

HE'S BAAAACK: SUPERCARS CEO DEJA-VU



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LANDO'S REDEMPTION

**BUT F1 TURNS
TO FARCE ...**

**... AS INDY
DELIVERS A
CLASSIC 500**

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IMAGE: GETTY IMAGES

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Indy was drama-filled from before the green – Scott McLaughlin’s unfortunate crash the start of a dramatic race day. Right: Monaco – the Racing Bulls backed up the Williams duo, who backed up the Mercedes pair ... Images: GETTY IMAGES



INDYCAR PUTS ON A SHOW, F1 DELIVERS A FARCE ...

ON THAT RARE WEEKEND WHEN TWO OF THE WORLD’S BIGGEST MOTORSPORTS ON OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC GO HEAD-TO-HEAD, FORMULA 1 KICKED A MASSIVE OWN GOAL WITH A FAILED DOUBLE PITSTOP EXPERIMENT EXAGGERATING THE GROWING INADEQUACY OF MONACO AS AN F1 CIRCUIT - WHILE INDYCAR TURNED ON A CLASSIC 500 ...

THE DIFFERENCE could not have been more stark.

Formula 1’s new Monaco-specific two-stop requirement was sold as a means of putting some potential tyre stop/compound choice variation into a race at a circuit where passing has become increasingly impossible – accentuated by the bigger-than-ever size of the current hybrid F1 cars.

In the end, it backfired. Nothing much changed up front, but with smart, analytical midfield teams, especially those with two cars running close to each other, playing a game of ‘hold-up’ – where the second car literally cruised around, holding up a queue of cars, while the other car belted out enough of a gap to stop and not lose position.

It worked for some – Racing Bulls and Williams in particular – but it was farcical, and drivers and teams could barely wait to apologise once it was all over.

Williams boss Jame Vowles even admitted to sending a text to his former boss, Mercedes’ Toto Wolff, in the middle of the race, apologising for their tactics ...

“I’m sorry. We had no choice given what happened ahead,” read the text “We know,” Wolff replied.

“He had to do it – he has two cars in the points,” Wolff told media post-race, by way of explanation. “I think what started it was these RBs that backed us back off, and that’s what he had to do.”

He, and others, were already turning

their thoughts to a solution.

Wolff’s immediate thought was modifying the two-stop rule, maybe incorporating a slowest lap time a driver can run at during the race:


“I think what we can look at is to create some more specific regulations that there’s only a maximum of back-off that you can have.

But then: “I don’t think that’s feasible. We need to talk also with maybe the AC Monaco here, and see if there is anything we can change on the layout? Difficult in a city – we’re limited by a mountain and the sea. But you know, I see the positives. This is an unbelievable spectacle.”

His lead driver, George Russell, was taking a light-hearted approach,

despite it having ruined his race, suggesting a water sprinkler on the back of each car, to be activated once during the race when the driver chose. He wasn’t being serious, obviously. But it was symptomatic of the crisis the Monaco race faces.

Hours later, after race favourite Scott McLaughlin had destroyed his race car during the roll-up pre-race laps, caught out on cold tyres, IndyCar put on a classic 500.

The comparison could not have been clearer. Formula 1 faces the need for some sort of major change at Monaco ... 

Coverage: Monaco, p66;

Indianapolis, p58

Comment: p27

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JAMES WARBURTON RETURNS TO SUPERCARS CEO – WITH WORK TO BE DONE

JAMES WARBURTON IS BACK – AND SUPERCARS IS BETTING BIG THAT THE MAN WHO ONCE DRAGGED THE SPORT INTO THE MODERN ERA CAN DO IT AGAIN. HOWEVER, NOT EVERYONE IS CONVINCED IT'S THE RIGHT MOVE. ANDREW CLARKE INVESTIGATES ...



FORMER SUPERCARS chairman and founding architect of the modern championship, Tony Cochrane, has publicly cautioned against “going backwards,” urging the sport not to rely on recycled leadership in a world that’s moved on.

The comments, made in the wake of Warburton’s appointment, have added heat to what was already shaping up as a critical juncture for the category.

Warburton returns as Chief Executive Officer from July 23, succeeding Shane Howard at a time when Supercars faces pivotal decisions about its future direction, most notably the broadcast deal beyond 2025.

It’s a high-stakes, high-pressure handover – precisely the kind of challenge Warburton built his reputation on.

The appointment marks a homecoming for Warburton, who previously served as CEO of Supercars from 2013 to 2017. That first tenure delivered real momentum, marked by commercial growth, destination street races, major broadcast deals, and corporate polish. He turned Newcastle from a concept into a crown jewel, supercharged the Gold Coast and Townsville events, and brought a sharper edge to how Supercars was marketed and sold.

However, this return is not just about legacy – it’s about rebuilding trust and

momentum in a landscape that has shifted dramatically.

“Supercars is a phenomenal product,” Warburton said. “It’s got heritage, personality, tribalism – and at its heart, some of the best racing in the world. But we need to make it easier to access, more visible to casual fans, and more valuable for stakeholders.”

Chairman Barclay Nettlefold was unequivocal in backing the move:

“The Board is delighted to welcome James back to Supercars,” he said. “He is a proven executive with strong leadership skills, a deep understanding of our sport, and a track record of delivering results.”

Warburton’s track record since his Supercars departure adds weight to that claim. He went on to lead APN Outdoor through a highly successful initial public offering (IPO), then took the reins at Seven West Media, where he oversaw digital transformation, strengthened the broadcast portfolio, and expanded the company’s streaming operations. He also chaired Universal Media Co, giving him a unique perspective across both legacy and new media platforms.

That matters now more than ever. Supercars is negotiating a new broadcast agreement – a critical move that will determine how, where, and how many people watch the sport from 2026 onwards. The current mix



Top: Newcastle came about during the last Warburton era. Above: Getting the band back together with then COO, and recent CEO, Shane Howard. Images: GETTY IMAGES, SUPERCARS

of Foxtel exclusivity with limited Seven Network free-to-air coverage has frustrated many fans. Warburton’s experience with major media platforms, both traditional and digital, is seen as essential to delivering the visibility Supercars desperately needs.

“There’s no question James has the vision and credibility to lead the sport forward,” said Nettlefold.

“He did it once before, and we’re backing him to do it again. His understanding of broadcast, sponsorship, media and fan engagement is world-class, and that’s exactly what Supercars needs right now.”

For all the optimism, Warburton’s return comes amid pressure and

THE ROAD BACK: JAMES WARBURTON’S EXECUTIVE JOURNEY

JAMES WARBURTON’S return to Supercars brings one of Australian sport and media’s most seasoned leaders full circle – back to the paddock he helped reshape nearly a decade ago.

He began his ascent in commercial television, first as Sales Director at the Seven Network, before moving to Network Ten in 2003, where he rose to the position of CEO by 2011. A boardroom shake-up led to his exit in 2012. Still, he quickly resurfaced as CEO of DMG Radio Australia, now Nova Entertainment, where he restructured the business and rebuilt its market edge.

In 2013, he took on the top job in Supercars, where his aggressive commercial instincts secured landmark broadcast deals, expanded the calendar, and helped build the modern street-race model through events like the Newcastle 500. After leaving Supercars in 2017, Warburton took over at APN Outdoor, leading the business through a \$1.2 billion acquisition by French advertising giant JCDecaux.

His most recent high-profile role was as CEO and Managing Director of Seven West Media, which he assumed in 2019. There, he drove digital growth, particularly through 7plus, navigated pandemic-era programming challenges, and sharpened the network’s sports and entertainment portfolio. He stepped down in late 2023.

Now chairman of Universal Media Co, Warburton has remained embedded in the shifting world of modern media. But from July 23, his focus returns to the pit lane – with the same urgency, and even bigger expectations. 🏁

opportunity. Gen3 appears to have settled its skewed parity; a second New Zealand round has been announced, while further international expansion remains a focus; and Toyota is finally joining the sport.

Supercars’ public profile has taken hits in recent years, exacerbated by an inconsistent calendar and a diluted media footprint and there is work to do as soon as Warburton officially starts.

URNS AS SUPERCARS DONE...

Welcome back. Brad Jones was on the Supercar Commission during Warburton Mk1. Image: GETTY IMAGES



"I'm proud of what we achieved the first time around," Warburton said. "But there's more to do. The media environment has changed – fans consume sport differently, and the competition for attention is fierce. We need to meet that challenge head-on."

Shane Howard, who has served as CEO since 2022, will remain in the role until July and is expected to assist with a smooth transition.

His contribution, especially during the pandemic and through the launch of Gen3, has been acknowledged.

"I would like to thank Shane Howard for his continued leadership and dedication during a period of significant change," Nettlefold added. "Shane has played an integral role in our sport and will work with James to ensure a smooth transition."

Internally, teams are already bracing for change – and, in

most quarters, welcoming it. Warburton's previous term brought financial confidence and promotional polish and there's a sense he'll again bring the clarity and pace currently lacking in Supercars' executive structure.

"James returns to Supercars at an exciting time as we continue to innovate and grow our sport both in Australia and internationally," Nettlefold said. "His experience and passion for motorsport will be invaluable as we take the Championship to the next level!"

But Cochrane's warning remains a pointed one. Motorsport isn't what it was in 2013. Fans expect more access. Sponsors want sharper ROI. Streaming has shifted the broadcast game. Warburton may be the right man given the changes and his diverse media background.

The countdown to July 23 is on. 🏁



FROM BAD TO WORSE: TEAM PENSKE'S INDY 500 GOES UP IN SMOKE

YOU COULDN'T HAVE WRITTEN A SCRIPT FOR A BIGGER DISASTER THAN TEAM PENSKE'S 2025 INDY 500. ANDREW CLARKE REPORTS ON WHAT HAPPENED, THE RAMIFICATIONS AND THE COMPLETE LACK OF REDEMPTION ON A MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND DISASTER ...



The team sought to rectify the problem in pit lane as cars assembled for the Top 12 shootout, but in the end, withdrew the two remaining cars – McLaughlin's car had already been crashed and was out.

TEAM PENSKE'S 2025 Indianapolis 500 weekend started in disgrace and ended in disaster, with a humiliating on-track showing compounding one of the biggest 'earthquakes' in the race's history.

While Alex Palou delivered a commanding win for Chip Ganassi Racing, Team Penske's weekend collapsed into a storm of controversy, technical breaches, and performance failure.

Scott McLaughlin failed to take the start after a roll-up laps crash, Josef Newgarden retired with 60 laps to go, and Will Power came home a lap down in 19th—Team Penske's best finish.

It was a collapse in every sense – and one largely self-inflicted. The unravelling began days before the green flag, when IndyCar disqualified Newgarden's #2 and Power's #12 from their qualifying results. Post-qualifying inspection revealed unauthorised modifications to their rear attenuators – the critical

safety components designed to absorb crash energy. Additional 'filler' material had been applied to the joining 'lip' to create a smoother profile, apparently offering zero aerodynamic gain ... but nevertheless breaching the rules.

The punishment was swift. Both drivers were fined \$100,000, stripped of their grid spots and relegated to the rear. Any shot at strategic control or clean air was gone.

McLaughlin's #3 car passed inspection but was already compromised. He had crashed heavily in final practice, forcing a rushed rebuild. On race day, the car never made the grid – scratched after crashing into one of the inside walls while warming

tyres on the roll-up laps ...

Before race weekend, team owner Roger Penske reacted swiftly to the second cheating scandal involving his team on consecutive Indy 500s.

"This is a clear failure of process and oversight within our competition department," he said in a statement. "We accept the penalties, and I personally apologise to our fans, sponsors, competitors and the IndyCar community."

The apology came with consequences. Penske sacked three of its top team officials: President Tim Cindric, Managing Director Ron Ruzewski, and engineer Luke Mason. Cindric's exit was seismic – he'd been Penske's right-hand man for more than two decades.

But the story didn't end there. Last year's race winner, in the Indy Museum, was found to have the

same 'filler' on its attenuator ...

"We did not catch the oversight prior to the 2024 race," Penske said. "That was our failure, and it won't happen again."

With two Indy 500s now tainted, the reputational damage is massive, made worse by the fact that Penske owns not just the team but also the IndyCar Series and the Speedway. Rival teams have called for governance reform, questioning how the sport's owner could be involved in repeated rule breaches.

"When the guy who owns the sport gets caught breaking the rules – even if he didn't know – it changes everything," one rival team said.

"It damages all of us."

Series President Jay Frye defended the process: "The rules are the rules and they apply to everyone. No exceptions."

To mitigate the fallout, Penske Racing has implemented stricter compliance protocols and reorganised its technical leadership. Raul Prados stepped in to replace Mason on Newgarden's car. And IndyCar's tech division is now likely to be restructured and wholly independent.

But the damage was done – for the sport and for one of its most storied organisations. Power finished 19th, Newgarden retired mid-race, and McLaughlin didn't start. No laps led. No contention. No upside.

It was a catastrophic Indy 500 for the team that once set the standard. For decades, Penske stood for precision and dominance. In May 2025, it stood for scandal, failure, and public reckoning.

For Team Penske, it was the month everything came apart. 🚩

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Ruapuna Park – currently known as Euromarque Motorsport Park – has been owned and operated by the Canterbury Car Club in Christchurch, since it was opened, in 1963.

RUAPUNA BEATS HIGHLANDS AS SUPERCARS LOCKS IN CHRISTCHURCH ROUND

CHRISTCHURCH'S RUAPUNA Park has landed the second Supercars round in New Zealand, edging out Highlands Motorsport Park in a high-stakes decision shaped by geography, access and long-term vision. While Highlands impressed with its world-class presentation, it was Christchurch's status as a major population centre – the second-biggest NZ city – that ultimately gave Ruapuna the edge.

The announcement confirms Supercars' commitment to a New Zealand double-header from 2026 through to at least 2028, with Ruapuna to host the opener, followed by Taupō the next weekend. The pairing provides stability, marketing firepower and logistical efficiency, transforming the two events into a marquee early-season feature on the Supercars calendar.

Ruapuna, currently officially known as Euromarque Motorsport Park, has long been the heart of South Island motorsport and is run by the Canterbury Car Club. It becomes the first South Island venue to host a Supercars Championship event and joins Taupō and former hosts Pukekohe and Hamilton in the small club of New Zealand tracks to secure a round.

The circuit's short, bumpy, high-

commitment layout is expected to produce aggressive, elbows-out racing.

Highlands Motorsport Park, owned by Tony Quinn through the Tony Quinn Foundation, had been favoured early in negotiations. Its facilities are unmatched in the region and its appeal as a motorsport destination is well established. But the logistical advantage of Christchurch – with its airport, accommodation base, and metropolitan catchment – proved too great to ignore.

"It's bloody brilliant, mate," Quinn told *Auto Action* in April, when signs first pointed to Ruapuna getting the nod, seemingly more interested in what was best for New Zealand motorsport rather than himself.

"I've been banging the drum for South Island motorsport for years. Ruapuna's got character – it's fast, bumpy, old-school – and the people in Christchurch will turn up in droves. This is exactly what we need to keep the sport growing."

Quinn, whose foundation owns Taupō, Highlands and Hampton Downs, was heavily involved in securing the deal and has long pushed for a stronger South Island presence in major categories. He also played a key role in facilitating conversations

between the Canterbury Car Club and Supercars management.

Supercars CEO Shane Howard said the move was a clear signal of the championship's intent in the region.

"Bringing Supercars to Christchurch is a massive win for the city and the South Island," he said. "The support we saw in Taupō proved how much appetite there is for Supercars in New Zealand. Expanding to Ruapuna was the next logical step."

Christchurch City Council has committed to a three-year deal, with funding set aside for essential upgrades. While a full FIA Grade 2 licence is not required – it is currently a FIA Grade 3 rated circuit – improvements to the paddock, broadcast infrastructure, and spectator amenities are already in motion.

Ruapuna has a rich racing pedigree dating back to 1963. It has hosted everything from Tasman Series events to the New Zealand Grand Prix, the Toyota Racing Series, NZV8s, national GT and touring car championships and a crowd-pulling annual Historic Skope Classic. The circuit's high-speed nature and abrasive surface have long been praised by drivers.

The decision also marks a significant evolution in Supercars' relationship with New Zealand. The championship

first ventured across the Tasman in 2001 with a memorable debut at Pukekohe Park Raceway, before a short stay on the streets of Hamilton led to a return to Pukekohe.

That venue became a fixture until its final farewell in 2023, after which the series shifted to Taupō for 2024, which was a sell-out despite shocking weather.

The 2025 event was a commercial and sporting success, despite skyrocketing hotel prices and similar challenges, which undoubtedly affected the crowd, but was also rated a commercial success and it will only benefit from a second round across the ditch as Supercars and local authorities work on the price gouging.

"Christchurch has long deserved something like this," Quinn said.

"It's not just about race fans – it's good for the city, for tourism, for business. And it proves that if you back motorsport, it can deliver."

With Ruapuna and Taupō now locked in for three years, Supercars has not only re-established its New Zealand presence but solidified it. The championship's post-COVID rebuild across the Tasman is no longer speculative – it's operational, strategic and permanent.

Andrew Clarke 🇳🇿

AVALON STILL ON

THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT HAS REAFFIRMED ITS LONG-TERM COMMITMENT TO MOTORSPORT WITH AVALON, ALBERT PARK AND SANDOWN ALL ON THE TABLE ...

By Andrew Clarke

THE VICTORIAN Government has reaffirmed its long-term commitment to motorsport, with senior officials confirming that the Avalon Motorsport Precinct remains a live and strategically significant project, even as the Sandown circuit enjoys a reprieve and Albert Park prepares for a transformative \$350 million upgrade.

Despite suggestions that the Avalon project had faded into the background, Motorsport Australia CEO Sunil Vohra made it clear in an interview with *Auto Action* that the plan remains at the centre of the organisation's strategic ambitions.

"Avalon still sits as a strategic priority for Motorsport Australia. We've done all the groundwork – the feasibility, the design work, the circuit configurations, and the financial modelling. We're ready to go," Vohra said.

"The intent has always been to create a facility that serves the full spectrum of motorsport, particularly at the grassroots and club level. It was never about replacing Albert Park or building a Formula 1 venue; that was never the design or purpose."

Vohra explained that the Avalon circuit was always planned as a Grade 2 facility, with an emphasis on accessibility, community use and development programs rather than elite-level racing. Motorsport Australia sees it as a critical platform for training, development and everyday use by clubs and officials, filling a gap that current privately owned venues can't always meet.

"It's about accessibility, about creating a home that doesn't rely on the commercial decisions of private operators, and that can support training, development, and community engagement every day of the year," Vohra said.

The project has already cleared significant hurdles, with planning, design and cost modelling all completed. Motorsport Australia, in partnership with government



departments and expert consultants, submitted a fully scoped proposal to the Victorian Treasury process ahead of the 2024 budget. While it was not funded at that time, the pre-work means the project is effectively 'shovel-ready' pending financial backing.

"We stand by, ready, at what point the funding model lands for the context that we're in," Vohra added.

The Avalon precinct was initially driven by concerns over the potential closure of Sandown. That urgency has lessened somewhat with Sandown's immediate future looking more stable, but Vohra said that doesn't lessen the long-term need.

"The context has shifted since the idea was first conceived during the COVID recovery phase," he said. "At the time, Sandown's future was highly uncertain, so Avalon had an added sense of urgency. While Sandown's outlook is now more stable, the need for Avalon hasn't disappeared – it's just changed in tone."

Albert Park's pit lane rebuild is a full-on government project. Avalon will require wider-based funding.

Above: Avalon has been on the radar for a while; this design study is from before 2010.

Opposite: Avalon could have grandstands like this.

Far right: Sunil Vohra, MA CEO.

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That view is echoed by Victorian Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Steve Dimopoulos, who confirmed the government is still actively exploring the Avalon project.

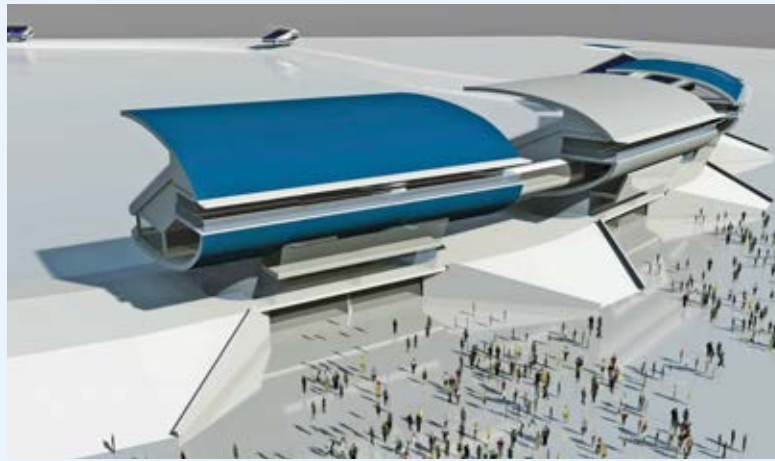
"Nothing's dead. We haven't concluded the exploration work on that project. I'm a strong supporter of motorsport in all its forms – from Formula 1 to Supercars and regional rally events – and I believe there is more we can do in this space," Dimopoulos said.

The renewed public support for motorsport infrastructure comes as Albert Park prepares for a once-in-a-generation rebuild of its pit and paddock complex.

A \$350 million upgrade has been locked in as part of Melbourne's long-term contract to host the Australian Grand Prix through to 2037. The existing pit building, opened in 1996, will be demolished after the 2026 race, with a two-stage construction process to deliver a world-class venue by 2028.

Dimopoulos described the investment as a critical component in maintaining Melbourne's international reputation as a premier global events city.

"Every single dollar we spend has a far greater return than the initial outlay. This is about respecting a global event, but also giving our local



sports clubs upgraded facilities all year round," he said.

The new venue will include expanded garages, state-of-the-art media centres, a significantly larger Paddock Club, and seven indoor community sports courts.

These facilities will be managed by the State Sports Centres Trust and used by local clubs for soccer, rugby, and other indoor sports, ensuring year-round community access.

Vohra described the Albert Park redevelopment as "a fantastic project – it will be great for the Grand Prix, but also for those of us who work and operate at the event. More importantly, it's going to serve the local sporting community every day of the year."

He also confirmed that Motorsport Australia is involved in discussions

about expanding the Grand Prix footprint to include a second weekend of racing, potentially anchored by Supercars.

"It's a commercial discussion between the Grand Prix Corporation, the government and the categories. But we're absolutely ready to support it.

"The more motorsport that happens in that context, the better," he said.

Motorsport Australia staffed this year's AGP with 996 officials – a major logistical undertaking that would need to be expanded to cover a second weekend.

"It would be challenging, but not impossible. With good planning, we can make it happen," he added.

Beyond Victoria, Vohra also confirmed ongoing engagement with



international partners regarding a possible Thai Grand Prix and support through the FIA Asia-Pacific region.

"We have a history of supporting other ASNs. We did it with Singapore, and we're open to supporting Thailand through the FIA if requested. We have a high standard of operations and a great network of officials who are ready to contribute."

All of this sits within what Vohra described as a broader shift in how governments and sporting bodies view motorsport.

"The government recognises that motorsport happens at a community level too – across thousands of clubs every weekend. The high-profile events like Formula 1 or Supercars are just one part of a much bigger picture," he said. 🇦🇺



JACK PERKINS LANDS NASCAR XFINITY DRIVE

JACK PERKINS IS FINALLY SET TO LIVE OUT A DREAM TWO DECADES IN THE MAKING — AND IT'S HAPPENING ON ONE OF NASCAR'S TRICKIEST ROAD COURSES.

THE SUPERCARS veteran and third-generation racer has secured a start with powerhouse outfit Joe Gibbs Racing for the NASCAR Xfinity Series round in Portland next month.

The one-off appearance sees Perkins jump behind the wheel of the #19 Toyota GR Supra – a ride that comes loaded with Aussie backing and a deep back-story that's anything but overnight.

Perkins will carry support from long-time partners Shaw and Partners Financial Services and Southern Cross Truck Rentals, alongside TLC Auto Centre in Perth and ARB's Penrith and Thornleigh outlets. The move is the result of years of persistence – and a critical connection with fellow Aussie James Small, the Cup Series crew chief at JGR, who helped open the doors.

"It's surreal," Perkins told *Auto Action* from the US. "I've tried to put it all together for years and to finally be here and have it locked in – it's just awesome."

The deal germinated during a 2024 visit to Sonoma, where Perkins joined Shaw and Partners to support fellow Supercars driver Will Brown. There, he rekindled ties with Small and began floating the idea of an Xfinity tilt.

"It sort of fizzled at one point," Perkins admitted. "But then something opened up at Portland — and we just had to grab it."

Timing, as ever, played a crucial role. With NASCAR's Cup Series racing at Darlington the same weekend as Portland, the usual influx of Cup drivers eyeing road course miles in Xfinity machinery was absent, leaving a coveted opening at JGR.

"If it had been Chicago or Sonoma, there'd be a queue of guys wanting that seat. So, it's a case of beggars can't be choosers. But Portland is a hell of an opportunity."

The 38-year-old brings decades of racing nous to the gig but has left

When opportunity comes, just grab it! That's the philosophy that will see Jack Perkins line up at Portland next month in a Joe Gibbs Racing Xfinity Toyota ...



no stone unturned in preparing for the switch. That's included time on JGR's high-end simulator – a rare experience made even more valuable by observing Cup regulars like Chase Briscoe in action.

"Just watching how they apply themselves, the way they give feedback, it was eye-opening. I've come from a generation without sims, so you learn to adapt fast. I even started making setup changes – it's full-on engineering immersion."

Perkins will link with crew chief Seth Chavka, who has his own Supercars background through his time with Small at Richard Childress Racing. That common language, Perkins says, has helped ease the learning curve.

What makes this story resonate even more is its underdog roots.

Long before simulator runs and engineering briefings, Perkins was turning laps at The Bend in an old Xfinity car – a 2009-era machine found in Shepparton – just to

experience the layout, left-hand drive and right-hand shift style. He jokes it may not have been a 'test,' but it planted a seed.

"If I never got to race in America, I still wanted to try it at home. Just sitting in that thing gave me some feel for what to expect. There's nothing like jumping in a car that's totally foreign."

Despite the high-profile gig, Perkins is quick to douse speculation of a career overhaul.

"I'm not chasing a full-time NASCAR career or anything like that. I've got family, work, life here in Australia. But if I do well, who knows — maybe there's another one-off in the future."

