shanghai [round four] before we can be reasonably reliable.”

And if he’s really lucky, he might even get lapped. **✎**





Power splashes to win in Brazilian rain...

ABBOTT/LAT



...and looks suitably 'rapt' (in Aussie speak)

LECKY/GETTY



Penske debut came in St Petersburg last year

ABBOTT/LAT

# RECONNECTION OF **POWER**

On his return from serious injury, Australian Will Power has propelled himself to the top of the IndyCar standings after winning in Sao Paulo. *By GLENN FREEMAN*

**S**econds after his huge impact with the stricken car of Nelson Philippe at Sears Point last year, Will Power thought he was sitting in a racing car for the last time. While he didn't know the exact details of his injuries – two broken vertebrae in his lower back – the Australian knew he was in deep trouble. And he certainly didn't think that seven months on he would be a full-time Team Penske driver, winning the IndyCar season opener on his race return.

"When I initially hit [Philippe] and the car was skidding to a stop, I was thinking, 'Well, that's the end of my career,'" the 29-year-old admits. "The pain was just terrible. The doctors told me that an impact like that is like being hit by a bus. So to win on my comeback was a great way to reassure myself that I'm back to where I was, which is big for my confidence."

Power had started 2009 on a deal with Penske that might not have even allowed him to race at all last year. He had signed up as stand-in for Helio Castroneves, should the Brazilian's tax-evasion trial overlap with the start of the season. When that turned out to be the case, Power got the call and took a top-six finish first time out at St Petersburg. Penske then rewarded him by entering a third car for Long Beach as Castroneves returned on the eve of the race weekend. When Power took second on raceday, the team knew that it had to find a way to keep him on its books.

"When I signed the deal I knew there was a chance that I wouldn't race, but in my mind it was a risk worth taking because of how great this team is," says Power. "Then they promised me the Indy 500, and after that they said they'd give me five more races. That's the sort of team they are – if you're doing a good job they don't want to let you go."

Penske continued that approach from the moment Power was given a bed in hospital following his crash. While the

**PENSKE POWER**



**Will Power's rookie IndyCar season with KV Racing in 2008 yielded one front-row start and two top-five finishes from 17 races. His stats since joining Penske last year are somewhat more impressive:**

<b>Starts</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Wins</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Poles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Podiums</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Fastest laps</b>	<b>1</b>

Queenslander doubted what his future held, he was reassured by the team that it would find a way to field a third car full-time in 2010.

"That's Roger Penske for you. He's probably the best guy you could work for – very loyal, he sticks by you no matter what," Power adds. "He told me, 'Don't worry, we're working as hard as we were before, you'll have a drive next year.' Obviously until the deal's done you're a little bit anxious when you're lying in hospital, but I was confident."

With Penske promising to sort out his future for him, all Power had to worry about was recovering in time for the new season. Aside from the odd minor setback when he tried to do too much too soon, it was a process that went better than expected, and enabled him to get back into an IndyCar at Sebring in mid-January.

"When you break your back and you can only stand up for 15 minutes at a time, there's obviously a little bit of doubt in your mind at times," he says. "It was a slow progression, but every time I saw the doctor he was really happy and surprised at how well it was healing."

"When I got back in the car, it felt normal straight away. I thought to myself, 'Nothing's changed; I still feel

exactly the same in this car'. My injuries didn't even register in my mind at first – it was like nothing had happened. The only time I felt my back a little bit was under braking, but that was gone by the second test."

After a grounding in British F3, Renault World Series and then Champ Car, Power has always shone on road courses. But he knows that if he is to hang on to his new-found place at the top of the IndyCar standings then he will have to deliver on ovals, where he has just 13 starts to his name, and a best result of two fifth-place finishes.

"There's probably a bit of experience lacking on ovals, but I think I can run at the front now," he says. "Last year, when I ran at Indy, that was a real step forward for me. Before then I wasn't super-confident, but at some point during the 500 I just became really comfortable with the car. You're always worrying about the rear on ovals, because if you have a car that oversteers you'll be in the wall. I had that a couple of times with KV [in 2008] because we were learning on the job after the merger, but the Penske Dallara is very good, so I know I've got a great shot at this title."

After what he's been through since last August, it's hardly surprising that Power doesn't go looking for excuses. ❧

**THE BACK-BREAKER**

Power suffered his broken back when he speared into the side of Nelson Philippe's stricken car in practice at Sears Point last year. EJ Viso (left of pic) had already clipped the Frenchman





# THE BE

After six years, the GP2/05 racer has just been decommissioned from service. Here is the best and worst of its history

94 RACES 40 DIFFERENT WINNERS

# ST JUNIOR CAR

**L**aunched in 2005, the Dallara-built, Mecachrome-engined GP2/05 has been the finishing school for a raft of drivers shooting for Formula 1 stardom. Fifteen of them used the car as the final stepping stone before making their debut in grand prix racing, either in the main series between '05 and '07 or Asia Series from 2008-10, finishing less than two weeks ago in Bahrain. It produced some of the best racing ever seen in an F1 feeder formula. "It was a huge step up in downforce over everything else, and was a genuine scaled-down F1 car," says Karun Chandhok, a race-winner in the car in '07 and a recent F1 graduate. "Compared to an F3000 it was in a different league and was a true landmark chassis."

These are some of the stories that made the car a classic of its kind:

## MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS

Will Buxton, GP2 press officer between 2005 and '07, reflects on what GP2/05 meant to him

**I STILL** remember the first time I saw her. At the tail end of 2004, she looked so much more modern than the three-year-old Lola F3000 car she was replacing. She still looks great – such a clean, simple car and so effective at not only training the boys for F1, but in providing some of the best racing I've ever seen.

Her birth wasn't straightforward though. I remember writing the first press release after Franck Montagny's shakedown run in July 2004 and, although I can't recall exactly how many kilometres he'd completed, I know it wasn't many. Her gestation period was littered with problems, and they continued through to the first group test. We had rear-wing failures, exploding brakes, and engines and gearboxes that sporadically lunched themselves.

That first race at Imola was insane. The boys at the teams worked 48-hour shifts trying to make the cars work. After the wire-loom problems in practice, the Carbon Lorraine brakes fell apart in the race. Brembo had been tipped off that the original brakes were marginal, and were waiting outside the track with enough new brakes for the whole grid. We never had brake issues again.

The engine issues continued for a while and the clutch still remains a tricky little bugger, but nobody had ever tried to build a spec car for an F1 feeder series that was this advanced. By mid-season the creases had been ironed out and the car was running beautifully – so well, in fact, that she was included in that year's

racing car Top Trumps! With upgrades for every season she remained relevant too. I remember that Heikki Kovalainen was tasked with the development work for 2006 at Paul Ricard. A female racer who shall remain nameless showed up for a secret run, and Heikki decided to show off a bit. He lit the tyres up coming out of the garage and stacked into the pitwall!

I'll never forget Nico Rosberg in Bahrain in 2005, Lewis Hamilton in Turkey in '06 and his double move on Piquet and Piccione through Maggotts/Becketts at Silverstone that same season, Timo Glock's emotional 2006 home win in Germany, Adam Carroll's bucketload of oppo taking the lead on the first weekend at Imola, Giorgio Pantano's double win at Monza, or even the penultimate GP2 Asia weekend in Bahrain, one of the greatest races I've seen.

She was safe too. Neel Jani at Spa in 2005, Carroll at Valencia in '06 and Ernesto Viso at Magny-Cours in '07 stand out as heart-stopping moments. But from her first race to the 94th and last, you knew she would stand up to the gruelling punishment dished out by 26 testosterone-fuelled nutters.

The GP2/05 has played a big part in my life for the past six years, and launched the career of many household names in F1. Her successor has not produced racing half as close nor anywhere near as exciting, and in many ways the GP2/05 represents something of a moment in time, when the only thing that mattered was making a car that would enthral the crowds and challenge the drivers.

She might have started her racing life as something of an unfortunate joke, but she quickly became revered and loved, and a car that I believe will merit a place among the very finest of the past decade.

## FIVE REASONS WHY THE GP2/05 ROCKED GOOD RIDDANCE TO F3000



Adam Carroll's sideways pass on Alexandre Premat to win at Imola



The top six positions changing every lap in 2005 Nurburgring thriller



Lewis Hamilton's three-abreast '06 move through Maggotts/Becketts



Hamilton charging from the back to second in Turkey



Cars withstand a massive stone battering in Sentul

## DOING THE FEATURE/ SPRINT-RACE DOUBLE

It's tough to scythe from eighth to first to win again, but it can be done

### NICO ROSBERG, SAKHIR 2005

Rosberg wrapped up the inaugural GP2 title as his ART car demonstrated fearsome straight-line pace.

### LEWIS HAMILTON, NURBURGRING/ SILVERSTONE 2006

The dive between Nelson Piquet and Clivio Piccione into Maggotts is the defining memory of a brilliant double for Hamilton. Equally impressive double at 'Ring.

### NELSON PIQUET, HUNGARORING 2006

In torrential conditions he demolished the field to win by over half a minute in feature race. Almost as dominant in sprint.

### GIORGIO PANTANO, MONZA 2006

Track specialist upstaged Hamilton/Piquet title battle. Sprint-race start – eighth to first by first corner – was probably the finest in GP2 history.

### ROMAIN GROSJEAN, DUBAI 2008

On his GP2 debut he was peerless on first weekend of Asia series' existence, despite cooking brakes early in sprint race.

## LAUNCHING PAD

Drivers who raced the GP2/05, and then raced in F1

**Sebastien Buemi**  
**Karun Chandhok**  
**Timo Glock**  
**Lucas di Grassi**  
**Romain Grosjean**  
**Lewis Hamilton**  
**Nico Hulkenberg**  
**Kamui Kobayashi**  
**Heikki Kovalainen**  
**Kazuki Nakajima**  
**Vitaly Petrov**  
**Nelson Piquet**  
**Nico Rosberg**  
**Bruno Senna**  
**Scott Speed**

Hulkenberg: no ill effects from Qatar cold



## SMARTEST DRIVE

Hulkenberg dominates under the lights – eventually

**DUE TO** the car's very nature, GP2 races had never leant themselves to a driver dominating a race by huge margins. But, under the lights in Losail, Qatar, Nico Hulkenberg gave a demonstration of his future-champion qualities with an amazing drive in 2009.

In only his third Asia Series start, he made a poor getaway from pole and dropped to third. What was he doing?

The Bridgestone control tyres were graining in the cool of the evening, combined with the dusty

'green' track surface. Drivers were pitting early, whining that they'd "killed" their tyres. This is where the genius of Hulkenberg and his ART team shone through. He nursed his tyres through this phase and, with his rivals in the pits or already on new tyres, which would also grain, his rubber came back to life, allowing him to run a super-long stint. He claimed afterwards that his radio wasn't working, but the ART guys weren't exactly hanging off the pitwall to wave him in.

His lap times were often 2s faster than his rivals during this period, and he extended a 45s lead before pitting just before the end. On new tyres, with the track rubbered in, he didn't have to worry about graining, and rattled off a super-quick sequence of laps to win by over 13s.

## BIGGEST CRASH

Strength of chassis demonstrated in horrific Magny-Cours shunt

**ERNESTO VISO** escaped with concussion and bruising to his arms, hands and foot following



Viso prepared for his IndyCar career in 2007

his massive crash at Magny-Cours in 2007. Kazuki Nakajima and Michael Ammermuller had slowed dramatically for yellow flags and safety-car boards, and the unsighted Viso was flat-out in third gear when he hit them and was sent skywards. He barrel-rolled on top of a concrete wall and into a metal advertising hoarding structure (which opened the side of the cockpit), narrowly avoided a bridge and landed on the wrong side of the barriers.

"I didn't see the yellow flags because I was behind those cars and they just braked," said Viso. "We were going at high speed and I couldn't do anything. I just touched the cars in front and was flying.

"It's amazing that I'm still alive. The wall was 30 or 40 centimetres from my head. Hitting that would have been enough to push my head down and I wouldn't be sitting here telling you this story, or maybe I would have lost my arms or something. The cockpit was

in two pieces, and when we've seen accidents like that before, I don't like to mention names, but everybody knows about it.

"The doctors said I was talking to them when I was in the car, but I don't remember any of that. The last thing I remember in the car was my steering wheel going light and the sensation that I was flying. That's it. The next thing I remembered I was in the medical centre, and my engineer, John Gentry, was holding my hand. I felt conscious again, and that's when I would say I was normal again.

"Everything I hit seemed to have a double edge: would it save me, and be lucky? Or would I be... not so lucky? I think somebody up there protected me, because having seen the huge accident on TV I'm more than lucky that I have no injuries. It's racing – sometimes you get out of a situation like this, sometimes you don't. God's been with me for a long time, and he was especially with me on that day."

## CONCEPTION OF A RACER

How the GP2/05 came together, from design at Dallara to hitting the track.



Dallara commissioned to build F3000 replacement



CAD used in development of chassis design



Finishing touches put to windtunnel model



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STALE

Perrin witnessed rise and fall of GP2/05

## DIDIER PERRIN

GP2 technical director on the past, present and future of his machinery

**THE END** of the GP2/05 was heartbreaking! No really, there are two sides. On one hand it was sad, because the car has a lot of history. But on the other hand I am happy to move on from it, because we obviously had to make a lot of compromises with it. Everything was new; the engine, the gearbox and so on. We learned everything with this car.

I still think that the current GP2/08 is a very good-looking car, and the technology is still up to date. But I have the pleasure now to work on the GP2/11, and that will again be another step ahead. This is the reason why it was difficult for me to see the GP2/05 racing, because 100 per cent of my time is spent on the GP2/11 now.

So I was two generations ahead of the GP2/05, but I like it. We must thank the old car for all of the success. The success of GP2 is down to the success of this car. If this had not been a good car, then GP2 would not have been successful. Even if it looks a bit out of date now, we have to respect it.

## BIGGEST COCK-UP

Front row team-mates take each other out

**IT ONLY** took four seconds from the lights going out to iSport team-mates Timo Glock and Andi Zuber driving into each other from the front row at Magny-Cours in 2007. Both of them lit up their rear wheels and drove

towards the middle of the track. Zuber rode over Glock's wheels and landed briefly on the German's head.

"It was just so stupid," said Zuber. "I got a better start and thought, 'Yes, I've got him' and the next thing I knew there was a bloody big thump." Glock added: "I went right, he went left. We really messed it up for the team."

Team principal Paul Jackson's reaction, caught by the TV camera in the pitlane, was classic.



FERRARO/LAT

1: Glock (left) moves over and collides with Zuber



FERRARO/LAT

2: Zuber is pitched onto two wheels and towards Glock's head



FERRARO/LAT

3: Having an Austrian on your head was not in the plan



FERRARO/LAT

4: Both eliminated from the race they'd started on front row



Jacques Laffite, Adrian Campos and Damon Hill drove

## LEGENDS TAKE A SPIN

Will Buxton, GP2 press officer between 2005 and '07, organised a group test of legends, including Damon Hill, to test the GP2/05. But the bloke who left the biggest impression came from AUTOSPORT!

**TO BE** totally honest, Damon wasn't our first-choice Brit, because I'd set my heart on getting Sir Stirling Moss into the car. Stirling was so humble and gracious in turning us down, admitting that he'd become a big fan of the championship but that if the twentysomethings were finding it hard to keep the thing on the black stuff, he didn't hold out much hope for himself.

Luckily Damon, who I grew up idolising, was keen to have a go in return for GP2 giving his young charge Steven Kane a run too. Damon was hugely impressive, and seeing him back in a Renault-powered car for the first time since he took the F1 title, wearing his old 1996 helmet, was a moment I'll always treasure. I still have his signed gloves from the day, framed on my wall at home.

The shock of the day, though, came from AUTOSPORT's own Ben Collins, who was running a track test of the car in the afternoon. He was bang on the pace, and I seem to remember he beat Damon's best lap on old tyres! GP2 technical director Didier Perrin wanted to sign him up there and then as the championship's development driver.



Crash test was mandatory before car was signed off



Cars assembled at Dallara factory near Parma in Italy



First test run was a bit smokey with Franck Montagny



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# AND FOR OUR NEXT ELECTRIC

The next generation of electric ice racer has the support of long-time series backer Andros. *PETER MILLS* took it for a spin in Val Thorens

**I**t's difficult to envisage innovation being nurtured in a fruit processing company, but in the depths of south-west France just such a firm has concocted something rather more startling than a routine tweak to a line in jam: an all-electric ice racer that's capable of challenging fossil-fuelled alternatives.

