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So much depends on Ferrari in F1 2016

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While a Lewis Hamilton-versus-Nico Rosberg championship battle does have potential for fireworks, ideally what the sport really needs is for Ferrari to get into the mix.

Mercedes has enjoyed a comfortable margin during the past two seasons, and the six races it has failed to win in that time have more often than not been down to its own problems and errors. In 2015 Ferrari was there to capitalise, but it will take more than a stolen win or three for Sebastian Vettel to get into the title fight.

So the question Ben Anderson asks this week in our cover feature is whether Ferrari really can make a big enough step to take the fight to Mercedes week in, week out. The odds favour a negative answer. There have been no significant regulation changes, so it's down to Ferrari to outdevelop Mercedes. It took a massive step from a low starting point going from 2014 to '15, but the law of diminishing returns means that it will be tougher to make anything like that big a stride this time.

But let's hope, for the sake of F1, that it does. A genuine fight between not just two drivers, but two teams is what everyone wants to see. Based on last year's late-season form, Rosberg could also be a factor, and if Kimi Raikkonen rolls back the years he might even be in the mix to take a first win since 2013.

So there's a lot riding on the folks of Maranello right now. F1 desperately needs a classic inter-team title battle.



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CAN FERRARI DEFEAT MERCEDES?

The Scuderia shocked everyone last year with its off-season turnaround. Making another step this winter will create a tantalising title fight

By Ben Anderson
Grand Prix Editor

 @BenAndersonAuto





“

don't want to say that we are going to win the world championship, but for sure we are committed at least to win two races.”

These were the words uttered by Ferrari team boss Maurizio Arrivabene upon the unveiling of the Scuderia's 2015 Formula 1 car. A modest ambition for such a legendary F1 name, but even that seemed a pipedream following Ferrari's disastrous '14 season.

That annus horribilis was Ferrari's first winless campaign since 1993, its worst championship result since 2009, and it led to the firing of several key technical personnel and the departure of star driver Fernando Alonso.

Such a sequence of events would not usually create the preconditions for success.

Fast-forward 12 months and Ferrari looks reborn: new car, new engine, new star driver. Suddenly Maranello is triumphant again, exceeding its own expectations by winning three races and finishing second in the 2015 constructors' championship, behind Mercedes.

Ferrari has yet to declare any bold targets for 2016, beyond chairman Sergio Marchionne's pre-Christmas statement that it would be “incredibly unlikely that the [new] car will not offer Mercedes a proper challenge”, but the logical next step is a title tilt. Indeed, Arrivabene was bold enough to suggest just that during the closing stages of last season: “If you want my honest expectation, it's not to be closer to Mercedes, but to be in front of them. I tell you with humility, but we must be in front next year.”

Ferrari is in F1 to win, and win big. The Prancing Horse has a long history of glory, and will also depend on the resultant income of future winnings now that parent company Fiat Chrysler has instructed the F1 operation to stand on its own two feet, financially speaking. Ferrari doesn't just want to win; it *needs* to win.

The coming season represents its last chance within the current rules, under which Mercedes has dominated F1 for two consecutive campaigns. Technical stability usually breeds more success for whoever holds the advantage, and maturity under a particular set of regulations means gaining rapidly on faster rivals becomes more difficult, thanks to broader understanding among engineers and resultant convergence on similar technical solutions.

Ferrari will no doubt draw encouragement from the massive leap forward it took in 2015, transforming itself from opportunist podium finisher to occasional race winner, but progress was trickier to come by during the season itself, and uncovering the technical nuggets necessary to close the gap to Mercedes will be more difficult this year. But this wouldn't be F1 if it weren't possible, or worth trying.

The questions are: can Ferrari uncover that buried technical treasure in 2016? Can it do enough to win even more races this year? Can Ferrari, overall, defeat Mercedes?



Arrivabene set tough targets for 2015, which were hit. He expects more in the coming season

“Aero improvement is needed from a team that hasn't traditionally been best in this department”

SUCCEEDING THE SF-15T

This is where Ferrari arguably needs to devote the greatest energy. Last season's car was demonstrably better than its predecessor, scoring

almost twice the number of points and finishing two places higher in the constructors' championship. The drivers delighted in its consistency and driveability, and the SF15-T was competitive everywhere but Spa, where Sebastian Vettel achieved his worst qualifying result in a session unaffected by a serious mistake, technical problem or grid penalty.

But the Ferrari was not clearly the second-best chassis. It was probably weaker than the Red Bull, and not much better (if at all) than the Toro Rosso, McLaren and Force India come season's end. Ferrari did not follow the general trend towards shorter noses, though it did start to set the SF15-T up with more rake in the closing stages of the campaign.

It will be interesting to see whether the team falls into line in 2016 (as many expect) or continues to go its own way. Technical director James Allison remained tight-lipped during the '15 run-in. “You'll have to wait and see where we've found our best performance,” he said. “There's many, many different

ways of skinning a cat. All I'd say is, we'd be morons not to look at everything, wouldn't we?”

The 2015 Ferrari was one of the better cars at protecting delicate Pirelli tyres, often running longer on a particular set and generally getting stronger relative to rivals as races wore on. At last year's Brazilian Grand Prix, Vettel dropped roughly 10 seconds to winner Nico Rosberg's Mercedes over the first 30 laps, but lost just five more over the remaining 41, which included two pitstops.

The challenge for Ferrari is to become better at ‘switching on’ the tyres, and therefore extracting more performance in qualifying. Only at Singapore, where Vettel took pole by more than half a second on the super-soft tyre, did Ferrari show truly stunning Saturday form.

Aerodynamic improvement is certainly needed, from a team that hasn't traditionally been the best in this department, but Ferrari clearly feels it now has a firm base on which to build, and there has been nothing like the same degree of technical upheaval we saw in 2014. Ferrari will probably feel in better shape than ever under the current V6-hybrid regulations, but is also under no illusion about the scale of the challenge it faces to overhaul Mercedes. As one senior insider puts it, “finding one second will be very difficult.” »



Hamilton has good reason to keep a close eye on what Ferrari produces

MORE MOTIVATION FROM THE MOTIVATOR

Ferrari's 2015 engine was its big strength, thanks to huge strides made with the complicated energy-efficiency loop that determines the effectiveness of the V6 hybrid-turbo power units. Its first attempt was overweight, underpowered and poor at recovering energy, but last year's effort was much better. The fact that sole customer

Sauber went from scoring zero points (for the first time in its history) and finishing 10th in the 2014 constructors' championship, to placing eighth with 36 the following season, is testament to the magnitude of Ferrari's improvement.

Ferrari developed the engine effectively during the season too, to the point where Williams chief technical officer Pat Symonds reckoned it was a match for the Mercedes customer unit. Indeed, Ferrari did well enough that Mercedes introduced an experimental engine ahead of schedule, at September's Italian Grand Prix. This development saw Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg through to the end of the season, but was too immature to be rolled out to customers, suggesting Ferrari's rate of improvement was such that it was at least forcing F1's premier engine builder to glance nervously over its shoulder.

There was a suggestion that Ferrari was poised to introduce a radical new concept of its own around the time of October's US GP at Austin, and that is probably what is needed to truly take the fight to Mercedes. The way Hamilton and Rosberg could switch their engines into 'Q3 mode', then generally qualify more than 0.3s clear of the Ferraris at most circuits, suggests Mercedes still has plenty in hand. If Mercedes could engineer in enough reliability and fuel efficiency to run this mode for consecutive race distances, then its rivals would be in even worse trouble.

As things stood at the end of last year, Mercedes was still a chunk more powerful and more reliable than Ferrari. None of the eight drivers who used Mercedes engines in 2015 received a grid penalty for breaching their mandated allocation of four; Kimi Raikkonen and Vettel took three between them last season.

The search for more power will only stress reliability further and, as Renault found out in 2015, dramatic changes to the combustion engine can have unexpected and costly knock-on effects. Red Bull won races and finished second in the constructors' championship in 2014, but went backwards amid Renault's struggles last year.

Be warned.

DRIVING IT ALL FORWARD

The arrival of Vettel at Maranello was a revelation. The four-time champion shrugged off his indifferent 2014 form, settled in quickly, and looked motivated, fast and consistent last year.

As Hamilton showed by transforming from occasional poleman and race winner in his first season with Mercedes

in 2013 to world champion the next, drivers often make a significant step in their second season with a team, so Vettel could be even better this year, having had more time to work on the finer details of his relationship with the Scuderia.

The manner in which Vettel has enveloped himself in all things Ferrari — becoming fluent in Italian, imbibing the Maranello culture and becoming the fresh focal point for its competitive ventures — will only aid him in this quest. He has seriously impressed the company, including those at the very top of the tree. Vettel's efforts even moved Marchionne to declare: "Alonso stayed here for five years and he was less Ferrarista than Vettel is after one year."

Ferrari has also been hugely supportive of Raikkonen since he returned to Maranello, but there remains a big question mark over the Finn's performances. He certainly suffered the brunt of Ferrari's reliability problems last year, but also admits he made too many errors. Raikkonen performing at the same level again could prove very costly in a tight constructors' battle.

Like any world champion, Raikkonen's motivation is to win, so he could rediscover his mojo in a car good enough to fight for the title, but he will need to cut out the mistakes — particularly in qualifying — because his three main rivals are driving too well for Raikkonen to get away with being below par.

Many were surprised by Ferrari's decision to retain Raikkonen, given how comprehensively Alonso and Vettel outperformed him, but Raikkonen's apolitical nature, and healthy working relationships with Allison and Vettel, make him a safer bet than an unproven young gun who may place his own ego above the needs of the team.

Stability is what Arrivabene wants, but Ferrari cannot afford for Raikkonen to stabilise at his current level. Hamilton and Rosberg are pushing their team forward through an intense (albeit often fractious) personal battle; Vettel seems to have Raikkonen covered for the most part. That will need to change if Ferrari is to beat Mercedes this year. *W*

The new-look Ferrari squad cohered well during 2015 and must build on that





HAS MERCEDES GOT ANYWHERE TO GO?

WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOU'RE the team that has won absolutely everything there is to win for the past two seasons? Well, that's easy. You try to win it all again.

There is a fair argument to suggest that the only thing that can really defeat Mercedes this season is Mercedes itself. Complacency is the main potential peril for this team. Mercedes has produced the best technical package for two campaigns and the rules are stable, so the odds are stacked in its favour.

The mission for the technical teams, led by Paddy Lowe (chassis) and Andy Cowell (engine), will be to continue finding marginal improvements without overstriving and undoing previous good work. Relatively immature technology in these hybrid power units means this remains the ripest area for development, particularly in terms of fuel and combustion efficiency.

The Mercedes V6 is clearly the market leader in performance and reliability,

which is a huge plus and means the chassis doesn't have to be the absolute best aerodynamically for Mercedes to win. Last year's car looked as though it ran with more wing angle and

“The key for Mercedes will be to carefully manage its two drivers”

softer suspension than most rivals, and Mercedes has not followed the same development trends as other top teams. Its power advantage means it can afford to tread different paths to its rivals.

Lowe targeted efficiency across the broadest range of circuit characteristics with the W05 and W06, and there's no reason to expect that to change with the W07. When you're winning under stable regulations, the aim is careful evolution, not carefree revolution.

The key for Mercedes this season will arguably be to carefully manage its two drivers. The intra-team battle between Hamilton and Rosberg has caused team boss Toto Wolff a fair few headaches since they started fighting exclusively for the world championship.

A healthy dose of personal tension is terrific fuel for a title fight, but the competitive fires could leave Mercedes with bad burns, especially if Ferrari becomes a genuine threat this season.





HOW JAMES ALLISON WILL HAVE MADE A BETTER FERRARI

After snatching three wins from Mercedes' plate last year, Ferrari needs to ensure its new car is an even stronger package if it is to mount a championship assault. So how does a team go about closing the gap over the winter?

By Gary Anderson, technical expert

The nearer to the top of the ladder you are, the more difficult it is to take the step to the next rung. The same is true of Formula 1 car development.

When the regulations change significantly, as they did for the 2014 season – and before that in 2009 – someone always gets the jump on the others. For the current set of rules that team is Mercedes – an organisation that had previously underperformed, ever since taking over the Brawn team that had so much success the last time the rules changed.

Everything points to the Mercedes power unit package being the best in the pitlane, but I have no doubt that the chassis has enabled it to fulfil its potential. The car is competitive on all types of circuits, and usually gets the best out of the tyres over one lap. It's also been as good as any other chassis with regard to degradation, so overall it's a solid all-round package that will take some beating.

If any team can do that, it has to be Ferrari. On a few occasions in 2015, the Scuderia took the fight to Mercedes but did not have the last bit of performance needed to do so consistently. So there were a few great days in Malaysia, Hungary and Singapore, but the championship was never on.

From 2014 to 2015 Ferrari made up a lot of ground, improving from a very distant fourth in the constructors' championship in one year to second in the next. I believe most of that gain came from power unit improvements; in 2014, Mercedes caught everyone with their trousers down on that side.

During the 2015 season, Ferrari didn't really close the gap to Mercedes. Some tracks suited one chassis a little better than the other, but based on average fastest laps of the weekend, there was still about 0.8 per cent between them in terms of pace. So around a theoretical 90-second lap, that equates to 0.72s.

Ferrari will have been pretty confident on which areas needed to be worked on. It will have drilled deep into every bit of data on Mercedes from the 2015 season and compared it with its own performance. But what is key is deciding what direction to go in to close that gap. There are still gains to be made with power unit performance, but don't underestimate how much Mercedes will be able to find in this area. Gaining ground isn't just about improving your own package, it's about improving as much as your rivals and then improving some more on top.

On the chassis side, if you are lacking overall downforce do you decide to push ahead and find some more at the expense of aero sensitivity? If you don't feel the drivers are able to use that downforce to the maximum, do you then try to reduce the sensitivity and give the driver a more consistent package?

Do you work more on centre-of-pressure shift with steering or yaw, and try to make it work more for you when you need it?

These are just a few of the many questions for which technical director James Allison will have had to find answers. Once that is done, he will put together a specification for the new car and it is then up to everyone in their individual departments to pull together and achieve that objective. This spec is a living, evolving thing but it must be in place before the previous year's August break. If it is achieved too early, then the targets can be reviewed, but from that point the direction is defined and it is all about optimising a concept. The big problem is that if you just keep doing what you have done previously, then you will probably end up with the same inherent problems.

If I was involved with Ferrari, the first question I would be trying to find an answer to is why it doesn't seem to get much from the shorter nose concept. Everyone else has gone in that direction and have been able to introduce this style of development mid-season. Given that changing the front crash structure is not cheap, the reward must be significant.

The front wing and nose area defines the airflow through the rest of the car. Get this right and the rest of the car will respond. Get it wrong and finding more downforce will be like plucking teeth from a chicken. I have no doubt Ferrari has looked at this area in fine detail. One thing that can have a major influence is the front suspension, which on the Ferrari is a pullrod system. Suspension, especially at the front, is not just there to hold the wheels on since it acts to manage the

airflow coming off the front wing. It would be very easy to have something wrong in this area, and in turn not get a response from the nose concept that seems to suit everyone else.

It could be something like this that meant they went through 2015 with that 0.8 per cent deficit to Mercedes. They did all the research, but didn't get the reward because something was overpowering the outcome. But for all this, Mercedes will not be standing still. We hear a lot about conservative or aggressive concepts and for sure there is a difference.

Take McLaren's 'size zero' aero package. That's what I call aggressive, but if you are going to put yourself there you need to make sure you have a way out if it all goes wrong for you.

Mercedes has enough data at its disposal to make sure it avoids development routes that won't take it where it wants to go. It also knows that if it doesn't take too many risks then a third world title is possible. But it can only expect to be closed down in 2016 – because the longer the regulations stay stable, the closer the grid gets. Roll on Melbourne... ❄

“You need to make sure you have a way out if it all goes wrong”

PIT+PADOCK

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FORMULA 1

Why Kevin Magnussen

AS KEVIN MAGNUSSEN PREPARES FOR LIFE at Renault in 2016, with his official confirmation with the manufacturer due as *Autosport* closed for press, he will be grateful for a rare miracle for Formula 1 drivers – a second chance.

When top F1 teams chew you up and spit you out, it is very difficult to recover. Magnussen's F1 career looked all but over when McLaren finally gave him the boot, by email on his 23rd birthday last October. But such is the way in F1. Drivers are often without sentiment ejected. Sometimes they deserve it, sometimes not; often it is not performances on-track but that potent mix of politics and finance that means the axe is swung.

So it was with Magnussen, who was told he had done enough to remain a McLaren race driver at the end of his 2014 rookie season, only for other elements of the corporate structure to decide that Jenson Button – British, experienced and the 2009 world champion – was ultimately the better bet.

Whatever McLaren's reasons, whether pecuniary, political, performance-related, or a complicated mixture of all three, in pure performance terms, it was the correct call.

Button raced substantially better than Magnussen that year. He scored by far the bulk of McLaren's points, and with Honda returning as works engine partner in 2015, Button held the advantage of experience and a prior successful relationship with the Japanese marque.

There were also doubts within McLaren about Magnussen, principally his ability to understand the Pirelli tyres fully, and questions over his attitude and capacity for self-improvement.

Then came the misfortune and the mismanagement. McLaren took too long to sanction a racing programme alongside his reserve duties, and a potential last-minute IndyCar deal was derailed by the need to sub for Fernando Alonso in the 2015 Australian Grand Prix. Magnussen was left with little to do except sit in briefings and twiddle his thumbs for the rest of the year. He was afforded no chance to address those perceived shortcomings with further opportunities behind the wheel, and as Stoffel Vandoorne's star ascended in GP2 so it cast Magnussen's further into the shadows.

Alonso is box-office, Button isn't too far behind, and Vandoorne looks the best talent



Magnussen spent most of 2015 sat on the sidelines as McLaren tester

merits his second chance in F1

(Max Verstappen aside) to come through the junior ranks in recent times. It's easy to see how McLaren might feel it possessed an embarrassment of riches, among which it saw Magnussen as the roughest diamond. It's the way of the F1 world – no more room at the inn, so out he went.

This will make him damaged goods in the eyes of some, but being wrong for McLaren doesn't mean he isn't good enough for F1. After all, this was a driver who finished second on his debut in the Australian Grand Prix two years ago – a rare feat.

McLaren was also impressed by Magnussen's raw speed in 2014. He lapped 0.183 per cent faster than Button in qualifying on average, and pushed him hard in the intra-team battle – losing 10-9 overall, but matching his team-mate 9-9 if you discount the Spanish GP, where Magnussen's engine broke in Q3.

That's a very impressive record for a rookie, and, in another year, against a different

“Magnussen impressed McLaren with his raw speed”

team-mate, with different players calling the shots, it probably would have saved his seat.

Magnussen admits he ultimately didn't maximise his chance in 2014, focusing too hard on beating Button and struggling to deal with the pressure once it became clear he was in a shootout to become Alonso's 2015 team-mate.

The frustration is that he never got the chance to show he learned his lessons. Racing for Renault this season rectifies that.

Pastor Maldonado is a capable driver on his day, and a grand prix winner, lest we forget, but is perceived by many to be little more than a crash-happy pay-driver. And without the Venezuelan backing that has fuelled his career so far, he has been left out in the cold with no reprieve – for this season at least.

Renault loses Maldonado's experience, and in turn a serious injection of budget, but gets a hungry and talented young driver in his wake to partner rookie Jolyon Palmer.

It's important for factory teams to give the impression they care more about ability than money in F1. Such an attitude makes them more credible in the eyes of the fans they hope to market cars to.

It's probably accurate to say Maldonado had his fair chance. He conquered GP2 in 2010, raced in F1 for five seasons, driving for two decent teams (Williams and Lotus), won the Spanish GP in 2010 and finished in the points 14 times in 95 starts. That's a fine career by any measure, but there was never really any suggestion he possessed huge hidden potential.

Magnussen is a different prospect. We've yet to really find out how good he is, or may become.

It's a brutal world. Money often trumps talent in this game, but when that money dries up, the tables turn.

Such business is nothing new, but the result is something rare – a reprieve, a second chance to show what you can really do in a big team, an opportunity to tell the world that you belong.

However it has come about, Magnussen is talented enough to deserve this chance.

BEN ANDERSON

TOYOTA LOOKS TO LOEB AND SOLBERG TO SOLVE PROBLEM

TOYOTA'S RETURN to the World Rally Championship could be hit by the lack of a frontline driver to spearhead the Japanese giant's 2017 effort.

The Tommi Makinen-led Gazoo Racing squad is flat-out developing the new Yaris WRC, scheduled to be on the Monte Carlo Rally startline in a little over 11 months, but at the moment there is nobody to drive the car.

Makinen is now looking beyond the current crop of drivers to former world title holders Petter Solberg and Sebastien Loeb. He has spoken to the Norwegian and is ready to open discussions with the nine-time champion about a return.

Makinen told AUTOSPORT: "So far I haven't done anything, but if Sebastien would be interested to do something then of course I want to talk to him. We discussed different plans with Petter. We know Petter is a world champion and a fast driver."