He's also realistic about the format: limited track time, no competition pit stops, and a fiercely competitive field on a tight, technical track.

"We'll only get one practice session. That's it, straight into qualifying and race. It's brutal. But it's the same for everyone."

The broader symbolism isn't lost on Perkins either — another Aussie flying the flag in a US scene still buzzing from Shane van Gisbergen's Chicago heroics two years ago and a brace of wins in Xfinity last year, including at Portland.

"The road courses just suit us. We grew up on them. If I can put in a clean, fast run, represent the sponsors well and bring it home straight, I'll be proud!" He laughs about the timing – being 38 and still chasing dreams – but it's all part of the appeal.

"Last year in Super2 gave me confidence I've still got it. I'm not reinventing myself – just grabbing the chances that come. If someone asked me to race an Excel tomorrow and I could make it work, I'd be there."

One thing's for sure – come Portland, the #19 Supra will have a distinctly Aussie flavour. And win, lose or crash into Turn 1, Jack Perkins will have earned every inch of it.

Andrew Clarke 📺

VAUGHAN GETS BJR CO-DRIVE

THE CO-DRIVER marked is filling up with Brad Vaughan confirmed to steer alongside Bryce Fullwood at BJR.

The announcement was widely expected after Vaughan received a Super2 lifeline from BJR after being dropped by Tickford.

After winning the 2022 Super3 Series, he was snapped up by Tickford and recorded five podiums and a win at Sandown across two seasons.

But, at the end of 2024, his career was at a crossroads before Jones got in touch.

The Adelaide boy, from Elizabeth, has had a solid start in Super2 and has been rewarded with a coveted co-drive.

He currently sits seventh in the

2025 Super2 championship thanks to three straight top 10s, highlighted by a storming podium at SMP.

Vaughan already has previous Supercars experience, having finished 19th and 25th in a wildcard with Matt Chahda.

"Super excited to partner up for the Enduros with Bryce," Vaughan said.

"I've been getting along well with everyone at BJR, and Bryce has been super helpful with my Super2 program already.

"It'll be great to head to Taillem Bend for an enduro race this year. Exciting to have a home race! So that's very, very special. Hopefully we have some good results."

Vaughan will be Fullwood's third co-driver in as many years following Dean Fiore and Jaylyn Robotham.

"Excited to have Brad as my co-driver for this year. I believe it'll be his second go at it after making his debut last year," Fullwood said.

"I've been following his Super2 journey closely and he's been doing a good job.

"It'll be great to have him drive with me and excited to see what we can do later in the year."

Brad Jones has been impressed with how Vaughan has handled himself so far at Albury.

"Brad is a very exciting prospect and he did a good job in Chahda's car last year, so we're keen to see what he can do in car #14," he said.

"It's great to be able to pull from our Super2 program.

"We've always put an emphasis on developing and nurturing young

talent and Brad has that in spades, so at the end of the day it's an easy decision.

"He already has a great relationship with Bryce and has spent some time in the garage with Phil Keed, so he's very familiar with the full crew.

"Brad has been amazing to work with over the first two Super2 rounds. He's very switched on and has an impressive work ethic."

With BRT also locking in Zak Best alongside Aaron Cameron, only three co-driver spots are undecided.

PremiAir needs to find a partner for Richie Stanaway; so does BRT for veteran James Courtney, while MSR has not revealed who will fill the other half of its Cameron Crick wildcard.

Thomas Miles 🇺🇸

Vaughan (left) and Fullwood – BJR enduro partners for 2025.



TA2 TO FILL WANNEROO VOID

TA2 WILL STEP IN FOR TCR AS THE FINAL SUPPORT CATEGORY WHEN SUPERCARS RETURNS TO PERTH'S WANNEROO RACEWAY NEXT MONTH ...

THE 2025 TCR Australia season was scheduled to begin at Perth, but the category pulled out due to "a revision of the category's strategic direction."

As a result, there was a gap to fill with no event schedule able to be presented less than a month before the fifth round of the Supercars Championship takes place on June 5-8.

TA2 will fill the void by staging a non-championship event where the 'King of the West' crown will be on the line.

While Trans Am is a regular fixture, this will be the first time the TA2 class will be racing alongside Supercars.

The King of the West title will return, having previously been held in 2023 across a three-round series.

As a result, TA2 Category Manager Matty Mack is confident of having around 15 cars on the grid.

"Due to our previous King of the West titles in Western Australia, there's quite a number of cars and drivers already in Perth that are keen to compete," he said.

"Previous WA champions Brett Niall and Ron Moller have entered, along with speedway star Jason Pryde and we are confident of delivering a field of up to 15 cars.



"We plan to send three or four cars from the East over to Perth to top up the field. It will be a super busy time between TA2 and Trico Trans Am with Perth, Darwin, Sydney and Queensland Raceway all in a space of five weeks!"

The news arrives at the same time as the takeover of Trans Am for the new owners take place. Trans Am was previously run by Australian Racing Group – that is now HCC Pty Ltd.

The handover has just been completed with a new syndicate formed by regular TA2 competitors Paul Hadley, Mark Crutcher and Graham Cheney (above) leading the way.

"All the formal paperwork with Motorsport Australia has been signed regarding the transfer of ownership, settlement has been completed, and we are now focussed on growing both the Trans AM and TA2 Muscle Car platforms," HCC's Mark Crutcher explained.

"We have already invested in a much larger trailer to service both series on track with parts and components, expanded staffing where required, ordered more new cars from Howe Engineering in Michigan, confirmed supply of Chevrolet crate engines, as well as Holinger Engineering for the

supply of an optional gearbox to the original G Force for both series.

"My role is to head up the new entity and continue the expanding trajectory for both categories. As well as being a quick driver, Graham has a good engineering and racing head and will support the technical side with ongoing product development.

"Paul brings an enormous breadth of business skills to the table, I believe we are a very complementary team."

Either side of the bonus trip to Wanneroo, TA2 races at Sydney Motorsport Park and Queensland Raceway. **Thomas Miles** 🏁



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LOVE TO MAKE RACING RETURN

AFTER A 96-day hiatus, former Supercars driver Aaron Love (*right*) will make a welcome return to motorsport.

Having lost his full-time Supercars drive with Blanchard Racing Team on the eve of the Australian Grand Prix, Love has been in the wilderness over the last three months.

But he will be back in the hot seat on May 30-June 1, racing a Ferrari 296 GT3 in the GT World Challenge Australia.

Love will make a cameo return, replacing his absent brother Jordan in the second Arise Racing Ferrari entry alongside Steve Wyatt at the third round of the GT World Challenge Australia at Queensland Raceway.

It will be a boost for Love, who struggled during his rookie Supercars season and left the team in unceremonious circumstances after clashing with teammate James Courtney in qualifying.

After suddenly losing his Supercars seat, it was unclear what was next for Love, so he is thrilled to return to racing again.

"It's a really nice feeling to be going racing again after a couple of months away from a racetrack," said Love.

"To be doing it with Steve and



the whole team at Arise in a Ferrari makes it a pretty cool weekend back, I must say.

"I've known most of the team and Steve for quite some time now, so it's been a nice warm welcome back coming into the round.

"Steve has done the first two rounds now with my brother so I think he's getting nice and comfortable with the car and I'll be there to help him continue along that path.

"For myself, it's my first weekend in the car so it might take a little bit of adjusting from what I've been driving the last couple of years, but I think we should get the ball rolling once we get stuck into the weekend.

"It's been a difficult year so far for me with my racing in general, so I'm just really looking forward to going racing and having fun again. I get to do it in a pretty cool car and with some really good people around me so I think it should be a good weekend!" **Thomas Miles** 🚩



MANSELL TO LEAD ONE RACEWAY

ONE RACEWAY is to be led by familiar face Lachlan Mansell, who returns to the industry with clear goals of growing the revived circuit's profile.

In the Head of Motorsport position, Mansell (*above*) will handle the media, PR, marketing and management areas of both One Raceway and Pheasant Wood circuits.

Whilst he does not start until mid-June, Mansell has already highlighted some areas he hopes to make a difference in at a track that has been there since the very start of his journey.

"There are a few things to focus on. Up to this point One Raceway has not really promoted its own events and it has been up to the people hiring the track," he told *Auto Action*.

"From a business perspective making sure as a venue we have capabilities to run our own meetings will be high on the priority list.

"Looking longer term is one of the great things about Steve Shelley – he is a very successful entrepreneur

and building up IT businesses and hopefully we can do some cool things and develop technologies to make the customer experience something that is very exciting.

"Volunteer officials are always so important in motorsport and in NSW there is probably a bit more that can be done to not only bring more in, but also look after the current crop."

With his experience outside of motorsport, Mansell hopes to bring in some new ideas.

"Particularly when it comes to the media and PR sort of things. Having had the chance to work with the top rating Kyle and Jackie O Show in particular, it has definitely opened my eyes to what cuts through in mainstream media and reaches audiences that don't get breached by motorsport," he said.

"In motorsport it is easy to be insular, in a bubble, but having seen what it is like in the outside world hopefully I can bring some knowledge to the sport!"

Thomas Miles 🚩



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MAKING THE BEST OF SUPERCARS SHOT

AFTER TWO years in the wilderness, Zak Best is back in the Supercars spotlight in 2025 and he is determined to make the most of his unexpected shot.

After not being seen since 2023, Best will partner Aaron Cameron in the #3 CoolDrive Blanchard Racing Team Mustang in the enduros this year.

It will be his fourth endurance campaign and seemingly most unexpected.

His last three were all with Tickford, having represented the team at Super2 level, but since a third runner-up finish in a row in the Development series, he has hardly been seen.

Best has had a handful of Porsche Carrera Cup starts and even got

a drive in Germany, while he also competed in the recent Bathurst 6 Hour.

As a whole, it appeared Best was becoming one of the great 'what-if' stories of recent Supercars history.

However, he is back and is determined to give it everything.

"I was definitely worried (Supercars would not happen) at times, but I also explored other avenues like the cool Porsche opportunity I got in Germany with EMA," he told *Auto Action*.

"It was quite frustrating – especially seeing some of the guys you have raced against door to door and beaten make the step up and do well. Meanwhile, you are just sitting there watching, knowing you could do quite a good job, so it

has been a tough two years.

"I took a different path for a little bit, but have come back to Supercars and that is where I want to be and I am excited to be back in the paddock.

"I am fortunate to get the chance from the Blanchard family, and I am very grateful for the opportunity.

"A bit of time away does not hurt and coming back fresh should be good.

"I am leaving no stone unturned. That is my mindset, and I am looking forward to the challenge."

Even before the Aaron Love news, Best had been in conversation with BRT.

Now things have come to a reality, and he has already enjoyed a first drive of the #3 Mustang and, in just

10 laps of Winton, detected a massive difference in the Gen3 Ford from 2023 to 2025.

"BRT has copped a lot of criticism, but they are turning things around and the team is putting in a lot of work and it is showing," Best said.

"The car felt great, and it is a credit to them.

"I only drove Gen3 in the first year and it was cool to see the cars come a long way and take a step forward in the right direction since then.

"The engine mapping and everything feels more refined like a proper race car."

Best made it clear he is using the co-drive as an 'audition' for a full-time seat in 2026.

Thomas Miles 🏁

Zak Best – back in the Supercars contest with Blanchard Racing.
Image: BRT



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Aussie Senna Agius has broken through for his first win in the frantic world of Moto2.
Image: GOLD AND GOOSE

AWESOME AGIUS TAKES MAIDEN MOTO2 WIN

AUSTRALIA TEEN Senna Agius is a rider for the occasion – having taken his first Moto2 podium on home soil last year, he has scored a breakthrough first win at an unforgettable British Grand Prix.

The Moto2 race at Silverstone had it all and ended in unforgettable fashion with Agius going from third to first in the final three corners to snatch it.

The 19-year-old celebrated in style, swearing and performing a shoey on the podium with the Aussie flag around his neck – but he did not care because he is a winner in his 36th start.

Agius emerged victorious

from an enthralling four-way battle with Aron Canet, Diogo Moreira and David Alonso.

After they squabbled throughout around the sweeping Silverstone, Agius found himself third behind the battling Moreira and Alonso as they completed the Hanger Straight for the final time. But when the top two ran side-by-side into Vale, they ran slightly wide, which opened the door for Agius.

He took it with both hands, sliding beneath the pair and snatching an unforgettable victory.

“I honestly can’t believe it,” said the Intact GP rider.

“It really hasn’t sunk in yet, grand prix winner sounds pretty

f***ing good to me, mate!

“I battled so hard during the race. When Alonso went for Aron, I saw Aron square him up, and I went ‘this is going to go bad,’ so I waited, let the brake off, and I couldn’t believe it.

“All my family watching back home ... I wish they were here to celebrate with me. I’m so proud of everyone and it hasn’t sunk in, but I’m just so happy.”

The win is the highlight of a career-best season for Agius, who also stood on the podium at Thailand and Spain, to sit sixth in the standings ahead of Aragon this weekend.

Thomas Miles 🏁

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SPORTS SEDANS HEADING FOR THE PAPERCLIP

ROUND 2 of the National Sports Sedans series sees a renewed push into QLD for just the second visit in five years to Queensland Raceway on May 30 - June 1.

And whilst this round won't have the big numbers seen at the wet SMP opener, there is still a quality field of machines heading north to the refurbished Tony Quinn owned 'Paperclip' track.

And once again, it can also be viewed on 7plus.

Whilst it's always been harder to get a big state contingent of machines in Queensland, there's still two newcomers coming on board, whilst the series leader Geoff Taunton will be looking to extend his lead after taking out the Sydney affair.

The relatively small field of 12 - most of which are hitting the road to get there - with drivers such as the Ingram brothers missing out for this round, as well as Steve Lacey who can't make the trip on medical grounds.

Brad Shields is also another to unfortunately withdraw

The locals include the likes of series regular Ashley Jarvis in his Monaro, whilst local Tim Triton will also be making his debut in the well-known Honda Prelude



After a recent visit to a state event at QR to sharpen up, series leader Geoff Taunton starts as favourite. Image: MTR IMAGES

that was built by Derek van Zelm. The machine used to find regular championship success in the Vic State series.

There's also Daniel Crompton in Phil Crompton's Mustang that will likely run up the front.

Todd O'Brien is also coming with a new 6L MARC Gen1 Mazda V8 joining in, whilst Micheal Rowell can also be considered a debutant in his IRC SS Mustang after his mechanical issues at SMP.

It's also a big round for Steve Tamasi, whose swift Holden Calibra looked the goods at SMP, winning at the wet opening round before a Race 3 retirement.

Nick Smith is another to continue his series return in the smaller

capacity turbo Mazda RX7, whilst it's a huge round for young Cadel Evans in the new John Gourlay Audi.

The highly talented 17-year old was held back in the wet at SMP, but the machine returns after getting some vital rear wing adjustment that should see it as highly competitive.

He's a good chance to take his first national win, and is certainly one to watch for the future, especially in the quality of the machine that he's piloting.

Series manager Michael Robinson has also sorted out his sensor issues in the Monaro with it also having spent some time on the dyno, whilst, in some

good news for the future, his new Mustang is also nearing completion.

In terms of how the season is progressing, Robinson says that this year sees the series in a bit of a holding pattern.

"I think we're in a bit of an unknown time at the moment, but we're not the only category struggling with numbers at the moment," he told *Auto Action*.

"It's not unusual in Queensland for us - it presents the hardest travel round this year, whilst the next round at Winton should see a substantial pick up in numbers. The likes of the Ingram brothers and Ryan Humfrey should be back also.

"SMP was quite good but it was a bit wet. And with Taunton taking the cake in his green SS, he's certainly looking the one to beat this year."

There is plenty of action to be had for the SRO Motorsports Australia round, which is also the first time for the Sports Sedans on its bill. The National Sports Sedans will be on track for three practice sessions, a Saturday morning Qualifying, and three 23 minute races.

TW Neal 🏁

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EXTENDED BREAK FOR GARWOOD CAPRI

AFTER A solid debut in Tasmania, fans will have to wait a little longer to see the Adam Garwood Ford Capri return to Touring Car Masters.

Having raced with the #1 for the first time at the recent Symmons Plains round, Garwood had hoped to return at the following round at Darwin's Hidden Valley on June 19-22.

However, the reigning champion will be forced to wait until September's trip to The Bend after it emerged he was lucky to even complete the weekend in the revamped Capri his father Greg has raced over the years.

"Overall it was a good learning weekend. We were down a bit of

power and found some engine issues so we were lucky to make it out of the weekend," Garwood told *Auto Action*.

"We had a cracked piston and damaged piston ring.

"It happened on the Saturday night when we were doing some engine maintenance so we just nursed it through Sunday.

"We had planned on running in Darwin but won't get pistons for it so that has turned into a bit of a nightmare – but it could have been worse.

"We will now aim for the following round at The Bend"

Despite the drama, Garwood showed solid pace in the nimble Capri and even won on debut in

fairytale fashion in the Trophy Race.

However, he had to settle for fourth in the first championship sprint, not having quite the same legs as Steven Johnson and Joel Heinrich.

After the red-flagged Race 2, not one, but two flat tyres proved costly in the finale.

But having dived into Symmons Plains with minimal track time, Garwood knows he will be better for the run and will fight next time.

"We changed a lot in the Capri to make it align with the rules and due to parts not arriving in time we did not get to test the car so we went in pretty blind which made it hard," Garwood said.

"Each session we got better but

the second race red flag did not help.

"By the end of the weekend we were really good in the parts of the track where there were not any straights.

"It is good under brakes and turns and handles well. If we can get some straight line speed we should be a bit faster.

"We have a good direction where we need to head to mix it up with Steven, Joel and Ryan.

"It would have been great if the Trophy Race was a points paying one but it was still amazing to race at home with the #1 – a special feeling, but now keen to get after it more often."

Thomas Miles 🏁

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JOHN SIDNEY (1944–2025) A LEGEND OF AUSTRALIAN MOTORSPORT

JOHN SIDNEY, one of the sharpest minds in Australian motorsport, passed away early last week at age 81.

From the dirt tracks of Victoria to the high banks of the Calder Thunderdome, Sidney's influence reshaped Speedway, Sprintcars, and Australian NASCAR alike. More than just a team owner and engineer, he was a visionary who earned the respect of a generation of racers.

Born in 1944, Sidney got his start turning spanners at 17, apprenticing under noted race engineer Jack Godbehear. Just two years later, he was racing Speedway Sedans, winning the Victorian Production Car Title in 1967 in a Chrysler Valiant he tuned himself. That same year, he opened Improved Motors, beginning a decades-long journey of engine building and chassis setup that would come to define his career.

Though talented behind the wheel, Sidney soon gravitated to the garage. Through the 1970s and '80s, his Melbourne-based workshop became legendary. He built engines and Sprintcar chassis under the OTR (Oval Track Racing) brand and quickly developed a reputation for technical excellence.

"We've made four ram-tube combinations – different lengths, different tapers – that we will be trying on the engine dyno," he explained in a 2000 interview, showcasing his meticulous and experimental approach.

It was in the mid-1980s, though, that Sidney found his most enduring



John and Max – at the Speedway and (below) the Australian Motorsport Hall of Fame investiture.



partnership – with a young Sprintcar talent named Max Dumesny. Their debut year in 1984 was an immediate success, with wins in both the Victorian and South Australian Sprintcar Championships.

Over the next decade, their alliance flourished. With Sidney building

thspengines and calling the strategy, Dumesny claimed three World Series Sprintcars titles, two Australian Sprintcar Championships, and back-to-back wins in the Grand Annual Sprintcar Classic at Warrnambool.

Sidney wasn't just along for the ride – he was the force behind it. "Sidney

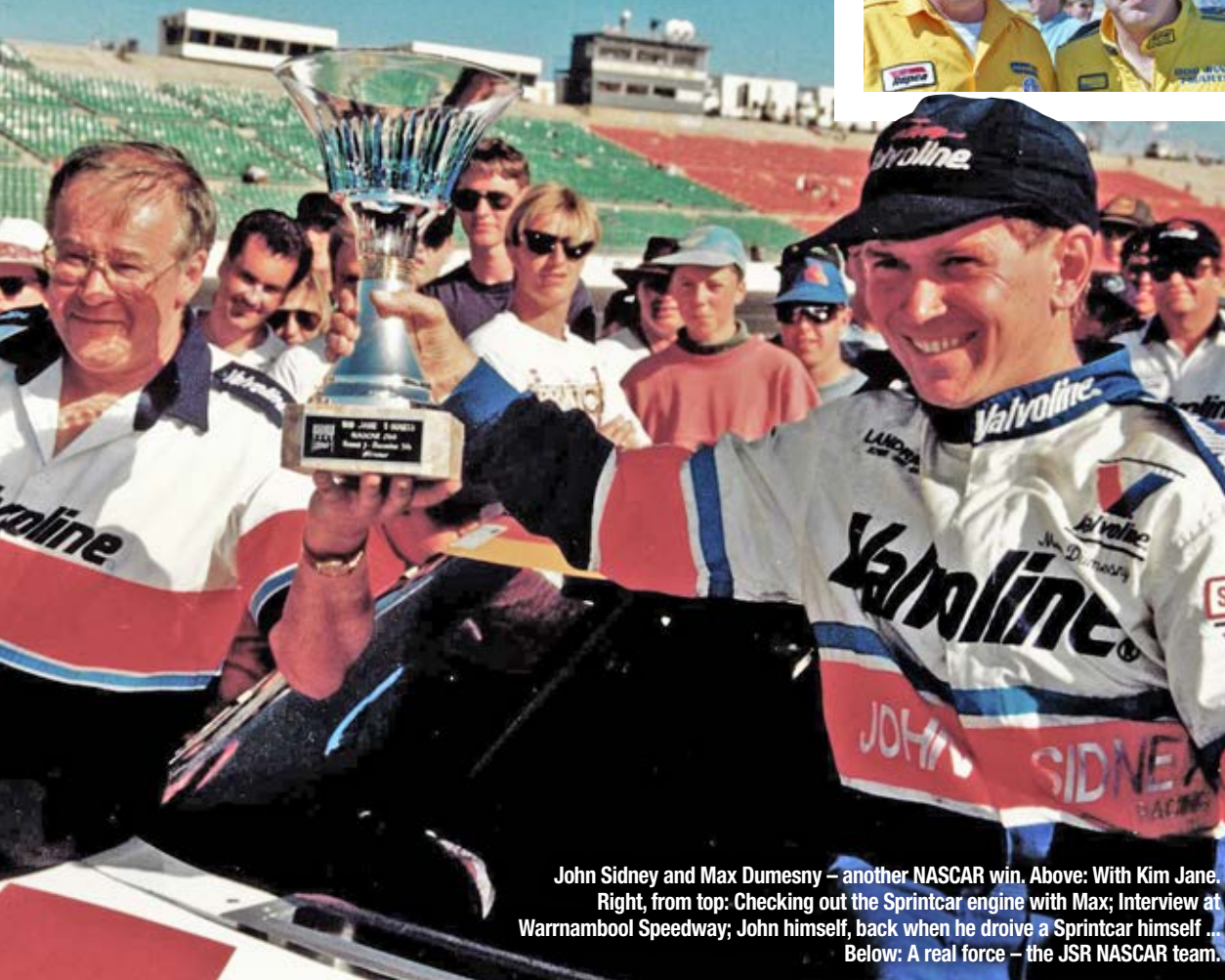


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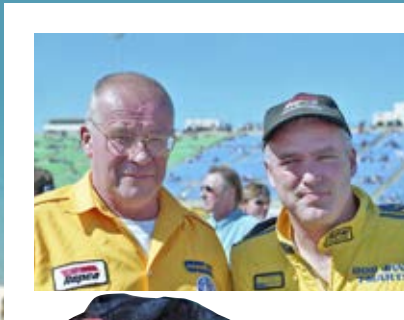
has been a mainstay of speedway racing in Australia since the 1960s, initially as a title-winning driver himself before focusing on car preparation and design," read his Australian Motorsport Hall of Fame citation. His innovations – particularly the introduction of aerodynamic wings in Australian Sprintcars – helped shape the future of the discipline.

Sidney's influence extended far beyond the clay. When Bob Jane launched the Calder Park Thunderdome in 1987 to bring NASCAR-style racing to Australia, Sidney didn't just follow – he led. He adapted his Sprintcar strategies to Stock Car racing, introducing undercuts, overcuts, and mid-race refuelling during Safety Cars – tactics previously unheard of locally.

"Undercut and overcut, refuelling under Safety Car conditions – all were foreign concepts. Sidney used them



John Sidney and Max Dumesny – another NASCAR win. Above: With Kim Jane. Right, from top: Checking out the Sprintcar engine with Max; Interview at Warrambool Speedway; John himself, back when he drove a Sprintcar himself. Below: A real force – the JSR NASCAR team.



wisely and won," the Hall of Fame noted.

With JSR – John Sidney Racing – he built the most successful team in Australian NASCAR history.

Dumesny won the 1992/93 national championship with Sidney as crew chief. Barry Graham followed, with titles in 1993 and 1994. Then came Kim Jane, who won four straight championships from 1996 to 2000. Between 1993 and 1995 alone, Dumesny won nine of 12 Thunderdome races.

Sidney's operation was the benchmark. "Always thought the John Sidney cars were the best presented in the paddock," one former rival said. Whether in the pits or back in the shop, his attention to detail was relentless.

In the mid-1990s, Sidney briefly ventured into touring cars, buying an ex-Glenn Seton Racing Falcon and entering the 1996 Australian Touring Car Championship with Dumesny.



Though results were modest – Dumesny finished 16th – it was proof that Sidney was never afraid to tackle new challenges. Glenn Seton's Ford team later used Sidney-built engines, further underlining his respect in circuit racing circles.

Into the 2000s, JSR scaled back but never truly disappeared. Sidney kept building engines – Sprintcars, Drag cars, even club racers. His workshop remained a hub of knowledge, a place

where young drivers and mechanics could come for advice, parts, or simply a pep talk.

As Dumesny put it: "I knew I could trust anything John put under me." That trust was earned over decades of calm, methodical preparation, and a record of delivering race-winning machines.

In 2008, John Sidney was inducted into the Australian Speedway Hall of Fame. In 2025, he received motorsport's highest honour—induction

into the Australian Motorsport Hall of Fame, during Australian Grand Prix week in Melbourne.