With continued support from fruit producing giant Andros, former French rallycross champion and ice-racing trailblazer Max Mamers has been the driving force behind five generations of electric ice buggy. The first effort, a Fouquet-built machine dubbed Andros Car 01, took to the pistes in 2007, but early nickel-battery technology handicapped the squat-looking device to just seven minutes of flat-out motoring. However, in the two years since appointing ace engineer Luc Marchetti's Magny-Cours based Exagon Engineering to assume control of the project, and aided by heavyweight collaborators Siemens and SAFT, progress has been staggering.

In the cavernous garage of a traditional wooden ski chalet overlooking the highest ice racing venue on the calendar, Val Thorens, five examples of Exagon's latest effort, AC03 'Evo 2', have been assembled. A modest grid of eight cars has run in support of this season's Andros silhouette series, while four more are expected to turn out in 2011. Mamers looks on with justifiable pride, and no sign of trepidation, as the Exagon crew makes some final adjustments prior to handing the cars over to the press. The range of the new machine has been increased fivefold over the original, now standing at 35 minutes, and performance has come on equally dramatically; 0-60 takes under six seconds, top-speed is 160km/h.

"The car has come on a really long ▶

AC03s run in formation around Val Thorens



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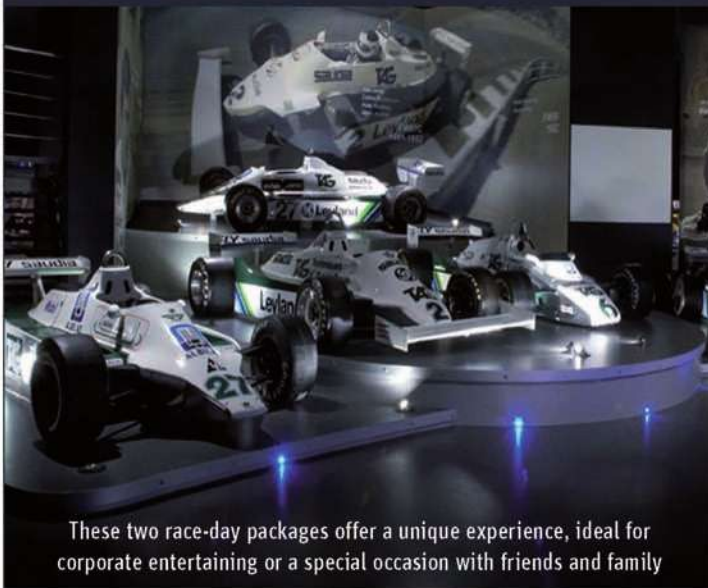
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Andros/Exagon tie-up produced all-new AC03

◀ way,” explains Exagon’s Cedric Challine. “It has a new battery, adapter, gearbox and differential. There are no gears, only an adapter, with the range of the engine we don’t need a gearbox because the speed we’re achieving on ice is not so high.” Starting off with a humble bus motor, Siemens completely reworks the power plant for racing. The motor is also compatible with an as-yet-unraced electronic regenerative braking system, which has already proved its effectiveness on asphalt.

Descending an imposing slope behind the track, a number of curious skiers break off from the dense half-term throng and peel to one side in order to gain view of the activity around the chalet’s garage. A white, Picard liveried machine is disconnected from its charger and wheeled out.

Nicolas Prost, son of Formula 1 legend and double Andros Trophy title winner Alain, has been charged with showing AUTOSPORT the ropes around the 980-metre track. It will be the first time Nicolas has driven the car

since last December’s Andros launch, also at Val Thorens. Before setting off, he offers up his thoughts, and gives reassurance that the inviting, virgin covering of snow has bolstered the scope for any damage when I take the controls later.

“My dad was really surprised when he drove this car, it’s an incredible difference from the early electric cars,” he says. “It’s much more comfortable in the quick corners. The problem you will have is not handling the power, but with only two-wheel drive dealing with all of the torque. Still, I think there’s only around a five-second difference in lap time between it and the 350bhp petrol, four-wheel-drive cars.”

Prost Sr chips in to expand on the comparison: “With the old car it was impossible, just spinning off everywhere. I think that was maybe to do with the differential. What is good with this car is that it is really difficult to use the power, you need to have a good sensibility, obviously using the brake and throttle at the same time. I was really surprised how good it is.”

Torque must not be underestimated from power figures alone.

“The thing is not to think you have the equivalent of, say, 140bhp, but to remember that the torque is like something out of a 400bhp car,” says Nicolas. “Going out of the slow corners you can’t go flat out, because of the wheelspin. We worked a little bit at the beginning of the season with Siemens because the prototype had too much power exiting the hairpins. So we

reduced the torque and the power on the first part of the acceleration. Now you will see it’s like driving a kart that has a very constant engine. Luc Marchetti designed cars for

[multiple Andros champion] Yvan Muller, so the way it has been done is like a proper car. The quality of the damping and everything is fantastic.”

As we take to the track I’m conscious of my luge-style, feet-forward seating position close to Nicolas’s shoulder height, and the comparatively muted electric motor accentuating the crunching of ice under the anorexic tyres. Applying power and gathering speed, the whirring becomes more potent and the sound of ice being thrown up by the spikes intensifies. Prost makes small corrections at the wheel, despite being on a ‘straight’, as the digital read-out nudges 90km/h on the downhill approach to the first of Val Thorens’s four hairpins. The ▶

**“There’s a five-second difference in lap time between the electric car and the 350bhp four-wheel-drive car”**

**Nicolas Prost**

## ALAIN PROST MASTERCLASS

The racing legend shows AUTOSPORT exactly how it’s done



Prost has won two Andros Trophy drivers’ titles

Wilfully playing against the image of the doyen of smooth, effortless driving, four-time F1 world champion Alain Prost has spent the past seven years honing a very passable impression of a joy-rider auditioning for a part in a Reme Julienne production thanks to his involvement with the Andros Trophy.

An opportunity to view these hooligan antics from the passenger seat of the 55-year-old’s 350bhp Thork Engineering Dacia Duster is not to be passed up. All, of course, to aid research into the contrasting driving styles required between the AC03 and a conventional four-wheel-drive ice racer. Once the narrow entrance forged between the Dacia’s makeshift seat and roll cage is negotiated, Prost offers his apologies that the tyres are losing a little grip following a number of earlier passenger rides for a group of French journalists.

The dampening of expectations is to prove unnecessary. The Dacia provides a raw experience after stepping from the almost silent AC03 Evo2. Far more outrageous angles of slip are achieved on corner entry, while Prost accelerates up to third gear before clearing the apex of the hairpins.

Fellow ice racing Frenchman and ex-F1 driver Franck Lagorce explains the difference between the four-wheel-drive beasts and the new electric racer.

“This electric car requires more finesse,” he says. “You need to have concentration and anticipation. With a standard car you turn in, put the power on and wait for the grip. With this one you can’t wait, because if you wait you lose time.”

Purpose-built AC03 weighs just 800kg



Eight cars contested the inaugural series



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M0310P



Exagon-built car is simple but effective



Dash read-out reveals extent of battery charge

Tubular chassis carries Siemens 67Kw engine



## TECH SPEC: NEW VERSUS OLD



### AC 03 EVO 2 2010

**Chassis** Tubular  
**Constructor** Exagon Engineering  
**Length** 3.36m  
**Width** 1.70m  
**Height** 1.38m  
**Weight** 800kg  
**Engine** Siemens 67Kw  
**Power** 122cv (90kW)-200Nm  
 5000rpm constant  
**Transmission** Two-wheel drive  
 with limited-slip  
 differential  
**Batteries** Lithium-ion SAFT 27,  
 320V  
**Brakes** Discs all round (optional  
 electric regeneration)  
**Top speed** 160km/h  
**Range** 35min



### ANDROS CAR 01 2007

**Chassis** Crosscar D1  
**Constructor** Fouquet  
**Length** 2.60m  
**Width** 1.60m  
**Height** 1.40m  
**Weight** 520kg  
**Engine** Two motors, 6.5Kw  
**Power** 36Kw (equivalent 50CV)  
**Transmission** Two belts driven  
 by the motor  
**Batteries** 14 modules NiMH, 12V  
 mounted in parallel (84V)  
**Brakes** Electric at rear,  
 discs at front  
**Top speed** 110km/h  
**Range** 7min

◀ corner-entry technique is to brake and then turn very suddenly. Nicolas has more finesse than the spectacular Franck Lagorce who is out on track with us. "It's like racing in the wet for me, you don't really see people sideways everywhere," explains Nicolas.

After a few laps we swap positions. The first impression of the car is overwhelmingly of its responsiveness, while the simple controls breed confidence. Perhaps a little too much so, as heading into the first hairpin Nicolas implores me to brake much harder. The warning comes too late and as we slide well clear of the apex I am suitably chastened: "You've got to scrub off more speed, the car won't rotate like that." At the next, uphill hairpin I'm overcautious. Only when Nicolas tells me exactly when to brake and turn do things improve.

It's obvious that I'll require some considerable time to sharpen my ice-driving abilities, but there's no prospect of a two-hour lapse in proceedings for our AC03 to be recharged, as the surplus of vehicles on hand provides a steady supply of cars for Prost, Lagorce, and joining us in the afternoon, lady racer Margot Laffite.

Unusually high humidity levels provoked problems with the car's electrics during the development phase, but having been honed over an intense season during which temperatures at events ranged from +30C to -15C, all of the cars run impeccably during our test.

Were it ever to escape through the Val Thorens circuit gates and be subjected to urban use, the 100 per cent electric AC03 is estimated to have a range of around 200km. Development driver Lagorce is left in no doubt about the electric racer's potential on both ice and conventional circuits, having seen how far things have come.

"We are leading the way. Last year we did only seven laps and the battery weighed 250kg, now we run to 30 laps and we've already lost 100kg. In the future, why not have four-wheel drive, less battery weight and more power?"

"Today, if you want to organise a new street race in Paris or Nice, it just wouldn't be possible because racing is not green. But with this programme, you can do it right now, as I'm sure you

could develop the car for the track."

I can't pretend that the extra tuition made my driving becoming any more refined, but my additional time in the AC03 Evo2 did help cement the view that this is a hugely impressive, accessible vehicle. Notwithstanding that Camille Janetzy's electric cars exceeded 100km/h back in 1899, Exagon appears to have made huge gains over what has come before. The team, and Andros's president Frederic Gervoson, has set a new standard.

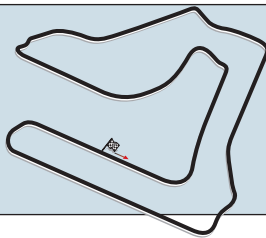
"I get a lot of satisfaction from being involved at the start of something innovative," he says. "If this initiative can give ideas to other businesses, and if Andros is copied tomorrow by more powerful players, then I think that satisfaction will be doubled." ❧

New fleet awaits fettling in Exagon workshops



**ALMS**

Sebring, USA  
 March 20  
 ALMS  
 Round 1/9

**AT A GLANCE**

- **Winners Anthony Davidson/Marc Gene/Alex Wurz**
- **Pole position Gene**
- **Fastest lap Sebastien Bourdais**



Peugeot's sextet celebrate one-two

# Florida favourites fly to famous finish



Wurz takes Peugeot's first Sebring victory

**Peugeot's brace of diesel-powered 908s made last weekend's Sebring 12 Hours their own, but the intra-team, lead-trading rivalry made things far from dull**

## QUALIFYING

### Gene proves to be a quick learner

Sebring rookie Marc Gene dusted off his X-Box in his attempts to learn the demanding 3.7-mile airfield circuit. The plan didn't work out, but last year's Le Mans winner again proved he's a worthy member of the Peugeot squad by taking pole.

"I looked at a computer game, but you had to reach quite a high level to race at Sebring," said Gene, "and I wasn't good enough to get there."

Instead he turned to team-mate Nicolas Minassian, the man he beat to pole. "I have to thank Nico for that," he said.



Lamy (left) congratulates Gene on his pole position

Peugeot might have had things all its own way in the Sebring 12 Hours, but at least it put on a show. The French marque's pair of turbodiesel coupes battled it out deep into the final hour of the American Le Mans Series opener last Saturday. Although victory went to team debutant Anthony Davidson, paired with Alex Wurz and Marc Gene, it could quite easily have gone the other way.

With no Audi at Sebring for the first time in ALMS history, the battle between the Peugeots would be better described as interesting, riveting even, rather than exciting. The balance between the winning car and the rival

908 HDi driven by Nicolas Minassian, Sebastien Bourdais and Pedro Lamy ebbed and flowed right through the 12 hours.

It eventually all came down to the final pitstops with three quarters of an hour to go. Wurz was in front coming into the final hour, but he knew that the chasing car with Bourdais at the wheel would need less fuel when the cars stopped.

"I was under pressure to get a gap of at least seven seconds," explained Wurz. "I pushed like crazy and got a little bit more."

That ensured that the Austrian was coming down the pit straight when Bourdais started to move from his pit stall. Wurz's earlier efforts had been enough, meaning a quick

spin for the Frenchman as he booted it out of the pitlane and through Turn 1 turned out to be more dramatic than relevant to the outcome of the race.

If Wurz cemented victory in the countdown to the final stops, the turning point in the race came when Davidson was at the wheel in the ninth hour. He leapfrogged Lamy when the Portuguese sustained a puncture with a lap of his stint still to run.

Lamy had led by a shade over 6.5sec, but the need to change tyres (and therefore driver) when Davidson took on fuel only changed the balance of the race. That meant that a six-second deficit for the Englishman turned into a 24-second lead over Minassian.



We were being sensible, but we were pushing flat-out all the way”

Anthony Davidson (Peugeot)

## RACE RATING

★★★★★

Peugeot dominated, of course, but the two 908s raced each other hard nearly all the way through

## REPORT SEBRING 12 HOURS



Gary Watkins reports

### KEY MOMENTS

**HOUR 1** Winning car drops out of lead when team changes tyre at first stop

**HOUR 9** Puncture for Lamy allows Davidson to move ahead

**HOUR 12** Wurz has pulled enough of an advantage to keep lead in pits

Davidson held that gap through the following stint, only for it to disappear when the yellows flew yet again. At this point the race might have swung back the other way had Minassian forgone a new set of tyres when the other car swapped drivers to Wurz, but with temperatures falling Peugeot opted to put

both cars out on the soft-compound Michelin.

That forced a change of tactics for Minassian and then Bourdais. They switched to fuel-save mode in an attempt to leapfrog the sister car at the final fuel stop.

“I couldn’t really push in the second half of that stint,” said Minassian,

“because we were really trying to save fuel.”

That was almost an admission by Peugeot that there would be no passing out on the track. The inference was: flat-out driving, good; wheel-to-wheel racing, bad.

Bourdais exited the pits a second and a half behind Wurz after the penultimate

stops. The Frenchman’s attempts to save fuel resulted in the leader edging away.

Ten laps into the stint, the gap was 2.3sec, 20 laps in it was nearly up to the seven seconds Wurz needed. The Austrian had his margin when the pair of Pugs dived for the pits for one last time 11 laps later. The race was over.

There were two more LMP1 cars in the race, and for a brief period one of them was *in the race*. Five-time Le Mans winner Emanuele Pirro revelled in the Drayson Lola-Judd.

The Italian, as motivated as ever, demoted Adrian Fernandez in the Aston Martin Racing coupe for third on lap four and then stayed with the Peugeots. He even had the audacity

to overtake Bourdais with a breathtaking move through traffic on lap 17.

It is doubtful that Drayson had the driver lineup in Pirro, Jonny Cocker and Paul Drayson to race the AMR Lola-Aston driven by Stefan Mucke, Fernandez and Harold Primat for a podium, but two problems – alternator failure and a water leak – resulted in a 12th-place finish.

The AMR Lola-Aston took third, three laps down.

The result in Florida bodes well for the French squad’s defence of its Le Mans 24 Hours crown. **✘**



Lola-Aston Martin was third behind Peugeots



Pirro's Drayson Lola got in on the act early in the race

**P60 SEBRING GT REPORT**

**P62 DAVIDSON INTERVIEW**

### LMP2

## CytoSport Porsche defeats faster HPD in LMP2 class scrap

The Porsche RS Spyder’s glory days might be in the past, but the German LMP2 contender notched up a first American Le Mans Series class victory in private hands at Sebring. The CytoSport Porsche wasn’t the fastest P2 last weekend, but a trouble-free run for Klaus Graf, Sascha Maassen and Greg Pickett yielded a clear victory.