The only frontline drivers not contracted for next season are Thierry Neuville and Mads Ostberg – all three Volkswagen crews and Citroen's Kris Meeke are contracted until at least the end of 2017. And Neuville wants to remain with Hyundai beyond next season.

Mikko Hirvonen is expected to test the car in April, but he has no desire to return.

"One of the most important areas in the package are the drivers," said Makinen. "But now we have to be also realistic that there are not so many for us to choose from. Next year would most probably be a compromise for us."

The dearth of rally-ready young drivers can be traced back to a rule change in 2004, when the FIA cut the number of scoring drivers in each team from three to two. Before then, as well as running specialist drivers such as Gilles Panizzi, teams were more likely to develop young talent – in the way that Citroen did by running Loeb as a junior team-mate to Colin McRae and Carlos Sainz in 2003.

The spiralling costs of Junior WRC competition have also had a negative impact.

Ironically, Makinen is developing young Japanese drivers Hiroki Arai and Takamoto Katsuta.

"The best option for us is to have Sebastien Ogier behind the wheel," said Makinen. "But it's complicated. Would it be an interesting idea if you could have some newcomer and one day challenge Ogier and even beat him?"

DAVID EVANS



Formula V8 3.5 shapes up

Things are looking encouraging for the category despite Renault's withdrawal of support

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF FIVE ADDITIONAL DRIVER signings to the rebranded Formula V8 3.5 series in the past week has provided additional confidence to teams ahead of the opening race of the series in mid-April.

Fortec Motorsports' completion of its line-up with Formula 3 graduate Pietro Fittipaldi eliminated a blockage in the driver market, since several drivers were chasing the seat. Pons Racing duly announced Beitske Visser and Alex Bosak, while newcomer Teo Martin Motorsport reached agreement with EuroFormula Open race winner Yu Kanamaru and then Aurelien Panis was confirmed at Arden Motorsport.

"I am positive about how the championship is shaping up," said Fortec manager director Jamie Dye. "Fortec has been in far worse positions at this time of the year, as has the championship. I think 2010 was much tougher. I am

not sure what is happening in every team, but by my count there are at least 14 deals done and the first test isn't until March 29-30."

Following the decision by Renault last year to end its support for the category, 3.5 teams pledged to work closely together to ease the transition to the lone promotion of RPM, the Barcelona-based company that jointly created the World Series by Renault package. Strakka Racing team manager Dan Walmsley confirmed that this collaboration is ongoing.

"The motorsport community is close," said Walmsley, who is also involved in Strakka's World Endurance Championship programme. "I have been speaking to other 3.5 teams' general managers and team principals. If a team has had talks with a driver who doesn't quite have the budget, they will pass on the contacts to another team who might be able to offer a deal."

"The only thing that has changed is the Renault badge above the door. I am sure that after we've got through season one, people will again see that the car produces the best bang for the buck in single-seaters. We are working to ensure the grid is not only full, but of a high quality. We have had drivers with a budget approach us, but if they don't want to win, we've turned them away. We believe Strakka is a premium brand, and a driver who pays for a seat with us in 3.5 could well end up being paid in LMP."

"Things are not in bad shape. The biggest challenge is that there are drivers chasing rock-bottom deals in GP2, and don't want to commit just yet. GP2 costs are so colossal that most can't get anywhere near it."

Tech 1 Racing team boss Sarah Abadie believes a shortfall in drivers with funding is the cause of difficulties for teams in GP3, GP2 and 3.5.

"I am quite happy for the moment," said Abadie. "In all the highest single-seater categories there are problems, some more visible than the others. In general, the 3.5 teams are not as rich as those in GP3 and GP2, who can afford to subsidise drivers more. That's why, when you look at how many drivers there are confirmed, we are in a healthier position."

PETER MILLS



VAN DER LAAN/LAT



Maldonado was meant to race for Renault this year... but funding dried up

FORMULA 1

Maldonado's farewell

PASTOR MALDONADO'S CONFIRMATION on Monday, ahead of the announcement that his Renault seat had been taken by Kevin Magnussen, potentially brings to an end a turbulent Formula 1 career for arguably the most divisive driver of the 21st century.

A grand prix winner – and worthily so – Maldonado earned a bad reputation after relying on PDVSA backing to break into F1. But considering he had just won the 2010 GP2 crown, he was worthy of his place on the F1 grid. It is true he had too many incidents, but there were signs of improved consistency with Lotus last year, and had he been able to

keep his nose clean in battle – when the red mist too often clouded his judgement – then he would have a more impressive record.

Having lost his seat thanks to the PDVSA backing not coming through, and with little prospect (amid Venezuela's financial travails) of securing new support, Maldonado will find it difficult to break back in. But it's not impossible and his statement on Monday suggested he hopes to return.

A far more personable driver out of the car than his reputation would suggest, and an exciting one in it, he will be missed in F1.

EDD STRAW

TOP 3

Maldonado F1 results

The Venezuelan's best race results during his five seasons in grand prix racing show he was no mug



SPAIN 2012 – 1ST

One of the great shock wins of grand prix history. Maldonado started from pole position and jumped Fernando Alonso in the pits to take a famous victory. A well-executed triumph.



ABU DHABI 2012 – 5TH

Some at Williams believe Maldonado's run to fifth after losing KERS mid-race was a better drive than his win in Spain. Without the problem he would have been on the podium.



MONACO 2015 – 7TH

Of his three seventh places, this is the strongest for Maldonado. Why? Because on a track where he always excels, he outqualified and outraced highly rated team-mate Romain Grosjean.

IN THE HEADLINES



SNOW RUN DOESN'T WORRY RED BULL

Red Bull is adamant it acted correctly in organising Max Verstappen's ski-slope stunt in one of its world championship-winning Formula 1 cars. It was suggested by local authorities that the event took place without an official permit, and that Red Bull faced a fine of €30,000.

ANOTHER MEETING OVER 2017 RULES

Formula 1's technical chiefs face another meeting next month to finalise the 2017 rules package after last Friday's discussions proved inconclusive. The meeting in February represents another opportunity for those involved to find solutions to ongoing problems in finalising the 2017 regulations for more spectacular, faster cars – a process that is taking longer than expected.

HAAS OPTS FOR LAUNCH ROLLOUT

The new Haas Formula 1 team's first challenger will break cover on the opening day of the first pre-season test at Barcelona on February 22. It has passed the crash tests that are mandatory before a car can run in testing.

BRDC DOES NOT NEED SILVERSTONE SALE

The BRDC is no longer under pressure to sell British Grand Prix venue Silverstone, according to its president Derek Warwick. "Eighteen months ago, in particular, we would have bitten anybody's arm off [to sell]," said Warwick. "Now, I don't care if we do a deal or not."

MONZA SET FOR NEW GRAND PRIX DEAL

Italian Grand Prix officials are set to sign a new contract with Bernie Ecclestone by the end of February that will secure the immediate future of the race. It should safeguard the event until the end of 2020 at least.

ERICSSON WANTS SCANDINAVIAN GP

A Scandinavian grand prix would be a huge success if Formula 1 could return to the region, according to Sauber's Marcus Ericsson. "I don't see it happening for a long time, but it would be cool for the sport if we can have a race in northern Europe," he said.

FORCE INDIA SIGNS UP MAZEPIN

Force India has signed Russian Formula Renault graduate Nikita Mazepin to a development role. The 16-year-old (below) joins Mexican Alfonso Celis on the team's development roster, and will combine the position with a season in European Formula 3 with Hitech GP.



PIT + PADDOCK



WTCC

CHILTON GETS LOEB CITROEN WTCC SEAT

TOM CHILTON HAS joined Sebastien Loeb Racing for the 2016 World Touring Car Championship after agreeing a one-year deal with the team.

Chilton lines up with Mehdi Bennani and Gregoire Demoustier at the Citroen satellite squad in what is a prized drive behind the wheel of an ex-works C-Elysee, and gives Chilton a real chance to have his best season yet at world championship level in touring cars.

Fifth (in the BTCC in 2010 and in the WTCC in 2013) marks his best end-of-year finishing position in tin-tops – a remarkable statistic when you consider 2016 will be the 30-year-old's 15th year of competition.

Chilton is realistic in his expectations, but recognises the opportunity. "It's a privilege to be driving for Sebastien Loeb's racing team," he says.

"It's a satellite team so it's very much like a works team – my main rivals other than my team-mates are probably going to be Yvan Muller and Jose Maria Lopez [in the factory Citroens].

"Maybe with my experience of sportscars, the more downforce that the TC1 cars have has suited me better. I'm quite interested to see how I'm going to get on with the Citroen.

"I'm hoping that I can finish in the top three in the main championship and win the Yokohama championship."

JACK COZENS



WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

LMP1 tyre war in the offing

TOP LMP1 PRIVATEER REBELLION RACING WILL SWAP from Michelin to Dunlop rubber for its 2016 World Endurance Championship campaign. The Anglo-Swiss team has been announced as the venerable tyre supplier's official development partner this season as it attempts to close the gap to the factory teams.

A bugbear for Rebellion since the rebirth of the WEC in 2012 is that it has been forced to run tyres developed for factory hybrid cars rather than for its conventional P1. The Dunlop deal will allow it to run tyres developed for its non-hybrid AER-engined R-One for the first time.

Dunlop is returning to P1 in the WEC, for the first time since OAK Racing ran its tyres in 2012, after a reorganisation of its racing operations in Europe. The deal with Rebellion

for 2016 will allow it to gain experience of prototypes with higher downforce levels and more power as it prepares for the arrival of a new breed of faster machinery in LMP2, a category it currently dominates.

The deal with Rebellion follows a test in Bahrain last year. An R-One ran on a P1 tyre during a Dunlop tyre test the week after the series finale there, which allowed for a comparison with the performance of the Michelins.

Dunlop hinted that it would be open to a deal with a manufacturer in P1 in the future.

"In a category with open competition, you have to prove yourself technically," said a spokesman, "and if you do that manufacturers will want to come to talk to you."

GARY WATKINS

WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

Kobayashi gets promoted

TOYOTA TEST AND RESERVE driver Kamui Kobayashi has been promoted to a full race seat for the Japanese manufacturer in the 2016 World Endurance Championship.

The former grand prix driver, who raced in the WEC in 2013 with the factory Ferrari AF Corse GTE team, is taking the place of the retired Alex Wurz in Toyota's line-up. That means Kobayashi will join Stephane Sarrazin and Mike Conway in the second of the two all-new TS050 HYBRIDS.

Toyota Motorsport GmbH president Toshio Sato said: "Kamui showed his speed and commitment in testing, so it was a relatively easy decision to select him to replace Alex."

Sebastien Buemi, Anthony Davidson and Kazuki Nakajima have been retained to drive the lead TS050.



A replacement as test and reserve driver is set to be announced at the launch of the TS050 in late March. Toyota has tested a couple of candidates and is expected to try further drivers imminently.

Toyota Motorsport will run a new black-white-and-red livery for 2016, which follows the adoption of the Toyota Gazoo Racing team name early last season.

GARY WATKINS



IMSA SPORTSCAR CHAMPIONSHIP

Ford's difficult debut

FORD HAS MADE NO BONES ABOUT ITS disappointment after its new GTs failed to make an impact in the Daytona 24 Hours last weekend. Yet at the same time it denied that the problems encountered by the two Chip Ganassi Racing entries added up to a disastrous start for its GTE programme in the opening round of the 2016 IMSA SportsCar Championship.

"I don't think anyone should think of this race as a failure," said Dave Pericak, boss of the Ford Performance division that is masterminding both the GT road and race-car projects. "It's not the Cinderella story we were hoping for, but I'd rather work the bugs out now."

The two GT Le Mans-class Ganassi Fords were both in trouble early in the race after becoming jammed in gear, the #67 entry as early as the ninth lap. The problem recurred for this car later in the race, and it would also require a change of gearbox, leaving it more than 100 laps in arrears at the finish. There was also a relatively minor problem with the quick-connect brake lines involving both cars in the opening hours.

Ford was hoping for much more than two delayed finishes after an extensive test programme in the final months of last year, which included an endurance run at Sebring.

"It is a little bit disappointing because we tested so well up until this point," said George Howard-Chappell, programme manager on the Ford GT at the Multimatic

organisation building the cars. "Obviously we have a bit of work to do."

The reason for the cars sticking in gear resulted from an electrical issue, according to Howard-Chappell. The suggestion, hinted at in Ford's post-race communications, that this might have been caused by a glitch with the wiring for the onboard cameras being run for the first time couldn't be proven at this stage, he said.

Ford's performance and its failure to notch up a clean finish should, however, be viewed in the context of the achievements of its rivals. BMW and Ferrari were also present with new cars, yet each managed to get one of their respective challengers – the M6 GTLM and the 488 GTE – home within a lap of the winning Chevrolet Corvette C7.R. Also worth pointing out is that these cars ran for the first time at the end of the summer, whereas the Ford hit the test track in May.

The encouraging points for Ford were that the #66 GT lost no more ground to the class leaders once its problems were out of the way by the end of the fourth hour and set competitive lap times along the way.

Ford's World Endurance Championship team is shortly to begin testing in Europe for the first time, which will mean a two-pronged programme in the run-up to the Le Mans 24 Hours in June. That will include two 24-hour endurance simulations, so there is, said Howard-Chappell, "no reason to panic".

GARY WATKINS

IN THE HEADLINES

PIC JOINS RAPAX FOR GP2

GP2 race-winner Arthur Pic has joined Rapax for his third year in the category after two years with Campos Racing.

DURAN RETURNS TO FORMULA E

Salvador Duran, who was originally slated to drive for the Trulli team this year, has taken over Nathanael Berthon's seat for the rest of the 2015-16 Formula E season.

CHILTON LANDS GANASSI DRIVE

Formula 1 refugee Max Chilton will race in IndyCar with Chip Ganassi Racing this season. For an in-depth interview with Chilton, head to [page 40](#).

CARPENTER AND FISHER TEAM SPLITS

Ferrari junior Antonio Fuoco has switched to Trident for his second GP3 season. He joins fellow sophomores Sandy Stuvik and Artur Janosz plus Giuliano Alesi (son of Jean).

BENTLEY LMP2 PLANS ON HOLD

Plans for Bentley to join the IMSA SportsCar Championship with an LMP2 coupe powered by its GT3 engine are on hold. "Yes, we would like to do it and, yes, it would make a lot of sense because it is a good fit, but it remains on the backburner," said Bentley racing boss Brian Gush.

REINKE TO HEAD AUDI CUSTOMER RACING

Christopher Reinke will move from his position of head of LMP at Audi Sport to boss of the customer racing department in place of Romolo Liebchen. The move, a promotion for Reinke, is effective from March 1. No successor has been announced.

AUSTIN GT CHALLENGE ROUND AXED

The US round of the new-for-2016 Intercontinental GT Challenge set for Austin in March has been cancelled. Series boss Stephane Ratel blamed a lack of support from European teams for the decision to axe the March 6 race.

HARD HAPPY TO SIGN SMILEY FOR BTCC

Team Hard has signed 2013 Mini Challenge champion Chris Smiley to drive a Toyota Avenis in the 2016 British Touring Car Championship.

TARQUINI LANDS LADA DRIVE

Former Honda driver Gabriele Tarquini will race for Lada in the World Touring Car Championship. The 53-year-old lines up alongside Nicky Catsburg and Hugo Valente.

AUTOSPORT JOURNALIST GETS AWARD

Autosport's Scott Mitchell was presented with the 2015 Renault MSA Young Journalist of the Year Award at the MSA's Night of Champions last Saturday. Mitchell (on right, below, receiving the award from Renault's Will Fewkes) is the first person to have won the award twice.



PIT + PADDOCK/LETTERS

FEEDBACK

Best of British bag their trophies

On behalf of the MSA I would like to congratulate all the 2015 MSA British champions and special award winners who were crowned during our Night of Champions last Saturday night.

Once again this prestigious event underlined the incredible breadth and depth of UK motorsport as well as the matchless calibre of all our volunteers, marshals and officials.

Thank you also to John Surtees CBE and Graham Stoker for presenting the silverware. And to all who attended, best wishes for a very safe and successful 2016.

Alan Gow
Chairman, Motor Sports Association

TV beats a computer screen

So no more Daytona 24 Hours on live TV. Also it looks like we have lost NHRA drag racing from BT Sport. Fox Sports seems to have taken over – is American motorsport becoming a no-no in Europe? At least we will have IndyCar on BT Sport, thank goodness.

Not everyone wants to watch

motorsport on a computer screen when we have a large TV in the lounge.

Dave Painter
Andover, Hampshire

There's not too much F1

Mark Slevin (Jan 28) says he is an avid reader, then goes on about too much Formula 1. I'm sure not long back you yourselves mentioned this and said sales fall quite a bit when it's not F1 on the cover. Sales of the magazine keep it going, true fact! And I must say I'm happy with it how it is.

Simon Priestley
Lincolnshire

There's too much F1

Mark Slevin has it bang to rights. The magazine is far too F1-centric, as a brief analysis of the 2015 index of *Autosport* published several weeks ago will attest – 41 per cent of all articles and reports related directly to Formula 1. 'Nuff said.

Dr Mike Rushton
Cheshire

The winners line up at the MSA's Night of Champions



Hill skilled on two wheels too

Your Damon Hill feature (Jan 28) does him a disservice. What made him the stand-out champion of his era and ever since was his ability on two wheels as well as four. Despite a tiny budget he won a hard-fought Brands Hatch Championship. With adequate funding, a national title was entirely possible. Respect!

Andy Ackerley
Tunbridge Wells

Will Channel 4 be good for F1?

In Lawrence Barretto's article about Channel 4's F1 TV challenge (Jan 28), he claims it could and should improve the show. Well, let's hope so. But hang on a minute... I remember, when F1 went to Sky a few years ago, how we were told it would be good for F1. Can anyone tell me how it has been?

John Graham
Radcliffe On Trent

Puzzled by Monte aftermath

Did anyone not think that the rock Kris Meeke hit was put there on purpose? It's an old 'habit'? Amazed it wasn't mentioned by any commentator.

Also, Jari-Matti Latvala is accused of hitting a spectator with no comment about spectator control. It was a minor incident. Why the outcry? Two incidents with very different responses. I don't get it, but I guess someone does?

Simon Astley
Rickmansworth

HAVE YOUR SAY, GET IN TOUCH

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Best of enemies

Rivalry between team-mates is inevitable, especially when they are both capable of winning the title, but it's also good for the show

By Ben Anderson, Grand Prix Editor

[@BenAndersonAuto](#)

LEWIS HAMILTON VERSUS NICO ROSBERG. THE DUEL between these team-mates has dominated Formula 1 for two straight seasons, as Mercedes has vanquished all rivals.

Every relationship is unique, but the pattern among team-mates fighting for a title tends toward the destructive.

Probably the most famous examples are the bitter fight between Nigel Mansell and Nelson Piquet at Williams in 1987, and the Alain Prost versus Ayrton Senna civil war that broke out at McLaren two years later.

But an exclusive world championship battle is not an essential ingredient for intra-team tension. In fact, the fundamental nature of this dynamic is taut, simply because of the need to reconcile personal ambition with the collaborative approach necessary to achieve it.

Sometimes, people just don't get on in such intense and competitive working environments. Jean Alesi and Gerhard Berger were Ferrari team-mates for three seasons in the mid-'90s, then Alesi left for Benetton and was gutted when Berger came onboard, too. They never fought for a world title...

Other times, internal politics cloud the picture. Niki Lauda wasn't happy with how Carlos Reutemann and Ferrari grew closer while he recovered from his horrific Nurburgring crash injuries in 1976, and so they clashed.

The Hamilton-Rosberg dynamic has veered towards animosity since they began fighting each other for the world title, because of either something one or the other said or did, or resentment over the way the team dealt with a particular controversy.

Mercedes is cast in the role of strict headmaster, trying to pull unruly pupils into line. It sets boundaries the drivers inevitably push against: when to use particular engine settings, how sandbagging in practice is not acceptable, what constitutes acceptable etiquette in wheel-to-wheel combat, or how and when alternative strategies are permitted.

Mercedes is trying to balance its own interests against those of 'the show', and has made great efforts to keep a lid on the cauldron bubbling behind the scenes. But the lid blows off eventually – Monaco '14, Spa '14, Austin '15. The result is always the same: one upset driver, followed by both sniping at each other, playing psychological games to gain the upper hand.

When they engage in this sort of mental warfare – Rosberg throwing his cap at Hamilton after a tough wheel-to-wheel battle, or Hamilton mocking Rosberg for blaming wind for falling off the track and losing a victory – their on-track battles become more intense, and more interesting.

It seems as though their relationship is inexorably drawn towards implosion, fuelled by the one burning desire that trumps all others in F1 – to become world champion.

Does it have to be this way? Damon Hill, who won the 1996 title after an amicable intra-team battle with Jacques Villeneuve at Williams, is an exception to the rule, but he only spent one season as team-mate to the French-Canadian.

"It depends on the personalities," he says. "Some are very adept at playing gamesmanship, and others aren't. And if they do try and play, it backfires on them."

