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FROM THE EDITOR



With the world of motorsport well underway in 2017, the PRO-AM Summer issue once again delivers thrilling articles, interviews and updates in, what is quite possibly, our most jam packed mid season annual. But, before you move on to our exciting features with double World Champion Fernando Alonso and double amputee David Birrell, we've got some exciting news!

Following on from our success with the MotorsportDays brand both online for track and test days, as well as the published PRO-AM Annuals, we at MSD have spent many years researching what you, the drivers, teams and enthusiast of this world really want and need from an event. We are now proud to introduce to you **MotorsportDays.LIVE**

In partnership with Silverstone Circuit, we have launched MotorsportDays.LIVE, an event that will bring together the very best of the motorsport industry over two days in November 2018. Our aim being an exhibition for the trade including competitors, MSA licence holders, track day users, professional and amateur drivers at any formula, championship organisers, team mechanics and engineers, to name just a few. For the first time at any motorsport event, MotorsportDays.LIVE will not only give visitors the opportunity to source UK and European championship organisers but will also get on track and behind the wheel during this peak

decision-making period at the end of the season, allowing for full grids in 2019. Visitors will have access to 24 of the pit garages that will be utilised by championship organisers for the two day event. Friday being used as a test day for licence holders and Saturday being for track day use for those looking to get into the industry or looking for new championship opportunities. In short, if you're a driver, racer or enthusiast either already involved in the sport or looking to get involved, you *do not* want to miss this!

Sales pitch out the way, we hope to see you next year. But for now enjoy the PRO-AM Summer annual full of exclusive interviews and mid-season reviews from the Classic Sports Car Club to the FIA's World Touring Car Championship.

Lastly, the 4th MotorsportDays PRO-AM Annuals will be available in January 2018 and will feature the latest news, interviews, and championship results.

We look forward to seeing you on track soon.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Whibley'.

Ben Whibley
Editor & Company Director

MotorsportDays



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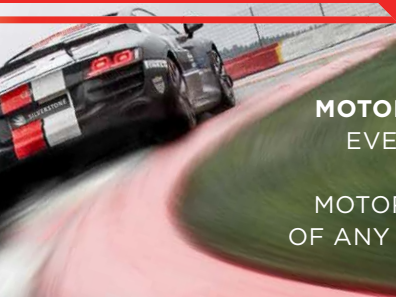
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Paul di Resta unexpectedly swapped microphone for Nomex at the Hungarian Grand Prix and won high praise

DRIVER QUOTES OF 2017



ANDY NAPIER

2017 has seen Napier Racing add another Elise, a Honda S2000 and a Citroen C1 to our stable across multiple series and championships. This ambition, expansion and impending return to the track would not have been possible without the constant support from my wife and family, and Napier Racing trackside mainstays Brian, Tim and Sarah.

Testing of the S2000 in July 2017 has proven unequivocally that our technical sponsors DMD Motorsport Engineering continually provide astounding performance chassis and suspension setups.

I must also thank sincerely and proudly: DVA Power, for having always supplied us with exceptional championship and series-winning motivation for our Elises. Mercury Hearing, for keeping my ears functional and so very comfortable. The students and staff at the National Motorsport Academy for their enthusiastic help and Sam Borgman for applying his frightening knowledge to prevent me designing myself in circles.



MIKE HART

After no significant outings in 2016, I was keen to gain momentum again this year. Joining my 2013 Caterham Championship rival Dave Robinson for the Brands Hatch round of the GT4 Euroseries Northern Cup, we charged to a hard fought 4th in the second race of the weekend.

Only a week after Brands Hatch, I flew to Bogota, Colombia to race in the 'Monomarca' championship final. The spirit of Caterham Motorsport was as strong in South America as it is in the UK!





BEN TUCK

"It's been a tough year in Caterhams and we've had a lot of bad luck, but that all changed when I won my GT4 debut race at Silverstone.

Since then we've looking much more closely at a future in GTs. The Ginetta felt right, I felt comfortable enough to push as soon as I got in it.

GT is definitely the way forward for us!"



ADAM MCNALLY

"With sim racing becoming ever closer to real life, using real cars, tyres and data to develop the sim cars handling, more and more pro drivers are using sims for practicing tracks coming up in their calendar. There is a variety of different channels broadcasting races live and drivers streaming from their own view - like I do. This allows for sim racers and teams to potentially gain sponsorship. I race for and manage the Youth Energy Drink sim racing team. We have had a lot of success and are the current leaders of the Super Cup Porsche.

I also race in the World GT Championship in the Ferrari 488GT and in the V8SEC using the Ford Falcon V8 super car. I am lucky enough to have MotorsportDays.LIVE, The Racing Mentor, Tamz Vehicle Detailing and the Prialx Premature Baby Foundation supporting me and I would just like to thank my sponsor's and everyone who follows my progress in the leagues."