The three-way P2 battle turned out not to be a battle at all. Highcroft Racing’s HPD ARX-01C was in a class of its own around the Sebring International Raceway. Marino Franchitti, who

qualified the car on pole, Simon Pagenaud and David Brabham dominated for nearly three-quarters of the race.

The car was four laps up when an electrical fire in the ninth hour resulted in a 24-minute delay.

The other P2 in the race, Dyson’s Lola-Mazda lost more than an hour early in the race with a blocked oil pump and, after returning to the fray, ran conservatively in the hands of Guy Smith, Chris Dyson and Andy Meyrick, whose only instructions were to get the car to the finish.

Dyson’s coupe made it to the chequered flag in 21st place, 24

laps behind the best of the new LMP Challenge contenders.

The Level 5 ORECA FLM09 driven by Christophe Bouchut,

Mark Wilkins and Scott Tucker was always at or near the front of the LMPC class, but it ultimately triumphed because

it was the only one of the six Chevrolet-powered prototypes to run through the race without any significant problems.

CytoSport Porsche took LMP2 victory



## AT A GLANCE

- Winners Gianmaria Bruni/Pierre Kaffer/Jaime Melo
- Pole position Jorg Bergmeister
- Fastest lap Dirk Muller



I should have put some money on the lottery today. The chances of your numbers coming up must be about the same as hitting a flying wheel”  
Jorg Bergmeister

GT

# Lucky breaks help Ferrari to victory

The Risi 430 GT took its sixth straight GT class win - but lady luck helped it happen

Rarely has a race been so eagerly anticipated in the American Le Mans Series. The drivers from the big four manufacturers going head to head in the renamed GT class couldn't wait to get started at Sebring, to see who'd shown their hand in pre-season and to find out who was really on top. Risi Competizione Ferrari drivers Jaime Melo, Gimmi Bruni and Pierre Kaffer might have triumphed in the 12 Hours on Saturday, but the race left many questions unanswered.

Risi took a relatively easy class victory, a remarkable sixth on the trot in the 'big-three' enduros since the 2008 Le Mans 24 Hours, but it should have been much closer. The Rahal Letterman Racing BMWs, which finished second and third, each lost time through no fault of their own under the safety car, the Flying Lizards Porsche was literally knocked out of contention by an errant wheel and Corvette Racing saw any chance of a decent result disappear with an uncharacteristic pitlane gaffe (see panel).

Risi took a stranglehold on this race courtesy of events either side of the seven-hour mark.

First, the third-placed BMW M3 driven by Dirk Werner, Tom Milner and Bill Auberlen lost the best part of a lap when the safety car, the second of five on Saturday, came out with the overall leader between it

and the Ferrari. Then, the Flying Lizards Porsche 911 GT3-RSR, which Jorg Bergmeister shared with Patrick Long and Marc Lieb, hit the wheel that had just flown off the Falken Tires Porsche.

One Porsche wheel made contact with another, the impact on Bergmeister's left rear corner damaging the rim. The resulting tyre deflation meant he had no choice but to pit, even though the pitlane had just been closed for another safety car. ALMS rules dictate that in this case no work can be carried out until the pits open.

The Lizards' misfortune was this didn't happen for three whole laps while the race officials unsuccessfully strived to pick up the race leader. It was a double whammy from which the best Porsche in the race was never going to recover.

There was no way back for BMW either, despite some impressive driving from the entire Rahal squad. The V8-engined Bimmers were consistently the

fastest GT cars on the track for the remainder of the race, but neither of the final two safety cars fell kindly for the factory team.

Ferrari may owe the ease of its victory to good fortune, but the evidence was there to suggest that the 2010 wide-spec 430 GT is the quickest of the class heavyweights for the moment. Or at least it was around Sebring. In the daytime.

Melo struggled during the opening stint, almost certainly as a result of pushing hard and long on his Michelins in qualifying. The car came alive when Bruni took over, the Italian moving past Bill Auberlen's BMW and pulling away with ease.

The Ferrari held the lead, despite a strong stint from Dirk Werner in the second-placed Bimmer, until the second safety car. Bruni dropped behind Bergmeister during the yellows, but once again he had the speed to regain the lead and move clear with comparative ease.

The advantage enjoyed by



BMWs flew, but had to settle for P2 and P3



## KEY MOMENTS

**HOURL 1** The two Corvettes collide in the pits

**HOURL 4** Werner/Milner/Auberlen M3 loses out under safety car

**HOURL 5** Flying wheel and gaffe by officialdom put Lizards Porsche out of running

the Ferrari was there to see in the daytime, but things were not so clear cut when the temperatures dropped after darkness. The BMW was consistently the fastest car during the night, but by then, of course, its drivers were playing catch-up, whereas the Ferrari trio enjoyed a handy margin.

The battle for BMW honours was decided on the final lap when Dirk Muller, struggling with brake issues in his M3, spun, handing second place to the sister car.

The German had qualified on pole, only to be sent to the back of the grid when the car failed its post-session stall test, the team suggesting that the airbox had been incorrectly affixed. The car, which was co-driven by Joey Hand and Andy Priaulx, made quick progress through the pack,

only to lose out at the first safety car. It fought back again with an impressive Priaulx, racing at Sebring for first time, passing Milner in the 10th hour.

Jaguar, the fifth manufacturer in the ALMS GT class, made an early exit from its first factory entry into one of the endurance classics since Le Mans 1993. Paul Gentilozzi's RSR team had a torrid time at Sebring, losing one engine in its XKR when the crankshaft broke in Thursday practice and then another with cooling issues after only a handful of laps in the race.

Jaguar has a long way to go and it appears that BMW, Chevrolet and Porsche have some work to do to catch Ferrari. However, they should be warned: the Italian manufacturer already has another engine evolution in the wings.



Melo, Kaffer and Bruni celebrate

# REPORT SEBRING 12 HOURS

## RACE RATING

★★★★★

The results suggest Ferrari had it easy, but BMW and Porsche would have been right there but for bad luck



Pace and luck gave Risi Ferrari victory

## THE INSIDE LINE

### Chevy's collision derision



"They never did that when we were racing them."

Those words, courtesy of Aston Martin Racing team boss George Howard-Chappell, summed up the collective surprise at Corvette Racing's mistake in the pits. Arguably the best-drilled team in the ALMS threw away any chance of a good Sebring result when the two Chevrolets collided mid-pitstop.

The #3 Corvette C6.R driven by Jan Magnussen, Johnny O'Connell and Antonio Garcia had already

lost eight laps to a steering rack leak when Magnussen was sent out of the pits after a routine stop in hour four. The problem was Emmanuel Collard was just coming in and trying to turn into his space ahead of the sister car. The heavy contact broke a wheel on the #3 car and front bodywork and anti-roll bar on the #4.

Corvette race boss Doug Fehan described the catastrophe as a "confluence of multiple factors".



The mechanic delegated to signal the car out of the pits had bent down to clear the radiator ducts, while the fuel alarm brought in Collard, who shared with 'Ollies' Gavin and Beretta for the first time, one lap early.

The clash left the 'Vettes eighth (#3) and ninth (#4) at the end - not the start to the season Chevrolet wanted.

# RESULTS

Sebring 12 Hours, Sebring (USA), March 18-20, American Le Mans Series round 1 of 9

GRID	
1 GENE 1:45.214	2 MINASSIAN 1:45.841
3 MUCKE 1:46.079	4 PIRRO 1:46.460
5 FRANCHETTI 1:47.684	6 GRAF 1:47.738
7 SMITH 1:47.882	8 WILLMAN 1:54.441
9 JEANNETTE 1:55.279	10 H-REAY 1:55.397
11 BOUCHUT 1:56.101	12 PAGEREY 1:59.580
13 B'MEISTER 2:01.150	14 HENZLER 2:01.201
15 MELO 2:01.236	16 MAGNUSSEN 2:01.358
17 GAVIN 2:01.628	18 V OVERBEEK 2:01.914
19 AUERLEN 2:01.922	20 COSMO 2:02.242
21 MURRY 2:03.622	22 KEEN 2:05.959
23 KROHN 2:06.680	24 KELLY 2:07.018
25 KAPUDIJA 2:07.205	26 SOFRONAS 2:07.751
27 RICHARD 2:11.371	28 FEINBERG no time
29 NEIMAN 2:07.874*	30 LEWIS 2:07.412*
31 GOOSSENS 2:04.804*	32 BIEKER 2:10.312*
33 HILDEBRAND 1:55.579*	34 MULLER 2:00.782*

\* grid penalty

367 LAPS, 1357.9 MILES						
POS	DRIVERS	TEAM	CAR	CLASS	TIME	GRID
1	Alexander Wurz (A)/Marc Gene (E)/Anthony Davidson (GB)	Team Peugeot Total	Peugeot 908 HDi	LMP1	12h00m54.362s	1
2	Sebastien Bourdais (F)/Pedro Lamy (P)/Nicolas Minassian (F)	Team Peugeot Total	Peugeot 908 HDi	LMP1	+13.817s	2
3	Adrian Fernandez (MEX)/Stefan Mucke (D)/Harold Primat (CH)	Aston Martin Racing (Prodrive)	Lola-Aston Martin B09/60	LMP1	-3 laps	3
4	Greg Pickett (USA)/Klaus Graf (D)/Sascha Maassen (D)	Team Cytosport	Porsche RS Spyder	LMP2	-14 laps	6
5	Simon Pagenaud (F)/David Brabham (AUS)/Marino Franchitti (GB)	Highcroft Racing	HPD ARX-01c	LMP2	-18 laps	5
6	Jaime Melo (BR)/Gianmaria Bruni (I)/Pierre Kaffer (D)	Risi Competizione	Ferrari 430 GT	GT2	-36 laps	15
7	Dirk Werner (D)/Bill Auberlen (USA)/Tommy Milner (USA)	BMW Rahal Letterman Racing	BMW E92 M3	GT2	-37 laps	19
8	Dirk Muller (D)/Joey Hand (USA)/Andy Priaulx (GB)	BMW Rahal Letterman Racing	BMW E92 M3	GT2	-37 laps	14
9	Jorg Bergmeister (D)/Patrick Long (USA)/Marc Lieb (D)	Flying Lizard Motorsports	Porsche 911 GT3-RSR	GT2	-38 laps	33
10	Christophe Bouchut (F)/Scott Tucker (USA)/Mark Wilkins (CDN)	Level 5 Motorsports	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	PC	-40 laps	11
11	Seth Neiman (USA)/Darren Law (USA)/Richard Lietz (A)	Flying Lizard Motorsports	Porsche 911 GT3-RSR	GT2	-42 laps	29
12	Emanuele Pirro (I)/Paul Drayson (GB)/Jonny Cocker (GB)	Drayson Racing	Lola-Judd B09/60	LMP1	-43 laps	20
13	Guy Cosmo (USA)/Ed Brown (USA)/Joao Barbosa (P)	Extreme Speed Motorsports	Ferrari 430 GT	GT2	-44 laps	4
14	Nic Jonsson (S)/Tracy Krohn (USA)/Eric van de Poele (B)	Risi Competizione	Ferrari 430 GT	GT2	-46 laps	23
15	Jan Magnussen (DK)/Johnny O'Connell (USA)/Antonio Garcia (E)	Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller)	Chevrolet Corvette C6.R	GT2	-47 laps	16
16	Oliver Gavin (GB)/Olivier Beretta (MC)/Emmanuel Collard (F)	Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller)	Chevrolet Corvette C6.R	GT2	-47 laps	17
17	Leh Keen (USA)/Juan Gonzalez (MEX)/Butch Leitzinger (USA)	Alex Job Racing	Porsche 911 GT3 Cup	GTC	-59 laps	22
18	Romeo Kapudija (USA)/Bill Sweedler (USA)/Jan-Dirk Lueders (D)	Alex Job Racing	Porsche 911 GT3 Cup	GTC	-62 laps	25
19	Luis Diaz (MEX)/Ricardo Gonzalez (MEX)/Patrick Kelly (USA)	Alex Job Racing	Porsche 911 GT3 Cup	GTC	-63 laps	24
20	Chris Dyson (USA)/Guy Smith (GB)/Andy Meyrick (GB)	Dyson Racing Team	Lola-Mazda B09/86	LMP2	-64 laps	7
21	Robert Rodriguez (USA)/Galen Bieker (USA)/Cory Friedman (USA)	WERKS II Racing	Porsche 911 GT3 Cup	GTC	-65 laps	32
22	David Murry (USA)/David Robertson (USA)/Andrea Robertson (USA)	Robertson Racing (Barbour)	Doran Ford GT-R	GT2	-67 laps	21
23	Shane Lewis (USA)/Jerry Vento (I)/Lawson Aschenbach (USA)	Velox Motorsports	Porsche 911 GT3 Cup	GT2	-68 laps	30
24	Henri Richard (USA)/Duncan Ende (USA)/Andy Lally (USA)	TRG	Porsche 911 GT3 Cup	GTC	-85 laps	27
25	Andy Wallace (GB)/JR Hildebrand (USA)/Tom Sutherland (USA)	Genoa Racing	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	PC	-86 laps	33
26	Andy Pilgrim (USA)/Bret Curtis (USA)/James Sofronas (USA)	GMG Racing	Porsche 911 GT3 Cup	GTC	-87 laps	26
27	Scott Sharp (USA)/Johannes van Overbeek (USA)/Dominik Farnbacher (D)	Extreme Speed Motorsports	Ferrari 430 GT	GT2	271 laps-oil leak/fire	18
28	Wolf Henzler (D)/Bryan Sellers (USA)/Patrick Pilet (F)	Team Falken Tire (Landmark)	Porsche 911 GT3-RSR	GT2	-112 laps	14
29	Joel Feinberg (USA)/Kyle Marcelli (USA)/Tom Weickardt (USA)	Primetime Race Group	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	PC	-133 laps	28
30	Mitch Pagerey (USA)/Brian Wong (USA)/David Ducote (USA)	Intersport Racing	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	PC	232 laps-accident damage	12
31	Paul Gentilozzi (USA)/Marc Goossens (B)/Ryan Dalziel (GB)	Jaguar RSR	Jaguar XKRS	GT2	11 laps-cooling/engine	31
NS	Bryan Willman (USA)/Tony Burgess (CDN)/Pierre Ehret (D)	Autocon Motorsports	Lola-AER B06/10	LMP1	engine	8
EX	Gunnar Jeannette (USA)/Christian Zuegel (USA)/Elton Julian (USA)	Team Gunnar	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	PC	-56 laps	9
EX	Ryan Hunter-Reay (USA)/Scott Tucker (USA)/James Gue (USA)	Level 5 Motorsports	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	PC	-143 laps	10

LMP POINTS		
POS	DRIVER	PTS
1=	Gene/Wurz/Davidson	30
1=	Pickett/Graf/Maassen	30
3=	Lamy/Bourd'/Minass'	26
3=	Brabham/Page'd/Fran'	26
5=	Mucke/Prim'/Fernan'	23

PC POINTS		
POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Bouchut/Tucker/Wilk'	30
2	Wallace/Suth'/Hilde'	26

GT2 POINTS		
POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Melo/Bruni/Kaffer	30
2	Aub'ten/Milner/Wern'	26
3	Muller/Hand/Priaulx	23
4	Berg'/Long/Lieb	20
5	Law/Neiman/Lietz	18

GTC POINTS		
POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Gonz'/Leitzin'/Keen	30
2	Sweed'/Kapud'/Lued'	26
3	Gonz'/Diaz/Kelly	23
4	Rodrig'/Biek'Fried'	20
5	Lewis/Vento/Aschen'	18

KEY NS=Non-Starter; EX=Excluded. Winners' average: 113.016mph. Fastest lap: Bourdais, 1m44.972s, 126.891mph. LMP2: Pagenaud, 1m47.699s, 123.678mph. PC: Bouchut, 1m56.977s, 113.869mph. GT2: Hand, 2m00.985s, 110.096mph. GTC: Keen, 2m07.355s, 104.590mph. Driver listed on grid set qualifying time. First-named driver of each car in table started race.

ALL PICTS L&L

# DAVIDSON IS BACK IN BUSINESS

After giving up on his F1 dream, can Anthony Davidson add Le Mans glory to his Sebring success? *By GARY WATKINS*



Anthony Davidson is an enthusiastic soul – anyone who listens to Radio 5 Live's Formula 1 coverage knows that. And he was positively bubbling right from his first day in the Peugeot 908 with which he won last weekend's Sebring 12 Hours. Even on his first test after signing with the French squad, at Paul Ricard, he was "loving every lap. The seat's not right: I have bruised shoulders and a sore back. I'm in pain, but I can feel myself smiling in the car. I can't help it."