"Everybody has rivalries, in whatever they do, whether they're a racing driver, an artist, a journalist. We're interested in how we're supposed to deal with that and still prevail. How do we not get dragged down into the gutter? And that's actually the challenge, because I think they both dragged themselves down last year. If you're not careful, it spirals out of control and you both look cheap, childish and petulant."

Mercedes boss Toto Wolff insists there are no issues between his two drivers, and he is right to suggest their rivalry is

healthy for F1, but he also has to work hard to ensure the duo do not overstep the mark to the detriment of his team.

This situation is probably easier for Hamilton to handle, because he has emerged from each skirmish the overall victor. For Rosberg, the tightrope is trickier to walk,

because he has tended to do better when the atmosphere is tense and Hamilton appears less relaxed.

Both have learned the hard way that you cannot be friends with the person you are fighting against to achieve your dreams. The challenge is doing everything it takes to win, without jeopardising what makes the fight possible in the first place.

Given he heads into 2016 with his current Mercedes contract due to expire, Rosberg stands at an important crossroads. Does he go all out to win his first world title, possibly sacrificing his relationships with Hamilton and the team? Or does he play quietly, trying to come out on top while dutifully playing the team game in hope of earning a new deal?

If Ferrari is more competitive this year, the pressure to take the latter approach will be greater. On the flipside, how will Hamilton react if Rosberg maintains his late-2015 form and gains an early edge? Will he rely on natural ability to win the day, or will he have to "play gamesmanship" to derail his rival?


It will be fascinating to see how it plays out. Whichever way it goes, it will remind us that Formula 1, though driven by technology and science, remains a human sport at its core. ✂

"Wolff is right that his drivers' rivalry is healthy for F1"

LMP2 breaks through at Daytona

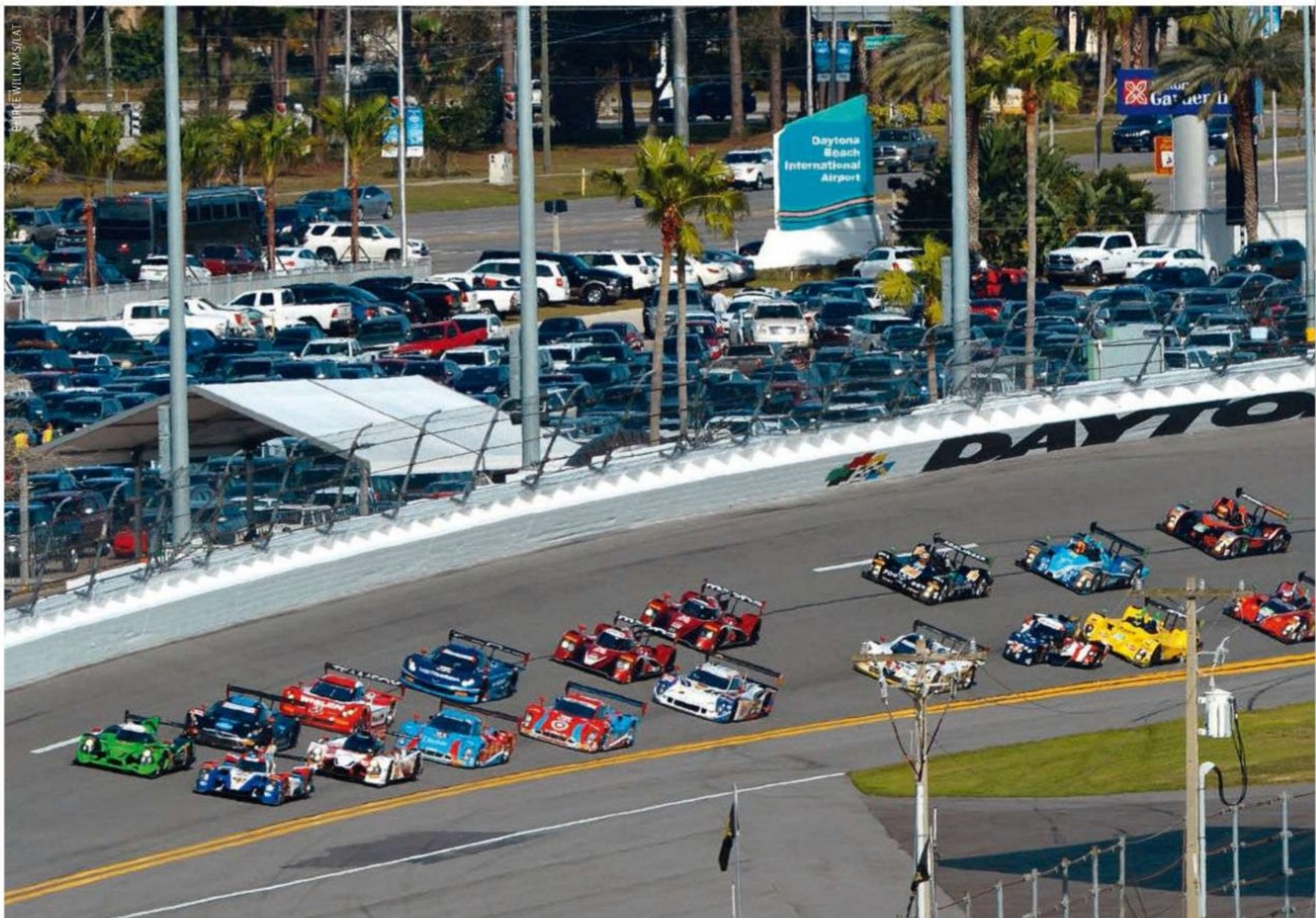
Extreme Speed Motorsports took the first Daytona 24 Hours victory for an LMP2 car, and its win was more convincing than it looked

By Gary Watkins, Special Contributor

 @gazzasportscars







As Luis Felipe 'Pipo' Derani climbed aboard the Extreme Speed Motorsports Ligier-Honda JSP2 with just over two hours to go, there was little doubt that the US entrant was going to win the Daytona 24 Hours. The Brazilian had been the star of the previous 22 or so hours and, with the fastest car-engine combination last weekend underneath him, the result appeared to be a foregone conclusion.

Derani duly delivered victory for ESM and team-mates Johannes van Overbeek, Scott Sharp and Ed Brown on a day when the best LMP2 machinery had a clear edge over the uprated Daytona Prototypes that had vanquished them in the previous two editions of the 24 Hours in the world of post-merger US sportscar racing. He quickly overhauled a deficit of more than 10 seconds to Jordan Taylor in the Wayne Taylor Racing Dallara-Chevrolet Corvette DP, and moved past into the lead.

Taylor briefly came back at Derani after ESM opted against changing tyres at the next round of stops, but the truth was that he had nothing for the ESM Ligier. And nor did Max Angelelli, who climbed aboard at the final pitstop after his team-mate complained of feeling unwell. Derani was able to pull clear, ignoring power-steering and gearbox-temperature alarms along the way, to complete a 26-second victory.

Derani, who was racing in the USA for the first time, reckoned it was closer than it looked.

"Only after they changed drivers at the final stop were we able to have a safe margin," he said. "They were still in with a chance up to that point."

That's probably overplaying it, because the ESM car and the identical Michael Shank Racing Ligier-Honda had a clear performance advantage last weekend. Only during the night, when the P2s struggled to get heat into their spec Continental tyres, could the old-style cars, competing in their final 24 Hours at Daytona, truly fight on equal terms.

The Shank car, driven by Oswaldo Negri Jr, Olivier Pla, AJ Allmendinger and

BR01 of Aleshin (inside) and winning Ligier of Derani lead field at the start

John Pew, was probably favourite for race honours despite some heroics from Derani early on. But a sudden engine failure put Negri out of a clear lead and the race in the 10th hour.

There were inevitable complaints about the Balance of Performance between the P2 and the DPs, but the arrival of a new 3.5-litre version of Honda Performance Development's V6 twin-turbo engine undoubtedly played a part in the rise of the P2s. As did the level of teams running the Ligier-Honda.

It shouldn't be forgotten that Shank received its chassis just a few days before the official pre-race test last year and the ESM entry was run in conjunction with the factory OAK team, which will take over ESM's WEC campaign this year.

"It wasn't much of a battle for the last two hours, but throughout the night I thought it was a pretty good race," said Jordan Taylor, who shared the WTR car with Angelelli, brother Ricky and Rubens Barrichello. "With certain drivers in that car, they could kind of get around us pretty easily."

That was a reference to Derani, and certainly he stood above team-mates van



CORVETTES PUSH TO THE END IN GTLM

CHEVROLET SET UP WHAT MUST SURELY BE one of the great finishes in Daytona history – at least one not involving a cynical last-minute yellow – by letting its two GT Le Mans-class Corvettes race hard to the chequered flag. Oliver Gavin successfully repelled the advances of team-mate Antonio Garcia to take the win for himself, Tommy Milner and Marcel Fassler by just three hundredths of a second in a breathtaking climax.

Gavin came out of the pits aboard the #4 Chevrolet Corvette C7.R after the final round of stops just in front of Earl Bamber's factory Porsche 911 RSR. He briefly lost out to the German car before hitting the front, having inadvertently nerfed the leader wide into the first infield hairpin. The Brit swiftly moved clear of Bamber, only for his flying team-mate, who shared with Jan Magnussen and Mike Rockenfeller, to shoot past the 911 and grow ever larger in his mirrors.

Garcia's pace as he hunted down Gavin included a string of fastest laps in the low 1m44s bracket, times that raised eyebrows with rivals who had already been suggesting that Chevrolet had something in hand.

With instructions from the Corvette Racing pit that the pair of 'Vettes could race each other, Garcia started to look for a way past. Gavin appeared equal to his efforts until the penultimate lap, when the Spaniard went around the outside into Turn 1, only to run wide and allow the sister car back through. Even then there was one last shot from Garcia as the cars rounded NASCAR Turn 4: he ducked

out of the slipstream and was moving alongside as the cars crossed the finish line.

"All I could think about was my boss, Doug Fehan [Corvette Racing programme manager], and what he would say if we did touch," said Gavin. "Then on the last lap, I was thinking I had enough on him. But it was like the finishing line was going away from me; I couldn't get there quick enough."

Bamber, who shared the #912 Porsche with Frederic Makowiecki and Michael Christensen, finished nearly 13s down in third, despite setting his fastest race lap in the final stint. The Kiwi had been able to pull away from the 'Vettes in the penultimate stint, but didn't have the pace when push came to shove.

The best of the new Ferrari 488 GTEs, the Scuderia Corsa car shared by Alexandre Premat, Alessandro Pier Guidi, Daniel Serra and Memo Rojas, finished fourth after coming back from an early three-minute stop-go after Premat was seen running a red light in the pits. It was a good result for the team, running in GTLM for the first time.

"The penalty wasn't the problem, it was the BoP," said Pier Guidi. "Chevrolet showed at the end what they could really do."

BMW driver Augusto Farfus offered similar sentiments after finishing fifth in the only surviving Rahal team M6 GTLM, an uprated GT3 car rather than a true GTE, together with Bill Auberlen, Dirk Werner and Bruno Spengler.

"We are driving on the limit to keep up," he said. "It looks like the Corvettes can turn it up whenever they want to."

Overbeek and Sharp. Gentleman driver Brown, meanwhile, only drove one green-flag lap and was happy to admit that he put the team's interests above his own.

WTR as usual had a problem-free run and has now completed every lap of the 24 Hours for four straight years. Its only issues came at the end when Jordan Taylor, who had been suffering the after-effects of a virus, wilted and then Angelelli had to be taken to hospital for a check-up after the race. Suspicions that exhaust fumes were leaking into the cockpit remain unconfirmed.

ESM, by contrast, endured delays that probably made the race closer than it might have been. Van Overbeek was spun around by Pew in the Shank car early on and the car would eventually need its rear bodywork section, which incorporates the rear diffuser, changed. The car was awarded a drive-through for pitlane speeding and Sharp was penalised a minute for running the red light at the end of the pitlane, though safety-car periods allowed ESM to quickly make up for those delays.

Action Express Racing driver Joao Barbosa, part of the team's winning >>



IMSA SPORTSCAR/DAYTONA 24 HOURS



SMP Racing entry took stunning wet-weather pole

AUDI HANGS ON FOR GT DAYTONA WIN

GT DAYTONA PRODUCED A finish almost as thrilling as that in GTLM, only this one wasn't a flat-out fight to the chequered flag. Rene Rast sealed victory for the Magnus Racing Audi squad by eking out a tankful of fuel to the maximum.

Rast, who shared the Magnus R8 LMS with Andy Lally, Marco Seefried and John Potter, ultimately prevailed by three seconds, but he would briefly lose the lead in the closing stages when Fabio Babini's Lamborghini Huracan GT3 moved past. The Italian car would pit, which meant the Audi had just enough in hand to hang on ahead of a hard-charging Nicky Catsburg aboard the Black Swan Racing Porsche 911.

"That was one of the hardest stints of my life," said factory Audi driver Rast, who reprised his 2012 Daytona class victory with the then Porsche-equipped team. "They were on the radio telling me to do the

Rast, Seefried, Potter and Lally won a thriller



laptime but to save fuel at the same time."

Catsburg, who had led GTD in the penultimate hour in the Black Swan car he shared with Patrick Long, Andy Pilgrim and Tim Pappas, stopped much later than Rast and had fuel to spare as he tried to make up

the lost ground. The Dutchman moved up from fourth and then inherited second when the Lambo stopped, but ultimately fell short.

This was a race that Lamborghini should have won. Babini made a decision to dive into the pits after his car had

spluttered on the banking, a move that the team insisted was unnecessary. The Lambo had stopped one lap after the winning Audi and is powered by the same V10 engine...

The Paul Miller Racing Huracan, in which factory driver Mirko Bortolotti joined Bryce

Miller, Bryan Sellers and Matt McMurry, sat at the top of the GTD leaderboard for much of the first half of the race. It lost any chance of victory, however, with a dramatic crash with Justin Marks in the Change Racing Lambo in the 11th hour.



line-up at Daytona in 2014, was candid in his criticism of the BoP.

"There was no way for us to race them; we were fighting for second," said the Portuguese, who shared the team's lead Coyote-Chevrolet Corvette DP with Christian Fittipaldi, Filipe Albuquerque and Scott Pruett. "There used to be a balance because we were faster on the straights. Now they are quicker than us on the straights as well as in the corners, so where's the balance?"

Barbosa and his team-mates struggled to make an impact initially, but the car came alive in the night. Any chance of

beating WTR in the unofficial DP class disappeared in the 21st hour when the left-rear driveshaft needed replacing and left the car five laps down in fourth at the finish. It was the same failure that had hit the sister car, which ended up sixth in the hands of Dane Cameron, Eric Curran, Simon Pagenaud and Jonny Adam.

Spirit of Daytona finally made it onto the podium at its home event, even if it wasn't a contender for victory with its Coyote-Chevrolet driven by Ryan Dalziel, Marc Goossens and Ryan Hunter-Reay. The team had much to do over the course of the race as it strived to get on top of

WTR Dallara Corvette upheld DP honours as Taylor bros, Angelelli and Barrichello took second position

handling issues, and twice needed to overcome electrical glitches that resulted in the car briefly falling off the lead lap.

There was no fairytale end to Alex Wurz's racing career. The Austrian, who joined the Chip Ganassi Racing line-up of Andy Priaulx, Brendon Hartley and Lance Stroll aboard the #01 Riley-Ford EcoBoost DP, ended up fifth after temperature and then gearbox problems intervened in the closing stages. The #02 car, with 2015 Daytona winners Scott Dixon, Tony Kanaan, Jamie McMurray and Kyle Larson, was initially the more competitive of the two Ganassi Rileys but lost time as early as the ninth hour with brake problems that resulted in three trips back to the paddock and a distant 13th-place finish.

It would be wrong to suggest that the pace of the DeltaWing at Daytona was a surprise, and it certainly did have the speed to be a contender given that Katherine Legge twice led the race. The surprise would have come had the Elan/Mazda-engined DWC13 run without problems through the race. There was, however, an air of confidence within the team that it now had a reliable package.

Whether this confidence was misplaced remains a matter of conjecture, at least until the Sebring 12 Hours in March. The DeltaWing retired early in the race, not with technical problems but after a major shunt when Andy Meyrick was driving, an incident that was both not of his making and totally unnecessary.

Meyrick, who joined Legge, Sean Rayhall and Andreas Wirth in the car, hit the rear of an ORECA Prototype >>



Alex Wurz's racing swansong netted fifth in the Riley, held up by mechanical problems in the closing stages

DOLE/LAT

IN THE HEADLINES



PEIRCE WILLIAMS/LAT

ATTRITION DECIDES PC CLASS

Honours in the Prototype Challenge class went to the JDC-Miller squad and its ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09 driven by Stephen Simpson, Chris Miller, Kenton Koch and Misha Goikhberg (above). They triumphed in a race of attrition despite a sizeable accident for Koch in the 16th hour. The PR1/Mathiasen entry of Tom Kimber-Smith, Robert Alon, Jose Gutierrez and Nicholas Boulle finished second in class, after losing time with fuel-pump issues.

WINNING CHASSIS HAS LE MANS FORM

The race-winning Extreme Speed Motorsports Ligier was the Honda-powered car that the works OAK team ran at last year's Le Mans 24 Hours. This chassis was brought into play because ESM's own pair of cars are being converted in France to Nissan engines ahead of the team's assault on the WEC with OAK.

DIFFUSER-FREE RISI

The Risi Competizione Ferrari 488 GTE finished a distant sixth in GTLM with Giancarlo Fisichella, Toni Vilander, Davide Rigon and Olivier Beretta after a rear impact damaged its rear diffuser during the night. A repair proved impossible and, with no spare available, the team opted to run without the device for the remainder of the race.

HEROIC POLE FOR SMP

SMP Racing claimed pole position with its Nissan-engined BR01 – built in France by BR Engineering – courtesy of an impressive lap in wet conditions from Mikhail Aleshin on Thursday. The car, also driven by Nicolas Minassian, Maurizio Mediani and Kirill Ladygin, didn't prove competitive in the race, the team complaining of a lack of straight-line speed after an engine change following a failure in final free practice on Friday. The car finished more than 100 laps down in 38th position after braking issues forced long stops to change first the master cylinder, and then a brake caliper.

SPEEDSOURCE'S TIME IN THE SUN

The factory SpeedSource Lola-Mazdas B12/80s, now powered by normally-aspirated turbocharged petrol engines developed by Advanced Engine Research in the UK, both retired. The #70 car went out with flywheel failure in the opening hour, but the second of the cars shared by Jonathan Bomarito, Tristan Nunez and Spencer Pigot (below) was able to lead the race before valvetrain issues put it out approaching half distance.



PEIRCE WILLIAMS/LAT

Challenge car sitting stationary and without its lights on around the blind Turn 1. A dozen or so cars passed without the safety car being deployed; Meyrick, who had lost radio contact with the team, was unlucky.

The DeltaWing is unlikely to be such a competitive proposition anywhere else on the IMSA trail this season and certainly not at round two at Sebring.