"I didn't realise how big a deal this was!" he said at the time, typically humble. "I'm not a high profile person at all, so when I look at these people that I'm here with, it's very humbling."

Sidney officially closed the doors on JSR in 2024, joking, "I'm out of fuel!"

But he kept tinkering, kept helping, and kept showing up at the track. Even in his final months, his presence was felt throughout the paddock.

On May 19, John Sidney passed away, leaving behind a legacy that shaped nearly every form of Australian motorsport.

Tributes poured in. Dumesny described him as "the best I've worked with." Others called him "a genius with a spanner," and "the calmest guy in the pits when everything else was going wrong."

He's survived by his family and the extended JSR family – mechanics, drivers, and fans who understood what he gave to the sport. From a dusty speedway oval to the roar of V8s at 300 km/h, John Sidney's fingerprints are all over Australian racing history.

Vale John Sidney – engineer, strategist, gentleman. One of a kind.

Andrew Clarke 🏁

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IN THIS ISSUE:

After three straight Grand Prix wins Australia's Oscar Piastri is leading the Formula 1 World Championship for McLaren – can he go all the way in just his third year?

Our main feature has Auto Action's F1 man on the ground Luis Vasconcelos sitting down for a one-on-one interview with the driver that's on everyone's tongue ...

Despite Dick Johnson Racing being replaced as Supercars Ford homologation team, the nation's most famous team is engaged in a positive direction that hopes will take its back to pinnacle. Andrew Clarke talks with DJR Team Boss David Noble about the rebuild.

Our Premium News Extra has all the latest from across the globe and at home...

It has been a long wait, but Targa Tasmania is back in 2025. CEO Mark Perry gives his own insights into the resurrection of Australia's Ultimate Tarmac Rally.

Also, McLaren are going back to Le Mans. Timothy W Neal takes a look at Papaya's history with Circuit de la Sarthe from its spiritual Kiwi founder to its unlikely triumph...

This latest edition is packed with a wide range of features for every rev head's tastes...

After overseeing some huge changes and obstacles in Supercars, Andrew Clarke finds out from the horse's mouth why CEO Shane Howard is moving into a new role, as he reflects on what's been and what's to come.

40 years on, we reflect on Ayrton Senna's first F1 win, in 1985. In the rain soaked grandstands at Portugal's Estoril, Auto Action's Luis Vasconcelos was there to witness the birth of a legend...

With the 109th Indianapolis 500 around the next corner, Auto Action looks into the rich Antipodean history of the Greatest Spectacle in Racing, from its beginning to the current crop of contenders.

Auto Action loves its own backyard, and our National Wrap covers everything from dirt stuff to the action on the circuit...

Our own Thomas Miles looks into one of the greatest ever Bathurst 6 Hour comebacks, and how two close mates realised a dream on the hallowed mountain.

You won't find more print Speedway coverage anywhere else in Australia ... Auto Action has an in-depth review of another dirt season run and done, with all the highlights of a sensational 2024/2025 campaign.

Plus, all the coverage from around the States, as well as 2025's opening SpeedSeries rounds with GT, Trans Am, and more...

The Time Machine is here. Timothy W Neal has a deep dive into the lost and forgotten teams, machines, and almost-rans. First up, it's the Le Mans bid of TVR, a true British underdog!

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Image: RED BULL CONTENT POOL

CHUCKY THE SERIAL WINNER

AUSSIE RALLYGP rider Daniel 'Chucky' Sanders has obliterated the field in the third round of the FIM World Rally-Raid Championship, taking his KTM 450 to a third straight victory in South Africa from May 18-24.

Sanders took a bag of records on his way to a 8min 55sec win over factory teammate Luciano Benavides and gave himself a healthy 35-point cushion at the top of the world standings.

His three stage wins at the debut South African Safari Rally saw him become the all-time chart-topper in W2RC stage wins (19) and the most specials won in a single season (11). There are still two rounds remaining, in Portugal and Morocco.

In addition, he's the first to claim three consecutive wins in a season (Dakar, Abu Dhabi, South Africa), and

his winning streak has extended to four after winning the Rallye du Maroc at the end of 2024. But seeing as that was a comeback from a year-long injury, his streak is five, dating back to his win in Sonoro, Mexico, in 2023.

"We've just won the South African Safari Rally to make it three races in a row this year!" Sanders began.

"What a start to the season, I couldn't have asked for anything better. Every day has been different, from the navigation to the terrain, some of it has been crazy but I've really enjoyed my first time here.

"It feels great to put KTM on the top step again, and I'm excited to celebrate with the team. We've put in so much work over the past year to get to this point, so it's great that it's all paying off and I'm having so much fun riding this bike.

"My goal is of course to win the championship, and I'm feeling good for Portugal and Morocco later in the year. I'll give it my all as always!"

Up until SA, Sanders' closest opponent had been Honda Spaniard Tosha Schareina, but a race-ending hand injury after Stage 1 saw Chucky take full advantage.

After Sanders took out his third straight Prologue win of the season, things turned sour across the first 555 km Stage after he lost six minutes from navigational issues, whilst a further two-minute penalty for a missed waypoint saw him end the day over three minutes back.

But with 356 km on the clock for Stage 2, Sanders finished four minutes up on the leading Ross Branch to shoot into the lead, before stretching the lead over the next with another Stage win, as well

as scooping the penultimate, and solidifying the win with a runner's up place across the final 111 km special.

The championship lead for Sanders has him well poised to become just the second Australian to win the world title after Toby Price claimed it in 2018.

And the future bodes well, with the field heading to another brand new event – the BP Ultimate Rally-Raid Portugal, covering 1,700 km with more than 1,000 of them timed – on September 22-28.

TW Neal 🇦🇺

FIM WORLD RALLY-RAID STANDINGS AFTER 3 ROUNDS

1. Daniel Sanders (AUS), KTM, 88 points
2. Luciano Benavides (ARG), KTM, 53 pts
3. Ricky Brabec (USA), Honda, 53 pts
4. Adrien Van Beveren (FRA), Honda, 48 pts
5. Tosha Schareina (ESP), Honda, 46 pts

GILL GOES BACK-TO-BACK IN JWRC

THE SECOND outing for the FIA Junior World Rally Championship saw teams heading for the Rally de Portugal and, once again, Aussies Taylor Gill and Dan Brkic sensationally came out on top.

Gill put in a measured drive from the front of the field to back up his win in Sweden, with his preferred gravel surface paying dividends with a 13.4-second win over title rival Mille Johansson.

Racing in their M-Sport Ford Fiesta Rally 3 machine, funded by the FIA Rally Star program, Gill now has three wins in two seasons after topping Rally Estonia in 2024.

The win was also his second straight victory in the WRC3 class, as he strives to take out the five round championship after going close last year and further advance with some funded WRC2 drives in 2026.

Heading into Round 3, Gill now finds himself equal on points but on top of the JWRC table with 59 points, having taken the full 25 plus seven bonus stage points, whilst Johansson's weight of stage wins has helped him keep even on the table with Gill.

Gill first gained the ascendency early



Gill and Brkic are continuing their spectacular run ...

on Friday with some storming stage wins and, when the Swede flipped his Fiesta onto its roof during SS4, Gill and Brkic kept the foot down to lead by over one minute at day's end.

The Aussies would then nurse that lead with some composed stages through Saturday, whilst they'd finish with seven stage wins across the 24 timed challenges.

"What a tough weekend. So long and so demanding, both physically and mentally," Gill said of the win.

"I'm really proud of the job we did. We really came out of the box firing on Friday morning and controlled the rally from there.

"Big thanks to everyone who gave me this opportunity. Dan did a mega job this weekend, and there are so

many people behind the scenes who contributed to this result. I'm just so happy right now."

The big challenge of Greece is now ahead of the pair, with its highly abrasive gravel roads set to make it a battle of attrition for the pair against their quick counterpart, with the Acropolis Rally Greece taking place on June 26-29. **TW Neal** 🚩

GB3 AUSSIES TAKE MAIDENS IN ZANDVOORT

THE SECOND round of the British GB3 Championship headed for the continent in May, with both Alex Ninovic and Patrick Heuzenroeder scoring maiden category wins at Zandvoort in the Netherlands.

Leaving the Dutch dunes, the top three spots are now filled with Aussie drivers, with Gianmarco Pradel also sitting in fifth.

Noah Lisle (third in the championship) was the other to feature but couldn't crack the podium, with Heuzenroeder also taking a P2, whilst Pradel left with a third place in the opener.

Heuzenroeder and Ninovic also took the two pole positions available, with both converting from the front row in Races 1 and 2 respectively, whilst Heuzenroeder's podium also came in Race 2.

Rodin's Ninovic - a former national KA3 champion and British F4 runner-up in 2024 - was relieved to get his GB3 breakthrough win after fighting off the Exel Aussie.

"It's definitely a weekend of Aussies at the front! I'm quite happy with the result - to come away with the win in Race 2 is really good and shows all the work we've been putting in has paid off," he said.

"It was a tough race keeping Pat off our back but I managed to do the best I could and come away with the win.

"Hopefully this is the first of many ... I'm looking forward to going to Spa."

In turn, the Race 1 winner and pole man was equally happy, with it also being Xcel Raciung's first win in GB3.

"I'm really happy with that, happy with the car and a great job from the



Alex Ninovic - among the Aussie winners!

team, it's Xcel's first win in GB3," said Heuzenroeder.

"It means a lot to earn Xcel's first win. We've worked hard in pre-season and, credit to them, they've come in with a new car, a new championship for them and they've delivered. So I'm really

happy with that."

Looking forward, the GB3 grid heads to Belgium for the second of four intercontinental rounds for the season, with Spa Francorchamps hosting them on May 31 - June 1.

TW Neal 🚩

TCM MIRACLES AT WORK

SOME MIRACLES have been performed by the racing community to ensure Jude Bargwanna and possibly even Andrew Fisher's damaged cars will take on the next Touring Car Masters round at Darwin.

Bargwanna and Fisher were part of a heavy three-car crash that also involved Scott Cameron in the shortened second race of the recent round in Tasmania.

After some initial fears, there is increasing likelihood that Jesus Racing may overcome the odds and get the 'Mary' Torana back on track.

The early diagnosis of the damage left Fisher worried he may have had to resort to the XY Falcon he calls 'Abigail'.

But thanks to the TCM community banding together, there is a chance the Torana could somehow make it to Hidden Valley.

"In the first week I did not even know if it would be repairable to be honest," Fisher told *Auto Action*.

"It has been a case of all hands on deck and we are still prepping Abigail just in case, but we are now quite hopeful of getting to Darwin in it which would be quite extraordinary.

"Everybody is doing what they can, Gary (O'Brien) and his team have been amazing and they will give up their weekend for us, so their families have been incredible.

"Derek Van Zelm in Melbourne has been amazing doing the Watts link, sway bar, hub and other stuff.

"Jim Pollicina and Dean Lillie sorted



Mary's carers: Steve Hearn (painter and body) Brenton Farinski (team leader) Alan Royall (body) Will Lindrea (panel beater) Mick Taylor (panel beater) John Laitala (coach builder) Matt Turner (fabricator) Will Beasy (fabricator).

the oil cooler and inner guard and Adam De Borre's helping us with the shocks because we snapped one in half and Mick Zukanovic is sorting the diff housing.

"My boys, who are all volunteers, are doing what they can.

"I want to thank the amazing guys at Retro Muscle Cars, Jesus Racing and the TCM and motorsport community for going above and beyond because, without their help, we would not be a chance of getting to Darwin."

Meanwhile, Whiteline Racing will get Cameron's Camaro to Hidden Valley and the Duggan Family Racing is also confident of getting Bargwanna's Carlton Zero VB Commodore back despite a head-on

impact with the tyres at close to 40G.

Gary O'Brien's workshop has been hard at work, with the car having been stripped down and work focused around the left chassis rail.

Bargwanna was thrilled to confirm the Holden should be repaired by the end of this week.

"We were pretty lucky because we hit the wall at 120kmh and a 35-40G impact ... so we are pretty lucky," Bargwanna told *Auto Action*.

"The great news is it will all be done by the end of this week and if we have enough time we could even sneak in a test day before Darwin.

"Gary and his team have done a stellar job. They are wizards of the panel beating industry and we thank them so much for time and

commitment they have put in.

"Once the car came back after the weekend it was stripped down - the car was better than we'd thought.

"What they have done from there is pull the front rail out and squared the car back up. They did all that on the chassis jig over the past couple of days and cut the front chassis rail on the left-hand side and replaced that because that was where the main impact was hit.

"Now it is off the chassis jig and in the fabrication room getting spot welded up with the front end coming back on ..."

The next TCM round is Darwin, sharing the spotlight with the Supercars on June 20-22.

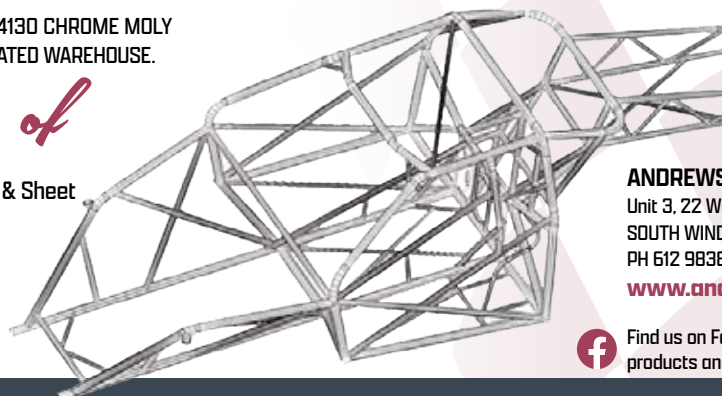
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IT'S TIME, BECAUSE IT'S GETTING EMBARRASSING

IT'S TIME to draw a line in the sand.

Formula 1 cannot retain credibility when a real race track like Imola is set to be dumped, yet the series is still prepared to cop the sheer embarrassment of an 'event' at Monaco.

Note I said 'event, not 'race'. Calling the Monaco GP a race is something that now risks a 'trades description' case ...

The extra, compulsory pit stop idea simply didn't work. Drivers were literally cruising around, slowing everyone behind them so that their team-mate, further up the road, could get a free pit stop.

Sorry, but that is not motor racing.

I'm a traditionalist and have always excused Monaco as the traditional event, the most traditional race, for all the reasons that keep on being regurgitated. But no more.

The top four finished in starting order – as usual. Well done Lando – but it was again won on Saturday (although for a second, with fronts locked into Turn 1, it was close to an embarrassing overshoot for the pole man ...).

F1 has certainly grown its audience significantly over recent years – since *Drive to Survive* added a whole new level of showbiz to it, attracting a wide new audience, including a lot of females.

Indeed, my daughter, who'd shown no interest, became an F1 fan. On Sunday night, though, she texted me an hour into it – "Monaco sucks" – and went to bed.

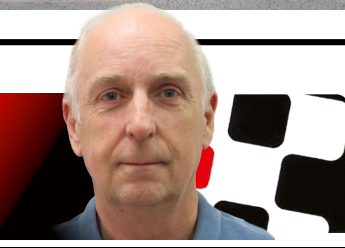
And despite the commentators and drivers and team bosses efforts to find some positivity (don't want to upset MBS, do we!), it was pretty glum post-race.



First time up the hill to Casino Square. An hour and 40 minutes later, nothing had changed, while the mid-field teams put on some sort of pantomime ... Images: GETTY IMAGES

with Chris Lambden

CL ON CALL



"Not the way we want to race," said the Williams duo and their boss. And so on.

It's clear. Something has to change; otherwise Monaco has to go.

So what could be done to justify the 'big show' staying on the bill, other than its glam corporate status?

The problem is the track. The tax-free haven might need to introduce a modest levy (that's Victorian state-speak for tax!) to fund some significant changes to it, to create something with two or more genuine passing opportunities. You know, a *race* track.

Obviously, it's not easy – Monaco's a tightly packed little place. There have been some suggestions that there are some options if the track turned left (instead of right) before the tunnel, utilised some additional land/roads,

then doubled back to the tunnel. Maybe, but only if it created real passing spots – and I have no idea whether there are any other alternate layouts that could work. But imagine diving into the tunnel a fair bit quicker than now ...

Here's a suggestion that'll really give the risk management/track inspection committee at the FIA palpitations ... but, as another option, how about getting rid of that stop-go chicane after the tunnel (or at least reverting it to the quick flat-out left-right that used to exist).

That would (especially with some DRS) turn the next corner, Tabac, into a genuine passing option – braking from pretty decent speed.

Too fast, I hear the RMs (risk managers) saying. Nowhere to go if it goes wrong – just a barrier on the outside ...

Really? If you'd turned the TV back on a few hours after Lando took the chequer you'd have seen a field of Indycars piling into Turn 1 at something like 350kph – that's right, 350 big-ones – with just 'Safer barrier' between them and the concrete.

That, my friends, is motor racing. And, thanks to the significant advances in the modern single-seater race car, it's safer than ever (reference Scott McLaughlin's spectacular practice shunt).

I'd guess that many AA readers will be like me – that is, love the tradition and atmosphere of Monaco, but ...

The events of Sunday have brought F1 to that line in the sand moment and I wonder

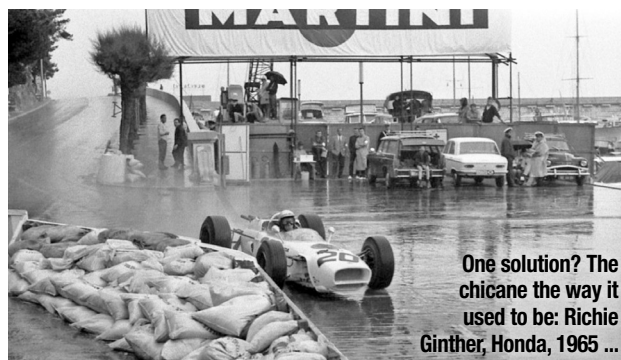
if the movers and shakers have the you-know-whats to actually take it on.

And if it's going to take some time to get significant changes agreed and done, then how about ... remember when the F1 race at Imola was known as the San Marino Grand Prix?

That's right – the San Marino Grand Prix wasn't run in the nearby tiny principality of San Marino from 1981 to 2006; it was run ... in Italy, at Imola.

So, if Monaco needs time, or a bit of subtle pressure, why not run the 2026 Monaco Grand Prix at Imola? Just once. It's only just up the road – a quick boat then chopper ride for the glitterati ...

Maybe. But, as one famous polly once said, "it's time." 🇮🇹



One solution? The chicane the way it used to be: Richie Ginther, Honda, 1965 ...

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PRICE'S 'FUN' ARC DEBUT

AUSTRALIAN DAKAR LEGEND TOBY PRICE TOOK HIS FOUR-WHEEL JOURNEY TO A NEW LEVEL BY MAKING HIS ARC DEBUT AT THE FOREST RALLY AND HE LEFT WITH A GRIN FROM EAR TO EAR ...

PRICE WAS part of the WA ARC round, debuting and winning the one-make Subaru WRX Challenge.

The Dakar Rally legend, driving for Maximum Motorsport, used it as a platform to carry on his four-wheel journey as it increasingly includes cars as well as trucks.

Whilst it was just a three-driver field, Price still made a statement in his development, having beaten experienced rally driver and mentor Glenn Brinkman by two and a half minutes.

It shows the strides he is making on four

wheels alongside young co-driver Holly Kilbride, having also recently won the Rally of the Heartland in South Australia.

Price said the experienced ticked all the boxes and believes the new class is a great entry point into ARC.

"It was unreal. I was grinning from ear to ear and had a lot of fun in the car," he told *Auto Action*.

"The Subaru WRX Challenge is a unique class and it is a great door opening for people to jump in and do some rallying.

"I am stoked with the result – and a big thank

you to all the crew for making it happen.

"It is a great stepping stone to get your feet in the door and work out how rallying is run and perfecting the pace notes."

Price's two previous rallies had been in a Mitsubishi Evo, so there was a big adjustment to make in the Subaru.

"It was a big change. I went from an H-pattern to sequential gearbox in the WRX.

"Those little things you miss a little bit, but it is good to learn the fundamentals.

"It took me the first

couple of stages to adjust but once I started to get my head around the car and how it reacts, I improved each stage.

"I felt comfortable in the car and Holly did a great job in the navi seat to keep us pointing in the right direction."

As he heads to America to take on the 57th Baja 500 with Paul Weel, Price has not ruled out the prospect of coming back to the ARC.

"It was a great challenge and looking forward to another go down the track, potentially – you never know," he said.

Thomas Miles 🏆



Image: GETTY IMAGES

OF FINE MARGINS, APPLES AND PEARS

ONE OF the areas where McLaren boss Andrea Stella has been a revelation for the Formula 1 media in general is in communication.

Those who knew him well before – and the Italian being a man who always shied away from protagonism, very few had even exchanged one word with him – were aware of what they were getting once Stella became McLaren's Team Principal.

For the wider Formula 1 community, though, his ability to communicate and his command of the English language have been a revelation.

As Oscar Piastri admitted in his latest exclusive interview (see current *Auto Action Premium* magazine), you don't get short answers from Stella – the downside being that meetings may last longer than you wished!

But the big upside is that the Italian leaves no stone unturned and you get a very detailed answer to whatever you ask.

On the subject of Max Verstappen's domination at Imola, Stella gave the perfect

with Luis Vasconcelos

F1 INSIDER



example of how analytical his brain is – but while his knowledge of the English language is extraordinary, some idiomatic expressions still elude him, as we saw and heard in Monaco.

Asked if the team had been able to get to the bottom of the MCL39's comparative poor performance in Imola, Stella translated an Italian expression into English, saying "don't compare apples and pears," rather than using the more common "apples and oranges." So there's still room for improvement on his knowledge of the language!

This anecdote, of course, doesn't detract from the perfect analysis Stella then offered and that we're borrowing for this column, as the details he provided were, obviously, spot on.

The Italian pointed out that, "Imola belongs to the category of Saudi and Japan – high-

speed corners, narrow tracks. If we look at those circuits, pole position was for Red Bull and, in Saudi, if it wasn't for the penalty, Max would have won the race.

"If we look at the pace between McLaren and Red Bull in Japan and in Saudi, for me the picture is very consistent with the picture we had in Imola. And if we look at the gap between McLaren and Mercedes or Ferrari, the picture is very consistent with what we had in Imola."

In his usual friendly and quiet way, the Italian also took a dig at the way some people jump into conclusions too quickly, saying that "I think there's a tendency to compare apples and pears, like my school teacher always said. He told us "make sure you are specific, analytical, precise in how you use information," but here we're comparing apples and pears."

The data completely validates his point and dispels the theories that McLaren had lost performance after being forced to comply with a new Technical Regulation.

But Stella decided to go into even more detail, insisting that "if we compare the race in Imola with the race in Miami, we are comparing an apple with a pear," before adding that "Miami is a low-speed circuit and with all the investment we have done from an aerodynamic development point of view, our car has improved massively in these low-speed corners.

"If we want to compare Miami, let's look back at China, where the two McLarens disappeared and got P1 and P2.

"Or, you want to compare with Bahrain, another low-speed circuit, where Oscar dominated the race. Lando started P6 with the penalty and still managed to recover positions.

"So, if we compare the circuits that belong to the apples and the circuits that belong to the pears, I think you can derive your own implications in terms of where

the factual assessment from a technical point of view is."

Then, unable to resist taking a dig at Red Bull and Christian Horner, as well as some of the British press, he concluded that "Formula One is a technical business, but obviously *some* people are good at dropping baits here and there, moving away from the technical facts ... so it's up to you whether you take the bait or not ..."

Mind you, even before the start of the Monaco Grand Prix, Stella had predicted Ferrari would be very strong competition and warned that the same will happen in Baku, so the man clearly knows what he's talking about.

And with his peculiar humor, asked if Monaco was a pear or an apple, he answered that "it's a peach!"

So fine are the margins in Formula 1 these days that track characteristics and tyre compounds can make or break your weekend – but it's the way you perform when the conditions are the most unfavorable to you that will determine the final outcome of this year's Formula 1 World Championship. 🍑



Newey has been catching up with Alonso – at the track. Image: GETTY IMAGES

NEWKEY DAMPENS EARLY ASTON EXPECTATIONS

WIND TUNNEL IS A1 BUT TWO-YEAR'S WORK NEEDED ON SIMULATOR ...

DESIGN GURU Adrian Newey is doing his best to cool Aston Martin's expectations for 2026, when the first car he's designing for Lawrence Stroll's team will be on track, powered by Honda.

In the pits at Monaco, his first Grand Prix in green, Newey made it clear that the team's hardware is still miles away from the quality the front-running squads already have and has pinpointed the simulator as the biggest handicap his new team has.

Making no bones about it, Newey stated that "I think it's fair to say that some of our tools are weak – particularly the 'driver in the loop' simulator.

It needs a lot of work, because it's



Aston's new wind tunnel is top shelf – but the simulator isn't yet up to Newey standard ...

not correlating at all at the moment, which is a fundamental research tool.

Not having that is a limitation, but we've obviously got to work around it in the meantime. And then sort out a

plan to get it to where it needs to be. "But that's probably a two-year project, in truth."

Asked to elaborate on how much of a problem having a bellow par

simulator can be, Newey made it clear that "it is a handicap, but difficult to say how much.

"Driver in the loop simulators are used in two ways: one is a research tool – when you're looking at how you're going to design the following year's car, how you're going to put all the tools together to better model it.

"The other, is how you develop the set-up of the car, typically, especially for given race weekends.

"So, we're going to be a bit blind on that for some time. We've just got to try to use experience and best judgement. How successful that will be, time will tell."

The former Red Bull man made a point of saying that "everybody's

been very welcoming. It's been a very easy team to settle into.

"And I guess my first job has been, obviously, whilst designing and talking to everybody, to try and understand how the team works, its strengths and weaknesses, and kind-of work with the strengths and set out a plan to try and boost the weaknesses."

Coming from a team that is used to winning and has a very unique mentality, Newey pointed out that, at Aston Martin, "there's a lot of individually very, very good people. We just need to try to get them working together, perhaps in a slightly better organised way.

"And I think that's simply a result of, obviously, the roots of the team at Jordan, that became Force India, that became Racing Point, and was, as such, always a small but slightly over-performing team, to now – in a very short space of time, a very big team that, in truth, has been under-performing this year.

"And I think a lot of that is now just getting everybody to settle down and learn how to extract the most out of the individuals."