Davidson is loving it because a manufacturer-run LMP1 is, he says, "the next best thing after Formula 1" and because he knows what it means to get the call to join Alex Wurz and Marc Gene, two thirds of the Peugeot line-up that won Le Mans last year, for the 2010 season. Well, almost.

"This is big for me, but I don't think the enormity of it, the importance for my career, has quite dawned on me."

That's not surprising, given the rollercoaster ride since the 30-year-old found out that he would be racing at Le Mans in the turbodiesel 908: one minute he was set to be the French manufacturer's reserve driver, the next he was promoted to a full race seat for a programme of events

that started at Sebring.

Things have moved quickly for Davidson since the end of last year. It was then that he finally gave up on the F1 dream that had engulfed him, perhaps even obsessed him, for the better part of a decade.

The influx of new teams had given him hope that he could return to the grand prix grid. "I didn't know they would be asking for money, and at the start a couple told me that they wouldn't," he explains. "Little did I know what was going to happen with Toyota and BMW. Suddenly Jarno Trulli and Heikki Kovalainen were looking at the newcomers rather than shuffling around in existing teams."

That led to a hard decision, one that had been coming since the end of the Super Aguri adventure four grands prix into 2008.

"I can count on the fingers of one hand how many times I drove a racing car last year," says a man who took steps towards establishing himself as a sportscar driver in 2009, first with Aston Martin Racing at Le Mans and then at the wheel of the Gigawave Nissan GT-R in the Spa 24 Hours.

"This was the year that I had to be driving a lot, the year that I had to focus on something else. I couldn't

## ANT AT LE MANS



Davidson has two starts in the Le Mans 24 Hours to his credit. In 2003 he raced a GTS-class Ferrari 550 Maranello (above), while last year he joined the Prodrive-run Lola-Aston line-up.

hang on to the F1 test-driver thing anymore. Not that there is any testing to do, but I had to do what I'm trained for, which is to race."

The opportunity in one of AMR's Aston-engined Lola coupes resulted in him "falling in love with Le Mans" and a promise to himself that he'd be back in an LMP car for this year's edition of the French endurance: "I was speaking to quite a few teams. I was in contact with the obvious ones, but to be honest Peugeot wasn't one of them."

That was despite Davidson looking a shoo-in for a drive with Peugeot for Le Mans 2009 at the back end of the previous year after a successful try-out in a 908 at Ricard that November. His place in the team was vetoed by new Peugeot Sport boss Olivier Quesnel when he took the reins last January, on grounds of inexperience. His replacement was the ultra-experienced David Brabham, who went on to win the 24 Hours with Wurz and Gene.

"I've learned that when a manufacturer invites you to do a test, they aren't just looking at you for the next year," says Davidson. "They want you in their account for when an opportunity does come up."

"I was made up when I was approached for reserve-driver duties

Perfect start: Ant (r) on Sebring podium with Wurz and Gene



Peugeot race debut came at Sebring

for 2010 and saw it as a good step. You don't turn down the chance to be involved with the best team of the moment. It subsequently escalated."

That escalation has resulted from Quesnel's decision that Sebastien Loeb should focus on the defence of his World Rally Championship crown with Citroen. That explains how Davidson was taking part in a 32-hour Le Mans simulation within the space of a week.

Davidson is "chuffed to bits" to be a Peugeot factory driver: "I'm a sportscar driver now. This is my new career and I've landed the best drive possible."

His enthusiasm for the task in hand begs a question: does he have any regrets not making the switch earlier?

"An F1 drive was temptingly close so many times before Super Aguri, which is why I never gave up. And in the end it paid off. Otherwise I'd be sitting here never having raced properly in F1. I'd have been judged on those two races in a Minardi [in 2002]."

Now that he's driving for one of the 'Big Two' in sportscars, Davidson is going to be judged on the important races, including Sebring. He leaves no doubt as to his aspirations.

"Mark my words, one day I'm going to win Le Mans," he says. "I reckon I've got 10 years, 15 at a push, to do it." ❧





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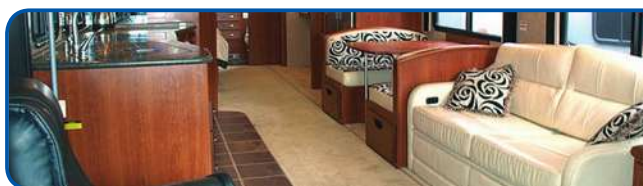


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**AT A GLANCE**

→ Winners **Juho Hanninen/**

**Mikko Markkula**

→ Points leader **Hanninen**

**RALLY RATING**

★★★★★

Skoda clean sweep of podium with ultra-dominant Hanninen out front

# Hanninen Fabia-lous for Skoda 1-2-3

A dominant win in Argentina gave Juho Hanninen the series lead, while top Brits Guy Wilks and Kris Meeke suffered differing fortunes



Hanninen tops the points table after first 2010 win

Skoda factory driver Juho Hanninen collected his first win of the Intercontinental Rally Challenge season with a dominant display on last weekend's Rally Argentina.

The podium was locked out by the Czech marque, with the Skoda UK car of Britain's Guy Wilks and Phil Pugh second on the Villa Carlos Paz-based event. Wilks was untroubled in the runners-up spot after a solid, sensible and pacy drive in his Fabia. But there was no touching Hanninen.

As soon as the event hit the dirt, Hanninen took control and collected three

wins from the opening loop of four stages to open up a 13.5-second lead by Saturday lunchtime. That initial advantage was over reigning champion Kris Meeke, who was holding a slender – two tenths of a second – lead over Wilks.

Meeke lost that place to Wilks on the first afternoon stage when the hard rubber beneath his Peugeot failed to warm up and offer any resistance to the cool and damp South American soil. Worse was to come for Meeke on Sunday, as his 207 suffered a throttle sensor problem when the event turned north of

Carlos Paz. The final insult for Meeke came when he lost third place with suspension failure on the event's penultimate test. Unable to fix the car, Meeke was forced into retirement.

As Meeke's challenge faded, Hanninen pressed home his advantage with a stunning time on the second run at the Amboy-Santa Monica test; having traded second for second with his rivals, the Finn took 10 out of everybody on the 12-mile stage.

With 32s in hand over Wilks going into the start of the final day, Hanninen put the result beyond doubt with fastest time on all four stages. The delighted IRC championship leader beamed at the end of the final test, saying: "It's fantastic. I am so happy with the result. Now it's time to celebrate."

Wilks was equally pleased, having collected his first fastest time of the season on his way to second. He holds second place in the table, having

claimed the same number of points in the past two rallies as Hanninen.

Wilks, who becomes the first Brit since Richard Burns to stand on the Rally Argentina podium, said: "We've had a good trip to South America, with good results in Brazil and here in Argentina. The team has done a great job and it's a really good result for Skoda UK – and Skoda itself, with the podium lock-out."

That third place on the podium was collected by Jan Kopecky, who made the most of Meeke's misery.

Argentinian rally hero Gabriel Pozzo was fourth – and first non-S2000 car – in his Subaru Impreza, albeit five minutes behind the leader. Just 10 seconds adrift of Pozzo was fellow countryman Federico Villagra, who made his IRC debut in a Ford Fiesta S2000. The Munchi's Ford WRC driver felt his Fiesta was down on power through the second day of the event, but he netted fifth. Fellow IRC debutant Nasser Al-

Attiyah didn't finish after flooding his Skoda in a 10th-stage watersplash.

Bruno Magalhaes collected sixth place, despite starting the event feeling under the weather, in his Peugeot 207 S2000.

At the head of the field, Hanninen's first win of the year signals the strength of his challenge for the drivers' title, but the good news for British fans is that while Meeke's challenge faltered in Argentina, Wilks stepped up in his strongest IRC drive to date.

**RESULTS**

**1 Juho Hanninen/Mikko Markkula (Skoda Fabia S2000) 2h30m38.1s;** 2 Guy Wilks/Phil Pugh (Skoda Fabia S2000) +51.0s; 3 Jan Kopecky/Petr Stary (Skoda Fabia S2000) +2m20.1s; 4 Gabriel Pozzo/Daniel Stillo (Subaru Impreza) +5m03.9s; 5 Federico Villagra/Jorge Perez Companc (Ford Fiesta S2000) +5m14.2s; 6 Bruno Magalhaes/Carlos Magalhaes (Peugeot 207 S2000) +6m11.0s.  
**Points:** 1 Hanninen 24; 2 Wilks 19; 3 Kopecky 15; 4= Kris Meeke/Mikko Hirvonen 10; 6 Magalhaes 9.

Wilks took another runner-up finish



QUICK RESULTS

- Winner Jimmie Johnson
- Pole Joey Logano
- Most laps led Kurt Busch

RACE RATING

★★★★★  
Just the usual Bristol  
bump-and-bash fest



Johnson broke his Bristol duck at last

IN BRIEF



NASCAR NATIONWIDE

Justin Allgaier (above) led Brad Keselowski across the line for a Penske Racing one-two in last weekend's Nationwide race at Bristol. Allgaier took the lead from his team-mate on a lap-274 restart and won by 0.128s, with Kyle Busch finishing third.

TOYOTA RACING SERIES

Fifteen-year-old Mitch Evans claimed New Zealand's Toyota Racing Series with a mature performance in a stressful final round at Taupo. Former A1GP driver Earl Bamber won all three races, but Evans scored two cautious seconds and then just managed third in a hectic finale to finish up three points ahead of Bamber.

NZ PORSCHE GT3

Craig Baird wrapped up his sixth New Zealand Porsche GT3 Championship in the final round at Taupo with careful finishes of fourth and third, then blasted to a runaway victory in the final. Jonny Reid won the round with two wins and a fourth.

STAR MAZDA

Ex-Formula Palmer Audi ace Tristan Vautier started his Star Mazda career with victory in last weekend's opening round at Sebring. The Frenchman finished ahead of Jorge Goncalvez and Conor Daly.

BRAZILIAN GT

Not even 45kg of ballast was enough to stop the new Lamborghini Gallardo LP 560 smashing the opponents in the first two rounds of the Brazilian GT3 Series, held last weekend at Interlagos. There were seven of the new cars on the grid, with Rafael Daniel and Claudio Dahruj (below) taking the win.



NASCAR SPRINT CUP BRISTOL (USA), MARCH 21, RD 5/36

# Johnson is now a Bristol rover

The Bristol 'Thunderdrome' was one of the few tracks Jimmie Johnson had failed to win at during his recent domination of NASCAR's Sprint Cup.

He ended that anomaly last Sunday with a sensational final flourish. Kurt Busch's Penske Dodge was the fastest car, especially on long runs but, when an errant brake duct brought out the 10th and final caution flag, it created a 10-lap dash to the flag.

Busch and Johnson had run at the front all day, and their crews opted for four new Goodyear tyres. The Roush Ford team decided to fit just two to each of its cars, leaving Greg Biffle,

Carl Edwards and Matt Kenseth running 1-2-3.

Tony Stewart also opted for two tyres, leaving Busch and Johnson on the third row. Crucially, Johnson's Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet was in the outside lane and he wasted little time in driving around the Ford boys, while Busch was bottled up in traffic.

It didn't take long for Johnson to work his way around the outside of the fast-starting Stewart for the lead either. By now Busch was up to third, but the laps had run out for him to move any further forward.

"We were solid all day but just lost out on the luck of the draw," Busch reflected. "I'd rather lose to any of the

other 41 cars out there than that 48 car [of Johnson]."

There was the usual quota of hard-luck stories further down the finishing order, with four potential winners taken out in the race's only multi-car shunt.

Mark Martin interlocked his Hendrick Chevy with Biffle's Fusion and ran into the wall. As he tried to take his hobbled car onto pitlane he was powerless to stop it running up the track and into the path of team-mate Jeff Gordon.

Martin was turned into the path of Marcos Ambrose, which left Juan Pablo Montoya with nowhere to go either.

Ambrose's Toyota was the quickest car in traffic. Twice the Tasmanian was sent to the back of the field for speeding in the pits, and the speed at which he was able to work his way through the field was impressive. Montoya led briefly early in the race, but was suffering from excessive front-right tyre wear.

David Reutimann had driven his Waltrip Toyota

into second place when his engine blew, while Sam Hornish Jr was set for his best finish of the year when his Penske Dodge dropped a cylinder.

It was another subdued race for Kevin Harvick, but a great piece of avoiding action during the Martin/Gordon spill allowed him to come home 11th and retain the points lead.

Next time out at Martinsville the cars will run with the new rear spoiler. It will be fascinating to see who adapts best.

● Connell Sanders Jr

RESULTS

**1 Jimmie Johnson (Chevrolet Impala)**, 500 laps in 3h20m50s; 2 Tony Stewart (Chevy), +0.894s; 3 Kurt Busch (Dodge Charger); 4 Greg Biffle (Ford Fusion); 5 Matt Kenseth (Ford); 6 Carl Edwards (Ford); 7 Dale Earnhardt Jr (Chevy); 8 Jamie McMurray (Chevy); 9 Kyle Busch (Toyota Camry); 10 Jeff Burton (Chevy). **Points** 1 Kevin Harvick, 644; 2 Kenseth, 618; 3 Biffle, 585; 4 Johnson, 570; 5 Clint Bowyer, 558; 6 Burton, 538; 7 Mark Martin, 521; 8 Stewart, 510; 9 Paul Menard, 505; 10 Kurt Busch, 502; 11 Jeff Gordon, 482; 12 Scott Speed, 482.



Montoya (42) crunches Ambrose

**QUICK RESULTS**

→ Winner **Jose Maria Lopez**  
→ Pole position **Lopez**  
→ Fastest lap **Lopez**

**RACE RATING**

★★★★★

Lopez untouchable at the front,  
but lots going on behind him

**TC2000 PUNTA DEL ESTE (ROU), MARCH 21, RD 1/12**

# Lopez gets back down to business

Following his recently-frustrated attempt to enter Formula 1, two-time and reigning TC2000 champion Jose Maria Lopez dominated the opening round of the TC2000 calendar at the resort of Punta del Este, in Uruguay, in what will be the Argentinian division's sole foreign outing of the year.

Lopez, as has been his habit in recent seasons, claimed pole aboard one of the works Honda Civics and the disappointed US F1 aspirant led away on the very narrow street layout.

But there was chaos several-hundred metres after the start, when the Chevrolet Vectra of Guillermo Ortelli and Honda Civic of Nestor Girolami banged doors

at high speed.

With Ortelli slightly ahead, his car darted sharp left and he nearly caught the slide, but the Vectra ended up clobbering the cement wall, littering the track with debris.

That brought out the safety car for two laps while everything was cleared. When the race restarted, Lopez began drawing away from team-mate Girolami.

Girolami's day ended on the fourth lap when he was shown the black flag for his part in the incident with Ortelli, allowing Facundo Arduso into second on his debut with the works Toyota team. But that was a brief moment of glory, for on the following lap he took a slightly wide line while braking for the corner after



With no US F1, Lopez won in TC2000 instead

ALF-MARCELO PANIA

the pits and Matias Rossi made the move of the day by slipping his Renault into second. At the same time, Mariano Werner's Toyota further demoted a surprised Arduso down to fourth.

Lopez continued to drive as if he was qualifying, and by lap nine was 7.5s ahead of Rossi, who in turn had his mirrors full of Werner's Toyota.

Lopez had worked out an

8.5s gap over Rossi by lap 17, when Matias Munoz Marchesi hit the barriers hard with his Peugeot 307, bringing out the safety car for another couple of laps.

Lopez then got to work again and by the finish he was already nearly 3s ahead of runner-up Rossi, who in turn had been able to create a 1s cushion over Werner.

● Tony Watson

**RESULTS**

**1 Jose Maria Lopez (Honda Civic)**, 27 laps in 51m01.366s; 2 Matias Rossi (Renault Megane), +2.695s; 3 Mariano Werner (Toyota Corolla); 4 Facundo Arduso (Toyota); 5 Mariano Altuna (Honda); 6 Christian Ledesma (Chevrolet Vectra); 7 Santiago Ventana (Honda); 8 Gabriel Ponce de Leon (Ford Focus); 9 Martin Basso (Ford); 10 Fabian Yannantuoni (Peugeot 307). **Points** 1 Lopez, 27; 2 Rossi, 20; 3 Werner, 15; 4 Arduso, 12; 5 Altuna, 10; 6 Ledesma, 8.