The big question on the lips of the DP contingent is what is going to happen to the BoP. "If the P2 cars can beat us here in a straight fight, what's going to happen at Sebring?" questioned Barbosa. They are going to be much, much stronger than us." ❄



DeltaWing ran fine until crash

DOLE/LAT

RESULTS DAYTONA 24 HOURS, DAYTONA (USA), JANUARY 30-31 (736 LAPS – 2620.160 MILES)

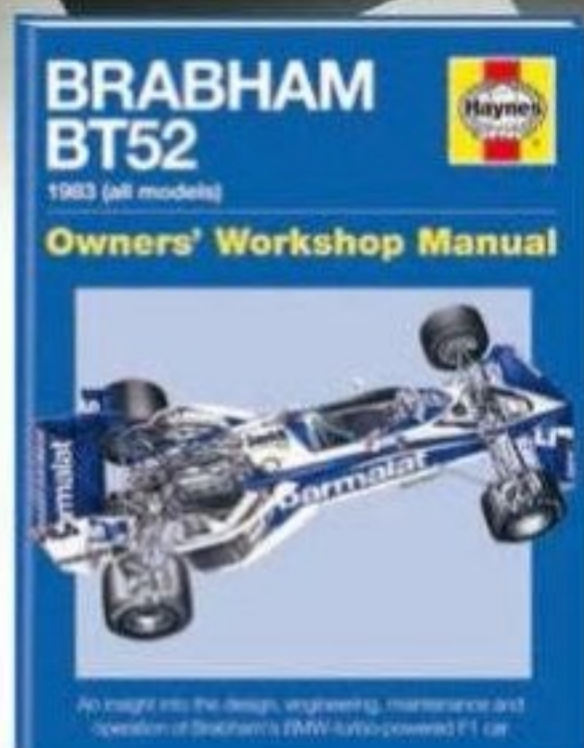
POS	DRIVER	TEAM	CAR	CLASS	RESULTS	GRID
1	Pipo Derani/Scott Sharp/Ed Brown/Johannes van Overbeek	Extreme Speed Motorsports	Ligier-Honda JSP2	P	24h00m34.607s	2
2	Ricky Taylor/Jordan Taylor/Max Angelelli/Rubens Barrichello	Wayne Taylor Racing	Dallara-Chevrolet Corvette DP	P	+26.166s	4
3	Ryan Dalziel/Marc Goossens/Ryan Hunter-Reay	Spirit of Daytona	Coyote-Chevrolet Corvette DP	P	+1m27.276s	8
4	Joao Barbosa/Christian Fittipaldi/Filipe Albuquerque/Scott Pruett	Action Express Racing	Coyote-Chevrolet Corvette DP	P	-5 laps	11
5	Alexander Wurz/Lance Stroll/Brendon Hartley/Andy Priaulx	Chip Ganassi Racing	Riley-Ford EcoBoost DP	P	-11 laps	5
6	Dane Cameron/Eric Curran/Simon Pagenaud/Jonathan Adam	Action Express Racing	Coyote-Chevrolet Corvette DP	P	-12 laps	6
7	Oliver Gavin/Tommy Milner/Marcel Fassler	Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller)	Chevrolet Corvette C7.R	GTLM	-14 laps	28
8	Jan Magnussen/Antonio Garcia/Mike Rockenfeller	Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller)	Chevrolet Corvette C7.R	GTLM	-14 laps	29
9	Frederic Makowiecki/Earl Bamber/Michael Christensen	Porsche North America (CORE)	Porsche 911 RSR	GTLM	-14 laps	23
10	Alessandro Pier Guidi/Alexandre Premat/Daniel Serra/Memo Rojas	Scuderia Corsa	Ferrari 488 GTE	GTLM	-15 laps	25
11	Dirk Werner/Bill Auberlen/Augusto Farfus/Bruno Spengler	BMW Team RLL	BMW M6 GTLM	GTLM	-15 laps	27
12	Toni Vilander/Giancarlo Fisichella/Davide Rigon/Olivier Beretta	Risi Competizione	Ferrari 488 GTE	GTLM	-27 laps	26
13	Scott Dixon/Tony Kanaan/Jamie McMurray/Kyle Larson	Chip Ganassi Racing	Riley-Ford EcoBoost DP	P	-28 laps	7
14	Andy Lally/John Potter/Marco Seefried/Rene Rast	Magnus Racing	Audi R8 LMS	GTD	-33 laps	42
15	Tim Pappas/Nicky Catsburg/Patrick Long/Andy Pilgrim	Black Swan Racing	Porsche 911 GT3-R	GTD	-33 laps	51
16	Damien Faulkner/Ben Keating/Gar Robinson/Jeff Mosing/Eric Foss	Riley Motorsports	Dodge Viper GT3-R	GTD	-33 laps	36
17	Richie Stanaway/Paul Dalla Lana/Pedro Lamy/Mathias Lauda	Aston Martin Racing	Aston Martin V12 Vantage	GTD	-34 laps	39
18	Stephen Simpson/Chris Miller/Misha Goikhberg/Kenton Koch	JDC-Miller Motorsports	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	PC	-34 laps	15
19	Marc Basseng/Rolf Ineichen/Lance Willsey/Franz Konrad/Fabio Babini	Konrad Motorsport	Lamborghini Huracan GT3	GTD	-34 laps	34
20	Markus Palttala/Michael Marsal/Maxime Martin/Jesse Krohn	Turner Motorsport	BMW M6 GT3	GTD	-35 laps	45
21	Jeff Segal/Christina Nielsen/Alessandro Balzan/Robert Renauer	Scuderia Corsa	Ferrari 458 Italia	GTD	-35 laps	43
22	Dion von Moltke/Kenny Habul/Boris Said/Tristan Vautier	Stevenson Motorsports	Audi R8 LMS	GTD	-35 laps	52
23	Mario Farnbacher/Ian James/Alex Riberas/Wolf Henzler	Team Seattle/Alex Job Racing	Porsche 911 GT3-R	GTD	-36 laps	40
24	Jeroen Bleekemolen/Ben Keating/Dominik Farnbacher/Marc Miller	Riley Motorsports	Dodge Viper GT3-R	GTD	-36 laps	38
25	Tom Kimber-Smith/Robert Alon/Jose Manuel Gutierrez/Nick Boule	PR1/Mathiasen Motorsports	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	PC	-38 laps	20
26	Raffaele Giammaria/Peter Mann/Matteo Cressoni/Marco Cioci	Spirit of Race (AF)	Ferrari 458 Italia	GTD	-38 laps	46
27	Sven Muller/Klaus Abbelen/Patrick Huisman/Frank Stippler/Sabine Schmitz	Frikadelli Racing Team	Porsche 911 GT3-R	GTD	-38 laps	37
28	Leh Keen/David MacNeil/Cooper MacNeil/Shane van Gisbergen/Gunnar Jeannette	Alex Job Racing	Porsche 911 GT3-R	GTD	-41 laps	35
29	Johnny Mowlem/Tomy Drissi/Marc Drumwright/Ricardo Vera/Brendan Gaughan	BAR1 Motorsports	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	PC	-43 laps	14
30	Townsend Bell/Bill Sweedler/Edoardo Piscopo/Richard Antinucci	O'Gara Motorsports	Lamborghini Huracan GT3	GTD	-46 laps	41
31	Joey Hand/Dirk Muller/Sebastien Bourdais	Ford Chip Ganassi Racing	Ford GT	GTLM	-46 laps	30
32	Andrew Davis/Robin Liddell/Lawson Aschenbach/Matt Bell	Stevenson Motorsports	Audi R8 LMS	GTD	-46 laps	47
33	Nick Tandy/Patrick Pilet/Kevin Estre	Porsche North America (CORE)	Porsche 911 RSR	GTLM	-49 laps	22
34	Alex Popow/Renger van der Zande/Chris Cumming/Jack Hawksworth	Starworks Motorsport	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	PC	-51 laps	18
35	Bryce Miller/Mirko Bortolotti/Bryan Sellers/Madison Snow	Paul Miller Racing	Lamborghini Huracan GT3	GTD	-81 laps	48
36	Dorsey Schroeder/Byron De Moor/David Hinton/Thomas Gruber/Jim Pace	Highway to Help (Doran)	Riley-Dinan/BMW DP	P	-86 laps	9
37	Jens Klingmann/Bret Curtis/Ashley Freiberg/Marco Wittmann	Turner Motorsport	BMW M6 GT3	GTD	-108 laps	54
38	Mikhail Aleshin/Maurizio Mediani/Nicolas Minassian/Kirill Ladygin	SMP Racing	BRE-Nissan BR01	P	-119 laps	1
39	Ryan Eversley/Adam Merzon/Don Yount/Ryan Lewis/John Falb	BAR1 Motorsports	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	PC	-126 laps	16
40	Ryan Briscoe/Richard Westbrook/Stefan Mucke	Ford Chip Ganassi Racing	Ford GT	GTLM	-176 laps	31
41	Gianmaria Bruni/Victor Shaytar/Andrea Bertolini/James Calado	SMP Racing (HPR/AF)	Ferrari 488 GTE	GTLM	-179 laps - accident	32
42	Norbert Siedler/Patrick Lindsey/Matt McMurtry/Jorg Bergmeister	Park Place Motorsports	Porsche 911 GT3-R	GTD	-212 laps	33
43	Kaz Grala/Spencer Pumpelly/Corey Lewis/Justin Marks	Change Racing	Lamborghini Huracan GT3	GTD	-212 laps	53
44	Tracy Krohn/Nic Jonsson/Pierre Kaffer/Christopher Haase	Flying Lizard Motorsports	Audi R8 LMS	GTD	-223 laps - gearbox	49
45	James Davison/Santiago Creel/Antonio Perez/Ricardo Perez de Lara/Lars Viljoen	TRG-AMR	Aston Martin V12 Vantage	GTD	-346 laps - accident	44
46	James French/Jim Norman/Josh Norman/Brandon Gdovic/Kyle Marcelli	Performance Tech Motorsports	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	PC	-351 laps - accident	17
47	John Michael Edwards/Lucas Luhr/Kuno Wittmer/Graham Rahal	BMW Team RLL	BMW M6 GTLM	GTLM	-376 laps - acc/brake disc	24
48	Emanuele Busnelli/Jim Michaelian/Joe Toussaint/Lance Willsey	Konrad Motorsport	Lamborghini Huracan GT3	GTD	-377 laps - accident	50
49	Tristan Nunez/Jonathan Bomarito/Spencer Pigot	SpeedSource	Lola-Mazda B12/80	P	-409 laps - engine	12
50	Oswaldo Negri Jr/John Pew/AJ Allmendinger/Olivier Pla	Michael Shank Racing	Ligier-Honda JSP2	P	-451 laps - engine	3
51	Sean Johnston/Mark Kvamme/Maro Engel/Felix Rosenqvist	Starworks Motorsport	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	PC	-557 laps - accident	19
52	Jon Bennett/Colin Braun/Mark Wilkins/Martin Plowman	CORE Autosport	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	PC	-576 laps - engine	21
53	Katherine Legge/Sean Rayhall/Andy Meyrick/Andreas Wirth	Panoz DeltaWing Racing	DeltaWing-Elan/Mazda DWC13	P	-617 laps - accident	13
54	Tom Long/Joel Miller/Ben Devlin	SpeedSource	Lola-Mazda DB12/80	P	-725 laps - engine	10

Winners' average speed 109.130mph. Fastest lap Derani, 1m32.192, 126.631mph.

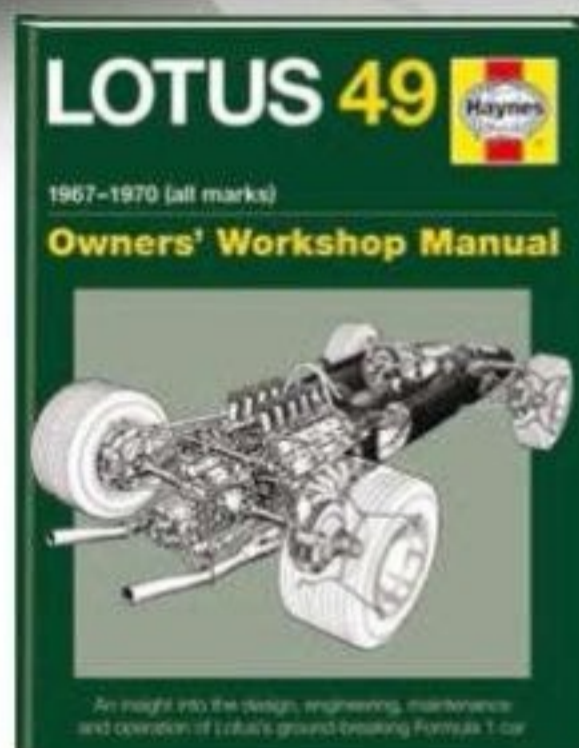
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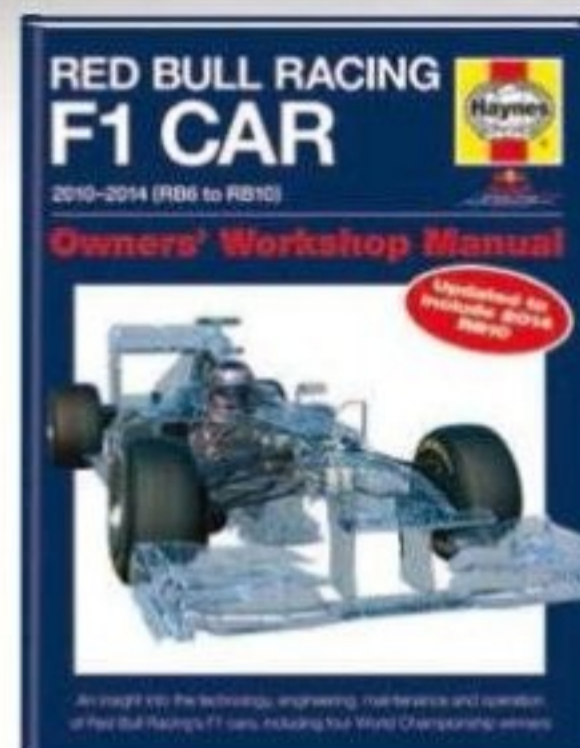
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The best F1 drivers never to win

By Gary Watkins, Adam Cooper, Scott Mitchell,
Paul Fearnley and Edd Straw

[@Autosport](#)

FEW REACH FORMULA 1, FEWER STILL EVER WIN.

Autosport elects the 20 greatest drivers who proved themselves in grand prix racing, but never won a grand prix.

Back in 2013, *Autosport* selected the best drivers never to race in Formula 1 (predictably, it was only just over a year before one of the number – Andre Lotterer – did get an unexpected chance). This time, we are working on the best drivers who did make it, but who were not among those to have won races.

There's no disgrace in not having had the opportunity to win a grand prix even if you did have the means and motive. Only 95 drivers have won a world championship grand prix during the past six-and-a-half decades, a rate of less than one new winner per season!

Our quest is to select those who were the best not to do so. This requires analysis of a multitude of factors, including what they achieved in Formula 1 relative to the machinery at their

disposal, their level of ability, speed, racecraft, and how close they did come to winning when there was half a chance.

Inevitably, such a list is subjective. The quality of the car has too big an influence in what drivers are able to achieve, while even comparisons between team-mates can be a minefield. After all, there were times when only one driver in a team might have access to a set of special qualifying tyres because of the supply level.

Our criteria, laid out below, are conceived to ensure that this becomes about picking the best of those who did have a meaningful grand prix career but never made the top steps. What follows are the stories of the ones that got away and missed opportunities.

But make no mistake, these drivers are not failures. All have proved themselves in grand prix machinery and deserve to be held in high regard. >>

THE CRITERIA

- 1 The driver must have started a minimum of 10 world championship races to eliminate those who did not have substantial grand prix careers. Otherwise, it would become a list of drivers who barely, or never, raced in F1 but excelled elsewhere.
- 2 The driver must have proved themselves in grand prix machinery, not simply be a driver who thrived elsewhere. This can include doing well in uncompetitive cars despite results being poor.
- 3 The driver must never have won a world championship GP, so non-championship victories are not counted, no matter how prestigious.
- 4 The driver must no longer be active in F1, defined either as not having raced at that level from 2012 onwards or having definitively come to the end of their grand prix career since then.
- 5 The anomalous points-paying Indianapolis 500s of 1950-1960 are disregarded. This leaves 212 eligible drivers who have made a combined total of 7726 world championship race starts.
- 6 Grand prix racing outside of the world championship era is disregarded.

Q&A

20

Eddie Cheever

F1'S AMERICAN DREAMER



Which race was your best chance to win a GP?

Hockenheim in '83. My car was really good and I was

running behind [Alain] Prost when the throttle linkage broke. One of the Ferrari drivers [Rene Arnoux] won, but when I sat down afterwards and worked it out, I would have won or come very close.

My car was brilliant that day. Prost's strength was going quickly without using up his tyres, but at Hockenheim I found a way to look after my rear tyres and

I was right with him. Renault was the best team I ever drove for and the best opportunities I had came with them.

Which of your podium finishes do you consider your best?

That has to be my second place with Ligier at Detroit in '82. There was a problem with the front tyres and we put a different compound on the front to the rear. That idea came from Jean-Pierre Jabouille [who had an engineering role with the team].

There was a restart early on and John Watson did the same and he

went on to win the race. I'm not sure I would have beaten him, because he was unstoppable that day. I was ahead of him on the grid for the second start, though.

How do you rate your nine F1 podiums against your other achievements?

Winning the Indianapolis 500 is not as important to me as finishing second in an F1 race. I didn't win a grand prix, but I'm in good company. Chris Amon didn't, and he was my hero growing up.



18

Piers Courage

A CAREER CUT SHORT

IF SECOND PLACES are a good qualification for this list, then Piers Courage deserves to be here. In 1969 he finished runner-up to his close friend Jochen Rindt at both Monaco and Watkins Glen in a privately entered car, but sadly he would never get a chance to go one better.

After a difficult F1 apprenticeship with Tim Parnell's BRMs, Courage blossomed in 1969. His long-time pal Frank Williams acquired an ex-works Brabham BT26, and prepared it to a high standard, with help from Robin Herd.

Courage loved the car, and he performed beyond expectations. Aside from the two podiums, he was also in the thick of the slipstreaming lead battle at Monza before a fuel pressure gremlin dropped him back.

Enzo Ferrari was interested, but Piers stayed loyal to Williams in 1970. Alas, the new De Tomaso chassis was initially disappointing, but was showing signs of improvement when Courage crashed fatally at Zandvoort. Only just 28 years old, his best seasons were surely still to come.

19

JJ Lehto

BIG BREAK GONE BAD

JJ LEHTO CAN'T CLAIM TO have come close to winning a grand prix, but then his big break was scuppered by injury. He suffered major back injuries before the season had even started after signing for Benetton in 1994.

The Finn, who'd cut his teeth in F1 with Onyx, Scuderia Italia and Sauber, crashed heavily at

Silverstone in January, resulting in an operation to fuse two vertebrae. Plans for him to take up his seat in the Interlagos season opener had to be abandoned after a disastrous exploratory pre-season test at Imola, yet just six weeks later he was on the grid there.

Lehto qualified fifth, but he was far from race fit.

"I couldn't feel my hands on the steering wheel at all," he says. "I had to keep looking to make sure they were in the right position."

His Benetton didn't make it off the grid after stalling and being clouted by Pedro Lamy's Lotus at the start of the tragic race. There was more disappointment in Monaco when he qualified four seconds from pole-winning team-mate Michael Schumacher. Barcelona might have yielded a podium but for a late engine failure, and then he was off the pace again in Montreal.

"Imola was OK because it wasn't very bumpy, but Monaco was impossible and so was Canada," he explains. "The lack of feeling was an issue, but the pain was the other problem."

Lehto was dropped by Benetton after Canada. A promised test programme failed to materialise and the next time he drove a Benetton was at the Portuguese GP when he was recalled to replace the suspended Schumacher.

Lehto would make two more F1 starts for old team Sauber in place of Karl Wendlinger. It was, he says, "another disaster".





17

Teo Fabi

THREE POLES... NO LAPS LED

TEO FABIS IS UNIQUE IN THE CLUB OF 11 drivers with a pole position to their name but no wins: he never even led a lap. That's despite three pole positions – one for Toleman-Hart in Germany in 1985 and two for Benetton-BMW in '86 at the Austrian and Italian Grands Prix.

He botched the Nurburgring 1985 start and slipped to eighth, then stalled on the Monza '86 grid before the warm-up lap. But Austria best sums up his F1 career.

While the Italian was an erratic performer in F1, he was quick on fast circuits. As *Autosport's* grand prix editor

Nigel Roebuck wrote at the time, the BMW engine in the Benetton provided "raw top end power rather than supple finesse" and, despite having to switch to the t-car and being held up by a Minardi, Fabi bagged pole.

Having lost out to Gerhard Berger at the start, he later swept back past his team-mate to take the lead moments before slowing and raising his arm to retire without even having chance to register an official lap led. This was the legacy of his engine being buzzed after the car jumped out of gear early in the race.

16

Stefano Modena

ITALIAN WHO FELL SHORT

STEFANO MODENA STARTED 70 GPs and competed in F1 for five full seasons, and yet he remains something of an enigmatic character – and perhaps the very definition of a driver who failed to fulfil his potential.

He could be brilliant on the track, but he lacked the steely determination that real success required, and needed more moral support than teams were ready, or able, to offer. With Tyrrell in 1991 he qualified second in Monaco, and finished runner-up in Canada.

Superstardom appeared to beckon, but after a poor 1992 season with the hopeless Jordan-Yamaha, his F1 career was over.



15

Mika Salo

IF MORAL WINS WERE REAL...

MIKA SALO KNEW THAT HE WASN'T GOING to win the 1999 German Grand Prix from the moment he took the lead. The stand-in Ferrari driver, taking place of the injured Michael Schumacher for the second of six races, had championship-chasing team-mate Eddie Irvine in his mirrors and fully understood that the time would come when he would have to cede position.

"As soon as I could see Eddie behind me I knew I wasn't going to win the race," he remembers. "I was there to do a job and that's what I did."

Salo, who had outqualified his team-mate, had taken to the front after a slow pitstop by early leader Mika Hakkinen. He spent just one lap in the lead before moving over.

That short tenure of the lead at Hockenheim proved something to Salo.

"That shows that I could have really made it in F1," he argues. "I didn't win a grand prix, but I beat all of my team-mates, and I had some good ones like Jos [Verstappen]. What else could I do?"

Salo has no regrets about giving up his one real shot at an F1 victory. It spawned a relationship with Ferrari that took him to Sauber, then using the Italian marque's V10 engines, for the 2000 season, and encompassed a successful post-F1 career in sportscar racing that yielded two class victories in the Le Mans 24 Hours.

"There aren't really any regrets, though there are maybe things I could have done differently," he says. "I'm one of the lucky ones: I made F1 and stayed around for a long time."

Salo clearly remains content with his F1 career and does have a GP winner's trophy on his mantelpiece... Irvine gave him the one from Hockenheim!