While the people that have been working for Aston Martin for a while have been delighted with the way the new wind tunnel is working, Newey, with his experience, as also explained that this crucial tool is still far from being as effective as needed.

"The genial engineer started off gently by admitting that "the factory's probably the best factory in Formula 1 ... and the wind tunnel is arguably the best wind tunnel in Formula 1," before pointing out that "wind tunnels are nowadays quite complicated tools, so it's still in a development process.

"Productivity's not quite there, because we're still working through it ... and a few other bits and pieces."

In conclusion, Newey made it clear that "ultimately, wind tunnels are a bit like engine dynos. You need them – and you'd rather have a really good wind tunnel compared to a not-so-good wind tunnel – but ultimately, it's not really the thing that makes the difference.

"It's the human element ... it's the design you put into it." ❏

... AND DOWNPLAYS CHANCES OF HIRING VERSTAPPEN

ASTON MARTIN'S number one recruit, Adrian Newey, has poured water on the likelihood of world champion Max Verstappen joining the big-budget team – for now.

A potential move from Max Verstappen to Aston Martin looked on the cards since it was announced that Newey was joining the Silverstone-based team.

But after the Dutchman has managed to hold his own against the McLaren duo in the first quarter of this season, the most likely scenario now points towards Verstappen staying with Red Bull for at least one more year – and Newey also seems to think it's too early for his former charge to reunite with him.

A big fan of the four-time world champion, Newey openly stated

at the weekend that "Max is clearly a phenomenal talent, and he's a supreme competitor," then expanding on that by adding "part of that means that Max likes to break things down to a simple common equation, if you like, and that is in this particular case choosing a team that he believes will deliver the fastest car.

"So if we're to ever attract Max, the first thing we have to do is make a fast car"

But he refused to give a timeline for that to happen, stating that "I've got absolutely no idea."

Later on, the name of the world champion came back into the conversation, with Newey repeating his view that "Max is, as I said earlier, a phenomenal driver, a phenomenal competitor," before closing the conversation by stating

that, "there's no point in pipe-dreaming about anything else from now."

Aston Martin, of course, has a two-time World Champion on board but Newey confesses he's had relatively little to do with Fernando Alonso until now.

The British engineer explained that "when it comes to working with Fernando, it's very early days, because, as you know, this is the first race I've attended."

Nevertheless, Newey conceded that "of course I've had discussions with Fernando at the factory, but I think it's only when you get to the race track that you really start to develop that relationship," before concluding that "I'm looking forward to that – developing a little bit this season, but particularly next season." ❏



Newey and Verstappen were the two key ingredients for Red Bull team success over the past three years ... Image: RED BULL CONTENT POOL

TWELFTH TEAM AT EMBRYONIC STAGE

FORMER FORCE India stalwart Otmar Szafnauer has publicly acknowledged he is actively trying to put together a new team to enter Formula 1 in the next few years, as there's still a 12th slot theoretically available in the field.

As there are no reports of any of the current 10 teams, or 2026 newcomers Cadillac, having interest in selling, starting a new team from scratch is the only way Szafnauer's project can come to fruition.

In a podcast for British website *the-race.com*, the American businessman has revealed that "we have the finances in place to enter Formula 1 and the financiers behind it are very serious people that have the financial wherewithal to be able to fund a Formula 1 team."

Furthermore, the man who got into Formula 1 with BAR and then worked for Honda and Force India in the team's many guises announced he's joining up forces with an undisclosed car manufacturer that is interesting in joining Grand Prix racing.

Szafnauer stated that "the car manufacturer that also wants to join



Szafnauer is confident he has the ingredients ...
Image: GETTY IMAGES

Formula 1's in place," adding that "it's just a matter of the timing being right to actually get the opportunity to start the 12th team."

The Romanian-born businessman has been a constant presence in the Formula 1 paddock in the last two years, since he was ousted from Alpine's team principal role and while initially he was offering help to Michael Andretti's project to enter the sport, for the last 18 months it has been clear Szafnauer has some big plans of his own.

While making it clear that his project is to start a new team from scratch, the former Honda man admitted that "perhaps in the near future there might be some for sale," explaining that "there are nine owners and they all have different outlooks on life – on Formula 1, on how long they want to be in, on the reasons they're in."

"Hopefully, and in the not too distant future, some of them will say 'You know what? I've had my time in Formula 1 – perhaps it's a

good time to sell!"

Revealing that "there's a difference somewhere between 10 and 30 per cent" on the cost of buying an existing team or starting a new one from scratch, Szafnauer hopes that, after the 2026 Concorde Agreement is signed, there will be people willing to sell. As he explained, "it's difficult when people aren't selling and I understand why – but there's a new Concorde coming that's all been agreed, so maybe things will change thereafter."

In conclusion, Szafnauer said that if he has to start from zero, "that probably takes two to three years from a standstill – but in those two-to-three years, if you put the right people together, you can also develop the simulation tools you need to be competitive, then, within three-to-four years, be competitive."

"I don't know when or if the process for a 12th team will open up, but if it does, I want to be ready. And if it opens up relatively soon, then 2028, 2029 would be a fair time-line to get racing ..."

HAMILTON PROUD HIS FELLOW

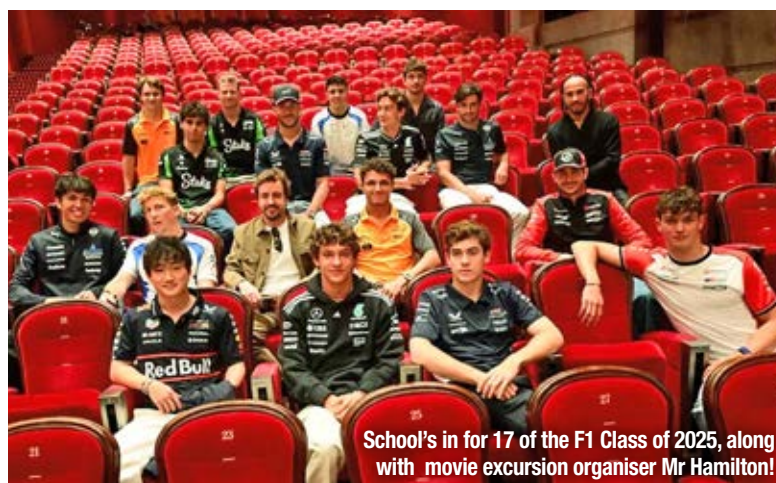
LEWIS HAMILTON was like a proud father at the private screening the Formula 1 drivers had of the movie he's co-produced with Apple Movies, but admitted he was nervously watching their reactions early on.

Lewis explained that, "it wasn't the first time I've seen it – I've seen it, like, 20 times already at least." He then added that "to come there and all of a sudden I've got all the drivers there ... I was sat in the middle and I was nervous."

"I was, like, 'they are all seeing it for the first time!' And it was great to look around and see some of the reactions from the drivers. I really care what the drivers think and I wanted them to think highly of it."

"I messaged them afterwards, saying that I welcome their honest opinions about it, because there's parts you'd be like."

"Hey, the timing may be off on a



School's in for 17 of the F1 Class of 2025, along with movie excursion organiser Mr Hamilton!

strategy stop or whatever it might be, but I think the great thing is that the sound is great, the image is incredible. It's something that's never been done before. So, it's something I'm really proud of!"

Hamilton didn't need to worry as there was only praise from his peers

as they spoke about that screening in Monaco on Thursday afternoon. With only Verstappen and Stroll missing the event, the other 18 drivers enjoyed the experience.

Fernando Alonso was happy to report the movie "was good," adding that "I like the movie, and I think it

represents quite well the Formula 1 part of it, and the sportive part of it, which is never a guarantee on these kinds of movies. If everything is fake, you don't feel that represents well what you do, but I think they kept that quite good, and hopefully the people enjoy it."

With drivers like Sainz confessing "there's a few Hollywood-esque moments the real fans will spot and laugh about," Alonso conceded that "there are a few of them, for sure – but it's a movie, it's not a documentary, so there were a couple of things that will never happen, but I would say that the majority, or nearly all of the movie, in terms of track action and things like that, was very, very original and very representative, so that was a very good thing."

The young Spaniard also admitted that "I truly enjoyed it," but warned that "for us Formula 1 experts, we're going

THE NUMBERS THAT DOOM IMOLA'S 2027 CHANCES

WITH THE 2026 Formula 1 calendar just days away from being announced, the promoters of the Emilia-Romagna Grand Prix already know their fate, as their race won't feature in next year's schedule, but that hasn't stopped them, the local authorities and the Italian government from keep on fighting to get their event back as soon as possible.

After all, last weekend's race boasted the highest number of spectators ever, as more than 242,000 people filled the Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari in the three days of running and the way the traffic was managed, particularly into the track in the mornings, was much improved compared to the previous years.

With Formula 1 spoiled for choice in terms of proposed venues for the races, only the United States is likely to host more than one Grand Prix per year in the future – and the dimensions of the country more than justify that. Even then, Imola would like to be at least part of a



rotation system between European races – with Barcelona, Spa-Francorchamps and either a race in France or in Germany – but the financial realities are scary for the Italians, who are unlikely to be able to afford a Grand Prix in the future.

First of all, there's the increasing fee required by Formula 1 for any event. The minimum fee demanded – Monaco apart – exceeds 40 million Euros (A\$70m) and that's already a price Imola

The F1 future of the exquisite and historic Imola track isn't looking good. Images: RED BULL CONTENT POOL



would struggle to pay.

Then, of course, come the organizational costs that, according to Italian sources, are expected to go up to A\$17-18m in case of a

future Grand Prix.

This year's revenues were record-breaking, with ticket sales bringing a net profit of 18 million Euros (A\$31.5m), but that's 40 per cent below what Imola will have to spend for a future Grand Prix.

Even with support from regional and Italian government, the event is likely to face a loss of several millions.

With the maths working against the event, the Italian government has however vowed to keep supporting Imola, with Minister Matteo Salvini stating, last Sunday, that "the Government recognises the extraordinary importance of the Monza and Imola GPs not only as world-class sporting events, but also as fundamental economic drivers and international showcases for Lombardy and Emilia-Romagna"

Very nice words, of course, but no mention of an increased subsidy to boost Imola's chances of getting a new contract, meaning the chances of the sport ever returning to that glorious track are quite slim ... ❏

DRIVERS HAPPY WITH F1 MOVIE



to see things a bit like we sometimes see with Netflix – you can tell they're a bit Hollywood-esque. I believe that, for a new fan, it will attract a lot of new audience. It will do very well for the people that don't know anything about Formula 1.

"But honestly, I enjoyed the whole thing. "The team have done an outstanding job in putting together, I

think, a very good Hollywood movie. But let's see what the people think."

Esteban Ocon was also very enthusiastic about the movie, saying that "as I said to Lewis, it's super-immersive, the scenes with them driving the cars, and I think that's fantastic, something we've never seen before."

Then, forgetting he was not

supposed to reveal any details, Ocon said that "what I found really good is that last race – they suddenly don't just fly and win the race, but it's because of something happening in the race, putting the red flag out and them not being into Q3 and then, you know, having the new tyres! ..."

But Sainz made a point of saying that "the quality of the pictures is

insane and that's, for me, the best part of Hollywood." Interestingly, he revealed that "they did a survey with a lot of people that had never watched a Formula 1 race. After watching the film, they would ask 'would you watch a Formula 1 race now?' And 100% of the people said yes, so that just tells you how good I think it's going to be for the sport." ❏

McLAREN DENIES BEING PEGGED BACK BY NEW TECH DIRECTIVE

McLAREN'S MANAGEMENT has denied the team had to change any parts on the MCL39 before the Imola weekend, after it emerged that a couple of new Technical Directives were issued by the FIA before the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix.

One of them was related to the skid block all the cars have to have on their underside; the other one just the circulation of a series of communications between Red Bull and the Technical Delegate regarding what could be used to help keeping tyre temperatures lower.

Pointing out that Oscar Piastri's car was subjected to a very detailed inspection after winning the Miami Grand Prix, focused on all the details

of the rear brakes and contouring drums, several sources from McLaren assured us there was not one part of the car that was changed before the start of practice, as all systems had been repeatedly cleared by all FIA inspections.

In terms of the circulation of the communication with Red Bull regarding the cooling of the rear wheels and tyres, the FIA decided to make it a Technical Directive, which is unusual but may have been issued to signal the regulator's diminishing patience with the constant questioning of McLaren's systems by the Austrian team.

What Red Bull has been doing for almost one season, is suspecting

McLaren is doing something illegal, then asking the FIA Technical Delegate if they could use such a system – and once the Fédération rejects their request, making sure the communication is circulated to the other nine teams, making such systems illegal.

That has been the normal procedure by all top teams for decades (legend has it Pat Symonds' main job at Renault some 20 years ago was to fire constant questions to the FIA to try and see what other teams were doing ...) but Red Bull has upped the procedure, bombarding the Technical Delegate with questions without, until to now, finding out where the MCL39's

advantage is coming from.

More interesting, the other Technical Directive was brought up to stop some teams from using clever ways to pass the post-race checks of the skid plank's thickness. It clarified the type of materials that may be used in the area of the skids, how they could be mounted and so on, after it emerged that some teams were using materials that would 'regenerate' themselves in a few minutes, gaining in thickness after being worn out during the race.

That would allow the cars to run closer to the ground during the race before passing the post-race scrutineering as the material would regain lost thickness quickly. ❏

Despite a number of 'provocative' questions thrown at the FIA by Red Bull, Oscar's race-winning McLaren has been declared 100 percent legal ... Image: GETTY IMAGES



FERRARI'S LAST-DITCH EFFORT TO IMPROVE THE SF-25

FERRARI'S RESULTS in the first quarter of the 2025 Formula 1 World Championship have been tremendously disappointing, but the Scuderia's management remains convinced there's a lot of potential in the SF-25 and refused to stop its development to focus on next year's car.

Taking away Lewis Hamilton's results in the two Sprint events held so far – the veteran won from pole in Shanghai and finished third in Miami – the red cars have been no match for the two McLarens, the two Mercedes and Verstappen's Red Bull, with some heroics from Charles Leclerc ending, at best, in fourth places in Sunday's races.

Having stated that, "the teams that will be fighting for the title will have to keep pushing the development of their cars until late in the season; the teams that won't be up there will make an early switch to the 2026 car," Frédéric Vasseur isn't yet ready to throw in the towel and has given his engineers until the middle of June to extract the speed they



New developments are aimed at improving the Ferrari's rear end stability – it wasn't too bad in Monaco! Image: GETTY IMAGES

believe the SF-25 has.

While Monaco was the first clue to progress, the first key moment will come in the Spanish Grand Prix this week, where new, stricter tests for front wing flexibility will be introduced – and in Maranello there's a conviction that McLaren, Red Bull and Mercedes will lose more competitiveness than Ferrari, thus bringing the red cars

closer to the front of the field.

The cruncher will come later in June, hopefully in Canada but more likely in the Austrian Grand Prix, when an updated rear suspension will be introduced on the SF-25.

The goal, according to Italian sources, is to allow a more extreme mechanical setup, such as to lower the height from the ground of the rear axle in search

of that missing downforce.

The rear suspension design will remain pull-rod, as it is now, but the interaction with the gearbox, that seems to be problematic since the start of the season, will be improved.

There is, apparently, room to change the attachment points to the gearbox and fit the new design, which should improve the kinematics of the system – the goal being to improve rear stability by generating more rear downforce in a car that has a very strong front end but then becomes too nervous in its rear end from the middle to the exit of corners.

If the on-track results match what the team expects from its simulations and Ferrari moves up to fighting for wins, the aerodynamic development will carry on through the summer; if it doesn't, then all work on the SF-25 will stop immediately and the entire technical department will focus solely on the design and development of next year's car, hoping that this early change of focus will give the Scuderia an advantage at the start of the 2026 season. 🇮🇹

IT'S ON! MBS PUSHES FOR CHANGES TO THE FIA ELECTION PROCESS

CARLOS SAINZ Senior's announcement that he's considering running for President of the FIA in the election set for December seems to have led the current incumbent, Mohammed Ben Sulayem, to try and change the rules for that election, according to a report from the BBC.

A set of changes to the electoral process has, according to that report, been put in place and will be voted on at next month's General Assembly.

The most important of them all is to significantly bring forward the deadline for candidates to formalise their nomination.

If approved, that would certainly create a problem for Sainz, who has just started talking to FIA club members and needs to present a long and complex list, together with his own name for President, according to the rules that were established during

Jean Todt's long tenure in the role.

The prospective candidate runs alongside a President of the Senate and must also pick a deputy president and seven vice-presidents for sport, as well as a deputy president and seven vice-presidents for automobile, mobility and tourism – and all regions in which the FIA structure is divided must be represented, with two representatives for Europe and one each of the MENA, African, North American, South American and Asia-Pacific regions. And getting that many people on board, at short notice, won't be an easy task for Sainz.

It's worth noting that in a change already introduced by Ben Sulayem last year, the maximum age for candidates for the role of FIA President was lowered from 75-years old to 70-years old, in a move that is widely believed to have been made to



Highly respected – Sainz Snr (right) chats with Racing Bulls team principal Laurent Mekies. Image: RED BULL CONTENT POOL

prevent 72-year-old David Richards from running against the Emirati in this year's election.

In next month's General Assembly, the national sporting authorities and automotive clubs representing the 245 member organisations across 149 countries will vote on the proposals Ben Sulayem has now handed them.

It is expected that the group led by Richards, that is throwing its full support behind Carlos Sainz's campaign, will try and defeat the motion, in order to give the Spanish legend a fighting chance to prepare properly to run against the current president in the December election. 🇮🇹

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The V8 Modified podium and (below) LS feature – including winner Hallett.

CLARK TAKES EMOTIONAL TOOWOOMBA TRIUMPH

TOOWOOMBA SPEEDWAY fans were treated to a triple treat at Hi-Tec-Oils Speedway with the grand final of the Field the Label Series for 360 LS Sprintcars.

The SEDL Contractors Queensland Sprintcar Title for the 410 Sprintcars and the V8 Dirt Modified Champion of Champions were the prizes on offer.

But Mother nature also wanted to be a part of Saturday night's program providing some misty showers at various times making life frustrating for the track crew, drivers and teams.

Luke Oldfield came agonisingly close to Lockie McHugh's track record of 10.404s when he stopped the clock at 10.996 seconds ahead of Brock Hallett while Tarhlea Apelt was again at her best, setting third quickest time.

In the heats Harry Stewart was the only driver to win both his heat races.

Twelve laps into the feature race despite best efforts, during a red light stoppage showers continued to fall resulting in the title declared a non-event due to not being able to complete 50 percent of the 35-lap feature race.



At the time the race was declared, Hallett had a commanding lead ahead of McHugh, Luke Oldfield and Nic Whell.

The final result meant that rain won the 2025 Queensland 410 Sprintcar Title and that the \$20,000 in prize money would be paid out evenly spread across all 20 drivers that contested the A-Main.

The 360-LS Sprintcar feature race was won by Kye Jensen who wrapped up the Field the Label Series. Brodie Tulloch who earlier in the night broke the 360-LS Sprintcar lap record of

11.581 seconds to beat home Luke Manttan.

Earlier in the night, David Clark won the Super Rooster V8 Dirt Modified Champion of Champions event from Brayd Stephenson and Kyle Armstrong.

Clark started from position five and from the outset was determined to make it to the top step of the podium.

From the start, Victorian Zeke Edwards led for the first of 30 laps before Seiton Young levelled up shortly after two laps were complete, this time searching for a way through

on the bottom line. With the track starting to widen there was plenty of action mid-field – with 18 laps to run Edwards rolled to a stop in Turn 1, his race over.

From the restart, David Clark drove straight through the middle and into second as Seiton Young stretched his lead.

Clark, switching to the high line, started to close the gap driving around the outside of Young with six to go.

Clark put in a sterling drive to claim a well deserved win from Brayd Stephenson and Kyle Armstrong.

An emotional Clark thanked Ray Klarich for his support and dedication to V8 Dirt Modifieds over many years and dedicated his win to Ray's wife Elena who had passed away after a long illness during the week.

Elena was a huge supporter of Ray's racing and, in healthier times, enjoyed traveling between tracks and various trips to Perth to spend time with family and friends.

The Modlite Australian Title will be held in Toowoomba on May 31-June 1.

David Budden 🏆

PUSHING THROUGH THE RAIN

RACING GOT away on time at Hi-Tec-Oils Toowoomba Speedway on Saturday May 16 after a big effort put in from Ryan Harris and his team following 62mm of rain.

Victorian Compact Speedcar star Aston Rodriguez won the Queensland Compact Speedcar Title.

The 16-year-old young gun currently holds State Compact Speedcar titles in Victoria, New South Wales and ACT.

Rodriguez started on the front row alongside current Australian Champion Justin Paul and the two got into a rhythm quickly, with the latter keeping the pressure on before spinning.

Having to start from the rear at the restart, he flew to fifth.

With 21 laps to go, Matt O'Neill dropped to the bottom and passed Rodriguez for the lead.

But he only stayed there for five laps before Rodriguez launched an attack.

After multiple laps of side-by-side racing that contained wheel-to-wheel contact Rodriguez edged ahead in lapped traffic.

A hard charging O'Neill and Luke Williams rounded out the podium.

The Modlites put on some close racing also throughout the final round of the Everyday Finance Solutions Ultimate Modlites Series.

Leading the way was current Australian Champion Terry Leerentveld, with Klinton Hancey and Ryan Silcock fighting hard.

Leerentveld persisted with the highline eventually dropped to mid-track and settled into second momentarily with 15 to go behind Silcock.

This happened as Silcock clipped the lapped car of Adrain Reinke, sending him skyward, landing upside down at the entry to Turn 1.

When the race resumed Hancey led them away from Leerentveld and Cameron Birch.

Leerentveld made his move around the outside and into the

Podiums for Speedcars; Junior Formula 500 (below left) and Senior Formula 500. Images: MATTHEW PAUL PHOTOGRAPHY



race lead just as caution came across the speedway again.

This meant Leerentveld had to do it all again – it would come with three to run as he drove around the outside and into the race lead ahead of Hancey and Leerentveld.

The current Australian Champion Bruce Marshall was the man to chase in the Stow's Transport South East Queensland Championship Series for AMCA Nationals.

But in the end he would have to be content with second on the night.

In the final hit out in Toowoomba, before the Australian Title on May 31-June 1, Marshall

led for the majority of the race with Brett Robotham and Matt Hardy in hot pursuit.

They were locked in a three-car battle and, with one to run, Hardy moved into second as lapped traffic came into play.

The two raced side-by-side with a lapped car between them and, just ahead, more traffic to contend with as Marshall momentarily slowed, giving Matt Hardy a clear run to the chequered flag. Robert Kynaston would finish third.

Current Australian Champion Kaidon Brown won the GSA Advanced Machining Speedcar 50-lapper.

At first we thought Brodie Tulloch was a hot chance – he

was driving away and looking in control of the race lead until contact with a lapped car damaged the right front of the car.

He fought on with an ill-handling machine but by lap 16 Brown had caught and passed him.

Tulloch would fade to finish fifth in the 50-lap marathon that had more twists and turns than a rollercoaster ride.

Just past the halfway point Brown had started to open up a commanding lead with Scott Farmer in second and Mitch Saunderson in third.

By lap 40 Brown had put down the fastest lap of the race and drove to a superb 11s win from Scott Farmer and Matt Geering.

In the Forza Global Series for Formula 500s Amanda Chaffey won the feature race from Liam Williams and Travis Wolfram; in the Juniors Blake Duggan was the first to the checkered flag from Cooper Flynn and Zack Hilder.

David Budden 🏆

BOHUD RACING'S STANDOUT SEASON

IT'S FAIR to say the Bohud Racing team and Michael Stewart had a solid 2024-25 season with both the Sydney International Speedway Track Championship and NSW Club Championship point standings wins to back that up.

The NS #14 driver was by far the form driver of the season at the Bohud Racing team's home track – Sydney International Speedway – off the back of six feature race wins, which was the most of any Sprintcar driver in the country at one single track this season.

As a result they managed to come away with the Sydney International Speedway Track Championship victory.

This success added to the NSW Club Championship win Michael and the team had secured over the Easter Long Weekend.

"To be able to come away with the Sydney Track Championship and



Image: THE ART OF SPEEDWAY

the NSW Club Championship was a massive achievement for the whole Bohud Racing team and something that we are all very so proud of," Stewart said.

"It's certainly been a very busy season with a total of 29 nights of

racing completed, especially with a lot of those nights at Sydney International Speedway, but the whole Bohud Racing team never stopped working and it was a very satisfying with not only seven feature race wins during the season

but a couple of championships to cap what has been a wonderful season.

"With it being only third season for the Bohud Racing team in Sprintcar racing, it's always challenging visiting new tracks and taking part in their major events, but the whole team just continues to work hard and keep learning.

"Winning the Adelaide 500 overall points and the \$25,000 winner's cheque that came with it was amazing – and one of the highlights of the season for the whole team was without a doubt being able to share the podium with two of Australia's best racers in Lachlan McHugh and James McFadden after we ran third in the Red Hot Shootout at Toowoomba Speedway.

"I can't thank Michael and the whole Bohud Racing team enough for all of their efforts throughout the season."

Daniel Powell 🇺🇸

HOME TOWN HERO TAKES TITLE

HAILED AS the 'Whyalla Warrior', Andy Maxwell Junior (*right*) rose above the best competitors from around the state to claim the 2025 South Australian Street Stock Championship on home turf.

He did it in front of a large crowd, estimated as the biggest crowd seen for many years at Whyalla Speedway.

Defending champion, Nathan Thorne started his campaign in fine form, claiming the opening heat to bank maximum points.

Fellow Mitsubishi Magna driver Drew Flatman claimed two of his three qualifying heats with singles going to Holden Commodore pilots Neville Nitschke, Mark Merrett and Maxwell Junior.

Maxwell Junior lined up on position two alongside the pole-sitter Drew Flatman while the champ Thorne squared up in third alongside veteran racer Neville Nitschke for the gruelling Specialised Tyres-presented 30-lap final.

At the drop of the green Maxwell swept around the top side to lead the

charge as the field screamed into the opening corner.

Thorne quickly manoeuvred into second and set his sights on the back of the Maxwell VE Commodore and pressured for several laps until retiring to the infield just seven laps into the journey.

Flatman re-inherited second position and steadily made the distance to challenge for the lead.