**SUPER GT SUZUKA (J), MARCH 21, RD 1/8**

# De Oliveira takes a stealthy victory

Joao Paolo de Oliveira and Hironobu Yasuda won the opening round of the Super GT Championship at Suzuka circuit last Sunday, after starting from 10th.

In slippery conditions, the pair owed their progress to a combination of strategy and incidents. Polesitters Takashi Kogure and Loic Duval were dealt an early blow when Kogure went off at 130R on the first lap.

That handed the lead to Richard Lyons in the Toyota Lexus SC430 that he was sharing with Yuji Tachikawa,

but that only lasted until he was passed by Kazuya Oshima on the second lap.

While Oshima built a lead, Andre Lotterer's similar SC430 was making progress through the field from eighth, from where he'd been forced to start after co-driver Juichi Wakisaka went wide at Spoon during qualifying. Lotterer's charge took him as high as third, but contact with Lyons sent the German spinning back through the field.

A three-Honda crash involving Ralph Firman, Ryo Michigami and Kogure

ended with a spell under the safety car while Firman's and Kogure's cars were retrieved from the barriers.

At that point Oshima was still leading, but de Oliveira's decision not to change tyres when he pitted from third on lap 34 proved to be the decisive move for the Kondo Racing Nissan.

● Jiro Takahashi

**RESULTS**

**1 Joao Paolo de Oliveira/Hironobu Yasuda (Nissan GT-R)**, 52 laps in 1h53m23.222s; 2 Daisuke Ito/Bjorn Wirdheim (Lexus SC430); +9.233s; 3 Takuya Izawa/Naoki Yamamoto (Honda HSV-010); 4 Juichi Wakisaka/Andre Lotterer (Lexus); 5 Andre Couto/Kohei Hirate (Lexus); 6 Hiroaki Ishiura/Kazuya Oshima (Lexus). **Points** 1 De Oliveira/Yasuda, 20; 2 Ito/Wirdheim, 15; 3 Izawa/Yamamoto, 11; 4 Wakisaka/Lotterer, 8; 5 Couto/Hirate, 6; 6 Ishiura/Oshima, 5.



De Oliveira and Yasuda made way up from 10th

ISHIHARA

**NEW ZEALAND V8s TAUPO (NZ), MARCH 21, RD 6/6**

# Baird's champion touch

Craig Baird capped off a superb New Zealand season by winning two championships – NZ V8s and Porsche GT3s – in the final round at Taupo.

Baird secured the V8 title with a race to spare, after driving his Ford Falcon conservatively to third and fourth in the first two heats.

Now racing for fun, Baird put everything into the final race, where he started from near the back of the reversed-grid 26-car field. He charged right through the pack and seized the lead on the last of the 20 laps.

"I had nothing to lose. I was just racing for enjoyment," he said.

The final race was a hectic one, with many cars going off the track. "There were clouds of dust and I didn't know if there was anybody in them," said Baird.

Former champion John

McIntyre won the round with two clear victories and a sixth in the final race – in spite of a pitstop to repair damage from a collision.

McIntyre finished second in the series, ahead of defending champion and fellow Ford driver Kayne Scott who was third overall at Taupo, just one point behind Baird.

● Bernard Carpinter

**RESULTS**

**Race 1 1 John McIntyre (Ford Falcon)**, 10 laps in 16m08.145s; 2 Kayne Scott (Ford), +1.291s; 3 Craig Baird (Ford); 4 Tim Edgell (Ford); 5 Andy Booth (Holden Commodore); 6 Andy Knight (Ford). **Race 2 1 McIntyre**, 10 laps in 16m13.834s; 2 Scott, +0.922s; 3 Edgell; 4 Baird; 5 Booth; 6 John Penny (Holden). **Race 3 1 Baird**, 20 laps in 34m30.439s; 2 Matt Lockwood (Ford), +3.863s; 3 Booth; 4 Scott; 5 Angus Fogg (Ford); 6 McIntyre. **Final points** 1 Baird, 1041; 2 McIntyre, 916; 3 Scott, 864; 4 Edgell, 855; 5 Booth, 774; 6 Eddie Bell, 714.

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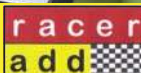
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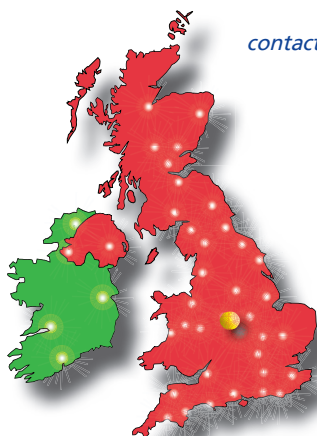
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Engines & Contact Details

**Works Van Diemen squad closes on Vernon deal, p80**



GIBSON/LAT

# Sports Extra

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Caine set pace at Silverstone test

JAKOB EBREY

## Caine tops Carrera Cup test as new entries join the pack

Michael Caine goes quickest at Silverstone as Lithuanian team brings two cars

**SPORTSCAR VETERAN**  
Michael Caine pipped Tim Harvey and Glynn Geddie to the fastest time in last week's official Porsche Carrera Cup GB test at Silverstone.

The three title favourites, who were split by just 0.033 seconds, each represent one of the series' 'big three' teams: Motorbase Performance, Redline Racing and Team Parker Racing. Fourth-fastest Ollie Jackson topped the Pro-Am 1 class with Motorbase.

Caine said: "We know we can be faster. We had just one set of tyres this afternoon and we're trying to keep the running down on the car. Motorbase is certainly making its mark."

### LITHUANIAN ENTRY

Joining the Carrera Cup this season is Lithuanian team Juta Racing, which has switched from the Scandinavian series to

run in Pro-Am 1. It will have some initial assistance from top squad Parker.

The team is led by 22-year-old Jonas Gelzinis, a former winner of the Lenktynes 1000km sportscar race in his homeland. The second car is raced by Tautvydas Barstys.

Gelzinis said: "The level in Scandinavia is quite high but the racing here is more professional and competitive, and the tracks aren't as narrow or dangerous! I'm really looking forward to it."

Oman's Ahmad Al Harthy, runner-up in the Formula Renault BARC series last year, has also joined the Pro-Am 1 class, with Redline. "I always knew the switch to closed wheels was inevitable," he said. "Porsche is the best decision and I hope one day to be racing alongside Formula 1 in the Supercup."

Al Harthy will become the first Arab driver to race in the Carrera Cup. He

brings Redline's squad to six drivers, matching Motorbase, although Tony Gilham has stood down from Redline this season to drive for his own ReDesign Racing squad.

### SUTTON IN ITALY

James Sutton, winner of the 2007 Carrera Cup with Redline and runner-up last year, is set to switch to the Italian championship.

Sutton, who took a podium finish from a one-off outing with Centro Porsche Padova at Monza last year, is hoping to firm up a deal with the squad for a full season. "It's looking good," he said. "Monza blew me away with how competitive it was, and racing in Italy is an excellent chance to raise my game."

Sutton took part in the official test at Mugello last week in the new-spec car, which has been introduced to the Supercup and Italian series this season. "I practised Mugello on the X-Box and it kicks arse on that, and it kicks arse in real life," he said. "The new car is an unbelievable bit of kit."



Gelzinis is part of new Juta Racing outfit

### SILVERSTONE TESTING TIMES

POS	DRIVER (TEAM)	TIME
1	Michael Caine (Motorbase)	57.044s
2	Tim Harvey (Redline)	57.053s
3	Glynn Geddie (Team Parker)	57.077s
4	Ollie Jackson (Motorbase)	57.273s
5	Michael Meadows (Redline)	57.278s
6	Stephen Jelley (Team Parker)	57.287s

### AUTOSPORT SAYS...

**KEVIN TURNER**  
NATIONAL EDITOR

kevin.turner@haymarket.com



**FOR PEOPLE** who have been paying attention, Kieran Vernon has been a star of club racing in recent years.

Success in Ginetta Juniors and G20s led to a Spirit drive in British Formula Ford last season. Despite a lack of funding - and therefore testing - Vernon showed he had potential. A one-off works Van Diemen drive at the Brands Festival, where he finished on the gearbox of team-mate and title challenger Garry Findlay, impressed many.

Fortunately, it also impressed Van Diemen boss Lindsay Allen, who is now trying to put a deal together to get Vernon in the car all year (p80).

It could be argued that the Van Diemen has been the equal of the Mygale in the category since August 2008, but a number of factors have limited it to a handful of wins. One of those is that top team Jamun tends to attract the best drivers.

With Vernon hopefully at Van Diemen, Daniel Cammish in a Spectrum and Scott Malvern in a Ray, the talent may be spread around a bit more this season.

The one team that did put together a real challenge to Jamun last year is, almost unbelievably, struggling to attract drivers. JTR and Josef Newgarden took the fight to Jamun, but the squad now finds itself without a definite frontrunner.

Given its record - 17 race wins and a Festival victory - and the fact it has the experienced Nick Tandy at its head, it seems a travesty that JTR isn't already in a position to join Vernon et al in the thick of the fight.

### Extra contact details

**Ben Anderson**, editorial assistant  
ben.anderson@haymarket.com

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LIFE ON THE LIMIT

British Formula Ford

# Vernon to race works Van Diemen

Single-seater ace on verge of deal with leading Ford team

**BRITISH FORMULA FORD** racer Kieran Vernon is on the verge of a full season in the series with the works Van Diemen squad.

Vernon finished second in the Scholarship Class last season, driving a Wrensport Spirit, and took sixth in the Formula Ford Festival with a works Van Diemen. Now he is set to join Jesse Anttila and James Tucker at the Fluid Motorsport-run team.

A lack of budget has delayed Vernon's deal, but team boss Lindsay Allen is planning to run him at the Oulton Park opener before raising more funding.

"We'll do whatever we can to keep him in the seat," said Allen. "Without a doubt he can fight for the championship."

Vernon, 20, said: "We plan to do the full season. We'll get the ball rolling, hopefully get the results, and then go from there."

"I'm sure Fluid has done a good job over the winter and I'm confident."

Fellow Formula Ford squad Enigma Motorsport has confirmed it will join forces with LMS Racing to run Finn Antti Buri in the series this year. The reigning Northern European Zone FFord champion will race a Scholar-powered Mygale.

**P85 Formula Ford preview**

## Kieran Vernon

**2003-2007** Karting  
**2007** Runner-up in **Ginetta Junior**;  
**Ginetta Junior Autumn Cup** champ  
**2008** Runner-up in **Ginetta G20**;  
**Ginetta G20 Autumn Cup** champ  
**2009** Runner-up in **British Formula Ford Scholarship Class** with Wrensport-run Spirit

British GT

## Ferrier gets new Chad Ferrari ride

**FORMER BRITISH** Touring Car racer Tom Ferrier will race a new Chad Racing Ferrari 430 Scuderia in the British GT Championship this season.

Ferrier, who has not raced since a British GT campaign with a Tech 9 Lamborghini Gallardo in 2008, will share the car with Chad regular Paul Warren. He tested the car for the first time at Oulton Park last week.

"It took me a little bit of time to adjust to being back in GTs, but it went really

well," said the 28-year-old, who will also run Team Parker's new Ginetta Junior squad this year.

Team manager Piers Masarati, who will also run cars for Daniel Brown/Chris Hyman and Jose Balbiani/Juanchi Garriz, added: "Tom won't have any more tests before the opening round at Oulton [next month], but he was as quick as [fellow Ferrari drivers] Matt Griffin and Adam Wilcox. Tom's helping Paul improve his driving as well."

"This year is going to be harder than last year, but we expect podiums."

Wilcox also tested the new 430 Scuderia he will race alongside Phil Burton for the first time at Oulton. He

believes the car, run by the renamed Predator Racing squad (formerly VRS), can help them take their first Brit GT win.

"It's awesome - much better than last year's car," said the 33-year-old. "We're going to win it this year."

Ferrier will share Chad Ferrari with Warren



HSCC

## Elford Porsche to race again

**A PORSCHE 911** formerly raced by versatile veteran Vic Elford took part in a pre-season shakedown at Lydden last Saturday.

Former Caterham racer Rob Russell now owns the car and plans to campaign it in HSCC meetings.

The car first appeared at Lydden in February 1967, when Elford raced it to victory in the first-ever rallycross event.

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British Formula Ford

## JTR still planning on Ford attack despite lack of driver deals

**LEADING BRITISH** Formula Ford squad JTR will contest the series this season, despite not appearing on the provisional entry for the Oulton Park opener next month.

JTR scored nine victories and finished second in the drivers' standings last year with American Josef Newgarden, but has struggled to attract drivers for its Mygales this season.

AUTOSPORT understands that the

team is close to signing Grand Prix Shootout winners Dani Domit and Tio Ellinas. It has already tested Ellinas.

Team boss and Porsche Supercup racer Nick Tandy said: "I'm sure we'll be there one way or another. We're talking very closely to the GP Shootout guys and we'd like both of them as they're obviously quick."

Tandy did not rule out putting a more experienced driver in one of the cars. "If the deal for both of them isn't ready [for Oulton] we'll have an experienced guy in to help develop the car," added Tandy, who won nine British Formula Ford races between 2006 and '07, as well as the FF Festival, before moving into British F3 with JTR in '08.



JTR scored nine wins with Newgarden in '09

Trofeo Abarth 500 GB

## Leggate and Watson join Trofeo grid

**EX-BRITISH** Touring Car driver Fiona Leggate and ex-Ginetta Junior racer Cassey Watson will contest the inaugural Trofeo Abarth 500 GB series this season.

Leggate will race with CMS in an Abarth 500 Assetto Corse backed by Abarth dealer Autoworld, while Watson will compete with MG and Britcar squad Lunar Racing in conjunction with Thames Abarth of Slough.

The pair will join former Ginetta G20 racer Sarah Franklin and TV presenter Vicki Butler-Henderson to make it

four female racers on the inaugural grid.

Leggate said: "I can't wait for the season to start and get in some testing beforehand. I'm confident that we can have a good season with this fantastic little car."

Watson added: "I'm so

excited. This is a huge honour for me and I would like to thank everybody at Thames for having the belief in me to give me this opportunity."

Leggate tested the Trofeo Abarth machine at Oulton Park last week.



Leggate tested at Oulton Park

Formula Renault BARC/Ginetta G50 Cup

## Powell to race in G50 and Renault

**FORMULA RENAULT UK** midfielder Alice Powell will contest dual campaigns in single-seaters and GTs this season.

Powell, 17, who finished 18th in Formula Renault UK last season, will step down to the BARC series with Fortec Motorsport, but remains on the TOCA package by racing in the Ginetta

G50 Cup for Tockwith Motorsport.

Tockwith boss Simon Moore, whose family squad carried son Nigel to the inaugural G50 title in 2008, will run a single car for Powell. He also plans to pair Powell with his daughter Sarah, the reigning Ginetta Junior champion, in October's Britcar 24 Hours, when Moore has gained her senior licence.

MARCUS PYE

# HUMBLE PYE

The voice of club motor racing



Mass drove Porsche 910 up the hill last week

**T**op drivers with real soul, and a burning passion for the sport and its history, are in extremely short supply these days. Maybe the financial stakes - if not the human ones - are too great in modern times, but the contrasts between combatants of different eras are perhaps the greatest attractions of the Goodwood Festival of Speed, now in its 18th year. I've worked at them all, and wouldn't miss one for the world.

Last Thursday the press corps basked in the pale spring sunshine outside Goodwood House, where Lord March introduced the minutiae of this season's event, tantalisingly entitled Viva Veloce! The Passion for Speed. Among the *anciens pilotes* who turned out were Richard Attwood, Jacky Ickx and Jochen Mass, Le Mans winners all.

Each raced in Formula 1 of course - even if Attwood, like brilliant future Porsche team-mate Brian Redman, did not much care for it. Indeed the Belgian and the German won nine GPs between them. But there they were, decades on, enjoying great cars and company.

Attwood was on duty for Porsche (still his employer 40 years on from landing the marque's breakthrough victory at La Sarthe with Hans Herrmann), albeit piloting the fabulous 530bhp, 204mph 911 GT2 roadburner, as used at its Silverstone driving centre, with assorted scribes riding shotgun.