MOST WITHOUT A WIN

STARTS

1	Andrea de Cesaris	208
2	Nick Heidfeld	183
3	Martin Brundle	158
4	Derek Warwick	146
5	Jean-Pierre Jarier	134
6	Eddie Cheever	132
7	Adrian Sutil	128
8	Pierluigi Martini	118
9	Philippe Alliot	109
10	Mika Salo	109



POLES

1	Chris Amon	5
2	Teo Fabi	3
3	Jean-Pierre Jarier	2
=	Stuart Lewis-Evans	2
5	Eugenio Castellotti	1
=	Andrea de Cesaris	1
=	Bruno Giacomelli	1
=	Nick Heidfeld	1
=	Nico Hulkenberg	1
=	Mike Parkes	1
=	Tom Pryce	1



RACES LED

1	Nick Heidfeld	8
2	Chris Amon	7
=	Jean Behra	7
=	Romain Grosjean	7
5	Sergio Perez	4
6	Valtteri Bottas	3
7	Eugenio Castellotti	3
=	Luigi Fagioli	3
=	Nico Hulkenberg	3
=	Jean-Pierre Jarier	3
=	Karl Kling	3
=	Jackie Oliver	3
=	Harry Schell	3



LAPS LED

1	Chris Amon	183
2	Jean Behra	107
3	Jean-Pierre Jarier	79
4	Ivan Capelli	46
5	Nico Hulkenberg	43
6	Romain Grosjean	40
7	Carlos Menditeguy	39
8	Jackie Oliver	36
9	Andrea de Cesaris	32
10	Bruno Giacomelli	31



The above statistics include drivers who are not eligible for our overall ranking based on the criteria listed

14

Stefan Johansson

SERIAL PODIUM FINISHER



Q&A

Were you aware of your record of 12 podiums without a win?

Trust me, there were enough people reminding me until it was beaten by Nick Heidfeld, but I always tell people that he did twice the number of races as me.

Does it bug you that you never won a grand prix?

To a degree. Racing drivers are by nature very proud of what they do; if we didn't have big egos we wouldn't get anywhere. You start out wanting to be world champion, so does it really matter if you win one grand prix or no grands prix? There were opportunities for me to win, but some didn't go my way and some I had to give up for team orders.

Which races stand out as the ones that got away?

Canada '85 with Ferrari is one.

I was catching Michele [Alboreto] by a second and a half a lap, but obviously when your team-mate is going for the championship, you aren't going to be allowed to pass.

I was always focused on race set-up in practice because in those days we were running the races on one set of tyres and one tank of fuel. I wouldn't sacrifice a run or two in practice just to get a good qualifying session. I was quicker than Michele in most of the races for that reason.

What about Imola that year when you ran out of fuel after moving into the lead?

That was certainly one of my better races. I'd qualified 15th because the floor had come loose. I drove the perfect race that day. I knew what the fuel count was and stuck to it.

There was a little crack in the inlet manifold, so the engine was

sucking in more air and using more fuel to compensate. That's why I ran out.

Do you think you were ready to win races when you joined Ferrari in '85?

I was ready speed-wise, but not in terms of all the other stuff that you have to deal with when you are driving at the top level in F1.

I've always believed that if I had won in Montreal in my first year at Ferrari, it would have changed everything. The dynamic in the team would have changed.

How do you rate your third at Estoril with Onyx in '89?

The whole Onyx experience was fantastic. We started from scratch with very limited resources, but everyone did an amazing job. To achieve a podium finish in the first year was unbelievable.

13

Jules Bianchi

DENIED HIS DESTINY



AFTER JUST 34 RACES IN A BACK-OF-the-grid car, there were still questions for the Frenchman to answer when he suffered his terrible accident at Suzuka in 2014. But he had successfully met every challenge thrown at him during his stint with Marussia, and he was destined for a move into the midfield that should have acted as a stepping stone for a Ferrari seat in the future.

It's impossible to say he would definitely

have raced for Ferrari, but had he delivered on his planned move to Sauber for 2015, there's every chance he might already be looking forward to his first season at Maranello.

"He was the driver we had chosen for the future, once the collaboration with Kimi Raikkonen came to an end," said former Ferrari supremo Luca di Montezemolo last year. "The Suzuka crash has taken away from us a top guy – reserved, quick, very polite."

12

Peter Arundell

TOUGH BREAK

THIS 'KING OF FORMULA JUNIOR' was confident that he could beat Jim Clark in F1 given equal equipment – and was given that very opportunity for that very reason: Lotus boss Colin Chapman liked his attitude. Although theory and practice failed to coalesce before fate dealt him a cruel blow, this serious-minded competitor – his vermillion crash helmet seemed out of character – gave fair warning.

Victorious in an Elva, Arundell had outshone Clark as they made their single-seater debuts at Boxing Day Brands in 1959. He'd also beaten him on occasion in 1960, despite being Team Lotus's third-string Junior.

Although the bond between the Scot and Chapman was already causing him frustration, Arundell decided on a patient game; he greatly admired Chapman and was sure that he could make him see the light.

As Junior number two to Trevor Taylor, Arundell scored five wins in 1961. Given his head the next season, he scored 18 from 25 starts, including a second successive Monaco win, and the British and European titles.

This slow-burner was now hot property, yet in 1963 Lotus 'rewarded' his loyalty with two non-championship F1 outings – he finished second at both – and a hopelessly flexible Junior monocoque (until it was cloaked in aluminium rather than fibreglass); his last-gasp title defeat of the superior

Arundell never got the chance to prove himself to Chapman

Brabhams proved that he could do it all. Smooth Arundell could scrap, too.

Even so, Chapman didn't expect him to beat Clark, but his decision to finally promote the Ilford man was vindicated by a sequence of second, third and fourth places (aboard unequal F1 equipment) early in 1964.

A leg broken in a Formula 2 crash at Reims in July was expected to be a blip in this upward curve. Instead, an infection contracted at a French hospital cost him all of 1965 and, although Chapman kept his seat open, too much momentum had been lost. After a disappointing 1966 – struggling in substandard machinery – he was dropped, understandably but without warning, for Graham Hill.

11

Tom Pryce

WELSH WIZARD

LIKE CHRIS AMON, TOM PRYCE FALLS into the small group of drivers who won a non-championship F1 race, and yet never triumphed in an actual GP. His victory in the 1975 Race of Champions with Shadow showed that he was more than capable of beating the big names. That year he was on pole at Silverstone, and started second in Monaco. His best career results – two third places – don't fully reflect the impact he made. After he was killed early in 1977, his replacement Alan Jones won a race for Shadow. Tom would surely have done the same had he lived.





10

Stuart Lewis-Evans

VANWALL FLIER

VANWALL'S LOCKOUT OF the (original 3-2-3) front row at Monza in 1957 is the most potent symbol of Britain's F1 succession: Tony Brooks and Stirling Moss – both unquestioned greats – and, on pole, Stuart Lewis-Evans. Relegated to the spare, the latter had, at the last minute yet with minimum fuss, recorded consecutive times good enough for top spot.


Vanwall dominated practice at the 1958 Dutch Grand Prix, too: Brooks, Moss and, on pole, Lewis-Evans. Still third

in the pecking order, the Kent-based bantamweight had loaned his car to Moss; Stirling promptly found eight-tenths – but Stuart went a fraction quicker still.

A product of bike-engined Formula 3, Lewis-Evans started from pole and finished second in his first F1 race. That 1956 Brands clubbie showed his fluidity at the wheel; his victory in 1957's attritional Goodwood Glover Trophy was a testament to a measured approach; and fourth in his world championship debut in Monaco should have quashed questions over his stamina. Having endured painful joint inflammation in childhood, he suffered duodenal ulcers as an adult.

Vanwall employed him on a temporary basis in summer 1957 – Moss and Brooks were indisposed – and he came within an oil leak of winning the Reims GP, a world championship race in all but name. Rewarded with a full contract, reliability was rarely a friend and his best result that season was a second place at the Morocco GP, another world championship race in all but name.

A year later, brave and optimistic to the end, he succumbed to burns sustained in a crash in Morocco. Team boss Tony Vandervell blamed himself – Lewis-Evans's engine had seized – and subsequently greatly scaled down his racing effort as a result.



9

Tony Brise

THE STAR WHO NEVER ROSE

TONY BRISE HAD A TRAGICALLY short F1 career – it added up to just the 10 GP starts established as the minimum qualification for this list. Yet before his death in the Hill team plane crash, he had already demonstrated that he was a special talent, even if the record books show just a humble sixth place.

The Hill GH1 was not a truly competitive car in 1975, but Brise formed a close bond with team boss Graham Hill, and we'll never know what they could have achieved together. He might have had to move on to find the true success that would surely have come his way.



8

Andrea de Cesaris

DON'T CALL HIM DE CRASHERIS

NOBODY HAS STARTED MORE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP grands prix without winning one than Andrea de Cesaris, who earned a reputation more for his ability to crash than for getting results. But, in many ways, this was unfair to the Italian, who was pitched into the high-expectation environs of McLaren early in his career and never really recovered. So difficult was that 1981 campaign that one very successful driver from Italy believes Ron Dennis has been unwilling to sign an Italian driver since because of the troubles with de Cesaris!

But when he wasn't crashing, or losing the lead of the 1982 Long Beach Grand Prix to Niki Lauda because he wasn't able to change gear at the right time – the consequence of his right arm being otherwise engaged with waving a fist at a backmarker – de Cesaris was an accomplished driver with five podium finishes to his name.

"When Eddie told me he was signing Andrea, I thought he was mad, says Gary Anderson, technical director at Jordan in 1991. "I was completely wrong. He was a professional driver who was a big part of our success."

So strong was de Cesaris that he came close to winning the 1991 Belgian GP before retiring late on when potentially on the brink of passing gearbox-troubled Ayrton Senna.

7

Derek Warwick

BRITISH BULLDOG

ON HIS 27TH START, DEREK WARWICK should have won an F1 race for the first time.

Smart strategy, searing pace and problems for the McLarens of Niki Lauda and Alain Prost put Warwick in the perfect position in the 1984 Brazilian Grand Prix. But a knock from Lauda earlier in the race would prove fatal to his chances.

Still, his performance in the season opener, on his Renault debut, was so impressive that the idea of him ending his career without a win seemed highly unlikely.

But that's what happened. Despite more than 100 other attempts, the Briton — a four-time podium finisher — never quite had the same opportunity to win again.

As he reflected in his post-race *Autosport* column: "The thing about Rio was — well, it was all going so nicely..."

"We were in good shape. I was right on the mark as to the fuel schedule, the car felt fine, the tyres were just perfect, the engine was running as clean as a whistle, and the radio link was working well and proving to be really useful. I had already shut off the boost by about 4psi and I was still going away from Prost at a second a lap.

"I was about 35 seconds ahead of him and feeling very comfortable, and it suddenly came to me — 'Hey! I'm going to win my first grand prix!' I began thinking about breaking my duck, and being a Formula 1 race winner, and starting the season with nine points in the bag, and the bonus I was going to get — oh, a million things went through my mind. I was really excited.

"Lap 48, and the left front suspension started to move backwards and forwards under acceleration and braking..."

"All the complacency evaporated and instead I felt some panic. Obviously, there was no point in making a pitstop at this stage, so all I could do was to carry on and hope it would last out until the finish — and pray that it wouldn't break in a fast corner.

"Fortunately for me, when it did break, two laps later, I was going into the second-gear hairpin. I did a complete 360, kept the engine running, got on the radio to the pits and just poodled in.

"I pointed out the busted wishbone to [engineer] Michel Tetu and he just said, 'Mmm — nasty problem.' That was that."



2001 Brazil — 3rd



2005 Malaysia — 3rd



2005 Monaco — 2nd



2005 Europe — 2nd



2006 Hungary — 3rd



2007 Canada — 2nd



2007 Hungary — 3rd



2008 Australia — 2nd



2008 Canada — 2nd



2008 Britain — 2nd



2008 Belgium — 2nd



2009 Malaysia — 2nd

6

Nick Heidfeld

F1'S ETERNAL SECOND

BY DINT OF HOLDING the record for number of podiums — 13 — without a win, the German is a shoo-in for this list. But even without that record, he would merit his place. A formidable racer, he had an excellent record against some illustrious team-mates during his time with Prost, Sauber, Williams, BMW Sauber and Renault teams.



2011 Malaysia — 3rd



5

Martin Brundle

HANDY WITH A WHEEL, TOO

MARTIN BRUNDLE IS BEST KNOWN AS the closest thing to the voice of Formula 1 in this country in the 21st century thanks to his work with ITV, BBC and Sky Sports over the years. But his 158-start, 12-year grand prix career included nine podiums and some fine performances.

It wasn't until late in his career that he found his way into genuine top teams, and it was with Benetton in 1992 alongside a certain Michael Schumacher that he had his best season. In fact, Schumacher's famous maiden win at Spa might have fallen to Brundle had things panned out a little differently.

"On lap 30, Schumacher turned into a corner a little too late, missed the apex and ran off the road," wrote Nigel Roebuck in *Autosport's* race report. "He was fortunate indeed to miss the barrier – and fortunate too that Brundle passed him at the same time. As he did so, Michael noticed that Martin's tyres were blistered and made an instant decision to come in for slicks. This boy doesn't miss a lot."

Had Brundle chosen to stop at that moment to do the same, there's every chance he would have won.

Two years later, in Monaco there was another glimpse of possible victory for Brundle, then driving for McLaren-Peugeot. He was running second behind Schumacher, when the Ferrari driver skated up an escape road at Ste Devote. Unfortunately for Brundle, Schumacher was able to manoeuvre back onto the circuit and go on to win.

The bottom line is that Brundle had everything he needed to win in F1. While not perhaps the strongest qualifier, he was an excellent racer and did a better job of troubling the legendary German than any other of Schumacher's 1990s team-mates.

A win or two was the least he deserved given his performances against the greats.

4

Stefan Bellof

GERMANY'S LOST CHAMP?

STEFAN BELLOF DESERVES A place on a list of drivers who could have been F1 world champions, never mind race winners. Indeed, he did earn just such an honour in sportscar racing in 1984, sharing his works Porsche with Derek Bell.

His F1 potential was hinted at that same year. With its Cosworth V8 'atmo' engine, the Tyrrell 012 was left far behind by the turbos, especially in qualifying, but there were circumstances – bad weather, or on tight circuits – where Bellof

and his equally inexperienced team-mate Martin Brundle could wring the car's neck.

The German's chance came in the rain in Monaco. On a day when Ayrton Senna kick-started his legend by catching leader Alain Prost, Bellof was catching Senna. Then the race was stopped, and Stefan had to settle for third. Sadly, even that was later lost to disqualification, and thus the record books show little evidence as to what might have been.

3

Jean-Pierre Jarier

FRENCH FLAIR FRUSTRATED

THAT JARIER'S 134-START GRAND prix career yielded just 31.5 points is one of the most bizarre statistics in Formula 1. On paper, his stint seems that of a journeyman, and in some ways it was, but on his day he was inspired. Two weeks in January 1975, when Jarier was driving for Shadow, sum things up.

"Seldom in modern GP racing does one man with one car have a spectacular advantage in one race meeting and, even less likely, is he to enjoy it again at the following meeting," wrote *Autosport's* grand prix correspondent Pete Lyons.

"Thus when Jean-Pierre Jarier put his Shadow on pole in Argentina only to be let down by a mechanical fault [a new crownwheel failed on the warm-up lap] even before the start, it was a tremendous disappointment.

"Fortune seemed to be making up for it a fortnight later in Brazil, however, for he was again fast and took pole by a wide margin and, indeed, started the



race. Once he got around Carlos Reutemann, he simply vanished into the distance, building up a lead of more than 25s by three-quarters' distance.

"It was morally 'Jumper's' race, but fortune's smile was a false face. With but eight laps to go, a seizure of the shuttle in his metering unit stopped him on the circuit. Disconsolately, stunned in fact, he had to sit and watch his race being won by Carlos Pace."

Three years later, called up by Lotus to take the late Jochen Rindt's place in the team, the Frenchman dominated the first 49 laps of the 1978 Canadian Grand Prix from pole position. But he lost oil pressure and dropped out, handing a famous victory to Gilles Villeneuve.

Jarier was never in a winning position again and his F1 career fizzled out in 1983 after stints with Ligier and Osella, fighting only for the occasional minor points finish.



ALL PICS: LAT

2

Chris Amon

THE UNLUCKIEST OF ALL

WHENEVER SIR JACKIE STEWART speaks of racing drivers making their own luck or extols the virtues of compartmentalisation, one name must flash subconsciously red: Chris Amon. Hailing from opposite hemispheres, the canny Scot and scatty Kiwi were poles apart in terms of approach and results – and yet 1970 world champion Jochen Rindt reckoned them his only real rivals.

Country boy Amon was a teenage sensation when he arrived in the UK in 1963. His naivety, and the uncompetitive F1 cars and unexpected death of patron Reg Parnell, plus a penchant for partying with the other ‘Ditton Road Flyers’, resulted in few results of note. Rounded up and pointed in the right direction by fellow New Zealander Bruce McLaren, their 1966 Le Mans victory with Ford finally confirmed Amon’s promise and, more importantly, his maturation.

Ferrari was sufficiently convinced.



Indeed, its long-time designer/engineer/team manager Mauro Forghieri is adamant that not only was Amon his best test driver but also as good a racer as Jim Clark. Certainly, he was the Scuderia’s strongman of 1967, carrying it alone after a spate of dire accidents for his team-mates: he finished third in Monaco despite driving through the Faustian aftermath of Lorenzo Bandini’s fatal crash. Impressively consistent in difficult circumstances, Amon would have won that season’s American GP but for run engine bearings.

He peaked in 1968, setting three consecutive pole positions, four in total, but too often his Ferrari let him down.

Amon fled Ferrari to race for March, but without championship success

Maddeningly, on the occasions it ran without fault, he was denied by a rock through a radiator at Spa and by a badly worn rear tyre and inspired Jo Siffert in a privateer Lotus at Brands Hatch.

That frustration grew during 1969 – his engine blew while leading in Spain – and when Forghieri’s new flat-12 threatened to repeat that pattern during testing, Amon, with execrable timing, walked away in favour of fledgling March. Although he beat Stewart’s sister car (on aggregate) to win the 1970 International Trophy and was denied at Spa by another surprise GP winner – Pedro Rodríguez in a BRM – Amon was relieved to leave the team. (It still owes him money.)

A two-year relationship with the French government-backed Matra began with an aggregate victory at the non-championship 1971 Argentinian GP. Amon regularly excelled against Cosworth runners lugging less fuel and packing more mid-range punch than his V12. He would have won at Monza had he not accidentally torn off his visor – the ultimate ‘Amon fail’ – and at Clermont-Ferrand in 1972 but for a puncture.

It’s trite to suggest that Amon’s own F1 car of 1974 was doomed to failure, though fail it did, or that his 1973 championship point for a divided Tecno team and final flourish with Ensign in ’76 were apposite to an unfulfilled talent.

1

Jean Behra

1950S BATTLER

THIS MAN FROM NICE COULD ‘tiger’ and bore many scars to prove it. But even with his good ear – the other had been sliced off in a crash – he wouldn’t hear a word said against his profession. Racing was life. Everything else was just waiting. (Eat, sleep, repeat, Steve McQueen!)

Hardened by numerous motorbike knocks – he was a three-time national champion on two wheels – Behra had turned 30 by the time he switched to cars and drove like a man in a hurry. Caning fragile Gordinis, he won hearts but not many races – a rare defeat of Alberto Ascari’s Ferrari 500, at Reims in 1952, a very notable exception.

Maserati signed him for 1955 after he matched Ascari’s times in testing and non-championship victories at Pau and Bordeaux ensued. His method, however, too often proved too much for his machinery in longer

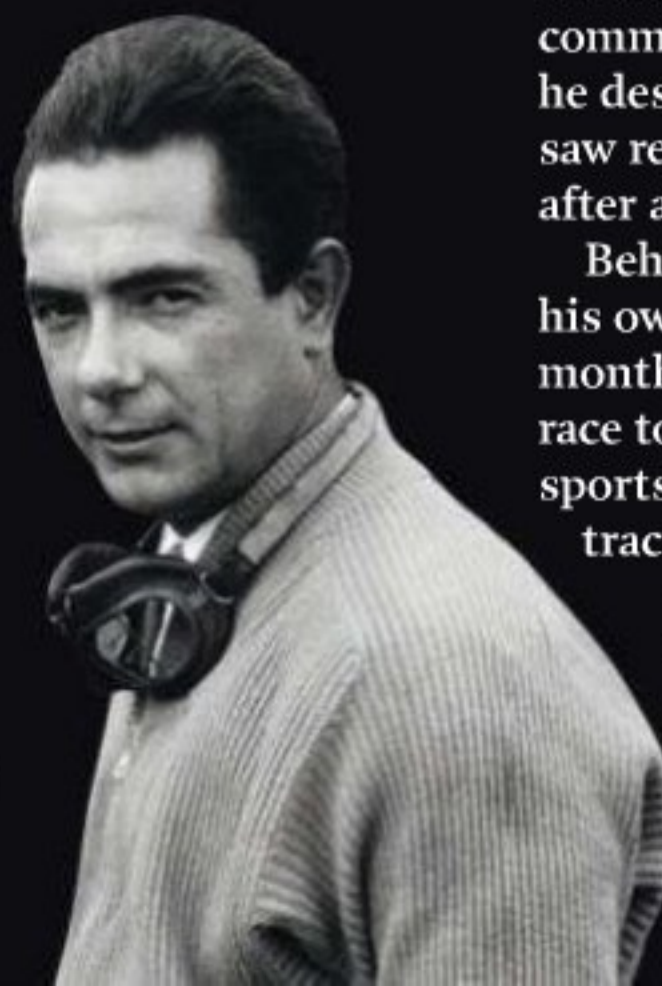
world championship races and left the team in need of a new number one.