However Maxwell would find the line to cover him off as the two young second generation racers ran to the chequered flag.

Veteran races Nitschke and Nigel Reichstein had a strong battle for the minor placings and finished their Commodore's in that order.

Despite not winning a heat race, Bailey Heinrich shone the brightest when it counted the most to take victory in the Whyalla Mini Bins 20-lap Wingless Sprint final.

The three heat winners, Alan Saint, Bronson Mauro and Tate Cowie claimed the minors.

The Modlites impressed the large



Image: PARIS CHARLES

crowd on hand with some exciting racing.

Jacob Carlier managed to take a flag-to-flag victory over the Brian and Justin Chadwick.

It was a fairytale finish in the Junior sedan final for Jayden Garner who raced for the final time before moving into the senior ranks.

Ryan Gilding was next while Brodie Reichstein was third despite clean sweeping all three heat races.

Also on the card were the Classic

Hot Rods and despite only a small field of four they managed to thrill the crowd as they turned back the hands of time with the sights, sounds and smells of yesteryear.

The night finished with the thrilling crash-and-bash Doug Taylor Memorial Open Demolition Derby.

After many crunching hits, female competitor Elise Kempster was the last car running and took home the prize purse.

Paris Charles 🇺🇸



LEHMANN HITS FIELD FOR SIX

TODD LEHMANN and Ace Bermingham (Jimco – *above*) dominated the 2025 GT Bobcat Mumbannar 160 on May 17 despite a strong field of outright contenders.

Lehmann crossed the line over four minutes ahead of Dean Carter and Brad Jacob (Razorback) with less than a minute back to third placed Garry Turnbull and Sam Lauccirica (Jimco) who had been plagued by electrical problems throughout the race.

Aaron and Shane Heemsker led home the large and closely matched class 10 field finishing fourth outright with Jake England and Damien Wombell next home.

David and Alice Middlemiss were

only seconds behind England and took a hard fought Pro Lite win from Daryl Nissen and Richard Andrews (SORE) who were the next team home.

David Vallance cut some good laps to claim P8 just over a minute up on Travis and Alistair Conrad (Racer) with James and Sophie Tamblyn (Tabor) completing the top 10.

2024 winners Glenn Pike and Peter Hutchins (Razorback) were on the pace but broke a gearbox in the second heat.

Lehmann took the Ultimate class win while Linda Miller (Southern Cross) came out on top in Class 2 after Brendan Forssman had throttle cable problems in heat one.

Tim Walker (Oakley) was the only finisher in Class 3 while Jason Forssman defeated a strong field of Class 4s.

Brenton Davey (Mitsubishi L200) finished 11th outright and took the Class 5 win after Andrew Cameron (Mitsubishi Triton) didn't make the finish.

Aiden Campagnolo (Can-Am) led all the way in Class 6 but broke on the last lap, gifting the class win to Chloe Swatton (Can-Am).

Heath and Michelle Weedon were comfortably in control of the Production 4WD class taking the flag more than 10 minutes clear of their nearest challenger.

Story and Image: David Batchelor



Image: SEAC

CAGNEY CLIMBS CLEAR

LIMESTONE COAST based drivers dominated the start of the South Australian Autocross Championship.

The opening round held at Mount Gambier's SEAC Park on May 10-11 saw South Eastern Automobile Club drivers rise to the top.

Dale Cagney led a local 1-2, 5s clear of Luke Winterfield (*pictured*) as seven of the top 10 were also represented by the club.

Cagney's Mitsubishi Lancer Evo II held off a pair of Subarus steered by Winterfield and Oscar Farnden.

But it was a field full of variety with seven different manufacturers in the top eight.

Cagney hit the ground running by winning the first two heats and he was simply consistent in general, not finishing any of the nine heats lower than second.

This was more than enough to take overall honours, despite a big challenge from Winterfield.

The Subaru WRX driver put in a mighty challenge in the mid part of the event, taking a hat-trick of heat wins in events four to six.

However, he was left to rue a mistake on the ninth and final heat as the pressure was at an all time high.

Little separated Cagney and Winterfield coming down to the finale, but a penalty saw the latter lose 5s.

In the end that proved to be the difference as Cagney finished with 15m54.09s and Winterfield just over 5s adrift with a total time of 16m00.31s.

A final heat win was enough for Farnden to get third.

Thomas Miles 🏁

THREE-WAY TUSSLE

IN NEW South Wales, there is an interesting Hillclimb tri-series taking place on the tarmac.

When most people think of a tri-series, the glory days of World Series Cricket would come to mind, but the Newcastle, Tamworth and Kempsey Sporting Car Clubs have combined to create a motorsport version.

The three clubs are fighting for pride and honour with their respective drivers competing at events held at each of their venues.

The latest event was the second round held at Tamworth Sporting Car Club's Oakburn Park.

It proved to be a decisive win for Adam Single, who was well clear of his rivals.

Single's 36.7550s time was 1.7250s clear of the rest as his Williams

SportsRacer set a hot pace.

The contest for second took place between two Stockman Mk1 drivers and was decided by a similar margin.

Jay Keam ended up beating Craig Stockman by 1.2s, while the latter

clung onto the top three in a much closer fight.

Leslie Maloney's Ford Focus was just half a second away, while Mike Nowland was also not far away in a Rage RX150.

Thomas Miles 🏁



A DAY OUT AT ROB ROY

ON A sunny Sunday, 86 entrants convoyed to Rob Roy Hillclimb to tackle the second oldest purpose-built hillclimb in the world.

The Rob Roy Hillclimb boasts a rich heritage in its near 90 years of intermittent competition. Figures such as Stan Jones, Lex Davison, Peter Brock, Jack Brabham and Tony Gaze, many of whom once held outright records at the complex, once featured among many more pioneers of Australian and international motorsport in the 20th century. Each aforementioned name fronted – just like rev-heads of today – to tackle the second-oldest purpose-built hillclimb in the world, Rob Roy.

Thus, the stage was set and its significance amplified for many – with the coming together for the patron of the meeting, Jim 'Stumpy' Russell. Successful in open-wheel racing in the 1960s and beyond with his family-built 'Nedloh', Russell also contested a Mini in the International 6 Hour Touring Car Race at Sandown in the '60s, both of Jim's once heavily peddled flatheads (winning multiple VHRR club championships) competed in Rob Roy with Chris Jackson and Derek McLaughlan at the helm.

In addition to Jim's presence at Rob Roy, his partner Joyce, son Ben and granddaughter Mae showed their support by helping to prepare and transport the 'Testa Piatta' Ford V8 Special.

The 2025 Rob Roy meeting marked the greatest, in numbers and operations, of the VHRR Rob Roy meetings. Spoilt by touring cars including a number of Datsuns, Clubman Sports Cars (who deserved their own class), as well as a couple of Bolwell Nagaris, it was, however, the pre-1960s Sports and Racing cars that shone among a generation of vehicles that have been dwindling in entries in recent historic events. Along with Jim's encouragement, a guru mechanic of Flatheads, Sprints/Midgets and Indy cars of the '50s and '60s



Chris Jackson and Jim 'Stumpy' Russell's granddaughter Mae in the Ford V8 Special. Below left: Russell is presented with the mounted flyer by artist Eric Irvine. Right: FTD – Daniel Leitner at speed ... Images: CHRIS BARBOUR



by the name of Malcolm Church from Shepparton sought to drive the numbers of the older alphabet classes.

From the moment the flyer for Jim and the VHRR Rob Roy event hit the press, Mal was on the phone to everyone he knew, from Shepparton and around the state, and was pivotal in ascertaining a number of old-school entries and display cars and, therefore, building the meeting into being as meaningful as it was. Mal's efforts in rallying the troops awarded him, very deservedly, the meeting's Ron Townley Sportsmanship Trophy.

The occasion, promoted by the



Victorian Historic Racing Register (VHRR), run in collaboration with and by the MG Car Club of Victoria, saw drivers conquer Rob Roy's original track configuration of 664 yards in four timed sprints, with the option of a fifth.

In competition, it was the Subaru that set the pace, with Daniel Leitner achieving the Fastest Time of the Day (20.68 seconds), despite a little rallycross at the top of the hill in his third run – attesting to the car-make's origins on dirt.

In the Historic field, Graeme Raper crossed the line at 129 km/h in his final run in the George Reed Monoskate V8 securing the

outright trophy of Fastest Time of Day – Historic Car, with a new personal best for him at 23.59 seconds. Partner, Louise was also recognised as the Fastest Female Driver in her George Reed Ford Flathead V8 in her quickest run of 2718 seconds.

To conclude the formalities, Eric Irvine, former Formula Vee racer and art-hobbyist, handed over the framed original of the VHRR Rob Roy promotional flyer to Jim and his family – a symbolic token of appreciation and a special moment to settle what was the 2025 VHRR Historic Rob Roy Hillclimb.

Ross McLaughlin 🏁



Grimsley/Grosser emerged as outright winners. Below: The Excels start. Right: One of the Hinks duo raises the dust... Images: SIDELINE IMAGES NT

RACING IN THE TOP END

THE INAUGURAL TOP END X3 300 Enduro was run by the North Australian Motor Sports Club.

The event involved two drivers sharing a vehicle and competing in six sprint races and then the 90-minute Enduro over the weekend.

Qualifying saw the locals leading the timesheets but the interstate competitors were getting up to speed pretty quickly.

Qualifying saw Excel #69 Tyson Mattiazzo setting the mark for everyone to chase.

Heat 1 saw the nominated 'A' Drivers head out – most 'A' drivers were local competitors.

The rolling start for Race 1 saw the only incident for the weekend with the extremely close drafting pulling six cars together and unfortunately Excel #21 spun out' rubbing the wall with front and rear, leading to a red flag.

The race was restarted with a shortened distance of five laps – there was some extremely close racing between Mattiazzo, Kroonstuiwer and Hinks for the whole race which was great to watch.

They were followed by Misty and Cody Grimsley, Kroonstuiwer, Hewitt and Ling.

Heat 2 (B Drivers) saw a slow mixed-up start which led to group being three-wide into Turn 1. Coming out of Turn 2 we had Dakota Masters



in the lead with a hungry pack behind her.

Masters pulled away from the pack whilst they squabbled over the minor positions.

Grosser missed the start and had to work hard to get through the South Australian boys and then chased Masters down taking the lead on lap four.

With half the group of B Drivers being non-regular drivers, they were still getting comfortable with their cars and the track and their times constantly reduced as racing unfolded.

This race also saw Mr Motorsport debut in the Excel Category, both David (Excel #45) and Rob (Excel #69) definitely didn't leave anything on the table and had a good crack.

Heats 3, 4, 5 and 6 were great races with lots of close action and great racing and great drafting down the long straight. The reverse grids definitely set out some challenges to

the lead drivers as they fought their way through the field to the front.

Races 3 and 5 were dominated by Excel #21 with Voltz behind the wheel; Races 4 and 6 by Excel #47 with Grosser steering.

The completion of the six sprint races saw the total points collated for the starting order of the Enduro completed with Excel #47 off pole and Excel #21 beside him.

Excel #21 started strong with Voltz behind the wheel and took an early lead being pushed hard by Mattiazzo and Hinks.

The GDM Racing Excels #17 and #47 settled comfortably in fourth and fifth.

After the 15 minute mark, we started to see the various pit strategies come into play with all teams having their own theories.

There was close racing right throughout the field especially with the different cars completing the pit stops at different stages, changing



from B Drivers to A Drivers etc.

But at the end of the race, with most of the teams lapping within a second of each other, it all came down to pit stops.

Excel #21 was the fastest car out there all day but they were a little slower in the pit stops which allowed Excels #47 and #65 to get through after the completion of the three pit stops and Excel #21 having to chase them down.

In the end, Excel #21 was able to get past #65 but unable to chase down #47.

This left Excel #47 with 15-year-old Noah Grosser behind the wheel to bring the car home, still lapping in the 1m29s and to take the win alongside Cody Grimsley.

Second place went to Aleeanz Voltz and Bailey Fridd, while Connor Kroonstuiwer and Chase Webster completed the podium.

The all-female crew in Excel #17 with Dakota Masters and Misty Grimsley finished fourth on the lead lap, and just a handful of seconds off the podium. 🏁

FROM WALL TO WINNER

JACKSON COPEMAN and Harrison Cooper took their Mazda MX-5 to a great win in the Sydney 300. Auto Action's BRUCE MOXON was on hand to cover the event.

The win came despite their day starting off with the car in the wall on the first lap of practice, meaning they went straight into qualifying with a repaired car – but put it on pole!

Charlie Khoury (Honda) was supposed to join them on the

front row, but he had a gearbox fail and wouldn't start.

Cooper took the start and built up a 45s lead in 14 laps before a Safety Car period.

At the restart, Andrew Hall / Matthew McLellan took the lead and just a few laps later another Safety Car arrived when the transponder had failed on the Copeman/Cooper car.

Upon the restart, the leader was Michael Osmond/Tim Columbrita from Chris Stannard/Jon O'Neill and

Zaki Wazir/Tom Shaw (BMW M4).

Others to find trouble were a crashed Martin Lyall/David Grice, a fiery Commodore Nathan Lebrocque/Graham Elliott, while Tony Virag/Liam Evans and Benny Tran/David Ashton clashed.

Meanwhile, the Jett/Todd Herring MX-5 expected to be a contender, blew a head-gasket.

With consequent pit stops and the field being compressed, the Coleman/Cooper car sat eighth after its five minute stop but found

pace as rain started to fall.

Two laps later Cooper was back on the lead lap with Jamie and Jason Miller leading but worried about fuel.

The rain was getting heavier, and Cooper not only soared into the top three, but reeled in Miller and passed him on lap 70 and disappeared up the road.

Miller was in serious fuel trouble, and spent the last couple of laps weaving to slosh the little fuel left towards the pickup, finally finishing ninth.





Sydney 300 winner, the Copeman/Cooper MX-5 – great comeback from practice disaster. Above: The Excels contested a pair of One Hour races. Right: Mark Baggetto heads a brace of Alfas. Bottom: Cody Brewczynski shows some Legends the way ...
Images: RICCARDO BENVENUTI



Zac and David Raddatz (MX-5) and Aaron and Matt Giuntini had a fantastic scrap right at the end, which was either for the lead or second place – nobody knew, what with the timing dramas! Turned out it was second and that went to the Raddatzes from the Giuntinis. Cooper crossed the line nearly 45s ahead.

TWO HOURS OF HYUNDAI

A pair of one-hour races for Excels headed the support program.

The opener went to Monique Scibberas and Wil Longmore.

Tim Colobrita led away from Bill Brittain, with Adam Roberts keeping them company.

On lap five, Shannon Williams ran

wide at Turn 1 and slid through the gravel before doing three-quarters of a roll before coming to rest.

The pit lane opened before the Safety Car came in, so the whole field filed in to serve their time.

First out was Reece Harradine, who'd taken over from Scott Ford. Next was Wil Longmore, who moved into the lead at Turn 2 on the first lap at the restart.

From there he was never headed, getting out to a 21s lead by the end, from Caleb Hefren/Preston Breust and Wayne Jones next, driving solo.

Race 2 also had an early Safety Car after Nathaniel Martin lost a wheel.

On the restart at lap five, Columbrita led, with Brittain and Hefren in close company.

Scibberas pitted on lap seven, handing over to Longmore, who'd be in a commanding lead by the time the pit stops were over.

Unfortunately his stop had been a tiny bit too good and he pitted again on the 20th of 27 laps to do it all again.

Winner Lewis Buhagiar (sharing with Columbrita), Bruest and Connor Cooper put on a great scrap to finish in that order, the three of them separated at the end by all of 0.15s.

MAZDA MX-5 / MG

Brad Herring took all three MX-5 races, John Fraser taking two seconds and Tim Herring the other, with thirds going to Tim Herring and Robert Giovenco taking two.

MG wins went to Matt Blanch (MGA) and Brayden Taylor taking the other two in his Midget.

ALFA / BMW E36

Mark Baggetto (Alfetta) took the first two of the combined class races, with the last going to Simon Greirson (Alfetta) after Baggetto didn't start.

Otis Sands took the first two wins out of the BMWs, with Rob Boaden taking the last.

LEGEND CARS

Dead-set ring-in Cody Brewczynski took two of the three race wins, with Robert Hogan taking the opener, in three closely-contested races. 🏁

CLOSE CONTESTS

THE ACTION carried on at Queensland Raceway on May 16/17 when the Motorsport Australia State Championship brought a number of categories to town.

The Series X3 Circuit Excels put on some competitive racing with just six points covering the top three drivers.

Initially it was an arm wrestle between two drivers – Jackson Faulkner and Jackson Cooper.

Faulkner won the opener and the fourth sprint, while Cooper went back-to-back.

Cooper appeared to hold the high ground with a runner-up finish.

However, as Luke Rinaldi took a two-tenth win to shoot to third, Faulkner's fifth place was actually enough to steal overall honours as



Jackson Cooper has his nose in front in the Excel contest. Images: MTR IMAGES

Cooper slipped to seventh.

Formula Vee was all about Alex Hedeman as he produced the perfect weekend.

Hedemann won all four sprints in his Rapier 2, leaving the others to fight for best-of-the-rest award.

That went to Alex Beswick, who

had a strong finish to the weekend as Eddie McFaul, who finished second in the opening pair of races, didn't start the others.

Bruce French started strongly and came home with a wet sail to take Holden HQ honours.

The only time French was defeated was in Race 2 when Seth Mathie was victorious in his only race of the weekend.

Holly Espray also showed strong speed to secure second ahead of Brock Mathie in a small field.

Formula Ford was tightly-contested although only two drivers were victorious.

Isaac McNeill bolted out of the gates with back-to-back wins, but was left to rue a third race DNF.

Michael McMillan was consistent with three second

place finishes, but could not quite get enough points to get the round win. That went to Carmelo Bonaventura, who came home with a wet sail and took the final two wins to soar to the top.

A familiar face, Geoff Taunton, dominated Sports Sedans and Invited Tin Tops.

Taunton in his familiar bright green IRC GT SS was the class of the field, winning all four races.

In fact the podium was unchanged throughout the entire weekend with Daniel Crompton's Ford Mustang and Brian Finn's Unknown (?) vehicle second and third respectively.

Production Sports Cars followed a similar trajectory with Porsche the car to have, filling the entire top five. Wayne Hennig was perfect, taking all four wins with Grant Sparks his nearest rival.

The SuperMini Challenge was a tale of two halves.

Andrew Mills was initially the driver to beat, winning the first two races, but his weekend came to an early end.

After being the runner-up in the first two sprints, Gregg Chesterfield seized his moment and took the last two races to soar to overall glory. **Thomas Miles** 🏁



Geoff Taunton brings the field around in the Sports Sedan contest.

CHASING THE TROPHY

THE MOTORSPORT Australia Trophy Series headed to the 'Paperclip' on May 9 to provide a platform for Toyota 86 and RX8 races.

The two one-make championships enjoyed the track all to themselves and enjoyed plenty of track time.

The Toyota 86s had three races on the schedule and they all followed a familiar path.

Zane Rinaldi headed Kade Davey in all three races amid a massive 40-car field.

However, an all-one-way round was far from evident from a tight qualifying.

Amazingly the entire top four was

covered by just 0.0460s but Rinaldi managed to edge Jordan Freestone, Charlie Parker and Davey.

The opening race was a competitive affair with the top four still not separated by much.

Only just over a second covered the leading quartet with Rinaldi leading the charge, while Davey won a drag race to be the runner-up.

Rinaldi enjoyed a slightly bigger margin of victory in Race 2 where many drivers failed to finish with nine retiring.

Again it was Rinaldi and Davey leading the way with the latter just keeping Alice Buckley at bay.

It all came down to the final race and Rinaldi saved his most dominant drive for that.

He was 4s up the road from Davey, with Jr-Lung Hay-Bartlem close by in third.

Formula RX8 was a lot more competitive with four different drivers being victorious.

Matthew Boylett was ultimately the class driver, being the only one to take multiple wins.

His first win was the opener where he bolted 4s clear of the rest as Ryan Gorton and Geoff Connell fought to the bitter end for second. Just six tenths separated the pair at the chequered flag.

Race 2 was an enthralling contest that was decided by a dramatic final-lap. Gorton appeared to be in control, starting the 10th and final lap in the lead, only to retire.

This created a fascinating battle between Josh Thomas and Boylett with just six-tenths the difference.

A busy Sunday saw three races take place with Boylett returning on top, beating Justin Lewis by a slender three-tenths.

However, Lewis hit back by winning the penultimate race before Boylett resumed his control with a final race win as Geoff Connell beat Diesel Thomas in a close call for second. **Thomas Miles** 🏁

CROSSING THE BORDER

THE NSW Motorsport Australia Championship resumed proceedings, holding Round 2 on May 10/11 at Winton Raceway in Victoria. Perfect sunny conditions greeted the drivers for this two-day meeting and **RICCARDO BENVENUTI** was there for AA ...

SPORTS SEDANS

GEOFF TAUNTON dominated the category, securing pole position and sweeping all three races.

In Race 1, Taunton seized an early lead from Steven Lacey, with the pair pulling clear of the field, while Matt Sims completed the podium in third.

Race 2 saw Taunton replicate his strong start, but Lacey's challenge was cut short when his engine failed, sparking an oil fire. Fortunately, Lacey emerged unscathed, and his car avoided major damage.

The race resumed after a small clean up, allowing Taunton to claim the victory, followed by Darren Hossack and Sims.

The final race featured a reduced grid, but Taunton remained in control from start to finish.

Sims cruised to second, while Chris Jackson secured third after an early battle with Greg Lynch.

RX8

STIAAN KRIEL was the standout performer in the RX8 Cup over the weekend, securing victory in three of the four races against a field that included none other than racing legend John Bowe.

Kriel controlled Race 1 from start to finish, comfortably taking the win ahead of reigning champion Robert Scott as Grant Bray rounded out the podium.

Race 2 unfolded in near identical fashion, with the top three positions remaining unchanged.

Kriel received his biggest test in Race 3 as Scott briefly challenged in the early stages, but Kriel absorbed the pressure, eventually pulling away to claim another win.

Jackson Noakes put in a strong performance to finish third.

The final race proved to be the most dramatic. This time, Scott made the best start, seizing the early lead while Kriel and Noakes kept close behind, waiting for an opportunity.

That moment arrived when Scott ran wide coming onto the straight, allowing both Kriel and Noakes to slip through, relegating him to third.

However, a 10s penalty for Kriel – due to wheelspin on the warmup lap – meant Noakes only needed to stay within that margin to claim his first race win.

In the end, Kriel crossed the line eight seconds ahead, handing victory to an elated Noakes, with Scott settling for third.

PRODUCTION TOURING

THE PRODUCTION Touring category delivered thrilling endurance racing over the weekend, with two intense one-hour battles.

Race 1 saw a gripping duel between Matthew Holt in a Holden Commodore

and Steven Hodges in a BMW M4.

Hodges initially led, but the mandatory pit stops reshuffled the order, allowing Holt to take control.

Meanwhile, Jayson Williamson remained a consistent threat, keeping both drivers in his sights.

Around the 40-minute mark, Hodges briefly reclaimed the lead, only for a late pit stop to push him back to third.

Holt secured victory, marking his 200th race start in the NSW Production Touring State Championship, with Williamson celebrating a strong second place.

Race 2 was even more unpredictable, featuring five lead changes.

Hodges led initially, then briefly Williams, before Holt, Steve Shelley, and finally Hodges hit the lead and emerged victorious.

A mix of strategic pit stops, and tight on-track action ensured the race remained competitive throughout. Holt finished second, while Tom Shaw was third.

FORMULA FORD

DESPITE A small grid, the nine competitors delivered an entertaining spectacle.

Giuseppe Imbrogno, Tabitha Ambrose, and Lachlan Mansell consistently battled for the podium across all three races.

Imbrogno proved unstoppable however, claiming victory in each outing, while Ambrose and Mansell fought hard for the remaining spots.

Ambrose secured second place in Races 1 and 3, but in Race 2, a

minor incident with Mansell saw her drop back to third.

Mansell, meanwhile, finished third in the other two races, ensuring the trio remained locked in a competitive tussle throughout the event.

IMPROVED PRODUCTION UNDER 2L

Matthew Birks showcased impressive speed, taking victory in the first two races ahead of Brett Porter. Paul Grziwotz and Larry Merifield secured third place in the respective races.

The final race seemed firmly in Birks' control until trouble struck on the penultimate lap, allowing Porter to snatch the win and claim the overall weekend over Grziwotz and Merifield.

IMPROVED PRODUCTION OVER 2L

ROYCE LYNE delivered a remarkable comeback, winning two out of three races despite being involved in a start-line rollover at the recent Bathurst 6 Hour event.

Danny Timwell claimed victory in the remaining race, while the podium places were shared among Michael Hazelton, Ian McLennan, Scott Tutton, and Joseph Lenthall.

FORMULA RACE CARS

THOUGH THE field was small, the racing remained exciting in Formula Race Cars. Michael Doherty secured two wins, while Rodney Baker took the other victory.

Adam Savic and Shane Varley consistently fought for podium positions, sharing the minor placings across the event. 🏁

Matt Holt heads the first of two One Hour Procar races. Right: Geoff Taunton dominated the Sports Sedan contest while (below) Stiaan Kriel took three from four in the RX8s. Images: RICCARDO BENVENUTI



FLYING AROUND THE ISLAND

THE VICTORIAN STATE RACE SERIES MADE A WELCOME RETURN TO PHILLIP ISLAND WHERE THE 55TH EDITION OF THE AUSTRALIAN FORMULA FORD CHAMPIONSHIP KICKED OFF. THOMAS MILES REPORTS ...

FORMULA FORD

FORMULA FORD fired up for another season and it promises to be a close arm wrestle for the prestigious title.

Three drivers stole the show – Joe Fawcett showed speed, Jamie Rowe put in an impressive recovery drive, but it was Kobi Williams, who took the round, by a single point.

Williams converted pole in the opener after a side-by-side tussle with Burchartz, but the race was far from over.

After a brief Safety Car for the stopped Jack Pennacchia at Siberia, Fawcett and Williams swapped stints in the lead on multiple occasions before it was decided at the final corner.

Lapped traffic compressed the

podium battle into a grandstand finish and Williams snuck home by 0.0416s.

Fawcett and Evenett rounded out the podium that was covered by less than a tenth of a second.