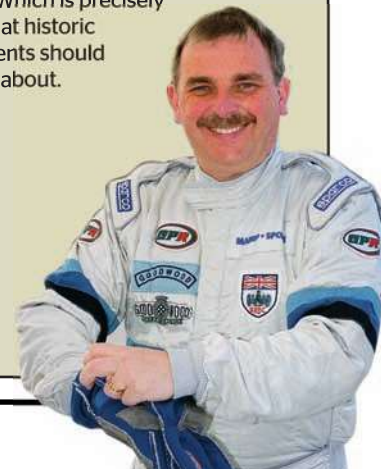
Mass launched the deceptively

small and exceedingly pretty ex-Bill Bradley Racing Porsche 910 (currently for sale with Gregor Fiskens's emporium) out of the blocks hard, while Ickx was spotted outside the house admiring the Marlboro McLaren M23, in a line-up spanning Alfa Romeo Alfetta to 2008 McLaren, representing 60 Years of the F1 World Championship. It surely evoked poignant memories of 1973, when he drove a Yardley-backed version to third in the German GP - a 'two-off' gig in a term started with Ferrari and ended less competitively in Frank Williams's bargain bucket Iso Marlboro.

Switching focus to May's GP Historique de Monaco, fans will be delighted that Emanuele Pirro - his five Le Mans victories one fewer than Ickx's tally - heads the F3 entry in a Martini MK34 (see page 82), a model he raced in 1981. As we have seen many times at Goodwood's Revival Meeting, the charming Roman relishes entertaining at great events, as consummate victories in the RAC Tourist Trophy Celebration (Jaguar E-type lightweight) and Freddie March Trophy (Austin-Healey 100S) down the years attest. Here is another fellow more than happy to leave his early career ego behind for the love of motorsport.

Which is precisely what historic events should be about.

“Mass launched the deceptively small and exceedingly pretty ex-Bill Bradley Racing Porsche 910”



#### Chevron GR8 Challenge

## New Chevron hits track with F3 veteran

**THE NEW** Chevron GR8 tested with bodywork for the first time at Anglesey last week.

Ex-British Formula 3 racer Martin O'Connell completed over 100 miles in the two-litre Cosworth-powered machine. The car, which will form the basis of the GR8 Challenge (see AUTOSPORT, January 21), had previously only run as a naked chassis.

Chevron Racing Cars director Helen Bashford-Malkie said: "Martin put together some exceedingly quick lap times and we are

extremely encouraged by the results. Now things are in place for tyre testing and aero-efficiency work."

Bashford-Malkie also confirmed that seven chassis are ready for bodywork, with others nearing completion. "We are on target for the opening GR8 Challenge event at Silverstone on May 8-9," she added.

GR8s are also expected in British GT, the GT Cup and VdeV, and further testing will establish which classes the car fits in for the various series.

O'Connell tested new Chevron at Anglesey



Classic F3

Pirro (62) will race his old Martini at Monaco

## Pirro to Monaco F3 race

### Sportscar legend to return to single-seaters for Monaco extravaganza

**FIVE-TIME** Le Mans 24 Hours winner Emanuele Pirro will be reunited with the Formula 3 Martini that helped launch his career in 1981 at the Grand Prix Historique de Monaco in May.

The 48-year-old will drive the Toyota-powered Martini MK34 in the F3 race for pre-1985 1600cc and two-litre machinery, a new event to the biannual historic festival on the streets of Monte Carlo. The car is the same chassis that he used to win the final round of the 1981 European F3 Championship at Mugello.

"Someone has bought the car and restored it to its original livery and invited me to drive," said Pirro. "I thought, 'Why not?'"

"My old team boss Mario Crugnola is coming along

to help run the car and there'll be another guy who used to work with us there too. It's like we've got the band back together."

Pirro explained how the Martini, run by Crugnola's Scuderia Torino Corse team, played a vital role in the early part of his career.

"That was my first year of European F3 and it was a real privateer affair," he said. "I won the last race of the season, beating Kurt Thiim in one of the Euroracing Marches, and that got me the contract with that team for the following season."

Pirro revealed that his F3 return will be the first time he has driven a single-seater since his final grand prix start for Scuderia Italia at Adelaide in 1991.

#### Tin Tops/US stock cars

## Tin-top racer targets NASCAR

**FORMER FUN CUP** and CSCC Tin Tops racer Simon Ward is targeting a future in NASCAR after securing a deal to race in one of the US stock car championship's regional feeder series.

Ward, who won the 2008 CSCC Tin Tops Class B title before switching to Fun Cup last season, will race a Chevrolet Monte Carlo for Go Green Racing in two rounds of the NASCAR K&N Pro Series East.

He hopes NASCAR 'spotters' will then grant him the requisite licence to

graduate to the Nationwide or Truck series, which both sit below NASCAR's main Sprint Cup category. He says he has enough sponsorship to make a mid-season move to either category with Go Green.

Ward said: "It's a dream come true for me. My backers want me alongside [Juan Pablo] Montoya and everyone else in two years."

"I've worked hard to fund myself into bigger racing without success, but have been lucky to find myself in the right

place, at the right time, talking to the right people. I'm an amateur racer, but I'm pretty determined we can do it."

Ward tested for the first time at Charlotte on March 17 and is due to make his race debut at the Greenville Pickens Speedway this weekend, before heading to South Boston Speedway the following week.



Ward will swap Alfa for US stock car

MICK WALKER

#### Dunlop MN Saloons

## Hodgetts BTCC RS500 returns

**A FORD SIERRA** RS500 formerly raced by ex-British Touring Car champion Chris Hodgetts will return to competition this season.

Hodgetts won the 1986 and '87 BTCC titles in a Toyota Corolla before stepping up to the Cosworth turbocar.

The Brooklyn-liveried car has not raced for 21 years, but will now appear in the Dunlop *Motorsport News* Saloons series, driven by Ford racer Craig Davies. He drove it for the

first time at Brands Hatch last week.

"It's amazingly quick, and incredibly sure-footed," said Davies. "It's a real pleasure to drive, but the team reckon I need to take more kerb, and short-cut the corners a bit, like the car used to!"

Running the car on average boost, Davies is believed to have recorded a lap of 53.1s. Rod Birley's pole time from the DMN Brands opener last year was 52.615s.

Ex-Hodgetts RS500 returned at Brands



GARY HAWKINS

**IN BRIEF**



**HISTORIC RACER** Dean Lanzante drove this Jaguar XJR-14 (above) at the Goodwood Festival launch day last week.

**REIGNING FORMULA RENAULT**

Winter Cup champion Harry Tincknell topped last week's two-day FR UK test at Rockingham. The CRS Racing man was 0.210 seconds clear of Lewis Williamson (Manor Competition), with Tamas Pal Kiss (ATECH GP) and Ollie Millroy (Fortec Motorsport) next up.

**FORMULA RENAULT UK**

racer David McDonald looks likely to join Team Firstair after testing with the team at Silverstone and Rockingham. Team boss Ian Barnwell said: "We're very pleased with what he's done and we'd love to sign him." McDonald took three fourth places with Manor Competition last year.

**EX-PORSCHE**

Carrera Cup racer Sam Hancock and Simon Dolan won the VdeV opener at Jarama last weekend in a Ligier (left). It was the first victory in the series for Jota Sport.



**REIGNING SPORTS 2000**

Duratec champion Mike Jenvey tested the new March 09/R, with which he will defend his title, for the first time this month. The double Formula Vee title winner completed a shakedown at Silverstone on March 8, before moving on to Brands Hatch last Tuesday (March 16).

**ANGLO MOTORSPORT**

has signed Dane Kasper Krogh to race in Formula Renault BARC this season.

**TIN-TOP**

legend Rod Birley could miss the opening Dunlop MN round at Brands Hatch this Sunday. The reigning champ's Ford Escort suffered a fire in testing last week, which inflicted a considerable amount of engine-bay damage.

**MASTERS HISTORIC**

Racing's new pre-1966 Mini series will no longer be the first single-make historic category. The series will now include a class for Hillman Imps of up to 1000cc.

**ANDY WOLFE**

gave Jason Wright's ATS Grand Prix car a run out at Mallory Park last week (below), in preparation for this year's Monaco Historique. Wright recently bought the car from racer Philip Walker.



**F5000 Tasman Cup**

**Hyde wins as Smith and Ross take title fight to season finale**



ALEX MITCHELL

Hyde's McRae ended Smith's winning streak

**THE BATTLE** between Kenny Smith and Steve Ross for the 2009/10 MSC New Zealand F5000 Tasman Cup Revival Series will go down to the wire at the Australian Grand Prix meeting, following Smith's two wins from three races at Phillip Island last weekend.

Chris Hyde and his McRae GM1 ended Smith's eight-race winning streak in the Lola T430 on Saturday. But defending champ Smith, who chased Hyde home first time out, made no mistake thereafter, beating Tony

Richards (Lola T332) and title rival Ross (GM1) in the subsequent races.

Hyde retired from race two with a detached ignition wire, but charged from 19th to third in the feature finale. Ross, third in the earlier races, remains locked in combat with Smith with just the two Grand Prix support legs to run.

Quickest of five British competitors in the 34-car Phillip Island field was Mark Dwyer, who bounced back from a non-finish in the opening stanza to finish fifth in race three.

**Formula Palmer Audi**

**Jousse targets FPA title run**

**FRENCH RACER** Maxime Jousse, brother of Formula 2 race winner Julien, will return to Formula Palmer Audi for a second season.

Jousse took his maiden FPA victory at Silverstone last year and finished eighth in the championship. He is targeting the £100,000 prize scholarship into F2 for the 2010 FPA champion.

Jousse said: "I'm aiming for the title for sure. I have the right level of experience now - it wasn't always easy in my first season, but now I know the championship, the circuits and the car."



GARY HAWKINS

**Senna's first turbocar gets run at Goodwood**  
Phil Quaife drove the ex-Ayrton Senna Toleman at Goodwood last week

**Caterham R300 Superlight**

**Ellwood joins bumper R300 grid**

**THE MOST** successful driver in Caterham racing history will switch from Caterham Graduates to the R300 Superlight championship for this season.

Reigning Mega

Graduate champion Jamie Ellwood, who has won six Caterham Graduate crowns, will join a field of drivers that hold 13 Caterham titles between them.

"Having won three

Megas titles in a row, all my challenges at the current level were complete, so it was time to look for the next," said Ellwood, who had his first run in an R300 at Oulton Park last week and will drive with the McMillan Motorsport team.

Reigning Classic Graduates champion Flick Haigh and 2009 Roadsports B champion Trevor Fowell will also join the fully-subscribed grid of 32 cars.



MICK WALKER

Caterham ace Ellwood will move to the R300

**Goodwood**

**Alfas and Surtees to Goodwood**

**MORE THAN** 50 significant Alfa Romeos will celebrate the marque's centenary under the 'Viva Veloce! The Passion for Speed' theme at Goodwood's Festival of Speed in July.

Cars ranging from an 8C 2600 sportscar, through 1960s GTA, to the new 8C Spider road car were present at last Thursday's launch. Alfa's greatest competition cars, plus many

personalities, will represent the Milanese marque at the festival.

In addition, September's Goodwood Revival will celebrate the career of 1964 F1 world champion John Surtees.

The only man to have won world titles on bikes and in cars, Surtees will preside over a cavalcade of machinery, and celebrate the 50th anniversary of his winning race debut in FJunior.



# Changing of the guard

There have been big changes in Formula Renault UK and British Formula Ford for 2010. We take a look at form

JAKOB EBREY

## Formula Renault UK By MARCUS SIMMONS

**C**racked rockers, gearbox dramas, oil starvation in long corners, brake vibrations, spares shortages, a huge hike in prices for some spare parts, late delivery of cars, and at least one case of a delaminating tub. Formula Renault hasn't had an easy winter, and it's a credit to the outstanding professionalism of the teams and the support of ever-present technical troubleshooter R-Sport that a grid of 20 of the brand-new Barazi-Epsilon EBO1A chassis should line up at Thruxton for the opening round of the UK series on April 3.

The new car, complete with seven-speed gearbox, dash gizmos, automatic downshift blip and closer-to-F3 performance, was profiled in detail in our December 3 issue. While the faithful old Tatuus, which served from 2000-09, was getting long in the tooth, there was resistance to bringing in the new Barazi-Epsilon for 2010 to the UK in this time of recession. The decision to do so, thereby keeping in line with the Eurocup, was probably the right one, but the delays and dramas have

seriously tested the teams' patience, even if some of those can be put down to traditional new-car niggles.

Renault has had a near-monopoly on European junior racing since the death of Opel Lotus in the late 1990s, but needs to remind itself that it has no right to this status. With Formula Abarth launching in Italy this year, complete with chassis provided by former Renault supplier Tatuus, and a pan-European series projected for the Italian manufacturer in 2011, Renault potentially faces its biggest threat as Europe's main feeder of talent to F3 in more than a decade.

Narrow favourite for the UK title is CRS Racing's Harry Tincknell, the highest-placed driver from 2009 in this year's field. The amiable and professional Devonian has put his learning year behind him, but will face a potent challenge from former team-mate Lewis Williamson and Will Stevens, who line up with Manor Competition. Williamson is working this year with Sarah Shaw – who engineered Dean Smith to the 2009 title

### CALENDAR

**Thruxton**  
April 3-4  
**Rockingham**  
April 24-25  
**Brands Hatch GP**  
May 1-2  
**Oulton Park**  
June 5-6  
**Croft**  
June 19-20  
**Snetterton**  
August 7-8  
**Silverstone Nat**  
August 21-22  
**Knockhill**  
September 4-5  
**Silverstone GP (World Series)**  
September 18-19  
**Brands Indy**  
October 9-10

– and the Scottish Highlander can be blindingly fast, but needs to find consistency. Surrey man Stevens has the consistency nailed and, according to the team, is making sound progress on qualifying pace, his weakness from '09.

Reigning teams' champion Fortec Motorsport has a fascinating line-up, from which you would narrowly pick 16-year-old Tom Blomqvist as the expected leader. The English-born, New Zealand-raised son of Swedish rally legend Stig did, after all, beat Tincknell on his sole Winter Cup outing last year, and is exciting Fortec with his pace on cold tyres.

For a long-term bet, Formula Ford Festival winner Chrissy Palmer could be Fortec's man, but his deal was a late one and he is well behind his team-mates on mileage.

Flamboyant Hungarian Tamas Pal Kiss has been the form man for ATECH GP (nee Hitech Junior) in testing, and this master of car control should carry that over to races. David McDonald will be strong if he joins returning squad Team Firstair, ATECH's Nick Yelloly is vastly improved, and kart stars Alex Lynn and Robert Foster-Jones have shown flashes of form in testing with

# British Formula Ford By KEVIN TURNER

**C**an anyone stop Jamun? It's the annual British Formula Ford question. JTR's Josef Newgarder came close last year, but ultimately the Mygales in red took their fifth consecutive drivers' title.

There's no doubt they'll be strong this year too, but the change of tyre supplier from Avon to Dunlop might just give the challengers some hope. Not only does it reduce the advantage Jamun can get from its years of Avon data, but it might remove a weakness in the opposition's armoury.

Whereas the Mygales were pretty kind to the soft Avons, some of the other machines, most notably the KMR Spectrums, overused them. That meant a drop-off in pace as the race weekend wore on.

The Dunlops provide similar levels of grip and last longer, something Jamun boss Tony Mundy believes could level the playing field.

"We've had to do quite a lot of changes," he says. "I think the change has suited the Ray and the Spectrum. I expect Cliff Dempsey and Scott Malvern to be our main rivals."

The return of Dempsey to the series – for the first time since son Peter challenged for the title in 2006 – is an intriguing one. After two uncompetitive years, the Ray looks quick and National FF1600 champion Malvern was on the pace in Oulton Park testing earlier this month.

"Jamun is the team to beat, so we'll aim to push them as hard as we can straight away," says the 21-year-old, who spent '08 as a Jamun mechanic.

"The Dunlops don't really fall away

so the Mygales have lost one of their advantages. Things are going well."

Spectrum had already started working on a fix for its tyre issue with its new 012 chassis, which will be driven by one of the most talented drivers on the grid. Daniel Cammish was one of the finds of 2009 and should be a frontrunner in the lead KMR entry.

Van Diemen was there or thereabouts last year too, but came away with just two wins. This year the works Fluid team has promising Finn Jesse Anttila, karting graduate James Tucker, and is hoping to sign Kieran Vernon for a full campaign.

Vernon starred in an unfancied Spirit last year, and impressed in his Festival drive with Fluid. If he raises the budget expect a title challenge.

Others who could surprise include Jake Green in the works Juno, now run by former champ Nathan Freke's Century squad, and ex-Ginetta Junior ace Jake Cook, who will drive a Getem-prepared Mygale.