Some expected the 1956 arrival of a young Stirling Moss to put Behra’s nose out of joint. Instead, he put it to the grindstone and became ‘Monsieur Fiable’ (reliable), a second place and four thirds placing him fourth in the final world championship standings.

Although Juan Fangio shaded ‘Jeannot’ at Maserati in 1957, it was the Frenchman’s most successful season, with non-championship wins at Pau (his third in four years), Modena and Morocco and second places at Buenos Aires and Reims. He looked set to win at British GP, too, until his 250F detonated with 20 laps to go.

He won, too, for BRM that year, at Caen and Silverstone’s International Trophy, and joined it full-time in 1958. This beleaguered team loved his unquenchable need for speed, but although he raised its spirits – between

Behra enjoyed most success driving for Maserati in 1957



his own short emotional slumps – he could not improve its reliability.

Joining Ferrari for 1959 smacked of a last chance. Behra grabbed it, defeated team-mate Tony Brooks while driving a smaller-capacity car to win the Aintree 200 and led the more nimble Coopers in Monaco until his engine went off song. But in France, while Brooks kept his cool in scorching July heat to win in commanding fashion, the man who felt he deserved to be Ferrari’s number one saw red and decked his team manager after a disagreement over rev limits.

Behra cut a lonely figure as he tended his own Porsches at Berlin’s Avus one month later. He was leading the support race to the German GP when his sportscar slithered over the lip of the track’s ridiculous brick banking.

Only Enzo Ferrari – and cold statistics – were unmoved by the death of the charismatic man in the chequered flag crash helmet.



THE SUNOCO RACE AT



'Go Jonny, go' in Rolex 24 Prototype Debut!

2016 Sunoco Whelen Challenge winner Jonny Adam proved that yet again the year long Sunoco challenge programme brings some amazing driving talent to the USA. Adam's well-earned prize drive in the Rolex 24 At Daytona was in the Action Express run No. 31 Whelen Engineering Corvette Daytona Prototype. During his two quadruple stints, during the twice around the clock endurance race, the speedy Scot kept the car on pace even managed to run as high as 2nd in his first stint in the car as the sun set over the track. In his second stint however smoke was seen coming from the No. 31 DP car, so he pulled into the garages and the team raced to replace the rear axle assembly. After this, they dropped down to 14th place, but they pulled through the remaining hours of the race and finished 6th overall. A great effort from the whole team!



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CHALLENGERS DAYTONA



McClughan impresses in Sunoco Mustang!

2016 Sunoco 200 Challenge winner Paddy McClughan won the opportunity to drive the Racers Edge Motorsports No. 16 Sunoco liveried Ford Mustang in the BMW Performance 200 on the Friday before the Rolex 24. His win was a result of multiple fastest laps and pole positions during his Radical Sprint Championship 2015 race season, and when he made his American driving debut, he certainly kept up this 'fast' pace! McClughan took the wheel from team-mate Chris Beaufait second in the race, and went on to achieve a top lap time of 1:59.192. Despite speed, the car unfortunately experienced bad luck during the race; a flat tyre, a drive-through penalty and brake issues all saw their dream of a podium fade. Despite this the young British racer brought the car home on pace, and safely, 8th in class/16th overall, and Paddy certainly proved his worth at Daytona!



551557 www.sunocochallenge.com

Reaching for the stars (and stripes)

Max Chilton is trading three years spent at the back of a Formula 1 grid or on the LMP1 sidelines for a shot at IndyCar glory. It's an ambitious path that has only rarely led to success for Britons

By Edd Straw, Editor

 @EddStrawF1

When Max Chilton's embryonic Formula 1 career came to what he calls an "abrupt and sad end" with the temporary demise of Marussia in late 2014, he had no IndyCar aspirations. Today, he already has an oval victory in American

open-wheel racing to his name and has landed a plum seat with the crack Chip Ganassi Racing IndyCar squad for 2016.

The sudden change was a consequence of happenstance. Remaining at a revived Marussia squad in 2015 was the objective, it was just that this aspiration wasn't compatible with the form of the team that eventually rose from the ashes. It seemed that his career was heading towards sportscars with a full-time drive for the ill-starred Nissan World Endurance Championship squad, but it was a different side project that sent him on his path to linking up with Ganassi. Initially he agreed to help out the Chilton-family-owned Carlin team with pre-season testing ahead of its first foray into Indy Lights. At first, it was nothing more than a chance for a little seat time to stay sharp, but it grew into something far more than that.

"I always said if I wasn't in F1, I would do LMP1," says Chilton. "I did it before F1 [briefly racing an Arena Motorsport-run Zytek in 2007], loved it and it suits my style of consistency. So I thought 'boom, get the Nissan deal done'. We got the contract signed very quickly, but then Trevor [Carlin] asked me if I wanted to do the first Indy Lights race in St Petersburg. We were quick but I had an accident in the first race that ruined the whole weekend."

That turned into an almost-full season, though he missed the Toronto double header (because of a timing clash with his Nissan commitments) and was thwarted at Indianapolis thanks to an oil leak that, despite even team boss Trevor Carlin getting his hands dirty with an attempted fix, prevented him taking the start. But the real turning point came once the Nissan project

was out of the way after Le Mans in mid-June. At that point, Chilton started to focus more on Lights. When he claimed an emotional pole position and victory at the Iowa oval on the mid-July weekend when his former team-mate Jules Bianchi died, he took a definitive step down the road to Ganassi.

"I loved Le Mans and it was a great experience, but I ruined my Indy Lights package because of testing, and the race clashed with Toronto," he explains. "If I had done that I maybe could have gone for the championship in the final round. It was a weird year; I didn't have anything I could sink my teeth into properly. But it really changed at Iowa when I won on my second oval start. I qualified on pole the day Jules passed, so the next day I was so driven to win. I couldn't have tried harder."

"The weirdest thing was two weeks after that, something you won't experience in Formula 1 happened. The American scene is very open and friendly and I had a phone call from most of the teams asking about my plans, just to get the ball rolling. That was helped by the timing with Jules because the press everywhere picked up on it."

"We got down to a choice of two teams pretty quickly but it took maybe three months to get the best contract sorted. And we went with Chip. There's no reason that I can't win races

next year, and if I can win races then I can win the championship."

Chilton's verdict when asked whether he would have pursued IndyCar without the serendipity of the Carlin campaign is "probably not". Graduating with Carlin, had the team made the planned step up to IndyCar, was something

that was considered, but while the team still has long-term aspirations to step up, the start-up costs are proving a barrier. Chilton stresses that he's not racing for another team as some kind of advance party ahead of Carlin eventually getting there, but that this is about his own career.

So what is behind the change of heart to go into a category he insists never seriously crossed his mind while he was working through karting and European single-seaters to F1? Granted, some of that is due to pragmatism and circumstances – after all, it's easy to rule something out sincerely when it is not on >>

"There's no reason I can't win races in 2016. And if I can win races, I can win the championship"



INDYCAR/MAX CHILTON

the cards — but Chilton talks intelligently about his reasons. He clearly respects the dangers posed by the ovals, and can only be going into it with his eyes open after those risks were made tragically clear by Justin Wilson's death last year, but he doesn't fear them. When offered the chance to shrug off the dangers, he's not afraid to admit to some concerns. Some might interpret that as a lack of confidence, but instead it reflects a mature attitude to a form of racing that is not for everyone. Just look at Mike Conway, who proved his ability as a race-winning driver in IndyCar but limited his horizons by deciding not to race on ovals any more as a delayed reaction to his leg-breaking Indianapolis 500 shunt in 2010.

"It's the complete opposite — I'm a worrier," says Chilton. "I worry about things and I am always cautious, that's why I got the record I did in F1 [25 consecutive finishes from his debut]. Consistency is important. But there have been six months of asking myself if I really want to do this."

"Ovals have been the concern because I never worry about a road course. At the same time as I was making my decision, Justin had his accident. But the way I have to look at this is that Jules and Justin's accidents were so freak they could have happened in anything; it nearly happened to me in F1 at Silverstone in 2014 with Kimi Raikkonen's tyre. You just don't know when your time is up."

"Yes, ovals are higher speed and there is more risk. But realistically, you can be racing a Mini around Brands Hatch Indy and have a severe shunt. I do think about safety when I'm driving on ovals, of course you would when you're doing 235mph with cars all around you and a concrete wall next to you. I'm still coming round to the idea, but you have to put the helmet on and commit. Hopefully I will stay safe."

One of the reasons Chilton opted for Ganassi, aside from the obvious one that it's a US powerhouse team and that he'll be able to learn from champion team-mates Scott Dixon and Tony Kanaan, is the presence of Dario Franchitti. Since the Scot's enforced retirement in late 2013, another reminder of the dangers involved, he has remained on Ganassi's books in an advisory capacity and has already given Chilton some guidance in adapting to the ovals.

"Dario is there for a lot of the races and that was one of the main things with choosing Ganassi," says Chilton. "He helped me out last year with a bit of oval advice. I remember him saying he didn't 'get' ovals for three years, so that gave me confidence that it does take a while to get used to it. So I'm in the best place to learn."

"I wasn't a massive fan of IndyCar and only ever watched the odd race; usually the Indy 500 and not the whole lot. It looked boring. But the reality is the complete opposite. You've never focused so much in your life as when you are on an oval. You are absolutely glued to it. In F1, you have time to look at the



Joining powerhouse Ganassi team means success is expected

ABBOTT/LAT



Chilton will be Indy's first British F1 refugee since Justin Wilson

STALEVLAT

big screens and see where you are. Not on ovals.

"You have to make split-second decisions as to how you go through the turn, so it's a lot more exciting. You're shitting yourself the whole time! But it gives me the adrenalin buzz and I want to give it a go. And if it's not for me at the end of the year, then it's not for me. But I've learned, especially with what happened to Jules, that life is too short not to try things I want to."

The question is how well Chilton does. In F1, he was never given a fair trial in the court of public opinion, which had long

decreed that his status as a well-backed driver meant he was to be dismissed. It's true his not-quite-two-year stint with Marussia was solid rather than spectacular and he usually failed to match team-mate Bianchi, but there's no disgrace in that. He was certainly consistent in F1, and proved himself to

be a savvy racer who made relatively few significant mistakes.

Chilton himself believes he benefited from being pitted against the best as he climbed the ladder and doesn't agree with this interpretation of his progression, but after starting very early in Formula 3 at the age of 16 and then moving to GP2 at 19, you can argue that he spent a lot of his time in Europe a little undercooked. He agrees that a fourth year either in F3 or GP2 could well have yielded a title, which might have ameliorated his reputation as someone who 'bought' success. But financial backing doesn't buy you GP2 victories, only the opportunity to potentially win if you have the ability to deliver. As a driver, Chilton has proved himself to be very capable.

Now, Chilton is revelling not only in being in a frontrunning team for the first time since his 2012 GP2 campaign, but also in being freed from the shackles of perception. As far as the IndyCar world is concerned, it's down to him to prove himself one way or the other. For Chilton, the American racing scene is a warmer and less judgemental environment, where people are more interested in helping someone gain an opportunity than constantly deriding them.

"It was frustrating," says Chilton when asked about the way he was perceived in F1. "But this feels different. In GP2, it wasn't easy to get pole positions and to win and I felt I'd proved myself then, but people didn't buy it. In America, they saw me win >>



British F3 debut in 2007 – aged 16

EBREY/LAT



KALISZ/LAT

Above: taking a well-judged GP2 victory at the Hungaroring in 2012 and celebrating (below)



Fighting with Marussia team-mate Bianchi

XPB IMAGES



STALEY/LAT



Left: Nissan LMP1 campaign was shortlived. Right: Chilton readies himself for a stint



Breakthrough oval win at Iowa in 2015

IMS



Maiden victory in US opened IndyCar door

IMS

on an oval and said 'right, he deserves his chance' so they called me and helped me out. It's exciting to be in that position.

"IndyCar is not in the rest of the world [in terms of international presence] like F1, but America is so big and they love sport so much that you can be just as successful there. It's like a fresh page for me. I'm the first British F1 driver to go across in the last 10 years, Justin Wilson was the last, and there have not been many. I don't know if I will start a new wave of people going across but people are starting to look at IndyCar in a new light. I'm not a betting man, but you wouldn't want to bet on who is going to win because you can't tell. IndyCar is a lot more unpredictable, so that's more fun for the driver.

"I'm fully aware of the expectation and I'm looking forward to it, because I've had several years of not having a car I could

"My career in IndyCar will probably be short-term. But I might be 14 years down the line and still there!"



Chilton's pre-season will be limited but he is excited nonetheless

win in. The last time was 2012 and I did get wins, so I have no problem believing I can do it. There's a bit more added pressure, but I want that. There are certain tracks that are going to be really hard, especially the ovals I haven't driven on, but the tracks I do know give me a few races and I'm confident I can go for podiums and victories."

Preparation time is limited. Chilton has yet to test an IndyCar and will have just five days in the car prior to the season-opener on the streets of St Pete on the second weekend of March. With the short, sharp season (15 race weekends spread over six months), he doesn't plan to relocate to the United States permanently but will use a New York hotel as his temporary base for the one week a month he's not on the road or back in the UK.

So according to the script, Chilton should now be hoping to look at the kind of lengthy American career enjoyed by drivers like Franchitti and Wilson. Well, not necessarily.

"I want to see how I take to it," says Chilton. "My career in IndyCar will probably be more short-term as I have other things I want to do. I'd like to do really well for four or five years and build up enough profile to do what I want. But you have to take it as it goes. I might be 14 years down the line and still there!"

So now Chilton has the means, motive and opportunity to prove himself in IndyCar. It won't be easy, as there are many established drivers in top cars with a wealth of experience to fall back on. But as far as opportunities go, it's far more important than the ones he had in F1. ✎

"It was the hardest thing I've ever driven. You can't call it a racing car"

FOR A FORMULA 1 refugee, a works drive with a major manufacturer in the World Endurance Championship should be the perfect move. But not for Chilton, whose stint as a driver for the works Nissan LMP1 project was far from the stuff of dreams. When he arrived for his first test in the car at Sebring last year, a gearbox failure meant the team was already packing up.

It didn't get much better. Since the car's

competitive debut was postponed until it was ready to make its first – and last – racing appearance in the Le Mans 24 Hours, Chilton had relatively little chance even to drive it. But when he did, it was a unique experience.

"It was scary," he says. "We were doing 230mph at the end of the straights and were quicker than the Porsches and Audis. But it took us a minute to get there while they were getting there within four seconds!

I was moaning about the steering from the first time I drove it because there was so much play, and then there was torque steer. You have Porsches and Audis flying past you on acceleration – massively faster, like a shot from a gun, they were just gone. You tried to keep to one side of the track but the road is crowned so you would pull it right to stop it going onto the grass and it would pull the car in right across the road into the other cars!





“There was problem after problem with the car. Even with a full testing programme now, it would still be two years away from being ready to race. It was so frustrating because there were some great people in that team. They could

not have put any more effort in – literally 24-hour shifts – but there was nothing they could do to make the car good.”

Chilton does take positives from the experience. He’s been a works driver at Le Mans, and describes Le Mans

Above: Chilton enjoyed his time at Le Mans, though mainly for off-track reasons

Below: his memories of driving the Nissan GT-R LM NISMO are, thankfully, few and far between

as one of the best weeks of racing of his life thanks to the camaraderie between a diverse group of drivers. But less so the actual driving.

“It was the hardest thing I’ve ever driven,” he says. “You can’t call it a racing car.”

50 YEARS OF BRITS ABROAD

In the last half century, a British driver racing American single-seaters has been somewhat rare. Max Chilton will become the 31st person from UK shores to start a top-tier race in that time when he lines up for Ganassi this season. Drivers heading Stateside have become much more common in recent years – but success remains largely elusive.

9

British winners at top level, including Indy 500s, over the past 50 years



1

New British winner in the past 10 years (Mike Conway)

11

British debutants in last 10 years, 20 over previous 40



2002

The last time a future champion made his US debut (Dan Wheldon)





Senna vs Prost... 2.0

Formula E likes breaking new ground in motorsport, and its inaugural fan-friendly eSports event in London was its latest effort

By Scott Mitchell, Formula E Correspondent

[@ScottAutosport](#)

The image seems as old as Formula 1 itself. Senna has track position, but Prost's feeling racey as soon as the lights go out. They go wheel-to-wheel into

Turn 1 as the Frenchman looks to wrest the lead and... contact!

Prost spins, Senna leads. Commentator Karun Chandhok cries: "This is Suzuka 1990 all over again!"

What's going on? An old rivalry's been

given a modern twist. Welcome to the first ever Formula E 'Race Off'. We're at the Gfinity arena in London, the UK's first dedicated e-sports venue. It's an impressive facility, a fitting arena for the two gladiators to do battle using high-tech gaming equipment on Xbox One racing game Forza 6.

The inaugural event was one of four scheduled for 2016 designed to offer something different for existing fans, and attract new ones as well. What better way to drum up interest than two of motorsport's most famous names?

"We're used to it," says Bruno Senna

after defeating Nico Prost in two head-to-head races, in Formula E machinery of course. "Both of us are successful in our own careers and we're comfortable with the link. It's natural – even though we're not the greatest game players in the world..."

Quite. The format allowed members of the public to register to attend the event, and engage in a series of practice runs to try and qualify for the semi-finals. Five laps around Long Beach, with the 16 fastest drivers divided into two eight-person races. The top three from each semi-final went through to the final,

Above: the Gfinity arena in London was a spectacular venue for the first-ever Formula E gaming event



WARNER/LAT



Senna was bested by fan and gamer Zak Scholes

WARNER/LAT

more tangible. And the result was a unique and slightly odd but overall successful blend of PR and fan interaction.

Not only did it manage to attract a good audience — most of the seats were filled, with series CEO Alejandro Agag among the ‘fans’ in attendance — but it had a decent strike-rate in terms of converting registrants to actual attendees on the competitor side. Those that did take part had plenty of positive things to say as well. Even Senna, who (along with Prost) was trounced by his gaming opposition in the final, won by Zak Scholes.

“It was a bit of a disaster, but really cool,” said the Brazilian. “The racing was pretty good and the format followed a really good pattern. I’ve got a few messages already with people asking if I play online, so there’s people getting involved already. For sure, I’d do this again — if time allows, next time I’ll be a little more prepared...”

The attendance of Nissan driver Jann Mardenborough raised a few eyebrows (and stopped Autosport from progressing to the main event) but he was a valuable addition. The Welshman bridges the gap between virtual and real racer, because he owes his career as a NISMO driver to winning the marque’s PlayStation-backed GT Academy.

“I’ve never been to an eSports event before. I’ve seen it online and it’s massive with so much support across a lot of different platforms,” he said. “It’s strange when you’re competing at home with no pressure but an event like this is completely different. It’s certainly the route to go down to engage with a younger audience and look to the future.”

Mardenborough wasn’t this writer’s favourite person at the end of the day. The ringer denied me a part in the Senna/Prost face-off. Although I really shouldn’t have been there in any capacity, to be honest.

In my limited experience, dealing with pressure in a racing environment has never been my greatest forte. But texting “Help. I’m in the race. This wasn’t supposed to happen” probably goes down as the least cool I’ve ever been.

The few laps I did in one of the hotseats, mid-qualifying window, were with two reasons: I like racing games and haven’t played Forza 6 very much, and I wanted to get a better insight into the experience of those participating.

I didn’t realise those laps would make the second much more achievable.

Wandering back into the main arena as the first semi-final was about to kick off, the big screen had the list of the eight racers about to do battle. ‘Scott Mitchell’ was the only one they were waiting for.

My bad. And it’s Mitchell. Two ‘l’s.

So, I was in. I wasn’t supposed to be, but I was in. And it didn’t go too badly. Although I did plough into the barriers at Turn 1 from second on the grid, but



“One highlight was a great last-lap dice, another was the fun”



Above: Mitchell (with two ‘l’s) was in the Forza hotseat, racing wheel-to-wheel with Nissan’s Mardenborough

I put that down to being told that the racing line indicator was allowed for this race, only to find a few yards before the corner that no braking markers appeared.

The racing was manic, but Formula E has a reputation for putting on a show. The driving standards were appalling — Senna joked afterwards that Formula 1 race director Charlie Whiting needed to be drafted in to dish out penalties.