Race 2 was cut short by a big incident at MG.

Under braking on the run down into Turn 10, Rowe hit the rear of Jack Pennacchia, which sent the former airborne and landing upside down in the gravel.

The race was red flagged and abandoned due to the incident.

As a result, Rowe's Fabcon team faced the big task of rebuilding the Spectrum 015 in less than three hours to make it for the final race – but they

did just that. Not only that but Rowe went from the back of the grid to ninth in a solid all-round effort and received the Hard Charger award.

Up front the battle for first was a close as ever with Fawcett and Williams in an arm wrestle.

Williams nailed the start and controlled the first eight laps before there were lead changes on each of the final five laps.

In the end Fawcett made a last-lap move to claim a hard-fought half-a-second triumph.

The top two had pulled away from next best Evenett, who was 3s adrift.

The Kent class was

dominated by veteran Richard Davison, who kept adding to his trophy cabinet over Peter Fitzgerald and Craig Arnold.



Kobi Williams leads the field down from Lukey Heights and was the overall winner – by a point. Image: PHIL WISEWOULD PHOTOGRAPHY

Formula Ford Australia returns at Morgan Park alongside the Queensland Circuit Racing State Championship on June 6-8.

E30 RACING

THE ONE-MAKE BMW E30 Racing series was all about one driver Benjamin Munro.

Munro's dominance started in qualifying where he took pole by 1.0568s.

Munro won all four races to complete a perfect weekend, while Brian Bourke won a close battle for second.

Bourke had a wrestle with Jesse Bryan, but the latter had to settle for third after a disappointing final race.



SALOON CARS

A HOLDEN and Ford rivalry returned to the Island via the Saloon Cars and a familiar face led the way.

Just before his BJR co-driver announcement, Brad Vaughan was busy driving a Holden VX Commodore to glory.

Driving for Harris Racing, with the iconic Smiths Trucks livery, Vaughan won three of the four races.

Race 3 was the closest contest of the weekend with just 3s covering the top three.

Vaughan actually lost out and fell to third as Dornan won a tight battle for victory over Travis Lindorff.

The Super2 driver prevailed in a tight finale, leading every lap of the sprint.

He held off Lindorff by just over a second as many struggled to finish with five DNFs including Dornan.

FORMULA VEE

FORMULA VEE provided more open-wheel action with Rocco Spinley leading the way initially.

Spinley took pole by four-tenths over Ashley Quiddington, but could not convert it, by the barest of margins.

Quiddington and Spinley dived for the lead throughout the nine-lap opener with Andre Curin in tow.

Just two-tenths covered the trio and Quiddington got his nose ahead.

Curin then had his moment in Race 2 by winning an even closer battle.

Just 0.0546s was the difference at the chequered flag with Curin squeezing out enough speed to get a tight win.

Brock Hamilton was third as Quiddington dropped to fifth.

If these battles were not enough, the best was yet to come with the entire top five covered by just six-tenths.

The six-way squabble in the finale meant it was anyone's guess as to who would win but Curin did it.

He ended up winning by half a second as a ridiculous half a tenth covered positions two to five.

EXCELS

THERE WAS more close racing in the Circuit Excels where another big field arrived.

The opening race was a thrilling two-horse race between Emily Jones and Toby Waghorn.

Nothing split the pair across the nine laps and in the end it was Jones, who snuck ahead by a meagre 0.06s.

The second race was a staggering affair as not two, but five cars fought for victory until the very end with just four-tenths separating them all.

Jones fell just short of back-to-back wins as Marcos Ambrose Motorsport's Rio Campbell snuck clear.

The closest finish was a dramatic final race where the battle for the win was expanded to seven cars.

Toby Waghorn made it three winners from as many races by getting his nose in front of Phillips by 0.0152s.

Campbell won a close contest for third with a number of drivers right behind.

HISTORIC TOURING CARS

THE CAMARO and Mustang contest was also on show in Historic Touring Cars.

The opening race was another show-stopping finish with only two tenths the difference at the end with Michael Miceli's Mustang getting its nose in front of Brent Tregrove.

However, Tregrove's Camaro hit back emphatically in Race 2 with a convincing 8s triumph.

But the last laugh was had by Miceli with his Mustang taking a 2s win in the finale and taking the round with Tregrove unable to start and Trevor Talbot next best.

IMPROVED PRODUCTION/SPORTS CARS/SPORTS SEDANS

THE COMBINED category was a sea of Porsches with Andrew Hall's 911 taking pole by the best part of 2s, while the brand also filled the first seven grid spots.

But with Hall only starting and winning one race, it was an open fight for the round win.

Sven Burchartz put up his hand with a Race 2 triumph, but a storming final race drive by Tim Wolfe snared the overall honours.

PORSCHE 944

THE PORSCHE 944 affair was a three-horse race with Adam Brewer, Cameron Beller and James Westaway all having their times in the sun.

Beller started strong by putting the #1 into P1 in Race 1, but could not repeat the performance.

Adam Brewer then hit back by snatching the next race to show his speed.

However, Westaway saved his pace for when it mattered and marched to the round win with back-to-back victories. 🏁

Above: Brad Vaughan was the man to beat in Saloons. Top: Rain or shine – Miceli snared Historic Tourer points. Below: Sven Burchartz heads the Sports Sedan field. Bottom: Tony Waghorn – three from three in Excels. Images: REBECCA HIND/REVVED PHOTOGRAPHY



ROUNDING THEM UP

IN ADDITION to the Australian Rally Championship, there was state pride on the line at the Forest Rally with the WA Rally Championship also on show.

A solid haul of 21 competitors lined up for state honours and it was all about one driver, Craig Rando.

Rando (*right*) headed the field throughout the weekend and emerged a comfortable 15 points clear of nearest rival Nicholas Box.

Box won a closer fight for second with Irishman Glenn Alcorn with Timothy Hiles not far behind.

Whilst Rando ended up comfortably winning overall honours, he had plenty of challengers early on.

Former Supercars driver turned rally driver Alex Rullo shot out of the gates and took a huge 38s win in the opening stage.

In fact, Rullo swept the first four stages with the smallest margin a convincing 30s.

He looked unbeatable until Stage 5 where he lost a wheel in a moment that ultimately



Image: TIM ALLOTT

decided his rally.

Suddenly the fight for victory was wide open as Hiles edged ahead of Rando by just 2.3s.

Hiles then went back-to-back to end the opening day.

But in the fight for overall honours, Rando was awarded for his consistency as he emerged with 59.5s

up his sleeve on nearest rival Box.

The Rullos were back on Sunday and Alex led Peter by 15s in Stage 7.

The trip through Ellis saw Alex Rullo at his best with a huge 40s win, while Box reduced the stage deficit to 22s in the following.

Alex Rullo ended up enjoying the perfect day, sweeping the entirety

of Heat 2 and take it by a huge 2m49.8s.

However, he was forced to rue that lost wheel and had to settle for sixth overall.

The WA Rally Championship returns with the Safari in Grimwade on June 21.

Thomas Miles 🇺🇸

McNEILL SNARES AU4 OPENER

THE 2025 AU4 Championship finally started at The Bend on May 24-25 and it was worth the wait with a fierce fight for glory.

There were three winners from as many races with Isaac McNeill (*pictured*) edging out Harrison Duske and Imogen Radburn, who were separated by just seven points across a hard-fought weekend.

The reborn class, comprised an 18-car field that saw the debut of the new Tatuus-Abarth F4 race cars, competing alongside the first-generation F4 Mygale-Ford cars.

Duske started with plenty of speed, driving to a convincing 5s triumph in the opening race.

The battle for second was much tighter with Radburn holding off McNeill.

Noah Killion then had his moment



Image: ISAAC McNEILL RACING

in Race 2, controlling that 13-lap encounter.

He overcame McNeill by 2s, while the fifth for third was a tight arm wrestle.

Just 1.4s covered positions three to five with Radburn winning the battle, forcing Duke to fourth.

Suddenly it was an open field in the final race for the opening round win and McNeill seized his moment.

After AGI Sport's Killion led the opening laps, he fell down the order on lap four and McNeill was not going to let the opportunity slip.

He controlled the remainder to

take the race and round by 6s over Radburn and Duske.

"We got the set-up nailed in the last race and it was a great result," said McNeill.

"I got some good starts in the races. My launches were pretty good, and I made some good passes.

"The racing was really good over the weekend too. It was very close all weekend, and hopefully this is a good start to a great season."

The younger Gen1 field was more one way with Jenson Marold putting in a perfect performance, unbeaten and leading an AGI Sport one-two with Koby Wilson.

The next round of the Motorsport Australia AU4 Championship returns to The Bend's shorter 'West Circuit' on July 12-13.

Thomas Miles 🇺🇸

PADDON WINS ARC THRILLER IN WA



KIWI PAIR HAYDEN PADDON AND JOHN KENNARD HAVE TAKEN OUT ROUND 2 OF THE AUSTRALIAN RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP, ADDING AN ARC VICTORY TO THEIR IMPRESSIVE INTERNATIONAL RESUME. TIMOTHY W NEAL REPORTS ...

THE FAMOUS NZ pair (*above*) have tasted World Rally Championship glory together, two European titles and, a healthy score of national championship across the ditch; but now they can add the WA Forest Rally to an incredible legacy.

Paddon narrowly took out both Heats in WA in his Hyundai Rally 2 machine, winning over Round 1 victors and title leaders Harry Bates and co-driver Coral Taylor.

Whilst Paddon looked the goods in Round 1 in Canberra, a meeting with a kangaroo ended that push, but there was no such wildlife to prevent him taking a thrilling 5.4s second win in WA in Sunday's Heat 2 to seal it on the final Power Stage.

It was an overall strong weekend for international crews with Swede pairing Tom Kristensson and Andreas Johansson also rounding out the podium in their one-off ARC debut.

For Paddon, things were tight all weekend, with a see-sawing Heat 1 seeing some luck fall their way.

"I am loving the battle right now. I had to push right down to the last stage – both yesterday with Scott (Pedder), and today with Harry (Bates) and we love that part of the rally and are enjoying that aspect.

"When you've got to fight for a win, it is always a bit more satisfying.



While Tom Kristensson impressed on debut, snaring a podium spot, it was kiwi Paddon (*above*) who took a strong win.

"It's similar to the feeling we had doing the European Championship where we had to be pushed on every stage.

"As for this afternoon, it was just a different rally for us. The car worked in these conditions, which made it easy to push."

AN EPIC BATTLE FOR THE HEATS

MORE THAN 35 crews took to the WA Forest for an enthralling Heat 1, with Paddon taking it by 12 seconds over former champion Scott Pedder alongside co-driver Glenn Macneall.

Whilst Tom Kristensson turned heads with a Stage 1 win on debut, Pedder then shot to the lead over the Swede and Bates.

Bates then suffered sensor issues early in his Toyota, taking a one-minute and 20-second penalty for arriving late to a stage to effectively

rule himself out of the challenge for the day.

Paddon then led after the third stage, before Pedder wrestled the lead back by the mid-day service.

The Kiwi then responded with double stage wins to seal the deal for the opening day, whilst a puncture to Kristensson and a crash from local Alex Rullo also saw them drop from contention.

Clayton Hoy and Erin Kelly steered their Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 6 to the Production Cup lead for sixth overall, whilst remarkably, the carnage for the Rally 2s also saw ARC 2WD Classic Cup Heat 1 Winners Nick Box and Caleb Ash in ninth.

Another ARC debutant to enjoy a memorable day was Australian superstar and two-time Dakar winner Toby Price and co-driver Holli Kilbride, finishing 12th overall

and top in the Subaru WRX Challenge class.

Pedder then suffered an off early in Heat 2 to rule him out of contention. Kristensson repeated his Saturday heroics with another early stage win, whilst Bates hit the lead at the mid-day service with a great comeback from Saturday. But Paddon would respond on the penultimate stage before sealing the victory on the Power Stage with a 2.9s advantage.

And whilst Hoy took out the Production battle, Box would take the Classic Cup in his Nissan Silvia C2, whilst Timothy Hiles and Noah Humble took the 4WD Cup victory in his Subaru Legacy.

With both heat wins, Price took the Subaru WRX Challenge comfortably on debut.

And finally, it was Garry Mills and Shaun McMaken in the ARC 2WD Cup, whilst young gun Jackson Long continues to impress alongside his father Damien with the ARC Junior Cup victory.

Harry Bates/Coral Taylor lead, but Australian Rally Championship points are still to be updated as AA is published. Next up is Rally Queensland, in Ipswich on 4-6 July for Round 3, as one of the most entertaining seasons in recent ARC memory continues to roll through the states. 🇺🇸

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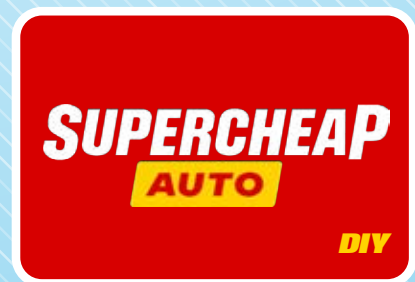
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HITTING THE JACKPOT

IN A bizarre British Grand Prix that saw winners crash and crawl out of contention, Marco Bezzecchi emerged victorious for Aprilia.

Across 19 wild laps, Bezzecchi remained calm to get a first win in Aprilia colours and be the 11th different winner in 11 British Grands Prix at Silverstone.

Johann Zarco backed his famous French win with second place as Marc Marquez extended his championship lead by being third – but that was only after a very eventful ride to get there.

After both Marquez brothers crashed from the lead, before a red flag that saved them, Fabio Quartararo appeared destined for a first win in almost three years, but he was reduced to tears after his Yamaha let him down.

Quartararo again recorded a sensational pole, but could not get away in the Sprint.

Instead, the Marquez brothers bolted away and battled for victory.

Many would have anticipated Marc to dominate, but he ran wide at Village which allowed Alex through and the youngster ended the #93's perfect Sprint streak.

BUT SUNDAY was where all the action was and, in the first attempt at racing, Alex Marquez got the best launch – but he did not get to enjoy it for a single corner, falling hard as soon as he braked for Abbey.

As soon as he grabbed the front brake, Alex lost control of his Gresini Ducati and fell hard.

This put Marc Marquez in the lead, but he also slid off his Ducati, going through Maggotts and Becketts.

However, it was a tangle between Franco Morbidelli and Aleix Espargaro at Vale that brought out the red flags – due to an oil spill.

With less than three laps completed, the entire field was permitted to rejoin, giving the Marquez brothers a massive Get Out of Jail Free card.

At the second attempt, Francesco Bagnaia made a flying start to soar into the lead at Turn 1, only for



It may have come at Quartararo's expense, but Bezzecchi's win was impressive. Image: GOLD AND GOOSE

Quartararo to hit back at Farm and put the Yamaha back into P1 – and he then checked out.

Meanwhile, the Marquez brothers were going backwards after slow starts and they had a fast Australian for company.

Australia's Jack Miller was speedy on the soft front tyre and flew into third having caught Marc Marquez napping at Village.

Then the next factory Ducati was in the Australian's sights and he came from nowhere at Brooklands to steal second from Bagnaia.

A lap later, the two factory Ducatis were not even in the podium picture as Marc Marquez followed Bagnaia off the track at Copse.

The #93 fell towards the end of the top 10, while Bagnaia was suddenly out of the race for good after falling at Luffield.

As Quartararo was riding more

than 5s into the distance, Miller was also looking good for a fairytale podium as well.

But soon his grip on the soft front tyre ran out and, on lap six, he slipped from second to fourth in one corner as both Bezzecchi and Zarco shot by. He would end up drifting to seventh.

Marc Marquez found his groove again as the race reached the halfway mark and pushed himself back into podium contention.

After 11 laps, Quartararo looked on course for a stunning win, but he was robbed.

The #20 Yamaha suddenly slowed coming out of Brooklands as the Frenchman crawled to a halt on pit straight. Having not won in three painful years, Quartararo was on his knees, in tears, behind the bike that let him down with a rear ride height issue.

This pushed Bezzecchi into the lead by 3s over Zarco and Marc Marquez, who found himself back on the podium ahead of Miller and Morbidelli.

The final drama was the fight for third as the Marquez brothers ganged up on Morbidelli. The trio put on a grand show in a battle that was not decided until the final corner where the #93 did just enough to hold on by nothing over Morbidelli and Alex.

Next up is the Aragon Grand Prix on June 6-8. Thomas Miles 🏁

MOTOGP WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP AFTER ROUND 7

- 1: Marc Marquez 196 points
- 2: Alex Marquez 172
- 3: Francesco Bagnaia 124
- 4: Franco Morbidelli 98
- 5: Johann Zarco 97

OGIER OUTLASTS HYUNDAI FIGHTBACK

THE FIFTH round of the FIA World Rally Championship saw more pain heaped on the struggling Hyundai team, as mechanical problems denied Ott Tanak a 2025 breakthrough in Portugal.

The iconic Rally de Portugal, with its famous Fafe Jump, was the start of seven straight gravel rallies and, despite the Hyundai team being happy to be off the tarmac, it still couldn't stop TGR's Sebastien Ogier taking his second win of the year alongside co-driver Vincent Landais.

With steering failure putting Tanak out of the lead late on Saturday, Ogier held his nerve over the Estonian who swept Sunday's stages to fall just 8.7 seconds short of a miraculous comeback.

In the meantime, Kalle Rovannerpaa took out third place to eat into his team-mate Elfyn Evans' massive title lead and will head to Sardinia in June just 30 points in arrears.

Toyota have now won all five events this season, whilst Ogier continues to be a formidable part-timer, with this



win being a record-extending seventh in Portugal, and the 63rd of his career.

"I think it's something I can be proud of, the way I have managed to stay competitive after all these years," said Ogier.

"Ott was just flying like crazy, but maybe a bit too much actually – I don't know. On our side, race management is definitely a craft we have, so I'm happy. Seven times here in Portugal ... not too bad.

After pulling 13.9 seconds clear by the penultimate stage on Saturday, Tanak was left pondering what could have been.

"We had a puncture on Saturday morning, and then we had the steering failure," he said.

"These are the things which decide

the rally. That's the way the rally is – it's never only performance and it's never only reliability ... It's the package.

"It's nothing to do with luck. It's just how strong we are – and it means we need to be stronger."

THE RACE TO FAFE

AFTER EVANS held a slender 0.2-second gap into Friday, Tanak immediately got the jump to lead through to the close of a gruelling day by just seven seconds.

Ogier had also wrestled his machine into second over team-mates Katsuta and Rovannerpaa.

Hyundai's Fourmaux also challenged early but clipped a rock at a hairpin to break his steering, whilst Neuville also hit a bank but recovered into fourth.

After extending his lead to 13.9 seconds by the penultimate 22.10km test at Amarante on Saturday, Tanak's power steering failure saw him drop 45 seconds and into third. Ogier, and Rovannerpaa held the one-two, with the former enjoying a 276-second cushion.

After the final six-stage day, when

the field took on the famous Fafe stage jump (Salto da Pedra Sentada), Tanak turned over a full 28 seconds to fight back into second place, 3.5 seconds over the title-contending Finn.

Tanak would own 12 of the 24 stage wins by the end of the rally, with Ogier's five the next best.

Behind Neuville in fourth, Toyota drivers Katsuta, Evans, and Pajari held fifth to seventh, followed by the M-Sport Fords of Josh McErlean and Grégoire Munster, whilst WRC2 winner Oliver Solberg completed the top-ten in his Rally2 GR Yaris.

Next up is the highly abrasive gravel outing of Rally Italia Sardegna, Round 6, on June 5-8, punctuating a further six-straight gravel runs across Greece, Estonia, Finland, Paraguay and Chile.

TW Neal 🏆

WRC STANDINGS AFTER 5 ROUNDS

| | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Evans/Martin - Toyota | 118 |
| Rovannerpaa/Haltunen -Toyota | 88 |
| Ogier/Landais - Toyota | 86 |
| Tanak/Jarveoja - Hyundai | 84 |
| Neuville/Wydaeghe - Hyundai | 78 |

The famous Fafe jump ... by this stage, Ogier was hanging on to a decent lead but (above) after losing the lead following a steering failure, Tanak was on a charge – back to second place. Images: GETTY IMAGES





BELL SCOOPS THE ALL-STAR MILLION

EARLY REGULAR season tearaway Christopher Bell came up trumps in the non-points-paying All-Star race at the historic North Wilkesboro Speedway, pocketing the million dollar purse from a 23-car field.

But the talking point after the race was from Penske's Joey Logano in second place, after the 'gimmick' caution that cost him the lead, and his distaste at how Bell got the win in the contact-filled 250 lap race.

Firstly there was the 'Promoters Caution' that led to the 28-lap green-flag run, and gave Bell the chance to pit and fight back with fresh tyres.

The controversial new rule for the exhibition race allows for the race promoter to call one caution whenever they want – but between laps 100 and 220, with their choice of doing it with 40 laps remaining irking the three-time champ.

"I'm pissed off right now. Just dang it – we had the fastest car," Logano said, who led 139 of 250 laps.

"I'm trying to choose my words correctly on the caution situation. Obviously I got bit by it, so I am the one frustrated obviously."



Just a couple of old buddies going at it .. Logano vs Bell. The latter (above) won ... Images: GETTY IMAGES

Then it was Bell's brushback which forced his Mustang into the high-side wall, with Logano also being peeved about that one.

Bell gave this facetious reaction after the race:

"He was frustrated? That is interesting. I genuinely would not have guessed that," he said before adding that "I had gotten to him a couple times before and he made it very difficult for me, as he should."

"I got my run, and I took the moment, as I should. I don't think that I did anything that Joey has not done – and I've seen Joey do much worse. We will continue on."

Leading into the race, the two

heats to decide the initial 20-car field were taken out by Brad Keselowski and Bell, whilst the Open Race to decide two of the final three spots went to winner Carson Hocevar and runner up John Hunter Nemechek, with Noah Gragson getting the final fan vote entry.

The Heat 1 winner had the early lead, with the first caution coming after Daniel Suarez found the wall. Byron then wrestled the lead at the restart before Logano came to the fore, with Bell getting to the front out of the first major pit cycle for the first of his 28 laps in the lead.

Action then started getting hot in the mid-pack when Cindric

and Chastain set off a wreck, with Logano and Bell then making some contact on the restart as a prelude to their later scrap.

Keselowski then found the wall with 75 laps remaining as the field would have been waiting nervously for the Promoters Caution, with Larson also hitting the wall shortly after.

When promoter Michael Waltrip finally waved the yellow, he literally dropped the flag onto the track – an embarrassing mishap – whilst Bell also hit Gragson in pit lane, with Logano opting not to take new rubber.

Bell and Logano then went back and forth for the million bucks.

"North Wilkesboro ... how about that one?" Bell shouted to a full grandstand.

"That right there is absolutely incredible. North Wilkesboro – best short track on the schedule."

The following NASCAR outing (opposite) was to bring back the points, with the traditional Coca-Cola 600 in Charlotte following the Indy 500 at Indianapolis.

TW Neal 🏁



Chastain on the charge to a fabulous '600' win. Below: There was the usual Charlotte carnage Images: GETTY IMAGES

EPIC 600 COMEBACK FOR CHASTAIN

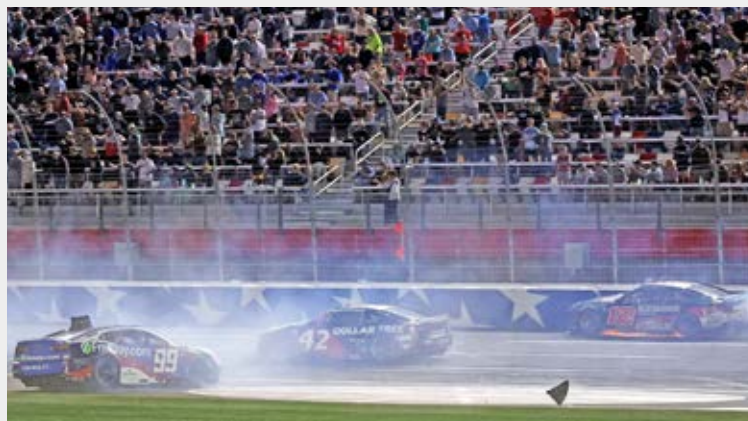
NASCAR'S LONGEST race, the Coca-Cola 600, had it all in a test of machines and guts at the Charlotte Motor Speedway, with watermelon man Ross Chastain taking the ultimate trip to Victory Lane on Sunday after coming from the clouds. **TIMOTHY W NEAL** reports ...

IT WAS the first ever win for Chastain at the Charlotte Memorial Day race, going from the rear in a back-up car to take out NASCAR's crown jewel event in the Trackhouse Chevrolet.

It was a huge disappointment for William Byron at the end of the four stages, after the Hendricks driver led 283 of 400 laps whilst taking the glut of the stage points, with Chastain only leading eight laps – but that was front for the five that mattered in a huge battle at the end that ended up with a 0.673s split.

Taking third was Toyota driver Chase Briscoe, with NZ's Shane van Gisbergen put on a good show with his second-best finish for the year in 14th, his highest in NASCAR on an oval.

It was the lowest ever starting position for a victor at the 600,



with the Florida native celebrating in his unique way after his ear-splitting burnout, by smashing a watermelon from the roof of his car in a tribute to his family's farming legacy.

Byron appeared to have the goods but as Chastain came at him he was forced to defend hard in the high lane, clipping the wall several times with his pursuer looking very fast on full throttle but needing to attack on the more turbulent lower lane.

Byron's lost attempt at a first '600' wasn't the only pain suffered for the day, with several high performers also going by the wayside.

Notably, the talented rookie Carson Hocevar was vying for the

lead in Stage 4 when his engine blew coming out of the seventh caution, whilst Denny Hamlin had also run a good race before he ran out of fuel with 11 laps remaining.

There was also a Memorial Day double-DNF for Kyle Larson, who after crashing out of the Indy 500 for McLaren, also got caught up in a big wreck in Charlotte after Suarez spun across Briscoe's nose, who impacted into Blaney then caught the Hendricks man.

Four time 600 winner Jimmie Johnson also had his race ended, on lap 112, with what he labelled a "rookie mistake," getting loose into the wall in the daylight hours and collecting two others.

But the day most certainly

belonged to Chastain in taking his sixth career win in his 236th start. But this was the biggest of them all, adding it to his other Super Speedway win, at Talladega in 2022.

"When I left the shop last night, I went over and sat in this car for the first time," said Chastain.