Nevertheless, Jamun is still likely to be the benchmark. Australian Scott Pye set the pace in Oulton testing, while Josh Hill has been turning in competitive times since he started testing before the New Year.

It's that sort of preparation that the rest will have to overcome if the Jamun run is to come to an end in 2010. **85**

## CALENDAR

- Oulton Park**  
April 3 & 5
- Knockhill**  
May 8-9
- Zandvoort**  
June 5-6
- Castle Combe**  
June 19-20
- Rockingham**  
July 17-18
- Silverstone**  
August 14-15
- Snetterton**  
August 29-30
- Brands Hatch**  
**Indy (DTM)**  
September 3-5
- Donington Park**  
September 18-19
- Brands GP**  
September 25-26
- Brands Festival**  
**(non-champ)**  
October 16-17



Stevens should be a frontrunner for Manor

Fortec and CRS respectively.

Dark horses are led by Fortec Formula BMW refugee Ollie Millroy, but don't rule out Victor Correa, who steps down (up?) from the SLC F3 car, fellow Brazilian Fabio Gamberini, who is flourishing at the little Burdett team, Dutch Renault loyalist Thomas Hylkema, or historic ace Michael Lyons, the only man in the field to have already won an F1 race! **85**

### FORMULA RENAULT UK 2010 ENTRY LIST

TEAM	DRIVERS
<b>Manor Competition</b>	Will Stevens (GB) Lewis Williamson (GB) Thomas Hylkema (NL) Josh Mulholland (GB)
<b>Fortec Motorsport</b>	Tom Blomqvist (S/GB/NZ) Ollie Millroy (GB) Alex Lynn (GB) Chrissy Palmer (GB)
<b>CRS Racing</b>	Harry Tinncknell (GB) Michael Lyons (GB) Robert Foster-Jones (GB) Victor Correa (BR)
<b>Mark Burdett Motorsport</b>	Fabio Gamberini (BR) Jesse Laine (FIN)
<b>ATECH GP</b>	Tamas Pal Kiss (H) Nick Yelloly (GB)
<b>Scorpio Motorsport</b>	Marlon Stockinger (RF)
<b>Team Firststair</b>	Joe Crook (GB) David McDonald (GB)? Mika Vahamaki (FIN)?



Spectrum (11) and Van Diemen should be quick



Malvern pedals revitalised Ray

### BRITISH FORMULA FORD 2010 ENTRY LIST

TEAM (CAR)	DRIVERS
<b>Jamun (Mygale)</b>	Josh Hill (GB) Scott Pye (AUS) Jeroen Slaghekke (NL) Emil Bernstorff (DK)
<b>Cliff Dempsey Racing (Ray)</b>	Scott Malvern (GB) Cormac O'Neill (IRL)
<b>Van Diemen/Fluid</b>	Jesse Anttila (FIN) James Tucker (GB) Ville Kivinen (FIN) Kieran Vernon? (GB)
<b>Kevin Mills Racing (Spectrum)</b>	Daniel Cammish (GB) TBA
<b>Century Motorsport (Juno)</b>	Jake Green (GB)
<b>Getem Racing (Mygale)</b>	Jake Cook (GB)
<b>GV Racing (Mygale)</b>	Josh Benson? (GB)
<b>Enigma Motorsport (Mygale)</b>	Antti Buri (FIN)
<b>Raysport (Ray)</b>	Zaamin Jaffer (IND) Tristan Mingay (GB) David Ellesley (GB)
<b>Spirit</b>	David Ellesley (GB)
<b>Minister International (Mygale)</b>	Dan de Zille (GB)
<b>Brits Academy (Ray)</b>	Jesper Egebart (DK) Philippe Layac (F)
<b>Harkesport (Mygale)</b>	Mark Harper (GB)
<b>Luke Williams Racing (Juno)</b>	Luke Williams (GB)

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New  
column



# Racer's diary Ben Anderson

The trials and tribulations of AUTOSPORT's resident racer

**Our man has an improved car for 2010, and he used it to take the lead in the title race**

**W**hen Jenson Button drove the Brawn BGP 001 for the first time at Barcelona last year he couldn't stop smiling. After two seasons slogging around in a rubbish Honda, Jenson's buttocks knew instinctively that he finally

set-ups, during the final session I refocused my energy and managed a 1m18.80s best on my final lap – a full nine tenths better than my previous best on this circuit. Job done. I headed straight to the pits to conserve the tyres and we hit the A11, confident we'd made a major breakthrough.

years now, yet that maiden triumph still eludes him. The results should come easy if you're quick enough, but the longer it takes the more the pressure builds and the harder it gets. He talks now of "needing to get back to enjoying the driving" before he can make the leap. Not good.

Fortunately for me, and my sanity, I didn't have to wait long to deliver on my own newfound speed. At the first two rounds of the Formula Vee championship at Snetterton, on March 13-14, I took a pole position, scored my maiden win in the category and claimed the championship lead.

This will seem like overstatement, but both races were absolute classics. The first involved an epic three-way fight with 2007 runner-up Martin Farmer and Peter Belsey (who has found his own impressive turn of speed over the winter in triple champion Jez Clark's old Spyder). It eventually ended in tears at the Esses, where Farmer and I clashed disputing the lead, but I escaped to victory after a grassy moment.

Farmer gained his revenge for that defeat on Sunday. Having towed him to pole in qualifying, he got the nod by 0.02 seconds in



Anderson celebrates his first Formula Vee victory

possessed a car that could carry him to F1 glory.

I had my own 'Jenson moment' when I tested my GAC Formula Vee for the first time this season at Snetterton on March 2. My father Phill, and my racer-turned-engineer sister Jenny, spent long hours dreaming up schemes to improve our fortunes over the winter. Just a handful of shakedown laps around the Norfolk venue, on a beautifully clear spring day, were enough to tell me their engineering instincts would bear fruit this season.

Before this test, I had fantasised about breaking into the 1m18s – a watershed time that would almost guarantee a competitive showing at the first race (double champion Sam Oliveira's best lap over last season's three races at Snetterton was 1m18.78s).

Having finished playing with



Farmer leads Anderson and jostling Vee pack

I've spent most of my racing career chasing the pace of other drivers. That exerts its own kind of pressure on the mind – one that nibbles away at confidence the longer you fail to get on terms.

Once you know you have the pace to win, however, the nature of that pressure changes, and focus must turn to delivering on your promise. Citroen rally driver Dani Sordo has shown the speed to win in the WRC for several

a photo finish to take race two, in which a scant 2.5sec covered the top six finishers after 11 laps of place swapping. Second place and fastest lap, however, were enough to hand me the points advantage.

Eighty-five per cent of F1 champions from the past two decades have gone on to take their title after winning the first race of the season. I'm hoping some of that statistical magic will rub off on the rest of my 2010 campaign. **✎**



Sister Jenny has helped Ben find extra pace

750 Motor Club Formula Vee Championship		
1	Ben Anderson	GAC 01 48
2	Declan McDonnell	GAC 03 42
3	Peter Belsey	Spyder MK2 38
4	Paul Smith	AHS Dominator 34
5	Ashley Sutton	Storm 2007 28
6	Martin Farmer	GAC 27
7	Paul Taylor	GAC 21
8	Peter Studer	Sheane 20
9	Gethin Jones	Storm SGO9 18
10	Jake Oliveira	Storm DC 07 17

Next round: Mallory Park, April 4

# FINAL DRIVE

LETTERS ■ GEAR ■ ON-TRACK ■ ON-SCREEN ■ PICS ■ TECH ■ ARCHIVE

## YOUR SAY

What you think of the motorsport news of the past week



## Stop moaning, start enjoying

I'm amazed by the amount of moaning that has gone on since the chequered flag flew at Bahrain. For pity's sake, it was just one race! There was plenty of dicing, albeit lower down the field.

This isn't NASCAR, this is F1. If we had the opposite, I'm sure people would still moan, saying it was too easy to overtake. The only boring thing about F1 is the comments people make year on year about it being boring, no matter what the FIA does.

**James Singleton** Derbyshire

EDITORIAL CONTACT [mail@autosport.com](mailto:mail@autosport.com)

**The problem** of improving the F1 show will only be fixed by imposing the aerodynamic changes that we've all known to be necessary for years.

However, in the short term at least, the teams should retain their one 'selected' pitstop, but a second stop be imposed on each car on a random lap, between lap 10 and one lap from full race distance.

The lap numbers would be randomly generated just after the lights go out. Each would be announced five laps before it's served.

**Tony Hickman**  
By email

**Complaining about** McLaren's aero tweak just illustrates that some are born to lead and others to follow. Those who've spent their budgets on inside-the-box development should stop moaning – it highlights their lack of creativity.

Maybe Bernie could offer a prize for the first team to produce a radical idea to bring back overtaking. We have been content with on-track follow-my-leader, largely because the regs encourage a follow-my-leader approach to design. Time's up.

**Alan Bell**  
Lincolnshire

**With the** return of Lotus and the performance of the novice teams in Bahrain, surely the time is right to consider resurrecting the moribund Jim Clark and Colin Chapman Cups.

The 'we're no good and here's a trophy to prove it' cups were last contested by the normally-aspirated Cosworth teams in 1987. Perhaps we could even persuade Jonathan Palmer – 23 years undefeated as Jim Clark Cup holder – to make a Schumacher-like return. Go on the FIA, you know it makes sense.

**Neil Rennick**  
Innereithen

**A way** to overcome the prevailing mental block against overtaking in Formula 1: in the last 10 laps of the race award two championship points to any driver who accomplishes a successful overtaking manoeuvre. Maybe one point to a driver who tries – by getting all four wheels alongside a rival – yet fails.

**Gerald Donaldson**  
By email

**AUTOSPORT.COM**

## TOP FIVE ON OUR WEBSITE

1. FIA CLOSES REAR DIFFUSER LOOPHOLE
2. SAUBER POISED TO REQUEST NAME CHANGE
3. RENAULT ALLOWED TO MAKE ENGINE CHANGES
4. MCLAREN BUYS BACK MERCEDES STAKE
5. FRY CALLS FOR REACTION TO IMPROVE SHOW

## WIN!



### ROAD ANGEL PROFESSIONAL CONNECTED

This week's star letter will receive a Road Angel Professional Connected – the world's only safety camera alert device to use GPRS/GSM update technology while you drive.

For more details on Road Angel please visit [www.roadangelgroup.com](http://www.roadangelgroup.com) Please ensure that your full address is included on all correspondence.

#### CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

- The graphic depicting how McLaren's new F-vent works (March 18, page 15), features Lewis Hamilton's helmet, but Jenson Button's race number. Thanks to Stuart Handforth for spotting that.
- In last week's 'Great Tracks: Daytona' we said that Ransom Olds was clocked at over 50mph on Ormond Beach in 1903. Darren Galpin has pointed out that records state it was HT Thomas, not Olds, who drove at 54.38mph in an Oldsmobile Pirate.

It is the policy of AUTOSPORT to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please note the issue date and page number when contacting us on [autosport.editorial@haynet.com](mailto:autosport.editorial@haynet.com)



# THE LATEST GEAR

The most desirable new releases for motor racing fans: books, DVDs, models, art and gifts

## ICON SHEENE MOTORCYCLE

£107,000

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Few legends lived life like double 500cc world motorcycle champion Barry Sheene, thus the British-built Icon Sheene superbike created in his memory is stunningly raw.

The world's most powerful production machine – its turbocharged 1400cc Suzuki engine produces 250bhp, good for 200mph – was last week launched at Goodwood, scene of Barry's final race victory. Only 52 will be made, one per year of his life.

Aggressively styled around its aluminium Spondon frame, Andy Morris's brainchild boasts swing-arm rear end (with airjacks!), twin three-pot front brakes, four-pot rears, and carbonfibre bodywork and wheels.

Mike Fairholme-designed paintwork incorporates unique playing card logo per bike – and there's even a sterling silver 'Daffy Duck' on the headstock. Expensive and exclusive... Mega!



### FERRARI T-SHIRT

£39.99

autosport.com/shop

Ferrari drew first blood in the opening grand prix with a one-two in Bahrain – a good start for the tifosi, you'd have to admit.

Why not join them by kitting yourself out in this official T-shirt, part of an extensive range of 2010 Scuderia merchandise. It's 100 per cent cotton and all the sizes are available.

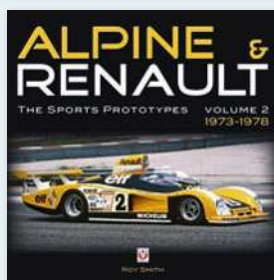


### RACETICKETS WEBSITE

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### ALPINE SPORTS PROTOTYPE

£34.99 (978 1 84584 226 0)

R Smith (veloce.co.uk)

The second installment of Roy Smith's two-volume history of the French prototypes picks up the story in 1973 and runs right through to the final hurrah of the programme – victory at Le Mans in 1978.

Produced to the same exacting standard as the first, this volume is packed with pics, stats and secrets.

## HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

**YOUTUBE: SEBRING 12 HOURS 1964**



**SEARCH:** 1964 12 Hours of Sebring (10:10)

If you had 'Sebring fever' last weekend, check out this colour film of the 1964 event in which Parkes/Maglioli lead home the sister Ferraris of Scarfiotti/Vaccarella and Surtees/Bandini for a Scuderia 1-2-3.

# WHAT'S ON...

Your guide to the best events taking place around the world this week – plus TV and online

## BRANDS HATCH

MSVR

March 27-28

Admission £12 per day; £16 weekend (online)

Tel: 01474 872331

MotorSport Vision's club-racing calendar gets underway this weekend with a two-day, 25-race 'season starter' meeting at Brands Hatch. The maiden race for the club's new Track Day Trophy initiative (including AUTOSPORT's Jamie O'Leary

in Charles Godfrey's VW Golf) concludes Saturday's 11-race programme, which also features the first action for James Beckett's revived Champion of Brands series, for Formula Ford 1600.

Production BMWs, BARC Tin Tops, Racing Saloons, BARC Intermarque and Lotus Elise Trophy all feature on Saturday, while DMN Saloons, SEMSEC Saloons & Sports, Monoposto and Golf GTIs will all join in the fun on Sunday.



Lotus Elise Trophy will be a highlight

HAWKINS/LAT

## SILVERSTONE

HSCC

March 28

Admission £11

Tel: 0844 3728 200

The UK's historic-racing hordes hit the track for the first time this weekend with nine races at the new-look Silverstone. Historic Road Sports, Historic Formula Ford, Classic Racing Cars, Guards Trophy, Historic Formula Junior, '70s Road Sports and Historic Touring Cars will all feature on the bill, which includes two races for Classic Formula 3. Racing starts after lunch at 1300.

Historic Touring Cars action at Luffield



HAWKINS/LAT

## LYDDEN

BRSCC

March 27-28

Admission £12

Tel: 01304 830557

## PEMBREY

BARC

March 27-28

Admission £12

Tel: 01554 891042

## OULTON PARK

BARC

March 27

Admission £12

Tel: 01829 760301

## KIRKISTOWN

500MRCI

March 27

www.kirkistown.com

## F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd 2/19

Australian Grand Prix

Melbourne, Australia

March 28

www.formula1.com

Albert Park hosts second F1 stop-off of 2010



DUNBAR/LAT

## INDYCAR SERIES

Rd 2/17

St Petersburg, Florida, USA

March 28

www.indycar.com

Tagliani and the boys in action in St Pete



ABBOTT/LAT

## NASCAR SPRINT CUP

Rd 6/36

Martinsville, Virginia, USA

March 28

www.nascar.com

## EUROPEAN TOURING CAR CUP

Rd 1/3

Braga, Portugal

March 28

www.fiaetcc.com

## V8 SUPERCARS

Non-championship

Melbourne, Australia

March 26-28

www.v8supercars.com.au

## SUPERSTARS

Rd 1/10

Monza, Italy

March 28

www.superstars.it/eng

## INDY LIGHTS

Rd 1/13

St Petersburg, Florida, USA

March 28

www.indycar.com/fil

## V8 STOCK CARS

Rd 1/12

Interlagos, Brazil

March 28

stockcar.globo.com

## Television

### THURSDAY MARCH 25

1300-1500 **Motors TV**  
V8 Supercars  
1330-1400 **Eurosport 2**  
IRC Cordoba

### FRIDAY MARCH 26

0125-0305 **BBCi LIVE**  
Australian GP first practice  
Press the red button to see the cars hit the track for the first time this weekend in Melbourne.  
0525-0705 **BBCi LIVE**  
Australian GP second practice  
0845-0945, 1300-1400 **Eurosport 2**  
GP2 Asia  
Reruns of the final round from Bahrain.  
1905-2220 **Motors TV**  
Sebring 12 Hours highlights  
2230-2300 **Eurosport 2**  
IRC Cordoba

### SATURDAY MARCH 27

0255-0405 **BBCi LIVE**  
Australian GP third practice  
0500-0730 **BBCi LIVE**  
Australian GP qualifying  
Full coverage of the qualifying sessions from Albert Park.  
1300-1415 **BBC1**  
Australian GP qualifying  
Repeat of qualifying for the non-early birds.  
1500-1730 **Motors TV**  
Bathurst 12 Hours

### SUNDAY MARCH 28

0245-0300 **BBC2**  
Inside F1

### 0600-0900 **BBC1 LIVE**

**Australian GP**  
You know the drill: set the alarm, wake up early, and catch all the action as it happens from Melbourne.