One highlight was a great last-lap dice with Mardenborough, even though he robbed me of a place in the grand final with a delightful pass around the outside two corners from home. It breached what I considered to be a perfectly decent attempted defence. But no matter.

The other highlight was how fun it was. Not just racing, but in the audience when I watched the other semi and the grand final. If anything, the headline act (Senna vs Prost) was the most underwhelming part — although that was because, by their own admission, they were quite rubbish.

As a gaming fan, a racing fan and a wannabe driver, this is exactly the sort of event the 21st century is crying out for. Kudos to Formula E for giving it a go — I genuinely hope they put it on again. Only next time I’ll try to avoid the hotseat. 🍀

RACE

MRF CHALLENGE • TOYOTA RACING SERIES • ANDROS TROPHY



Fittipaldi crowned after

MRF CHALLENGE
IRUNGATTUKOTTAI (IND)
JANUARY 30-31
ROUND 4/4

PIETRO FITTIPALDI ALWAYS LOOKED favourite to win the MRF Challenge title, but, entering the final weekend at the Irungattukottai circuit near Chennai, it would have been easy to falter under the strain. He didn't, and two flawless wins under pressure cemented him the crown with one race to spare.

Tatiana Calderon – like Fittipaldi, escaping from a dispiriting season in the Formula 3 European Championship – and SMP/French Formula 4 ace Nikita Troitskiy were within striking range of the Brazilian-American points leader as they arrived in India. Single-seater warhorse Alessio Picariello, after missing the opening round, had an outside shot.

The hopes of Calderon, Picariello and Troitskiy were hit badly in qualifying. Calderon was on a lap that would have given her pole by two tenths when she ran wide at the final corner, relegating her to seventh. Picariello found his set-up on new rubber was not to his liking, and languished down in fifth. Troitskiy set the fastest lap of the weekend in free practice, but the tyres he used in qualifying mysteriously caused lairy oversteer and the Russian ended up sixth.

Fittipaldi, who had built up gently through four periods of testing and free practice, pipped the fast-improving Harrison Newey by just

0.003 seconds to take pole for race one, and by 0.025s for race three. Fittipaldi then got a cracking start to race one, while Newey emerged second from a breathe-in-tight three-abreast moment, in which MRF debutant Mick Schumacher was forced onto the grass.

Newey, on new rubber in this race, overestimated the tyre degradation in the heat. Despite good pace at the end, he was unable to force an error from Fittipaldi, who explained that it was simply a case of "not making mistakes".

An intermittent misfire for Picariello allowed Schumacher up to third, both the German and Calderon benefiting from an early error that dropped local man Tarun Reddy to sixth.

That gave Reddy pole for what was a controversial reversed-grid race two. Picariello threw everything at him, but Reddy stayed firm, although he was given a grid penalty for edging his pursuer onto the grass. Finally, Picariello launched himself into a very slender gap with three laps remaining and vaulted over the cockpit of Reddy, who was millimetres from severe head or hand injuries and also had his car catch fire. With the tub wrecked, Reddy was forced into a spare car for Sunday's two races.

Troitskiy had been running sixth when Schumacher hurled his car into Calderon as they fought for third, and Newey took to the grass in avoidance. That put Troitskiy third, and he could hardly believe his luck when that became first. An error allowed Newey alongside with two laps to go, but he couldn't get through.



Fittipaldi flanked by Newey (left) and Schumacher (right)

spicy finale

Another spearing of Calderon by Schumacher allowed Nerses Isaakyan into third, while Calderon somehow beat Fittipaldi for fourth.

Fittipaldi wrapped up his title in race three by defeating Newey, who again kept within striking range for the entire race for his third second place of the weekend. "I was confident coming into the weekend but you can never be too confident," said the new champion, "you've got to finish all the races, but give 100 per cent."

Troitskiy won a battle with Calderon for third, as Picariello — given a grid penalty for his Reddy savaging — claimed sixth, and reversed-grid pole, tight behind Schumacher.

And with that, Picariello finally showed his good side with an utterly classy, dominant win from Schumacher and Calderon. Brummie karting graduate Max Fewtrell claimed sixth, his best result of a weekend in which he showed strong racecraft throughout.

MARCUS SIMMONS

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Pietro Fittipaldi, 15 laps in 32m18.347s; 2 Harrison Newey, +1.714s; 3 Mick Schumacher; 4 Alessio Picariello; 5 Tatiana Calderon; 6 Tarun Reddy. **Race 2** 1 Nikita Troitskiy, 20 laps in 32m18.347s; 2 Newey, +0.756s; 3 Nerses Isaakyan; 4 Calderon; 5 Fittipaldi; 6 Schumacher. **Race 3** 1 Fittipaldi, 15 laps in 25m30.069s; 2 Newey, +1.216s; 3 Troitskiy; 4 Calderon; 5 Schumacher; 6 Picariello. **Race 4** 1 Picariello, 20 laps in 31m53.856s; 2 Schumacher, +16.220s; 3 Calderon; 4 Fittipaldi; 5 Troitskiy; 6 Max Fewtrell. **Points** 1 Fittipaldi, 246; 2 Calderon, 199; 3 Troitskiy, 191; 4 Picariello, 181; 5 Newey, 107; 6 Nobuharu Matsushita, 80.



Piquet fires title bid to life

TOYOTA RACING SERIES
HAMPTON DOWNS (NZ)
JANUARY 30/31
ROUND 3/4

PEDRO PIQUET CATAPULTED INTO Toyota Racing Series title contention over the three Hampton Downs races, jumping from seventh to second in the points behind British teenager Lando Norris.

The 17-year-old Brazilian qualified on pole for the New Zealand Motor Cup feature race, the climax of the series' third round. He cleared away from the field, dealing with restarts after safety car periods, before a crash halted the race at two-thirds distance.

The victory put Piquet 52 points behind Norris and three ahead of Jehan Daruvala, who was third in the feature race behind Kiwi James Munro.

MSA Formula champion Norris kept total control of race one, ahead of Daruvala, starting from pole and recording his third victory in the series. In race two he had to

pit for suspension repairs after contact, and finished at the tail of the field.

Ferrari Driving Academy member Guan Yu Zhou from China won that race from pole on a marble-draw, partially reversed grid, leading all the way to finish ahead of Brendon Leitch. This race was twice red-flagged after incidents.

To add to Norris's frustration, officials blamed him for the contact and dropped him from second to eighth on the grid for the main race, where he finished sixth.

BERNARD CARPINTER

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Lando Norris, 15 laps in 15m22.954s; 2 Jehan Daruvala, +1.533s; 3 Pedro Piquet; 4 James Munro; 5 Brendon Leitch; 6 Ferdinand Habsburg. **Race 2** 1 Guan Yu Zhou, 15 laps in 17m26.210s; 2 Leitch, +0.797s; 3 Piquet; 4 Daruvala; 5 Antoni Ptak; 6 Kami Laliberte. **Race 3** 1 Piquet, 19 laps in 21m18.077s; 2 Munro, +1.711s; 3 Daruvala; 4 Zhou; 5 Artem Markelov; 6 Norris. **Points** 1 Norris, 518; 2 Piquet, 466; 3 Daruvala, 463; 4 Zhou, 460; 5 Leitch, 452; 6 Habsburg, 423.

Lagorce sets up decider

ANDROS TROPHY
SUPER BESSE (F)
JANUARY 30
ROUND 6/7

JEAN-PIERRE DUBOURG WAS CRUISING towards a maiden Andros Trophy title until the preceding round, when Franck Lagorce's double victory at Lans-en-Vercors closed the gap. And a spin on his qualifying run in the Super Besse single-header, which restricted him to sixth in the race, cost Dubourg further ground.

But it could have been worse. Former Ligier Formula 1 driver Lagorce could only manage fourth place in his Dacia Lodgy, which still puts him just 11 points behind Dubourg heading to the season finale.

Up front, Jean-Philippe Dayraut bagged his third win of the season in conditions best described as not especially icy, after shading qualifying just ahead of Audi driver Adrien Tambay. Olivier Panis took his best result of the year in second, ahead of Tambay.

The title will be decided at Saint Die Des Vosges on February 13, with Dubourg and Lagorce battling it out for what would be a first title for both.

RESULTS

Final 1 1 Jean-Philippe Dayraut (Mazda 3), 6 laps in 4m14.840s; 2 Olivier Panis (Audi A1 Quattro), +1.183s; 3 Adrien Tambay (Audi); 4 Franck Lagorce (Dacia Lodgy); 5 Benjamin Riviere (Citroen DS 3); 6 Jean-Baptiste Dubourg (Renault Clio 3). **Points** 1 Dubourg, 582; 2 Lagorce, 571; 3 Tambay, 547; 4 Riviere, 539; 5 Dubourg, 493; 6 Panis, 491.



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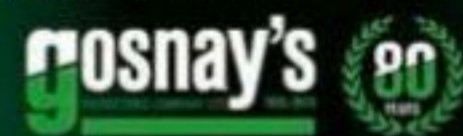
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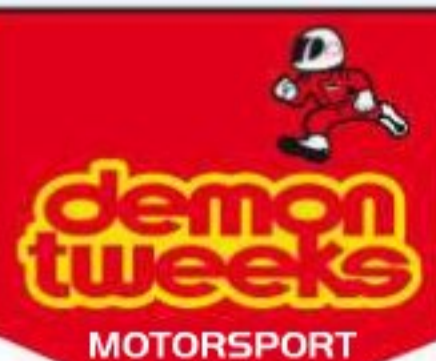


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AM 69.....£21,500	474 DGM.....£3,500	T30 DGB.....£500	HAM 3R.....£12,000	I LBO.....£13,000	P90 RNR.....£700	VJV 306.....£1,800	7 VJX.....£3,800
R800 AMY.....£1,500	A12 DGD.....£1,300	54 DM.....£12,800	I50 HB.....£8,000	S9 LCW.....£800	ROO2 ERT.....£2,400	T22 RPB.....£750	935 VPD.....£1,500
850 AT.....£6,500	2 DOG.....£30,000	I DOY.....£29,000	HEN 17.....£5,200	LEE 782.....£3,500	RUS 463.....£7,500	C7 RWG.....£1,800	VSNI.....£28,000
I68 ATP.....£1,500	98 DS.....£18,000	100 DVO.....£3,600	38 HGB.....£4,800	400 LH.....£9,500	16 OG.....£8,800	OKM I.....£10,500	
K99 ANA.....£1,000	A9 DSD.....£950	230 DXE.....£950	3959 HJ.....£1,300	8 LJS.....£8,800	6 OOO.....£30,000	6 OOO.....£30,000	
R20 AVA.....£600	I AXG.....£13,000		R9 HJH.....£1,200	CC02 LOT.....£500	OOO IX.....£8,800	OOO IX.....£8,800	
AXT 8N.....£4,995	AXT 8N.....£4,995		HJR IN.....£1,300	2000 LP.....£3,700	N5 OOO.....£5,000	N5 OOO.....£5,000	
II B.....£125,000			K12 HLE.....£450	222 LR.....£7,500	F2 OOO.....£5,500	F2 OOO.....£5,500	
700 BA.....£7,500			II HNS.....£5,000	L2 LTY.....£950	Y7 OSH.....£1,800	Y7 OSH.....£1,800	
38 BB.....£10,500			AD02 HOD.....£850	R11 LVE.....£950	I OTO.....£22,000	I OTO.....£22,000	
68 BB.....£10,500			R8 HRD.....£1,200	LXS 40.....£2,800	III OTX.....£1,500	III OTX.....£1,500	
Y662 BEC.....£1,000			HSK 288.....£1,200	LYN 554Y.....£4,500	50 OXH.....£1,500	50 OXH.....£1,500	
15 KF.....£14,300			HU5ICAN.....£4,500				
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CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS – FRIDAY 12TH FEBRUARY 2016

PLEASE NOTE: No Agencies please.



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Morris joins 2013
GT4 champion
Parfitt in Team
Parker Bentley



EBREY

Morris joins Bentley in sportscar switch

GP3 RACER SEB MORRIS WILL SWITCH to sportscar racing this season after signing to lead Team Parker Racing's new Bentley GT3 programme in British GT.

The 20-year-old will race the team's factory-supported Continental GT3 alongside 2013 GT4 division champion Rick Parfitt Jr.

Morris, a two-time McLaren Autosport BRDC Award finalist, finished 18th in GP3 last year as a rookie with Status Grand Prix. He previously finished third in the Formula Renault NEC standings and claimed titles in both Formula Renault BARC and Ginetta Juniors.

"This move has come about through budget and career prospects," he said. "We didn't have the best budget in GP3 and we could wind up spending millions in single-seaters to only move to GTs down the line anyway. I have time on my side, so switching now is better. I had the chance to go and do Blancpain, but a learning year in Britain seemed the better option."

"There are more chances to become a paid driver in GTs and with Team Parker I know I have a car capable of winning straight away. GTs take some adapting

to but my experience will serve me well. I know Rick very well too – since Ginetta Juniors – so we'll make a great pairing."

Team head Stuart Parker said: "I've known Seb since his Ginetta Junior days and watched him race on the TOCA package and he has all of the qualities to make it as a top GT driver. Rick, too, has come on so much in recent years and showed a lot of potential last season."

Foster to campaign Porsche

Formula Ford star Joey Foster will also race in British GT this year, sharing Lanan Racing's first Porsche Cayman Clubsport GT4 with Alex Reed.

Lanan has become the first team to register a fully crewed Cayman Clubsport GT4 for the championship, with triple Walter Hayes Trophy winner Foster, 33, and Lotus Cup UK racer Reed, 17, in the first of its two cars.

Foster has worked as a driver coach for Lanan's BRDC Formula 4 team in recent years, and drove for the team on its LMP3 debut in the European Le Mans Series last season.

"This chance has been a long time coming and I still can't quite believe



Foster and Reed will drive Lanan's new Porsche Cayman Clubsport GT4

it's actually here," said Foster. "I've wanted to do GTs for a while, and to get into British GT with Lanan is brilliant."

Reed will become one of British GT's youngest-ever drivers, having impressed by scoring two wins in his maiden season of sportscar racing with a Lotus Exige last year.

He said: "The Lotus last year was ideal preparation and showed I can be quick at each of the circuits on the calendar. I'm confident I can be fighting for wins with Lanan and Joey."

Another confirmed pairing is Ryan Ratcliffe and Will Moore, who will crew Optimum Motorsport's new Audi R8 LMS GT3 in the Silver Cup category.

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ADACTCR

Files' semi-works Opel deal

RENAULT CLIO CUP STAR JOSH FILES WILL graduate to German touring car racing this season after inking a deal with the Opel-supported Target Competition team.

Files, 25, has signed to race one of the team's new Opel Astras in the inaugural ADAC TCR German Series this year. The championship is an offshoot of the TCR International Series and takes place across seven rounds within and around Germany.

Target Competition took drivers' and teams' TCR International Series honours last year running Swiss racer Stefano Comini in a SEAT Leon.

Files won both the Renault UK Clio Cup and Clio Eurocup championships in 2013. He finished third in the Italian Clio Cup last season before making his TCR debut in the Macau finale last November with the Campos Racing team, in an Opel.

"My aim has been to break into touring cars in Europe for the last few years and my mentor [triple World

Touring Car champion] Andy Priaulx helped me get to Macau last year and that race got me noticed," said Files. "The chance with Target Competition has come about through that, and it's massively exciting because they are essentially a pseudo-factory team for Opel.

"The German racing scene is so strong at the moment, with a lot of manufacturer activity, so to be able to go into a new championship like ADAC TCR with the chance to do well gives you a great chance to carve out a career with a brand."

The new ADAC Germany series is expected to boast a 25-car grid this year. Files has yet to test the new Astra, but said it was a step forward from the older car he endured a frustrating Macau bow with, getting minimal running in practice and retiring from race two.

"The new Astra is a great piece of kit," he added. "It's got much more sophisticated aero and Opel has done a lot of parts-testing to ensure durability. It should be an exciting season."

CLIO CUP UK

CHAMPION BUSHELL BACK TO CLIO CUP

FORMER RENAULT UK Clio Cup champion Mike Bushell will return to the series this year after being unable to secure a British Touring Car Championship drive.

The 26-year-old won the Clio title in 2014 and graduated to the BTCC last year driving an AMD Ford Focus, but endured a tough campaign.

A hefty shunt at Thruxton dented his budget and so Bushell will now be reunited with the Clio squad he won the title with.

"Last year didn't go as well as I would've hoped," he said. "The BTCC is very easy to get drawn in to and it's like an addictive drug, it's very easy to make decisions that don't work out in the long run, so I've decided to go back to Clios."

Pyro boss Mark Hunt said: "The transition to touring cars is very difficult. Mike was driving quite an old car and that makes it tough – it's like playing tennis with a smaller racket. Some people go in and you never see them again, so it's great to have Mike back."

Irishman David Dickenson will also rejoin the team, having previously raced in the UK Clio Cup and Clio Eurocup with Pyro.

Mark Howard stays for another season, with Hunt eyeing two more possible signings.

CARRERA CUP GB

Jelley sticks with Team Parker in Carrera Cup

FORMER BRITISH TOURING Car racer Stephen Jelley will remain in the Porsche Carrera Cup GB this year with Team Parker Racing.

Jelley, 33, was a winner in his first stint in the championship between 2010

and 2011, but failed to add to his tally of victories on his return to the series last year, finishing the season fifth in the standings.

"I found there was a bit of expectation on me from outside sources that

I should have been a championship contender last year," said Jelley.

"I just concentrated on each weekend at a time. Each time I got in the car I was a bit faster, or a bit more savvy with the set-up.

"It sounds clichéd, but I learned a lot and I'm in a stronger position to go better this year. I've always had a great relationship with Team Parker and they are more than capable of winning the championship."



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Future of FR NEC not in jeopardy

THE FUTURE OF THE FORMULA RENAULT Northern European Cup is not in jeopardy, despite a conflict over the ownership of the championship.

Mick de Haas has been a key player in the series since it was formed in 2005 by a merger of the German and Dutch Formula Renault championships.

It is understood that Renault Sport Germany wants a controlling role in the running of the series, with a meeting to sort an ownership agreement scheduled this week.

"The timing of these talks is totally wrong, as our initial entry deadline was the end of

January, and we now find ourselves in this situation," said de Haas. "But regardless of the outcome, the championship will happen this year and beyond – I am 85 per cent certain of that."

Filippo Zanier, international sporting co-ordinator at Renault Sport said: "We share Mick de Haas's view the championship will go ahead. Everything is in place, there is no doubt about that. We wanted to act quickly, to take responsibility. We spoke to the parties. There will be a solution. We consulted the teams very early to reassure them it was just a communication problem."



GINETTA JUNIORS

Fittipaldi set for Ginetta Juniors debut

THE GRANDSON OF DOUBLE Formula 1 world champion Emerson Fittipaldi will race in Ginetta Juniors this year.

Enzo Fittipaldi was a finalist in the Ginetta Junior Scholarship last year and will now make the step up from karting into cars.

The 14-year-old has won numerous karting races in the USA and was second

in the Rotax Grand National Championship in 2013.

Fittipaldi will partner Ginetta Junior Winter Series champion Stuart Middleton at Douglas Motorsport.

"Switching from karts into sports cars will be a challenge, but I'm a fast and aggressive driver and I'll be going for the win in every race," said Fittipaldi. "The Ginetta Junior

Championship allows young drivers like myself to familiarise with all of the UK's big race tracks, whilst also being a highly competitive and well televised series."

Fittipaldi's brother Pietro has also raced in the UK. He won the Formula Renault BARC title in 2014, and secured the MRF Challenge last weekend.

B-TEC DEVELOPMENT

Gallagher first to join B-TEC series

KIERAN GALLAGHER HAS BECOME the first driver to sign up for the B-TEC Development Series, joining Team BKR.

Gallagher, who raced in the British Touring Car Championship last season with Team Hard in a Toyota Avensis, will drive one of the outfit's Volkswagen CCs.

Gallagher said: "I am keen to progress in NGTC machinery and what better way to do it than to move forward with Team BKR."

The series, which will operate for NGTC BTCC machines fitted with the original GPRM-derived parts, kicks off at Brands Hatch on March 27.



IN BRIEF

STYLES



MINI MIGLIA PRIZE DRAW SET UP

One driver will win a fully funded race weekend in the Mini Miglia Championship this year as part of a new competition run by series regular Rob Howard and category legend Endaf Owens. The competition will allow one driver to take part in the double-header Miglia championship round during the Brands Hatch Mini Festival on July 16-17 in a car prepared and run by the Owens Motorsport team. The prize, which will be drawn from a raffle, is worth in excess of £3,500.

BTCC RACER TAKES ON MINI CHALLENGE

Jeff Smith will contest the Mini Challenge this year alongside his British Touring Car Championship commitments. He scored a podium in the final round of last year's Challenge, scoring a podium finish. Smith has now purchased two cars and will field them under his Eurotech Racing banner.