"It was about 10 o'clock when I left. They worked until 2:30am. They were back at 5:30am this morning. Most of them drive 30, 45 minutes home ... a little shower, I think. I don't even know if they slept. Back there at 5:30am ... they get this thing ready, and that's the dedication it takes from Trackhouse.

"To drive on that final run in the World 600 and pass two cars that had been way better all night ... Crew chief Phil Surgen wanted me to pit two laps earlier. I went two laps longer just out of a little bit of confusion. Man, that paid off at the end! These Goodyear Eagles held on longer because they were a little bit fresher. Holy cow, we just won the World 600!"

Next up for the NASCAR series is another big Super Speedway race at the Nashville 400 in Tennessee on June 1. 🏁

“NO PROBLEM”:

IT HAD TO HAPPEN EVENTUALLY AT INDIANAPOLIS FOR CHIP GANASSI'S ALEX PALOU - AND NOW INDYCAR'S DOMINANT SPANIARD CAN CLAIM HIS PLACE AMONGST THE LEGENDS AS AN INDY 500 WINNER. TIMOTHY W NEAL REPORTS ...

THE 109TH Indianapolis 500 lived up to its name as the Greatest Spectacle in Racing, with Palou finally getting his likeness on the Borg Warner Trophy as the first Spanish-born driver to win the big one.

This one had it all: tears of joy and tears of despair; wrecks; cautions; fire; and pit lane drama, as well as some unique celebrations. And it was decided on the last corner with a flag ending the race at the death as Palou danced with fate with his fuel consumption to deny Marcus Ericsson a second '500'

Despite winning three championships in four years, the 28-year old Palou was yet to win on an oval in 29 attempts – but now there can be no question about his legacy.

His win also made it five out six visits to Victory Lane to start the season with a worst finish of second place, making it the most dominant start to a campaign since AJ Foyt in 1979. Thank goodness for the rest of the field that the '500' no longer gives double point ..., but it's already hard to see him not taking a fourth Astor Cup in five years. And it will now be one with extra meaning.

When the leading machines took their final pit stops, it appeared that Ericsson was in the box seat to push the hardest with a big fuel payload, whilst Palou had to juggle it from an effective second.

It remained unclear whether he should've taken the lead with 14 laps remaining and sat in the tow instead, but when he was informed of his fuel situation after doing so, his reaction to the CGR crew was typical – simply saying: “No problem.” And it wasn't.

With the traffic just ahead of him trying to stay on the lead lap it also meant that they were going at a decent clip, which meant he didn't really lose any tow.



McLaren's Pato O'Ward made the early running ... but just fell short in the final sprint – fourth for the fourth time! Images: GETTY IMAGES

And with that being the only pass amongst the top five for the final 14 laps, it would subsequently be tough for Ericsson to make a move in the dirty air. And with another car going into the wall on the last corner of the white flag lap, it was all over.

When Palou crossed the line with 0.682s over the former F1 swede, David Malukas, and Pato O'Ward, he pulled up just past the historic start line of bricks after completing a circuit, and ran down the straight with his arms out, creating a unique moment in the history of America's most famous race.

VINDICATION OF A YOUNG BUT DOMINANT CAREER

“I CANNOT believe it, What an amazing day,” Palou said on the track.

“What an amazing race ... by the #10 crew,

everybody at CGR, HRC. I cannot believe it. It's amazing to be here. It's amazing to win.”

“At the end, I didn't know if I was going to be able to pass Marcus or not, but I made it happen. First oval win. What a better place (to do it)”

In terms of the delicate dance with fuel after making his final pitstop with 32 laps to go, Palou said it was tough all throughout the 200 lap race.

“It was tough conditions, especially when you were third or fourth in the pack. Even leading, the energy and fuel consumption was super high. Did they want me to lead? I wanted to lead obviously, but I made it happen.”

And on the unique celebration on the main straight ...

“It was amazing, I don't know why they left me there alone. I told them if we were going to win then we'd meet there. It was the best celebration ever.”

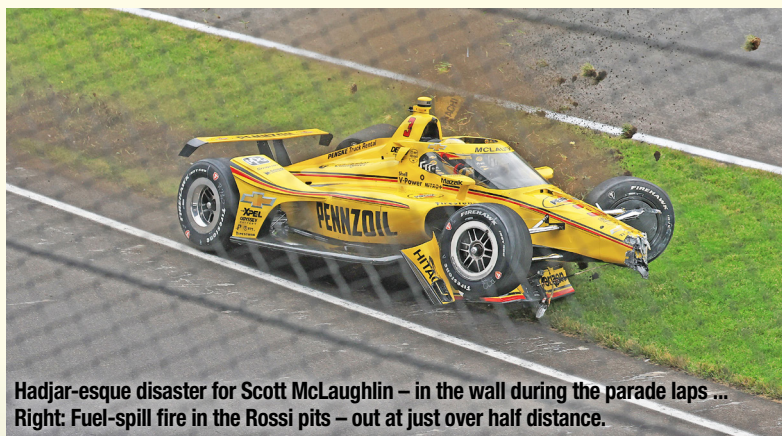
Team owner Chip Ganassi can now add a sixth Indy 500 to his trophy cabinet, with the two sharing a moment by taking a slug of the traditional cream milk.

“The guy is unbelievable. I don't know what to say,” Ganassi said.

“We saved fuel all day, doing this and doing that, and we were in the draft, and in the



A 500 FOR PALOU



Hadjar-esque disaster for Scott McLaughlin – in the wall during the parade laps ...
Right: Fuel-spill fire in the Rossi pits – out at just over half distance.



end we had those guys in front of us helping us ... he just beat everyone today. It's an incredible thing.

"It's going to make Alex Palou's career, it's going to make his life, and it certainly has made mine."

After taking his wreath, Palou also said "it's the best milk I've tasted, I'm going to take a little more ... It's just been an amazing year, Honestly, it's the team that makes me look good on track."

He then held the bottle up to Ganassi and said, "It's good huh?"

DRAMA FROM THE GET-GO

ALL UP there were seven cars that fell to the traditional '500' attrition – but before a racing lap had even happened, Penske Kiwi Scott

McLaughlin found the wall during the pace laps to make Team Penske's '500' campaign go from bad to worse after the earlier qualification disqualifications.

That other kiwi legend, Scott Dixon, was out of it from the start, pitting with a rear brake on fire and losing three laps as the brakes were replaced.

There was plenty of other drama in pit lane, with Alexander Rossi's Chevrolet bursting into flames whilst at a stop, but things were even more bizarre for rookie poleman Robert Shwartzman.

The Prema driver lost control whilst entering his pit box, collecting some crew members before hitting the wall in a strange and chaotic scene.

Alex Palou filled the last remaining gap in his spectacular resume, with a first oval win, in the biggest race of them all ...

The first half of Kyle Larson's attempt at the double also ended prematurely when he lost it into the wall, which also took Kyffin Simpson and Sting Ray Robb with him. The NASCAR star would then have a repeat crash at the Coca-Cola 600 in Charlotte just a few hours later.

Defending duel 500 champion Josef Newgarden also lost out to put an exclamation mark on Penske's weekend, with a fuel pump failure putting his challenge from the back of the pack to bed on lap 132.

Shortly after the McLaughlin incident, Marco Andretti crashed on the first lap after being

clipped and sent into the wall out of Turn 1.

As for the runners-up, it was Ericsson's second P2 in the last three attempts whilst, after missing last year's race, Malukas took his highest ever finish on the Indy oval. And O'Ward, the McLaren Mexican, spent this year's 500 as a nearly-ran for the fourth time in five years with his fourth time in P4.

With the Month of May over, the series now heads for the downtown streets of Detroit for the Chevrolet Detroit Grand Prix on June 1. 🏁



AVOIDING THE CHAOS

THE FIA Formula 2 Championship produced plenty of action across the Imola and Monaco weekends, including an infamous pile-up.

THOMAS MILES reports ...

THREE WINNERS from four races has ensured the race for the FIA F2 title is extremely open as the season heads into its second quarter.

Consistency has seen Luke Browning grab the lead of the championship as many of his rivals were hurt by the Monte Carlo car park.

Dino Beganovic took pole with a record time at Imola as then points leader Verschoor found himself a lowly 19th.

Due to the partial reversed grid, Ritomo Miyata started the Sprint at the front, but was immediately passed by Jak Crawford.

Crawford was then never seriously challenged again, dominating the race in a commanding lights-to-flag performance and claiming his third career win and first of 2025.

The likes of Arvid Lindblad and Browning also made fast starts to rise to the podium positions in the clean race as the top three were only covered by 1.5s.

Dunne won and took big points at Imola, but blotted his copybook at Monaco, losing the points lead. Image: F2

The Feature Race was a hard-fought affair however with many drivers in the mix.

After Sebastian Montoya stalled on the formation lap, Beganovic aced the start with Leo Fornaroli moving to second ahead of Lindblad and Alex Dunne as Victor Martins went nowhere.

The first moves were made in the lane with drivers changing to softs on lap even and Browning was the biggest mover, from seventh to first.

Beganovic tried to make a move for the lead around Tosa, but it did not pay off and this allowed Dunne to come into play.

Then, two laps later, Dunne made a more calculated move at Turn 2 and snared the effective lead.

A stranded Rafael Villagómez at Turn 4, after a clash with Sami Meguetounif, brought out the Safety Car and Dunne kept picking off rivals who were yet to box.

After passing Duerksen with DRS, Dunne completed his charge from fifth to first and backed up his success from Bahrain by a commanding 6s win over Browning and Beganovic.

"Very, very happy. Of course ... to do two out of three this year is

a pretty good start. It's important to try and do more and more throughout the year," Dunne said.

TO AVOID traffic craziness, qualifying was split into separate groups and having hit the championship lead at Imola, Dunne let the good times roll with pole at the Principality.

However, Kush Maini had the privilege of starting the Sprint Race from pole and the Indian driver maximised his advantage.

Maini got the perfect start and produced a lights-to-flag performance to fend off fellow Alpine Academy driver Gabriele Mini all the way.

Lindblad was third on the road but received a 10s penalty for contact with Crawford and this promoted Browning.

"First Indian to win in Monaco too. It's a great honour and a dream come true," Maini said.

However, the scene that will be remembered most from Monaco will be the start of the Feature.

One of the biggest objectives is to survive Sainte Devote and get into the race, but many failed to do that.

Pole sitter Dunne, desperate to regain track position, made a lunge

on the inside of Martins, who had jumped him off the line.

But contact with Martins' right rear caused both cars to career into the outside barriers and turn into road blocks.

Suddenly the entire field was left with nowhere to go and at least 12 cars were involved.

"Who does he think he is - Max Verstappen?" Martins claimed.

Leo Fornaroli, Lindblad and Crawford were the first cars to perform the great escape and racing resumed after a lengthy red flag.

The drama was not over as Duerksen then crashed at Rascasse, while Beganovic also found the barriers at Casino Square.

The second VSC period was the deciding moment as Crawford pitted, emerged in the lead, and ended up taking a comfortable 6s win over Fornaroli.

F2 follows F1 to Catalunya this weekend. 🏁

F2 STANDINGS

- 1: Luke Browning 70 points
- 2: Alex Dunne 67
- 3: Leo Fornaroli 64
- 4: Richard Verschoor 59
- 5: Jak Crawford 56



GAINING GROUND

RAFEAL CAMARA'S strong Feature Race form came to an abrupt end in Monaco, tightening the race for the FIA Formula 3 title. **THOMAS MILES** reports ...

Camara has been the class driver of the F3 season so far and he carried on his momentum at the start of the weekend at Imola.

He claimed a third successive pole position after leaving it to the final lap of the day to beat Santiago Ramos.

But it was all about MP Motorsport in the Sprint race as Tim Tramnitz led a 1-2 with teammate Bruno del Pino right behind.

Del Pino led the field initially from pole, but could keep his teammates behind for only two laps before Tramnitz made DRS count.

Behind them briefly was Boya but he went from third to 'out of the points' in an instant between Safety Cars.

The first was for a stopped Nicola Marinangeli (having lost a wheel) while the other was required for a beached Matías Zagazeta at Tamburello.

Tramnitz then controlled the remainder of the race as de Pino managed to hold off Tsolov to retain the 1-2.

The Feature Race was a cracker as Santiago Ramos and Rafael Camara wrestled for glory.

After a great start Ramos hit the lead, but Camara stayed with him and snatched the advantage on lap four.

A Virtual Safety Car was signalled on lap 12 of 22 with Ivan Domingues having stopped on-track at Turn 4.

The deciding moment came just three laps from the finish.

Ramos was now closer than ever and his race-long pressure paid off with a storming move around the outside at Turn 2.

By now Camara was struggling with his tyres and ran wide at Acque Minerali, allowing



Nikola Tsolov bagged a pile of points in Monaco ... Image: RED BULL CONTENT POOL

Stromsted to soar to second.

He got within DRS, but the VAR driver held on to claim his first Feature as Camara still did enough to stand on the podium.

"Happy with how I managed the race - it was good to wait for Rafa to enter a bit of degradation and then start attacking. So, I think the strategy was the right one," Ramos said.

WHEN THE F3 field arrived on the famous streets of Monte Carlo, Tsolov was in fine form, being a cut above the rest in qualifying.

His 1:24.882s was more than a tenth clear of teammate Mari Boya in Group A, which was well clear of Group B where the drivers could not get into the 1m25s area.

However, a number of drivers were penalised for impeding, while Nicola Lacorte was disqualified for obtaining outside assistance to rejoin the track.

Alessandro Giusti was on pole for the Sprint, but had a slow getaway and dropped to fourth before the opening corner.

Meanwhile, Martinus Stenshorne shot from second and into the lead and never looked back, dominating the race.

Tuukka Taponen also got a good start and secured second which he also did not let go.

Less than a lap was possible before the first Safety Car was needed, with cars everywhere.

James Hedley, Nicola Lacorte, Santiago Ramos, and Ivan Domingues all came together at Portier and Hedley was the most effected with a hand injury ruling him out for the remainder.

In a separate incident, Noel León and Callum Voisin also made contact.

On Sunday, Tsolov made history by being the first driver to take five career FIA F3 wins.

He did it in fine style with a lights-to-flag performance.

The Campos Racing driver ended up a huge 7s clear of the field with Roman Bilinski and Mari Boya fighting hard to end up on the podium.

After some tight opening laps,

Tsolov ended up putting the foot down in the second half of the race and built a commanding lead.

This is despite multiple Safety Car periods with Charlie Wurz finding the Massanet barriers and Brando Badoer having trouble at Portier.

"I think it's redemption time. The season started more difficult than an expected and it's a good track to do it and gives me a lot of confidence going into the season. A good track to do it and I could not be happier," Tsolov said.

It was also a decent day for the Antipodeans with Louis Sharp getting points in ninth and James Wharton a season-best 11th.

The F3 triple header heads to Barcelona this weekend. 🏁

F3 CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS

- 1: Rafael Camara 77 points
- 2: Tim Tramnitz 64
- 3: Nikola Tsolov 61
- 4: Noah Stromsted 52
- 5: Tuukka Taponen 51



THE BOOT IS ON THE OTHER FOOT

Report: LUIS VASCONCELOS
Images: GETTY IMAGES,
 RED BULL CONTENT POOL

MAX VERSTAPPEN won the Emilia-Romagna Grand Prix, breaking McLaren and Oscar Piastri's recent domination in the World Championship.

In a race where one VSC and one SC periods shuffled the running order as some could take a cheap pit stop while others had changed tyres under normal race conditions, the one thing that never changed was the race leader.

From the first braking area of the race until the end of the 63 laps of

the race in Imola, the Dutchman was the pace setter, leaving the McLaren drivers to fight for second place.

What a difference two weeks can make in Formula 1.

At the end of the Miami Grand Prix, it looked like McLaren was completely out of reach of its rivals and the rest of the season was going to be all about the internal battle between Oscar Piastri and Lando Norris.

But in Imola it was Verstappen who dominated the race, having better pace than the two McLaren drivers on both tyre compounds used on Sunday, after grabbing the lead with a daring and brilliant move going into

the Tamburello chicane for the first time after pole man Piastri braked early and left just enough room on the outside ...

Suddenly the dynamic between Red Bull and McLaren has changed, with even the very analytical Andrea Stella admitting that "we were a little surprised, I think I have to be honest here, by the pace of Red Bull, which was very competitive."

With Monaco being an unrepresentative circuit, we'll have to wait to see if, in Barcelona, the ultimate test track for all the cars, it's still the RB21 that sets the pace or if McLaren regains the upper hand.

BOLD AND BRILLIANT MAX WITH OVERTAKING being notoriously difficult at the Autódromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari and everyone expecting a one-stop race, the first few metres of the Grand Prix were always going to be very important and both pole-sitter Oscar Piastri and his front row neighbor, Max Verstappen, were extremely aware of that.

The Australian had his car pointed to the centre of the track and got a better getaway than the Red Bull man, but behind them it was George Russell who made an even better start and then got a massive tow from the two on the run down to Tamburello, the



For reasons that were not clear, after losing grip for a small number of laps, the Medium Pirelli tyres actually became competitive again, putting the early stoppers in big trouble.



Piastri led but left too much room on the outside, so that (top) Verstappen was on the inside for the next element of the chicane. Max was pretty thrilled with his day (above). Right: Albon beat Leclerc for fifth – a superb Williams result. Lower: Despite the support of his classmates (literally!) Antonelli had a tough day and DNF'd.



Piastri had no qualms in accepting that “we reacted a bit too quickly,” as he rejoined in the midfield, in P11.

As only Stroll pitted soon after, the Australian had to pass Tsunoda, Bearman, Colapinto, Hamilton, Antonelli and Hadjar the hard way, on track, losing valuable time and tyre life until the end of lap 29.

Then, a VSC to remove Ocon’s stranded car gave everyone who hadn’t yet pitted a ‘cheap’ pit stop – much to Norris’ frustration, as the British driver was literally coming out of the pits, having just stopped, when the race was neutralised, costing him valuable seconds and track positions.

That lucky break put Verstappen 20s ahead of Norris with Piastri, who had done a second stop, down in P4 behind the sensational Albon, until the Australian return to P3 on lap 41.

Everything seemed done and dusted, but a full SC period, to remove Antonelli’s broken Mercedes reignited the fight at the front. Well, almost ...

You see, Verstappen had such a big gap he could pit without losing the lead and Norris followed suit, both getting their second fresh set of Hards, a luxury Piastri no longer had as he’d used up his Medium/Hard race tyres by then.

That’s why he couldn’t even try to challenge Verstappen at the re-start and eventually lost out to Norris, in spite of a spirited defence until lap 57 of the 63.

But even on fresh tyres, Norris couldn’t match Verstappen’s pace, demonstrating that in Imola it was the RB21 that had the upper hand.

McLAREN PUZZLED BY DEFEAT

THAT PACE left McLaren puzzled and in search of answers, even if Team Principal Andrea Stella explained that “we knew that, because of the track layout and the slightly different ambient conditions, this race would

first chicane of the track.

With Piastri opting to cover Russell on the inside, the Mercedes driver had nowhere to go and was forced to brake early, only to see Verstappen pull off a move that will go into the F1 history books.

The Dutchman braked much later than his rivals, moving into the lead in the middle of the fast chicane, after catching Piastri completely by surprise.

Commenting on the move, Verstappen explained that “the start itself wasn’t particularly great, but then I was still on the normal line and I was, like, ‘I’m just going to try and send it around the outside.’ And it worked really well.”

Warming to the subject the World Champion noted that “I was quite far back as, before braking, I was basically in P3. I was on the normal braking line, but I still had to come from far. And as soon as I braked late and then came off the brakes I felt, like, ‘okay, there might be a move on.’ So, I just carried the speed in.

“I started to carry a bit more speed to the apex, so you have that kind of momentum swing then going into Turn 3. And, luckily, it basically was sticking. It’s not an easy move to make but everything went well!”

Piastri, for his part, admitted he wasn’t expecting to lose the lead there – but also explained he wasn’t overly concerned about being second, as in Miami.

The McLaren driver conceded that “I thought I had it pretty under control but it was a good move from Max. I’ll learn for next time ... clearly,” adding that “at that point, I wasn’t overly concerned to not be in the lead, but then our pace just wasn’t as strong as I expected. That compounded that first corner”

And when asked what he’d do if he had to do that start again, Piastri promptly admitted that “I definitely would have done something different – I would have braked 10 metres later probably! Live and learn ...”

RED BULL WAS THE FASTEST

VERSTAPPEN HAD also led in Miami but finished more than half a minute behind the two McLarens in the Hard Rock Stadium, so, being in the lead, even on a track where overtaking is hard, was no guarantee of success for the Dutchman.

However, unlike in the previous three races, it was Red Bull that had the better race pace, Verstappen’s lead growing slowly but surely with Piastri facing tyre issues as early as lap 10.

From being just 1.6s behind the Dutchman, the Melburnian suddenly started to lose half a second per lap and, on lap 12, the team made the decision to pit him for Hard tyres, changing the plan towards a two-stop strategy.

Russell had pitted the lap before, releasing Norris, who was already more than 10 seconds behind the leader, but the McLaren driver and Verstappen carried on, in what was a better strategic decision.



On fresh rubber (Piastrri had run out) Norris was able to move past into second late in the race. Below: Leclerc, Hadjar, Antonelli, Hamilton – early laps with Imola’s truly unique urban background ... Right: Hadjar performed again, netting points – again. Lower: Scenic Imola ... sadly, that’s it for now ...

have been just more balanced from a race pace point of view than Miami. “We knew that it would have been very balanced in qualifying, like already seen in Saudi, in Japan, in this kind of fast-flowing circuit.”

But rather than trying to find out how Red Bull unlocked some more speed from the RB21, McLaren might want to look at where the pace of its car went, because the gap to Ferrari and Mercedes in race conditions was also quite small, giving the impression it was the papaya cars that went backwards after Miami rather than Red Bull moving forward.

A disappointed Piastri admitted that “it’s never a great day when you start first and finish third. So, yeah, just not a great day. I think Turn 1 was not ideal. Then the timing of the VSC and the SC were bad for us, and the race was very tough from very early on.”

He then conceded that “given people had fresher tyres at the end, hanging on to a podium is not a bad result. And you’re going to have tough days in the championship ... and this is clearly one of them.”

“So as long as we learn the lessons, then that’s all I can ask for.”

Finishing second after starting from

P4, Norris was more relieved than happy, especially as he managed to recover three points on Piastri, who remains his main challenger for the title.

As he explained, “it’s probably the best result I thought we could really achieve today. I probably just didn’t expect the Red Bull to be quite as quick as they were. I’m happy with second. From fourth, it was a good race.”

And confirming his MCL39 didn’t feel at its best, Norris admitted that “it didn’t really feel great anywhere; it didn’t feel wonderful to drive. But sometimes it doesn’t, and you’re just quick. So it’s a little bit difficult to say. It’s just a very bumpy track ... a lot of these high-speed corners, are where we seem to struggle a bit comparing to the Red Bulls.”

“That’s where we’ve suffered the whole season so far – the high-speed corners. We have to work in that area, and maybe that’s proved to hurt us a little bit more this weekend.”

FERRARI FROM DR JEKYLL TO ‘SIGNOR’ HYDE

ITALY WAS almost in mourning for Ferrari at the end of qualifying, this being the first time ever no red car had qualified inside the top 10 at Imola, after a disastrous last Q2 run for Leclerc and Hamilton.

Once again, on new Soft tyres, the SF-25 was not quicker than on used tyres, leaving both drivers with a mountain to climb on Sunday.

On race pace, though, the car was transformed. Like a man on a mission, Leclerc gained three positions in the first eight laps and then pitted on lap 12, “on target” as his Team Principal explained, to resume in P17. As Russell, Sainz, Alonso and Stroll all reacted to his pit stop, the Monegasque, flying on new tyres, undercut all of them in just three laps, continuing to pass people at an amazing rate.

The VSC frustrated the Monegasque and then the SC even more, as he found himself in the same situation as Piastri, with no new tyres to use, dropping to P6 and seeing Hamilton finishing in fourth place after being quicker than his team-mate the whole weekend.

For Hamilton, this was the best main race result of the year, but the first half of the Grand Prix was a frustrating one, stuck behind Antonelli who, like him, had started on the Hard tyre.

Both pitted during the VSC period, keeping their respective positions, but on the Mediums the youngster struggled, with Hamilton finally getting the move done on lap 34.

The SC gave the veteran another





MORE GIANT KILLING FROM WILLIAMS

WILLIAMS HAS been the surprise package of the start of the season and, in Imola, both Alex Albon and Carlos Sainz (above) were in the fight for big points right from the start of the weekend.

The Spaniard beat his team-mate to qualify in P6 but pitting early to try and cover Leclerc cost him dearly, as that put him on a two-stop strategy and no extra new set of tyres to use when the SC came out with 18 laps to go.

In the end, Sainz managed a respectable eighth place but was upset that “we just didn’t execute a good Sunday yet again. Second time in a row that we let go a lot of points on Sunday after being in a very strong position after the first few laps.

“We over-reacted to Leclerc pitting and from then on we were on an offset strategy that really wasn’t working and wasn’t going in our way. I’m frustrated because it’s not the first time and it’s costing us a lot of points on Sundays.”

Albon, on the other hand, split the two Ferraris, which is a great result for a team that has admittedly already put all its eggs into the development of the 2026 car!

The Thai was attacking Leclerc for fourth place “as I could see Piastri struggling on old tyres and thought I could get to the podium,” when he was forced wide, with Hamilton breezing past both.

As Leclerc handed the position back, Albon admitted that “in his position I would have done the same, defending hard with just a few laps to go, so I understand what he did. Maybe I could have been a bit more patient but I really wanted to have a go at Piastri in the final laps!”

That alone is a statement of how competitive the Williams FW47 is – for at the start of the year, no-one expected the British team to have the third quickest car on race pace.

And given Albon and Sainz have been fast on all types of circuits, that fifth place in the Constructors’ Championship is looking quite safe, even with the caveat that other teams are still developing their current cars and Williams isn’t. 🏁

free pit stop with 17 laps to go and, as Leclerc fought hard to keep Albon behind, Hamilton caught and passed both as they nearly made contact and ran wide in Tamburello with just four laps to go.

MERCEDES DROPS DOWN THE ORDER

AFTER SHOCKING Norris by being third quickest in qualifying, George Russell had a brief sniff of the lead in the first 10 seconds of the race but never saw Piastri and Verstappen again the whole afternoon.