### 0900-1000 **BBCi LIVE**

**Australian GP post-race forum**  
Jake, EJ, DC and Martin put another shrimp on the post-race barbie.  
0810-0840 **Channel 4**  
**Mobil1 The Grid**  
1100-1130 **Sky Sports 4**  
**British Rally Championship Preview**  
1300-1455 **BBC1**  
**Australian GP rerun**  
1600-1700 **Dave**  
**WRC Turkey preview**  
1630-1730 **Eurosport 2 LIVE**  
**European Touring Car Cup**  
Back-to-back coverage of both races from Braga, Portugal as three-race series kicks off with James Thompson favourite.

### 1700-2200 **Open Access 3 LIVE**

**NASCAR Sprint Cup**  
The Goody's Fast Pain Relief 500 from Martinsville Speedway.

### 1900-2000 **BBC3**

**Australian GP highlights**  
2030-2300 **Sky Sports 3 LIVE**  
**IndyCar Series**

Round two from the streets of St Petersburg in Florida. Will it live up to the thrills of the Sao Paulo opener?

### MONDAY MARCH 29

1900-2000 **Sky Sports 4**  
**NASCAR Sprint Cup**  
Highlights from Martinsville Speedway.

## Online

# AUTOSPORT.COM

Coming up on the web this week

### F1, INDYCAR & NASCAR

The Australian GP should reveal whether Formula 1 is going to get more exciting than Bahrain, and AUTOSPORT.com will be there to take you through it step by step – from all the breaking news throughout the build-up, to live commentary during the sessions and a full round-up afterwards. There'll be plenty of IndyCar drama on the streets of St Petersburg, and NASCAR travels to its smallest track, Martinsville.



Read this week's AUTOSPORT magazine in full on the internet

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## REVVED UP OVER WHAT'S ON THE BOX

We cast a critical eye over the best and worst of this week's TV coverage



WATCHING TELEVISED motorsport for a living has given *Revved Up* a pretty sound perspective on what constitutes a boring race, and anyone who thought Bahrain was one of the worst races of all time has a short memory.

Certainly one that fails to extend back to 2004, when *all* the races were tedious and predictable. In fact, Bahrain was better, as the car out front at least had the decency to develop a problem, something Schuey's Ferrari never did.

No, the real problem Bahrain had was that it failed to live up to the enormous hype that preceded it. There are

people with much greater understanding of the technical issues than me to explain why there's no overtaking, but I think that would only solve half the problem... the whole show needs spicing up.

Darts has it. Snooker has it. And, of course, NASCAR has it. What, you ask? A mainly blue-collar, drunken audience? Yes, but also walk-on music.

At Bristol last weekend, the stock car boys walked out to the tune of their choice. Most of them were dire, but Brad Keselowski showed a fine sense of humour in selecting Tom Petty's *Won't Back Down* in light of his mighty spat with Carl Edwards.

So, why shouldn't the F1 boys walk out onto the grid in Melbourne to their own intro tune? Here's a few I'd like to hear: **Lewis Hamilton** – *Lies* (Fleetwood Mac) [well, it is a year on from all that!] **Michael Schumacher** – *On the Road Again* (Canned Heat) **Jenson Button** – *Push the Button* (Sugababes) **Fernando Alonso** – *Fernando* (ABBA) **Adrian Sutil** – *Crash* (The Primitives) **Rubens Barrichello** – *Old Man* (Neil Young)

**Tonio Liuzzi** – *Borrowed Time* (John Lennon) **Paul di Resta** – *Substitute* (The Who) **Bruno Senna/Karun Chandhok** – *Absolute Beginners* (The Jam) **Jarno Trulli** – *Train Kept a Rollin'* (Yardbirds) **Nick Heidfeld** – *How to Disappear Completely* (Radiohead)

It won't improve the racing, but would be more interesting than Martin Brundle having to speak to faceless dignitaries on his grid walk. *Revved Up*

"Darts has it. Snooker has it.

Why shouldn't the F1 boys walk onto the grid to their own intro tune?"

# THE WEEK IN PICTURES

The lensmen pounding the beat, from Belfast to Bristol

## CRUNCH TIME, JAPANESE STYLE...

Ralph Firman (left) gets into a tangle with Takashi Kogure, which ended in the tyrewall



ISHIHARA/LAT

## ...CRUNCH TIME, AMERICAN STYLE

Steven Wallace (66) submerges under Colin Braun's Roush-run Ford at Bristol in Saturday's Nationwide race



LAT/SOUTH

## COULTHARD PUTS THE 'FAST' IN BELFAST

David Coulthard hit the streets of Belfast on Saturday night. 18,000 turned out to watch his Red Bull F1 demo

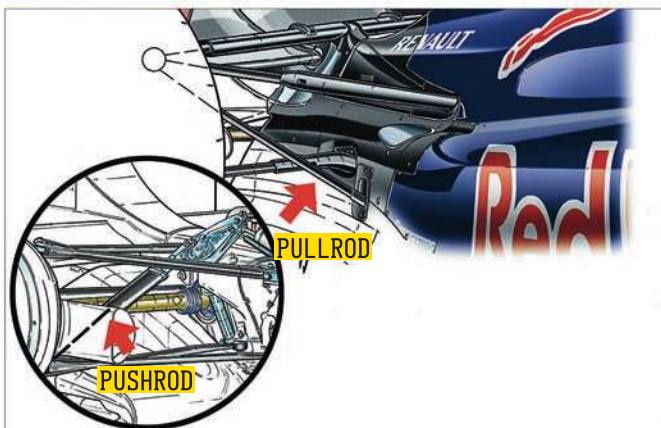


## Engineering debrief – pushrod and pullrod suspension



### GARY ANDERSON

**BIO**  
Gary has designed grand prix race-winning cars during his long F1 career and worked for Brabham, McLaren, Jordan, Stewart and Jaguar.



**OTHER THAN** a packaging exercise, there is not really a lot of difference in what is achievable between pushrod and pullrod suspension. With the high fronts on the current chassis, pushrod is slightly easier to package than pullrod, and it's also easier to get the rising-rate characteristics that are required from

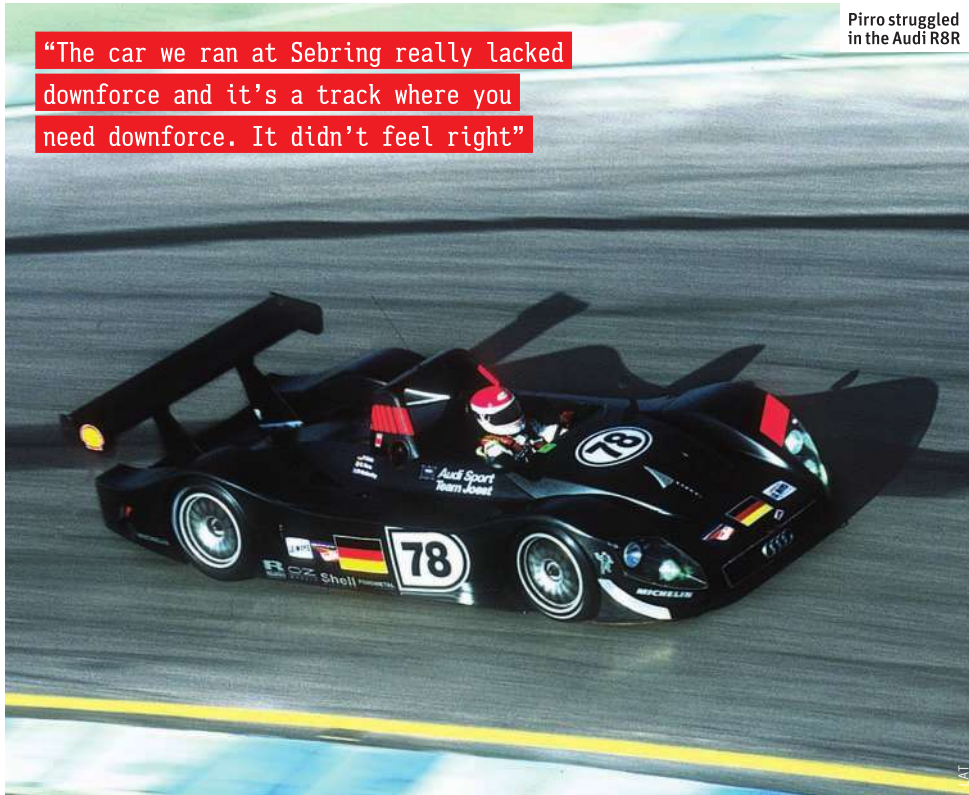
the front suspension through its movement. On the rear, as Red Bull shows (left), whatever characteristics a team specifies can be achieved by pullrod. It also lowers the centre of gravity of the system and reduces the airflow blockage to the rear downforce-producing devices, both of which are beneficial.

ILLUSTRATION: GIORGIO PIOLA

Got an engineering question you'd like answered? Send it to [mark.glendenning@haymarket.com](mailto:mark.glendenning@haymarket.com)

# FROM THE ARCHIVE

Emanuele Pirro, Sebring 12 Hours, 1999



Pirro struggled in the Audi R8R

“The car we ran at Sebring really lacked downforce and it’s a track where you need downforce. It didn’t feel right”

**LAST WEEKEND'S** 58th running of the Sebring 12 Hours marked the first time sportscar racing titan Audi has failed to appear in the classic endurance since the manufacturer entered prototype sportscar racing in 1999.

Back then, Audi headed to the challenging Florida circuit with its rapidly-evolving new R8R prototype, the car it hoped would take glory in that year's Le Mans 24 Hours.

The R8R, run by multiple 24 Hours winner Joest, would be squaring off against Bavarian rival BMW, which made a relatively late decision to enter its all-new V12 LMR.

All the talk pre-race centred around how the mighty German sportscars would be too new to win on their debuts at such a difficult track.

As it turned out the BMW wasn't too new to win. Ex-F1 racer JJ Lehto qualified on pole, before the Finn and team-mates Tom Kristensen and Jorg Muller beat home favourite Dyson Racing's Riley by 9.207 seconds.

But for Audi, the pre-race prophecy came true. Its cars struggled home third and fifth and lapped over three seconds off the pace.

Italian Emanuele Pirro, who finished nine laps down in the second car, found the R8R a difficult beast to tame over Sebring's severe bumps.

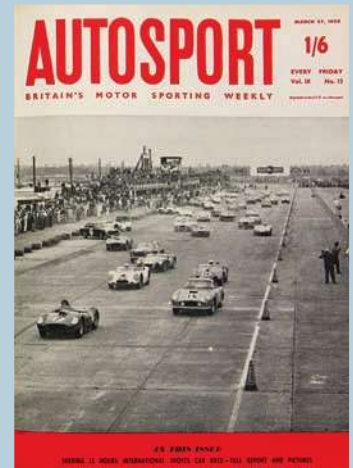
“For Le Mans we had another version of that car, but the one we ran at Sebring really lacked downforce and it's a track where you need downforce,” recalls Pirro, who would go on to take the first of five Le Mans 24 Hours wins with Audi the following season. “That car didn't feel right. I remember the rear of the car banging the track through Turn 1. It was really difficult to drive, but it was all part of the learning process.”

Disappointment in the first-ever ALMS race didn't deter Audi, which went on to win nine of the next 10 Sebring 12 Hours races.

“We came to consider Sebring as the only real test for Le Mans. It's only half the distance, but the track is twice as demanding,” says Pirro. “We would put together the same drivers, the same mechanics and the same engineers that we were going to run at Le Mans.”

“You can do a 30-hour simulation, but nothing beats racing at Sebring.”

## THIS WEEK IN...



**MARCH 27 1959**

**FERRARI FINISHED** one-two in the ninth Sebring 12 Hours (above), with Le Mans 24 Hours winners Phil Hill and Olivier Gendebien taking victory by a lap from Jean Behra and Cliff Allison.

The pair's own Ferrari broke its differential during the race, so they claimed the laurels by taking over the car of Dan Gurney and Chuck Daigh, to the displeasure of the partisan crowd.

Meanwhile, the British racing season got underway with a Snetterton Spring Meeting that was plagued by a “heavy toll of accidents” (below).

Cooper Monaco driver Perry Crabb broke his right arm and four ribs when his car ‘disintegrated’ against the barriers on the home straight, while AUTOSPORT snapper George Phillips broke his ankle when a gyrating 500 mowed him down at Ryeates.



**NEXT WEEK**



Formula 1 back on track with thunder...

**DOWN UNDER**

Who'll win the Australian GP?

On sale Apr 1

**PLUS**

Move over Whincup – it's Button in a V8; full BTCC/British F3 previews

# IAN FLUX

■ Radical Enduros, Donington Park ■ August 25, 2001 ■ Radical SR2 ■ 500th race and 100th win



Flux drove Tony Hancock's Radical to his 100th win

**THE CHOICE** is easy for me: a wet, one-hour Radical Enduro at Donington Park on August Bank Holiday weekend in 2001. It was my 500th race and my 100th win.

There are special reasons for choosing this race: chiefly, I was never meant to be doing it. I was supposed to be sharing a car with [fellow former Sports 2000 champion] Sean Walker, but when I went to dinner on Saturday night with a few other Radical drivers, Sean announced he wasn't doing Donington, so I was out of a drive.

My mate Tony Hancock [father of sportscar racer Sam] said he was also without a driver – because Ian Hutchinson had let him down to do a Euroboss race – so he said: “Why don't you share with me Fluxie?” And I agreed.

I was at Brooklands College with Tony in 1973-74, before I got kicked out for being ‘naughty’. He had a Ferrari Dino and I had an Escort van and we used to race each other whenever we could. I used to beat him, and he used to get pretty pissed off! It was great to share this win with Tony.

**“I overtook Roger Mayers going into the Old Hairpin. I gave myself a massive talking-to and brought it home”**

The other main protagonists in the race were Robin Liddell and Roger Mayers, who finished second. Robin started the race and so did Tony, and, no disrespect to Tony, but Robin was a better driver. On the grid Tony said: “What have I got to do?” I said: “As long as you can keep Robin in sight, we'll be all right.” Obviously I was going to be

quicker than Roger, but I got a bit worried about two laps before we changed over, Robin was turning through Redgate as Tony was coming through the chicane – I thought our plan was going out the window.

Robin stayed out longer, so when I hit the track we were trading times initially, then he

handed over to Roger. With 20 minutes to go the pitboard said ‘P2 -30s’ and I thought, ‘Fuck me, this isn't going to be good enough!’

I started to catch him at two seconds per lap, then it got a bit wetter and that became three seconds. With three laps to go I could see him exiting the Old Hairpin as I was going down the Craner Curves. The next lap I overtook him going into the Old Hairpin. I gave myself a massive talking-to and brought it home.

I knew it was my 100th win, and afterwards I was ecstatic – jumping up and down like a mongrel.

I've only won 21 races since then, so there's still a long way until 150 or 200. ☒

*Ian Flux was talking to Ben Anderson*

## IN PROFILE



**IAN FLUX** is a true legend of British motorsport, who says he “enjoyed life too much” to make it to F1. He has taken 121 wins from nearly 700 races, in a career so far spanning 36 seasons in everything from Formula Vee, F3 and Atlantics, to British Touring Cars, TVR Tuscan and Sports 2000. He proudly states he has “never missed a season and never spent a penny” going racing. This weekend will mark the 40th anniversary of ‘Fluxie’s’ first race at Tilbury kart circuit in 1970, which he won.

**NEXT WEEK**

**Brian REDMAN**





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