AL ZUBAIR GETS FORTEC F4 DRIVE

Omani racer Al Faisal Al Zubair will return to the BRDC Formula 4 Championship in 2016, racing for Fortec Motorsports. Al Zubair was a regular top-10 finisher in his rookie season, securing a maiden podium finish at Snetterton en route to 16th in the drivers' standings.

QUAIFE CONFIRMS FIESTA TIE-UP

Transmission manufacturer Quaife Engineering will provide every driver committed to the Ford Fiesta and Fiesta Junior championships with a free differential as part of a new sponsorship agreement. The firm has agreed to become title sponsor of both Ford Racing UK's Fiesta championship and the BRSCC Fiesta Junior Championship for this year.

DONINGTON PUSHING FOR EXPANSION

Donington Park has undertaken more work in an effort to open up additional spectator viewing areas later this season. Demolition of the old hospitality suite block that was located on the inside of the Craner Curves has been completed, with that section of land expected to be turned into a new viewing area. Track operators are also working to install a new, banked area on the inside of Roberts Chicane.



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Inspiring racing cars and Czech composers

By Marcus Pye, the voice of club racing

SUCH IS THE PACE OF RACE MEETINGS NOWADAYS, with typically 12 events per day on the programme – as opposed to six to eight on those of my teenage marshalling days in the mid-1970s – that it's rare to be able to sit down with successful competitors to find out what makes them tick. Thus I seized the opportunity last week to spend an afternoon with multiple 750 Motor Club champion Tim Gray, whose craft behind the wheel has wowed me consistently over 100 plus wins since he won the Locost title in 2003.

The fruits of my interview with this disarmingly (and refreshingly) modest ace can be read on [page 66](#), but here is a multi-tasking driver/engineer who clearly adores life and could go far in the sport on many levels. Having learned to build and get the best from kit cars with Stuart Taylor Motorsport and AB Performance, plus others fielded for his own customers since 2007, Tim has been given the freedom to express himself and thrive by Spire Sports Cars boss Paul Nightingale.

The vision of this former racer, who bought the original GTR project from designer Martin Keenan (of MK fame) to provide a focus in his retirement, was accelerated dramatically when he effectively headhunted Gray. Their tireless work over the past four seasons, improving the GT3 model, netted successive Road-Going Bike-engined (RGB) titles with Tim and Matt Higginson from 2012-'14 and evolving the stunning Bikesports version in which Tim has proved nigh on unbeatable, notching outright circuit records.

It never ceases to amaze me how people toiling in freezing cold workshops over long winter months can turn out cars which stretch the envelope of club racing performance without costing a king's ransom. The numerically-dominant Spire RGB contingent lost out last year to another ex-Locost king, Scott Mittell in the MC-52B built by his dad Ian in a garage at home.

Two new Spires – for John Cutmore and a class newcomer of championship-winning pedigree – three Mittell MC-53s and a concerted AB Sabre title attack promise greater needle in 2016.

But what of Gray? Having demonstrated his speed and versatility in sprint events and set fastest lap on Silverstone's Grand Prix circuit in the past three 750MC Birkett Six Hour Relays (which the Inspire team finally nailed on scratch last October), Tim deserves a serious endurance racing break. Running a hire car, with full tuition, in this season's inaugural M3 Cup may open its availability for Britcar Endurance or VLN events, and his all-conquering Spire is raring to win again. On the evidence to date, however, a shrewd GT or Sports Prototype operator would give him some testing mileage. Then the world would know how good he is.

Nineteenth-century Czech composer Bedrich Smetana's ethereal Vltava, from Ma Vlast, soothed my mood on Classic FM as I headed further north and homed in on the funeral service of fabled self-taught race engineer John Leek in Yorkshire last week. Yet I couldn't get the equally distinctive voice of legendary rugby league commentator Eddie Waring out of my head as I passed signs to Castleford, Featherstone (Rovers) and Wakefield (Trinity), all great bastions of the oval-balled game.

Wakefield, Britain's rhubarb-growing capital, was also home to 1970s' Ford engineer/racing car manufacturer Brian Martin and long-time Chevron racer Pete Smith. The latter shared a B23 with Dorset's John Turner, the Skoda Super Saloon originator whose Chevrolet-powered F5000 Leda-based Skoda coupe of '74 predated those of northerners Jim Evans, Tony Sugden and Bob Claxton, all built around chassis designed by Leek, an alternative 'Czech composer.' Funny how things go round in circles, even away from race circuits... ❄



BRITCAR ENDURANCE PROTOS

Britcar Endurance has confirmed that twin one-hour races supporting the 24 Hours at Silverstone on April 1-3 will kick-start its new CN Prototype initiative. One-hour events at Donington (July 16) and Snetterton (September 3-4) plus a two-hour finale at Spa (October 7-9) complete the series.



KEEN TO RACE 1974 F1 SHADOW

British GT and Historic ace Phil Keen is to step up to three-litre Formula 1 at the wheel of an ex-Tom Pryce 1974 Shadow DN3/5A. Having impressed in a Lotus-BRM 24, Keen should fly in the Cosworth DFV-powered car, which is eligible for both the FIA Masters championship and the ACM's 10th Monaco GP Historique in May.




ALBONE'S SPIRE RGB ATTACK

Billy Albone will join John Cutmore in the factory Spire Sports Cars RGB team as the triple championship-winning marque regroups in its bid to regain the 750MC title. Albone – '14's 750 Formula champion with 10 wins – and Cutmore will pilot new GT3s nearing completion, with Honda and Suzuki power respectively.

The best club racer in Britain

Tim Gray topped *Autosport's* club-driver rankings last season. But 2015 was just the continuation of a long-running streak of success for the 750 Motor Club talisman

By Marcus Pye, Special Contributor

 @Autosport



More than 110 race wins – almost a quarter in 2015 driving the Spire GT3 built and developed with marque owner Paul Nightingale – plus seven 750 Motor Club championship titles in 12 seasons make Tim Gray Britain's top club racer of his era and Autosport's number 1 of 2015. This stunning record reflects driving ability, engineering prowess and an extraordinary work ethic, yet the personable Nottingham man remains largely unknown in the sport's higher echelons.

Like BRDC president Derek Warwick and Le Mans 24 Hours winner Nick Tandy, Gray debuted on short ovals (in MiniStox) from the age of 11. "My father [Roger] raced a Morgan three-wheeler and mum [Nett] passengered in sidecar racing while pregnant with me, so I'd always been around the tracks," he says. "When I was old enough we dismissed karting as too expensive – and a bit too dangerous at the time – but a family friend who raced stock cars took us to Long Eaton. Mum saw a huge shunt, from which the driver walked away, and said OK!"

"We bought a car and trailer for £600 and reached red-top grade, but I'd never make a stock-car driver because I was more interested in keeping mine straight and looking nice. Dad insisted that I prepared the Mini myself. He taught me to weld – badly – and bought me a Haynes manual from which I learned how to put engines together, but rivals were revving pro-built 850s to 12,000rpm before the class went to standard 1000s. You stopped being a Junior on your 16th birthday; that was time to move on."

Still grafting at 31, Gray has missed the single-seater boat – "I've never driven one, although I'd like to," he says – yet he could still be a huge asset to a prototype or GT team. "My love is sportscars, and I've enjoyed graduating to higher-downforce chassis. I seem to gel with them and love the feeling of physical effort required to make them work. If somebody offered me an LMP3 test I'd be there in a heartbeat."

To understand why, take a YouTube white-knuckle ride with Gray as he hurtles his spectacular Suzuki Hayabusa-engined Spire GT3 round Cadwell Park, laps Castle Combe in 1m01.518s (averaging 108.26mph, the quickest in five years) or wins a Bikesports race from the back on Silverstone's International Circuit. You'll also appreciate the precision, confidence and commitment that lie behind his gifts.

Don't dismiss Gray's titles as 'just' 750MC stuff. While it

exemplifies motorsport's cheaper seats, winning consistently and imperiously – particularly on a level playing field – is no coincidence. The club has promulgated driving talent and design ingenuity from its first races in 1950, and has propelled standout alumni from both sides of the pitwall to Formula 1.

Tim doesn't take soft options. Locost, Road-Going Bike-engined (RGB) and Bikesports are fiercely competitive. And, having dropped a 1585cc 'busa into the sensational dayglo-flashed Spire in place of its regular 1340cc one, he relishes giant-baiting in the OSS championship or at Castle Combe. "Beating [OSS champ] Mike Jenvey's Gunn-Duratec twice at Snett – after RLM rebuilt my engine overnight – was one of my best moments," he says.

Dominance is a recurrent theme on Gray's CV. While blinding speed out of the blocks leaves opponents gasping, and if conditions are right he can turn on the pace to chase yet another lap record, Tim is ultra-consistent, mechanically sympathetic and makes few mistakes. "Outright records are important, but I'd prefer to win at a lower speed rather than risk breaking the car."

He credits "a brilliant apprenticeship" at Derby Royal Infirmary as the bedrock of his eponymous team, founded in 2007. "We did machining, fabrication, electrical and mechanical engineering. I owe my tutor, Steve Reeves, so much for the way my brain works

analytically, to diagnose and fix faults. Those qualifications landed me a good hospital technician's job but are equally vital in racing. I loved working at Nottingham's QMC, and it was with a heavy heart that I stopped,

to go racing full-time at the end of 2014.

"When I was 13 or 14, I had a Saturday job with Renault specialist Prima Racing, until I backed the works van into a customer's car. Fortunately, I'd been reading *Kit Car* and noticed Stuart Taylor Motorsport was local. Owner Ian Gray [no relation] was making Locost chassis and when I asked for weekend work I said I'd do it for free as I wanted to learn. I progressed from stripping Cortina uprights to building cars and helping at race meetings. Eventually, Ian said he'd give me the parts to build a car to race in 2001 if I bought it at the end of the season.

"I finished eighth in the points and, although I did fewer races in '02, I won the wet opening round at Mallory Park. Having absorbed as much as I could about race-prep and driving a car with no power – my 1300cc Ford engines finally made 96bhp – or aerodynamics, I wanted the title. I'd entered a Renault Clio scholarship but was 'chucked out' for outpacing the instructors. I thought speed was key, but the promoters >>

"I owe my engineering tutor so much for the way my brain works"



Mauve Striker took Gray to a third RGB crown

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“Why I never thought I could make racing my career I’ve no idea”

needed lots of people paying £250 per round of the competition to fund the prize drive.

“So back to Locost it was. Brian Randall did me an engine – I’d done them myself until then – and, by being meticulous with preparation, set-up and my driving, won 13 of the 14 rounds. Unfortunately, I got knocked off in Donington’s finale, going for the clean sweep. Perhaps I was too greedy...”

“Despite that success, I decided not to work full-time in cars. I didn’t want my hobby to be diluted by the day job. Why I never thought I could make racing my career then I’ve no idea.”

Gray stepped up to RGB for 2004, STM having bought Jeremy Phillips’s Sylva Phoenix project to install a motorbike engine. “Class C for standard 919cc Honda Fireblade engines offered great value and provided the biggest set,” he says. “The chassis was very well designed and we got it handling superbly.”

Tim won the title in the blue muletta, defended it in the bright mauve laser-cut round-tube evolution and added a seasonal class victory in ’06, after which STM bowed out of the kit car industry.

Gray sat out 2007, but his subsequent work with bike-engine specialist Andy Bates’s AB Performance concern, massaging the inelegant Fulcrum into a race winner, blitzing a third RGB crown in ’09 with the reworked car under a Striker shell, then proving pal Richard Wise’s rear-engined Sabre capable of winning were happy days, if a logistical nightmare, commuting to Suffolk.

“At the end of 2011 Paul [Nightingale] asked me to try John Cutmore’s RGB Spire and I made the very, very difficult decision to switch,” he says. “Spire Sports Cars was local to me in Alfreton, Paul shares my passion for winning and the car had enormous potential. He let me have total input and if something needs doing it’s done.”

Tim landed the 2012 Bikesports crown, unbeaten, results mirrored last term with the central-seat GT3 evo, turning the tables on reigning champion Adrian Reynard (Radical SR3).

“Tim is fantastic to work with,” says Nightingale, whose business and Tim Gray Motorsport intertwine. “He’s constantly striving for improvement. We bounce ideas off each other and when we’ve made a new part he knows instantly whether it’s quicker. Our RGB cars won 40 successive races [a run broken by Scott Mittell at Cadwell Park in October 2014], which reflects a phenomenal team effort.”

Does Gray ever slow down? Yes, by racing his own 1932 Morgan Super Aero – with his intrepid mum riding shotgun!

“I love racing and never give up,” adds Gray. “After John Cutmore’s GT3 was pushed off in testing at Brands last April we dashed home, worked 25 hours non-stop to repair it and he won both races.”

Monstrous Cadwell laps in the Spire GT3 are becoming the stuff of club legend



CV

TIM GRAY

2015	750MC Bikesports champion 14 wins Victories in OSS, Castle Combe Sports Racing, MSV Allcomers, 750MC Allcomers, Walter Hayes Closed-Wheel, Radical OC, 750MC Birkett 6hr Relay
2014	2nd 750MC Bikesports 5 wins ROC and Castle Combe 2 wins OSS race in Radical PR6
2013	750MC Bikesports champion 10 wins
2012	750MC RGB champion 14 wins
2011	750MC RGB (invitation entry) 3 wins
2010	750MC Bikesports (two end-of-season races) 1 win
2009	750MC RGB champion 10 wins
2008	5th in 750MC RGB 5 wins
2007	Season out, one-off win in Radical SR4
2006	750MC RGB Class C champion 6 wins
2005	750MC RGB champion 9 wins
2004	750MC RGB champion 4 wins
2003	750MC Locost champion 13 wins
2002	750MC Locost 1 win
2001	750MC Locost – 8th
1996-2000	Race wins in MiniStox (848cc/998cc)

WHAT'S ON

Twitter will miss Maldonado



WHEN AUTOSPORT BROKE THE NEWS last week that Pastor Maldonado was set to lose his Renault Formula 1 drive to Kevin Magnussen, the motorsport faction of social media exploded with a mix of relief and anguish (depending on allegiance), along with reflective sadness at the passing of an age.

"Finally... Finally... FINALLY! Please let it be true!" wrote one user upon reading the news.

"Could be the end of an era... let's raise a glass and throw it into the wall for literally no reason!" quipped another. Maldonado has surely been the subject of more parody Twitter accounts, hashtags and memes than any other driver in F1 history, and (very) few of the posts about him have been tributes. He also inspired one of the greatest, simplest and most brutal F1 sites: hasmaldonadocrashedtoday.com – a page bare apart from a clock ticking from shunt to shunt.

F1 fans have long memories; once they've labelled someone as

a 'pay driver' and someone else as 'promising but penniless talent', those categorisations tend to stick. They especially don't take kindly to drivers with lucrative sponsorship deals pushing out those they rate. Coming in with his PDVSA millions and costing Nico Hulkenberg a Williams seat at the end of 2010 meant Maldonado didn't really get off on the right foot with the fanbase. Magnussen, by contrast, is something of a social media favourite – highly rated, and regarded as

Diniz bought his way into Forti, Ligier (pictured) and then Sauber thanks to Parmalat backing



unfortunate to be rejected by McLaren. It's hard to imagine a driver switch that could have pleased Twitter more; social media declared F1's talent/wealth equilibrium was being restored at last.

But Maldonado is far from the first driver in the world championship's 56-year history to have cultivated a reputation for gravitating towards other cars or crash barriers, or to have brought funding with him. Pedro Diniz, Andrea de Cesaris and Taki Inoue were lucky enough to enjoy their chequered careers in a time where every race wasn't being commented on by millions of fans on the internet (though Inoue has used it for some ironic fame in retirement). Maybe there wouldn't be quite so many parodies of Pastor online had it all been seen a dozen times before.

There is some support for Maldonado out there, though. "Let's not forget this happened" posted one fan, attaching a picture of Pastor hoisted onto the shoulders of Fernando Alonso and Kimi Raikkonen at Barcelona in 2012

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HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

YouTube PORSCHE'S RETURN TO GLORY

Search for: A documentary of our road to Le Mans 2015

With more than two months still to go before the start of the WEC season at Silverstone, sportscar fans in need of a fix should take a look at Porsche's impressive new 53-minute film documenting the road to last year's Le Mans win. The cheesy dubbing jars, though – what's wrong with subtitles?



HONEY/LAT



HOVER/LAT

TV PICK OF THE WEEK

AUTOSPORT INTERNATIONAL 2016

SKY SPORTS F1

Thursday 2300 - Repeated throughout the week
Don't fret if you missed out on last month's *Autosport International*, Sky Sports has an hour-long special featuring the highlights from the NEC. Tune in for a behind-the-scenes look at some of Williams's most famous cars, a tour of the team's motorhome and interviews with key personnel.

to remind the world that he is a fully deserving grand prix winner. Some parody blogs reflected forlornly on an emptier future without their prime target. For part of the F1 social media world, Maldonado had comedic value, and the mere chance that he might do something chaotic helped alleviate the tedium of another race dominated by the Mercedes.

Pastor Maldonado has been the driver that F1 fans have loved to hate, and what he's lacked in wins, podiums and championships he has more than made up for in likes, retweets and shares online, even if the majority have been scathing or ironic. His fellow drivers might now have a greater chance of getting through the race unscathed, and Renault might face fewer repair bills, but F1's social media satirists will undoubtedly miss their 'Crashtor'.

Let's hope the doomsday clock on hasmaldonadocrashedtoday.com ticks on as a permanent monument...

LUCY MORSON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

FORMULA E

Rd 4/10
Buenos Aires, Argentina
February 6

Given his dominant form in the opening three rounds, victory in Argentina seems Sebastien Buemi's to lose. But expect Lucas di Grassi – the winner in Putrajaya – to push the Swiss all the way. Keep an eye out for Formula E debutant Mike Conway, in for Jacques Villeneuve at Venturi.

WATCH ON TV

Saturday Feb 6 1800
ITV 4 - Race live

BATHURST 12HRS

Mount Panorama, New South Wales, Australia
February 7

Nissan goes into the race as favourite to repeat its 2015 win, but the #1 car of Kelly/Chiyo/Strauss faces competition from the Phoenix Racing Audi crew. Vanthoor was mighty here last year, only to see the win slip through his fingers in the dying laps. Don't rule out the Bentleys either.

WATCH ON TV

Saturday Feb 6 1830
Live stream available
bathurst12hour.com



Formula E:
Buenos Aires



Bathurst 12 Hours



TRS at
Taupo

TOYOTA RACING SERIES

Rd 4/5
Taupo, New Zealand
February 6-7

Pedro Piquet – son of Nelson – rounded out a strong weekend with an impressive win last time out at Hampton Downs to jump to second in the drivers' standings. But the Brazilian will need to be at his best at Taupo to halt Lando Norris's march to the trophy.

WATCH ON TV

Motors TV
Highlights later this month

THE ARCHIVE

Nelson Piquet survived this dramatic moment at the Parabolica while lapping Ivan Capelli's March to win the 1987 Italian Grand Prix for Williams-Honda

LAT Photographic





TOP FIVE

BRITS IN INDYCARS

Max Chilton is the latest British driver to turn his hand to open-wheel racing in North America. If he can be half as successful as the drivers in this list, it will have been a great career move. This is our selection of the top five British drivers in over a century of this style of racing in the USA, encompassing a variety of sanctioning bodies stretching from the AAA through to today's IndyCar Series.



1 DARIO FRANCHITTI

When the Scot embarked on his maiden Champ Car campaign with Hogan Racing in 1997, he can't have dared hope how much success he would have over the following 18 years – ignoring his ill-fated flirtation with NASCAR in 2008. After a title near-miss in '99, it was in IndyCar that he thrived. Four championships, three Indianapolis 500 triumphs and a total of 31 wins make him not only the most successful Briton, but one of the most successful of any nationality.



2 DAN WHELDON

Who knows how much more success Wheldon would have had if he had not lost his life in 2011 when his career was back on the up following an unlikely second Indy 500 triumph? His first came during a stunning 2005 campaign for Andretti Green Racing that also yielded the title during a successful career in which he particularly thrived on the ovals, despite his road-racing background.

3 DARIO RESTA

The Italian-born, British-raised, American-domiciled racer enjoyed a stunning 1916, winning the Indy 500 (held over 300 miles that year!), the AAA National Championship and prestigious Vanderbilt Cup. His tally of five championship race wins would surely have been greater but for the interruption of racing by World War I. Resta died in a speed record attempt at Brooklands in 1924, aged 42.



4 NIGEL MANSELL

The reigning Formula 1 champion came, saw and conquered on his switch to America with Newman/Haas Racing in 1993. Surprisingly, he excelled on the ovals, taking four of his five victories on them after a debut win at Surfers Paradise. A poor restart cost him victory in the Indy 500, and his American adventure came to an end after a winless '94 season amid dominance by the rival Penske team.



5 JUSTIN WILSON

There were several contenders with Indy 500 wins to their names for the final slot in this list, but none of them achieved what Wilson did when he took the first win for perennial struggler Dale Coyne Racing! Wilson didn't achieve the success his talent and professionalism deserved before his career was brutally cut short, but his seven wins proved his tenacity and earned him universal respect.



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