Norris eventually got past him and pulled away quickly, before the

gamble on a two-stopper backfired. Salvaging P7 was the best he could do, complaining that “the rear tyres were moving even in the straights, but the team couldn’t find the reason for that.”

For Antonelli, his first home Grand Prix was a tough one, the Italian never getting to grips with the C6 tyre and qualifying only 13th.

The gamble on the Hard tyre, combined with pitting during the VSC period, helped him move into sixth place but he didn’t have the same pace on the Mediums and was dropping away from the sensational Hadjar when a throttle issue forced him to retire.

Isack Hadjar was the other unlucky loser with the last SC period, the Racing Bulls driver dropping to P9 at the end, but scoring two valuable points for his team.

Kiwi Liam Lawson was never able to match his team-mate but was unlucky with red flags in qualifying and the race incidents, finishing only in P14. 🏁



| QUALIFYING RACE 7 | | | RESULTS RACE7 63 LAPS IMOLA | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|------|---------------|
| Pos | Driver | Time | Pos | Drivers | Make | Laps | Margin |
| 1 | Oscar Piastri | 1:14.670 | 1 | Max Verstappen | Red Bull | 63 | 1:31.33199 ▲1 |
| 2 | Max Verstappen | +0.034 | 2 | Lando Norris | McLaren | 63 | +6.109 ▲2 |
| 3 | George Russell | +0.137 | 3 | Oscar Piastri | McLaren | 63 | +12.956 -2 |
| 4 | Lando Norris | +0.292 | 4 | Lewis Hamilton | Ferrari | 63 | +14.356 ▲8 |
| 5 | Fernando Alonso | +0.781 | 5 | Alex Albon | Williams | 63 | +17.945 ▲2 |
| 6 | Carlos Sainz | +0.762 | 6 | Charles Leclerc | Ferrari | 63 | +20.774 ▲5 |
| 7 | Alex Albon | +0.803 | 7 | George Russell | Mercedes | 63 | +22.034 ▼4 |
| 8 | Lance Stroll | +0.911 | 8 | Carlos Sainz | Williams | 63 | +22.898 ▼2 |
| 9 | Isack Hadjar | +1.076 | 9 | Isack Hadjar | Racing Bulls | 63 | +23.586 - |
| 10 | Pierre Gasly | +1.117 | 10 | Yuki Tsunoda | Red Bull | 63 | +26.446 ▲10 |
| 11 | Charles Leclerc | +0.934 | 11 | Fernando Alonso | Aston Martin | 63 | +27.250 ▼6 |
| 12 | Lewis Hamilton | +1.095 | 12 | Nico Hulkenberg | Sauber | 63 | +30.296 ▲5 |
| 13 | Andrea Kimi Antonelli | +1.102 | 13 | Pierre Gasly | Alpine | 63 | +31.424 ▼3 |
| 14 | Gabriel Bortoleto | +1.590 | 14 | Liam Lawson | Racing Bulls | 63 | +32.511 ▲1 |
| 15 | Liam Lawson | +1.709 | 15 | Lance Stroll | Aston Martin | 63 | +32.993 ▼7 |
| 16 | Franco Colapinto | - | 16 | Franco Colapinto | Alpine | 63 | +33.411 - |
| 17 | Nico Hulkenberg | +1.848 | 17 | Ollie Bearman | Haas | 63 | +33.808 ▲2 |
| 18 | Esteban Ocon | +1.943 | 18 | Gabriel Bortoleto | Sauber | 63 | +38.572 ▼4 |
| 19 | Ollie Bearman | +2.248 | NC | Andrea Kimi Antonelli | Mercedes | 44 | +19 Laps ▼6 |
| 20 | Yuki Tsunoda | - | NC | Esteban Ocon | Haas | 27 | +36 Laps ▼2 |

| CHAMPIONSHIP AFTER RACE 7 | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| Pos | Driver | Points |
| 1 | Oscar Piastri | 146 - |
| 2 | Lando Norris | 133 - |
| 3 | Max Verstappen | 124 - |
| 4 | George Russell | 99 - |
| 5 | Charles Leclerc | 61 - |
| 6 | Lewis Hamilton | 53 ▲1 |
| 7 | Andrea Kimi Antonelli | 48 ▼1 |
| 8 | Alex Albon | 40 - |
| 9 | Esteban Ocon | 14 - |
| 10 | Lance Stroll | 14 - |
| 11 | Carlos Sainz | 11 +2 |
| 12 | Yuki Tsunoda | 10 ▼1 |
| 13 | Pierre Gasly | 7 ▼1 |
| 14 | Isack Hadjar | 7 ▲2 |
| 15 | Nico Hulkenberg | 6 ▼1 |
| 16 | Ollie Bearman | 6 ▼1 |
| 17 | Fernando Alonso | 0 - |
| 18 | Liam Lawson | 0 - |
| 19 | Jack Doohan | 0 - |
| 20 | Gabriel Bortoleto | 0 - |

NORRIS LAYS HIS GHOSTS TO REST

Report: LUIS VASCONCELOS
Images: GETTY IMAGES,
RED BULL CONTENT POOL

LANDO NORRIS has bounced back from a difficult period in style, winning the Monaco Grand Prix and cutting his gap to team mate and championship leader Oscar Piastri to just three points.

The Australian, who, by his own admission, "had a messy weekend" still made it to the podium behind

the on-form Charles Leclerc, doing enough to keep his points lead.

The was hope the mandatory two-stop rule, made especially for the Monaco Grand Prix, would make Sunday more exciting than usual in the streets of the Principality, but that's not what happened.

Instead, teams who had two drivers in close proximity, sacrificed the worst placed one in the early part of the race, allowing the other driver to open a big gap and then quickly pit

without losing positions.

At the front, the top four finished in the order they started, Hamilton moving up two places to claim P5 as last of the unlapped drivers.

That's because by going as slowly as possible at some point of the race, for strategic reasons, the rest of the field was miles away from the top teams, so much so that ninth-placed Albon was lapped twice, the kind of gap Formula 1 hadn't seen in quite a few years.

NORRIS SOLVES HIS SATURDAY PROBLEM

EVEN WITH the new mandatory two-stop rule giving a massive headache to the strategists, everybody knew that Qualifying was going to be crucial, as usual, and that's where Lando Norris exorcised his recent demons and secured pole position with a tremendous last gap effort that crushed the locals' hopes of seeing home hero Charles Leclerc lead the pack.



Monaco: beautiful, scenic, atmospheric ... but almost an official 'no-passing' zone with the modern hybrid cars – Norris heads Leclerc, Piastri and Verstappen on the opening lap.



Norris very nearly blew it at the first corner, but was realistically unchallenged thereafter. Below (left) Piastri dropped away and held up Verstappen early on. Below left: Lap one hairpin traffic jam ... Below: The podium – not the most ecstatic of all time!



For Norris the start was the next crucial moment and he nearly blew it, reacting slower than the Ferrari driver and then briefly locking both front wheels braking for Ste.-Dévôte.

Fortunately for the McLaren driver, he managed to keep the lead and then managed the pace and covered his rivals' every move to give his team its first Monaco Grand Prix win since 2008!

His improved form in qualifying was, in fact, the crucial step for Norris and he openly admitted that the pole position gave him more satisfaction than the race win:

"I've been working hard over the last few months to get back to having that momentum that I had in Australia; that confidence.

"What I felt this weekend was a small step forward, but it's not it. It's not like

I've nailed it now and everything's back.

"There are still things that I need to work on, there are still things that the team giving me, the things I need from the car in order to excel and maximise results.

"I'm very proud of yesterday. I'm happier with yesterday's result than I am of today's."

Not knowing how the new rule was going to impact the race, McLaren started slowly, with Norris lapping a few seconds slower than he could and Leclerc glued to the back of his car while, behind, Piastri allowed a gap to open for the Ferrari driver, to preserve his own tyres, but without being under much pressure from Verstappen – who had started on the harder tyre compound.

Then, once fifth-placed Hadjar pitted

on lap 14, resuming into a clear track as Lawson had backed up everyone from P9 back, those fighting the Frenchman reacted quickly and that quickly opened a big gap behind Verstappen.

Once that happened, McLaren reacted quickly, Ferrari responded and only Red Bull kept its lead driver out.

But the Safety Car Verstappen was hoping for never came, so when he eventually stopped, on lap 28, to defend from a charging Hamilton, the order was reestablished at the front.

The difference was that Norris had turned the wick up and was now pulling away from Leclerc, who was also clear from Piastri. So, things were stable but it was the midfield shenanigans that provided the final opportunity for things to change.

With Sainz backing up everyone, there were 10 cars running like a train and Norris was closing on them quickly. To prevent an undercut during the lengthy period of passing that group, McLaren called Piastri in, thus forcing Ferrari to react, which allowed Norris to stop as well and resume still 5,6s ahead of Leclerc.

Red Bull tried to throw a spanner in the works by keeping Verstappen out until lap 77, hoping for a red flag that never came, so Norris only returned to the lead on the final lap, after being under a lot of pressure from Leclerc, but without making any mistakes.

A relieved Norris explained that "it feels amazing to win here. The last quarter was a little bit nervous, with Charles close behind and Max ahead, but we won in Monaco.

"So, it doesn't matter how you win. An amazing weekend with pole, with today – this is what I dream of. This is what I did dream of when I was a kid. So, I achieved one of my dreams."

Then, getting a bit emotional, Norris added that, "the best bit is that my kids one day will be able to tell everyone that I won in Monaco. That's probably the thing I'm most proud about. And I think that's something to be very proud about for the rest of my life."

PIASTRI HAPPY TO "BE ON PODIUM IN BAD WEEKEND"

ROLES WERE reversed at McLaren this weekend as, with Lando Norris recovering his mojo, it was Oscar Piastri who never really got into a rhythm.





An 'off' into the Tecpro at Ste.-Dévôte early in FP2 disrupted his weekend and, looking uncomfortable with his car, the Australian admitted that "I hit more walls this weekend than in the rest of my life..."

On Sunday, the championship leader lacked the pace to stay with the two leaders once the serious stuff started but, as he summarised at the end, "some more points on the board, another trip to the podium in Monaco, so not all bad. If this is a bad weekend, then it's not going too badly at all."

He then admitted that "the win would have been better, but it's been a bit of a tricky weekend.

"Practice was messy all the way through, and I felt like I got into Qualifying with not a lot of confidence with how the weekend was going.

"I got close, but not quite close enough. And, around here, where you qualify is pretty much where you're going to finish. So, pretty happy with that overall!"

LECLERC BRINGS SMILES BACK AT FERRARI

THERE'S AN inner Nigel Mansell in Charles Leclerc in the way the Monegasque driver manages to find

an extra gear every time he races in his home turf.

In a season where Ferrari has struggled a lot in qualifying, the local hero missed pole position by a whisker and the fact he was tremendously disappointed with that result showed how much effort he had put into it.

Leclerc had been negative about his and Ferrari's chances all weekend but, after the race, he finally admitted this had been a pretty good event for the team and himself.

Still, he was beating himself up, saying that "we lost the race yesterday and we should have done a better job. Lando did a better job this weekend and he deserves the win.

"On my side, I realised a childhood dream last year but not this year."

Then, finally accepting reality, he added that "considering everything, I think it's a lot above our expectations coming here. I thought that being in the top 10 would be a challenge. At the end, we are second, very close to P1.

"So, it's been a good weekend overall. But, of course, I wish I'd won."

With Verstappen running out of tyres and slowing Norris down in the last 20 laps, Leclerc confessed that "I really believed in it until the very end,"



Hamilton survived a practice crash and a grid penalty to salvage a strong fifth place. Above (top): Gasly removes his front-left on Tsunoda's Red Bull ... Above: Liam Lawson did 'the team thing' expertly – securing sixth for teammate Hadjar and eighth for himself. Left (top): From the start of the weekend – and despite a pair of meetings with the Armco – Hadjar had the pace and was 'best of the rest' in sixth. Left: Monaco, the harbour ... unique and beautiful – high-society tax-free paradise, but a race track? Far right: Verstappen was never realistically a chance from grid four ...

before revealing that "I thought about it all night – the two or three places where I could try something on Lando – and I was willing to take all the risks possible to try and get that win.

"But, unfortunately, those opportunities never came. I had maybe two or three laps where I was, like, 'Okay, maybe I go for it,' but Lando straight away saw those and defended very well. So I basically couldn't really go and try something!"

Penalised after impeding Verstappen in qualifying, Hamilton started from P7 but managed to overcut Hadjar and Alonso to complete Ferrari's good result with fifth place, admitting that "that's a positive, but it's frustrating to have been put out of it with a penalty..."

VERSTAPPEN ADMITS "THIS IS NOT OUR TRACK"

FOR MAX Verstappen and Red Bull the weekend was all about damage control, the Dutchman stating that "since we have the new rules we've never been competitive here, even when we were winning the championship with a margin."

Gambling on a start on the Hards, Verstappen needed a VSC or a SC once the leading trio pitted both times but that never came.

The last resort was to stay out until the penultimate lap, Verstappen

explaining that "we had a big gap behind, so we had nothing to lose.

"I could just hope that something happens and you get lucky, but that didn't come. When you look at the whole race, we didn't have the pace anymore to the top three cars. This is just not our track, man..."

HADJAR SHOWS HIS METAL IN THE

midfield battle, rookie Isack Hadjar was tremendously impressive all weekend. Two minor offs in Free Practice didn't seem to upset his rhythm, the Frenchman qualifying in a sensational sixth place, before being moved up one position by Hamilton's penalty.

Racing Bulls was the first team to put into practice a strategy that had been anticipated by many, Lawson in P9 backing the rest of the field up massively to allow Hadjar to pit on lap 14 and resume ahead of his teammate, repeating the strategy five laps later, to then run to the flag and claim P6!

As behind Lawson, Albon and Sainz had done the same, the Kiwi, on a more traditional strategy, ended the race in eighth place, to score his first points of the season.

For Hadjar, "yesterday was the most intense day and the most hard work I've had to put in since I can remember. Today it was a bit easier because I really relied on Liam.





both cars qualifying well and showing strong pace throughout the weekend.”

Splitting the two Racing Bulls, Esteban Ocon drove brilliantly all weekend and was able to put pressure on Hadjar, on very old tyres, until the flag, but without any success.

Nevertheless, it was a good reaction from the veteran to the recent form shown by Oliver Bearman, showing he can fight with the rookie in spite of a tougher start of the season.

DOUBLE POINTS FOR WILLIAMS

WILLIAMS ALSO benefited from the unique Monaco team strategy, Sainz protecting Albon’s escape before the Thai returned the favour, the two swapping positions close to the end to return to the order they had at the start, as previously agreed.

Albon’s defence was nearly compromised when a frustrated Russell jumped the chicane, radioing “I’ll take the penalty” as the Mercedes

“He followed the strategy, the plan perfectly and he offered me really early pitstops. So, that was the target and that was perfectly executed.”

For the more experience of the duo, it was a relief to score points, Lawson admitting that “everything came together nicely this weekend, and we executed the race perfectly. The strategy made sense for us today, with

man believed he’d get a 10s penalty, before being handed a drive-through penalty almost instantly.

A relieved Albon was adamant that “if that doesn’t happen, then you’re gonna see chaos. I think it was good that they put it harsh, because it would open huge loopholes in the future if we started to not punish it properly. I think it was correct.”

Laughing, he added that “I knew exactly what he was doing and it was a bit too obvious, to get away with. But I applaud the effort.

“He had to do something to get points. And he did make us worry for a couple of laps before the before the drive-through came through.”

For Mercedes this was a very frustrating weekend, as Russell was out in Q2 due to a Power Unit cut while Antonelli had crashed at the end of Q1 and was a no-show in the second segment of the session.

Even though they ran in tandem, the pace of those in front was so slow they couldn’t go with the same strategy, Russell admitting that “qualifying 14th and 15th, there is nothing you can do. You pit on lap one, we’d have finished nowhere. You go long, we finish nowhere.”

On his penalty he admitted that “I was a little bit surprised, but I’ve got to be honest, I didn’t really care because I was out of the points.”

| QUALIFYING RACE 8 | | | RESULTS RACE 8 78 LAPS MONTE CARLO | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|------|---------------|
| Pos | Driver | Time | Pos | Drivers | Make | Laps | Margin |
| 1 | Lando Norris | 1:09.954 | 1 | Lando Norris | McLaren | 78 | 1:40.33.843 - |
| 2 | Charles Leclerc | +0.109 | 2 | Charles Leclerc | Ferrari | 78 | +3.131 - |
| 3 | Oscar Piastri | +0.175 | 3 | Oscar Piastri | McLaren | 78 | +3.658 - |
| 4 | Lewis Hamilton | +0.428 | 4 | Max Verstappen | Red Bull | 78 | +20.572 ▲11 |
| 5 | Max Verstappen | +0.715 | 5 | Lewis Hamilton | Ferrari | 78 | +51.387 ▼1 |
| 6 | Isack Hadjar | +0.969 | 6 | Isack Hadjar | Racing Bulls | 77 | +1 Lap - |
| 7 | Fernando Alonso | +0.970 | 7 | Esteban Ocon | Haas | 77 | +1 Lap ▲11 |
| 8 | Esteban Ocon | +0.988 | 8 | Liam Lawson | Racing Bulls | 77 | +1 Lap ▲11 |
| 9 | Liam Lawson | +1.175 | 9 | Alex Albon | Williams | 76 | +2 Laps ▲11 |
| 10 | Alex Albon | +1.259 | 10 | Carlos Sainz | Williams | 76 | +2 Laps ▲11 |
| 11 | Carlos Sainz | 1:11.362 | 11 | George Russell | Mercedes | 76 | +2 Laps ▲13 |
| 12 | Yuki Tsunoda | 1:11.415 | 12 | Ollie Bearman | Haas | 76 | +2 Laps ▲15 |
| 13 | Nico Hulkenberg | 1:11.596 | 13 | Franco Colapinto | Alpine | 76 | +2 Laps ▲17 |
| 14 | George Russell | No Time | 14 | Gabriel Bortoleto | Sauber | 76 | +2 Laps ▲12 |
| 15 | Andrea Kimi Antonelli | No Time | 15 | Lance Stroll | Aston Martin | 76 | +2 Laps ▲14 |
| 16 | Gabriel Bortoleto | 1:11.902 | 16 | Nico Hulkenberg | Sauber | 76 | +2 Laps ▼3 |
| 17 | Ollie Bearman | 1:11.979 | 17 | Yuki Tsunoda | Red Bull | 76 | +2 Laps ▼5 |
| 18 | Pierre Gasly | 1:11.994 | 18 | Andrea Kimi Antonelli | Mercedes | 75 | +3 Laps ▼3 |
| 19 | Lance Stroll | 1:12.563 | NC | Fernando Alonso | Aston Martin | 36 | +42 Laps ▼12 |
| 20 | Franco Colapinto | 1:12.597 | NC | Pierre Gasly | Alpine | 7 | +71 Laps ▼2 |

| CHAMPIONSHIP AFTER RACE 8 | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| Pos | Driver | Points |
| 1 | Oscar Piastri | 161 - |
| 2 | Lando Norris | 158 - |
| 3 | Max Verstappen | 136 - |
| 4 | George Russell | 99 - |
| 5 | Charles Leclerc | 79 - |
| 6 | Lewis Hamilton | 63 - |
| 7 | Andrea Kimi Antonelli | 48 - |
| 8 | Alex Albon | 42 - |
| 9 | Esteban Ocon | 20 - |
| 10 | Isack Hadjar | 15 ▲14 |
| 11 | Lance Stroll | 14 ▼1 |
| 12 | Carlos Sainz | 12 ▼1 |
| 13 | Yuki Tsunoda | 10 ▼1 |
| 14 | Pierre Gasly | 7 ▼1 |
| 15 | Nico Hulkenberg | 6 - |
| 16 | Ollie Bearman | 6 - |
| 17 | Liam Lawson | 4 ▲11 |
| 18 | Fernando Alonso | 0 ▼1 |
| 19 | Jack Doohan | 0 - |
| 20 | Gabriel Bortoleto | 0 - |

PIT STOP RULE GETS THUMBS DOWN

TRIALLED FOR the first time, the two-stop rule didn’t get a positive review from the drivers, Norris cheekily stating that “I hated it because it made it a lot more scary for me. I wished it was a one-stop – it would have been a lot more chilled.

“The rules are not made for us to enjoy it more or whatever. They’re made for the fans. They’re made to provide more entertainment for the viewers.”

More seriously, he added that “there hasn’t been any more overtaking here. I thought that was what was wanted. Now you just give people opportunity by luck – by waiting for a red flag, waiting for a Safety Car.

“You’re not getting a more deserved winner in the end of things, which I don’t entirely agree with.”

Team mate Oscar Piastri concurred: “It definitely made it a bit more tense at a few points. You had to push more at certain points to kind-of recover the Safety Car windows to other cars around you or put yourself outside of someone else’s Safety Car window, so there were some strategic elements involved.”

Like Norris, though, the Australian admitted that “ultimately, at the front, I don’t think it changed a whole lot. It would have been quite a different story if there was a red flag with five laps to go and Max would have won.

“I’m sure if we keep this going in the future, eventually a result like that will happen. Is that what we want to see? I don’t know ...”

Leclerc was also not too impressed, saying that “it just adds a lot of randomness. You can either get lucky or very unlucky and it’s a bit out of your hands.

“But it’s always been a little bit the case in Monaco, probably even more so now with two stops. But there was not any more tension on my side.”

And a chilled Max Verstappen suggested that “maybe next year we get four stops,” before admitting that “for us up front, it didn’t do anything.”

Hamilton was the only one finding a positive on the attempt, although he admitted that “it didn’t really make any difference to my race necessarily.”

But the veteran insisted that, “they need to keep on trying with this one. I’m sure I’ll read some of your reports later, whether it was an exciting or non-exciting race.

“But still an amazing spectacle and an amazing location. So many people. I’ve never seen so many people here – it’s insane.

“To drive it in a single lap is incredible. The Friday and Saturday is unbelievable and the Sunday is kind of the day that you’ve gone off, almost.”

2005: LOWNDES' FIRST TRIPLE TREAT

THE TRIPLE Eight and Craig Lowndes era might be coming to an end in 2025, but two decades earlier it was just getting started.

At Eastern Creek, Lowndes took his first win in the #888 Ford BA Falcon in just his fifth round.

It was a long awaited and well-celebrated win after Lowndes' struggles at FPR, while it was a sweet maiden taste of glory for Roland Dane and his team.

After promising so much in the early rounds, Lowndes delivered with a fine drive at Sydney.

"It is a sensational feeling to finish off the weekend the way we started," Lowndes said after winning from pole.

"We have not been able to do that in the last few rounds!

"We have been trying to win this championship since the start of the year so we will keep trying to do that."

Dane knew this was just the start of something.

"This is the end of the beginning if you like, but now we have to keep the pressure up," he said.

"We beat everyone on the day and no one dropped out of the leading group.

"We were on pole, our strategy was superior and we beat SBR in the pits which is a real boost.

Meanwhile, the HRT and SBR stars were butting heads once again.

After their infamous clash at Wanneroo fighting for the lead, Mark Skaife and Marcos Ambrose clashed at Turn 3.

Ambrose made contact with the rear of Skaife, which sent the #2 sideways down the hill losing two spots.

No penalty was issued during the event and Skaife stormed into the stewards office.

"I thought I had track position and that if Marcos just eased the throttle that would be fine.



"Who knows how blokes come up with those decisions sometimes?"

Danica Patrick took America by storm by flying to fourth in the Indianapolis 500 at just 23 years of age, breaking the previous female record set by Janet Guthrie in 1978 with ninth, 10 laps off the pace. ❏



1975 FORTY YEARS before the Bend Motorsport Park, Tailem Bend was welcoming its first new race track.

A 1.5km circuit was planned by the South Australian Motor Racing Club which finalised its leasing terms for the abandoned horse racing track.

It was hoped the track would complement Adelaide International Raceway and feature a rallycross track within the horse racing track.

Back on track, Alan Grice's appeal against exclusion from the ATCC round at Surfers Paradise was dismissed at a CAMS hearing.

His Craven Mild Torana was excluded after the engine was found to be missing a thermostat.

Bo Seton drove a Ford Capri to glory in the Sun-7 Rothmans Under 3L Touring Car Series.



1985 DESPITE THE fact that nobody in an official capacity at Ford Australia would confirm or deny the report, Dick Johnson's dream of racing a Ford Falcon Turbo was not going to happen.

Delays in some aspects of the development and testing of prototype cars, the introduction of lead-free fuel and a CAMS proposal to withdraw the reduction in production quantities for homologation allowed for Australian-built Group A cars have dominated to cast more than a shadow of doubt.

CAMS maintained that Ford never indicated a desire to homologate a Group A Falcon.

Jim Richards was already well on his way to a double delight in 1985. Having already wrapped up the ATCC crown, he was well on his way to taking the AMSCAR title with a third win from as many rounds at Amaroo Park.



1995 THE DREAM return of 'Our Nigel' Mansell to F1 at Britain's McLaren was quickly turning into a nightmare.

After McLaren broke records to build a special 'wide-bodied' chassis for Mansell, Ron Dennis had to bite his lip as his driver condemned the multi-million dollar 'Big Mac' as an underivable dud.

"You have got to have a consistent car and you have got to trust it, but the bottom line is I am not able to," Mansell said.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Atlantic, in the State of Indiana, Marlboro-backed Mercedes was also struggling with defending champions Team Penske struggling to even qualify for the Indianapolis 500 as 'The Captain' even considered switching to a rival chassis.



2015 TICKFORD, THEN known as Prodrive, kick-started its run to the 2015 V8 Supercars title by dominating at Wanneroo.

Back-to-back wins for Mark Winterbottom on the Saturday catapulted 'Frosty' into weekend contention and he did not look back.

Tim Edwards put it all down to gradual improvement with the new FGX Falcons.

On the other side of the garage, Chaz Mostert carried on his progress with podiums as he inked a contract extension.

Meanwhile, Will Davison took an unlikely win for Mercedes after a brilliant tyre strategy by Erebus.

Over in Monaco, Lewis Hamilton was not happy after a Mercedes pit lane misjudgement saw him fall from first to third.

To make matters worse his title rival Nico Rosberg inherited the victory over Seb Vettel.



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