MID-SEASON NATIONAL DRIVER RANKINGS

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CANNONS MOTOR SPARES
TIN TOPS CHAMPIONSHIP
- 02 **NEIL STRINGFELLOW**
ROYAL PURPLE HOT HATCH
CHAMPIONSHIP (750MC)
- 03 **RIKKI TAYLOR**
CANNONS MOTOR SPARES
TIN TOPS CHAMPIONSHIP
- 04 **DANIEL STRINGFELLOW**
CTCRC BOSS, VTEC &
THUNDER
- 05 **GARY PARKES**
CTCRC PRE 05
- 06 **GEORGE MCDONALD**
AVON TYRES FF 1600
NORTHERN CHAMPIONSHIP



LEYTON CLARKE

It's been a brilliant year for my team mate and I so far. Our Ferrari 458 has been an absolute joy to drive and has already given us a lot of success this season!

We hope our streak of good luck will continue from here on!



Drama für DTM?

by Alex Goldschmidt

What does the future hold for the Deutsche Tourenwagen Masters, following the sudden announcement that Mercedes-AMG Motorsport made regarding its withdrawal from the series? MSD's Alex Goldschmidt delves deeper...

The Deutsche Tourenwagen Masters, the fastest touring car series in a global perspective, was pitched into turmoil surrounding its future within motorsport on 24th July, after long-standing powerhouse Mercedes-Benz took the decision to withdraw its brand from the championship itself, effective as of the end of the 2018 season.

The Stuttgart manufacturer will now be following rivals BMW and Audi into the world of Formula E, with season six starting in the second half of 2019, having delayed its entry for a year, before committing to the championship as a fully-fledged works outfit.

DTM itself had been on an upward scale as of the beginning of this year,

having introduced significant changes to the championship, which included softer tyres from Hankook, more power to the rear wheels, reduced aerodynamics and heavily-restricted radio transmissions during each race.

Rights holder and promoter ITR e.V. also brought in a fresh change of leadership as former Formula 1 racer turned





team owner Gerhard Berger as chairman in March of this year, along with Hans-Jürgen Abt relinquishing his position on the board of directors to concentrate on the DTM and Formula E activities that his Kempten-based squad is heavily involved with.

It also saw Berger replace outgoing chairman Hans-Werner Aufrecht, whose work over the past three decades has seen DTM evolve into what it is today. So his efforts will be forever written in the history books.

Doubts were originally cast over the series, when all three manufacturers reduced their amount of cars from eight to six for this year, with several drivers including António Félix da Costa, Miguel Molina, Daniel Juncadella and

Martin Tomczyk making the move on to pastures new or completing their respective contracts.

MERCEDES LEAVING BEHIND A LASTING LEGACY

Mercedes will leave at the end of next season with one impressive indelible mark on the series' history, having achieved some standout successes. ➔

The brand has also been instrumental in assisting towards the DTM's ongoing tenure as a very exciting, highly-competitive championship, with some of the worlds best drivers racing each other at some of the premier race tracks in Europe, including Russia. >>

TEN
DRIVERS' TITLES

13
TEAM TITLES

SIX
MANUFACTURER TITLES

183 WINS

128
POLE POSITIONS

540
PODIUMS



The calibre of the drivers that have helped the marque with the three-pointed star is a who's who of touring car legends and future racing starts, from the likes of Kurt Thiim, Klaus Ludwig, Marcel Fässler and the man known as "Mr. DTM," 5-time champion Bernd Schneider

DTM has also been an extension of other drivers' careers, with both Mika Häkkinen and Jean Alesi moving there in the early 2000s post-Formula 1 and proving their worth by taking a combined total of seven race wins.

Mercedes has also been instrumental in being the pillar of the DTM itself, as whenever the going got tough, they were always there to make sure the series was revitalised and firing on all cylinders.

When the ITC folded in 1997, the DTM re-emerged in a new way in 2000, with Opel also being instrumental in another new era, which eventually led to the cars that we see now, with the current set of regulations having come into force for 2012.

Silhouette racing was the result, bringing noise, drama and controversy to some great tracks, with all the drivers fighting for mere thousands of a second in qualifying, and for every inch out on the race track.

BMW coming back in 2012 was thanks in part to the Stuttgart manufacturer being the top dog in the DTM, as the Munich manufacturer wanted to compete in the championship against top-class rivals.

WHY WHY WHY MERCEDES?

Cost-cutting has been one of the deciding factors that has hit motorsport hard, with multiple manufacturers considering viable alternatives that will still allow them to compete at the highest level.

In many respects, that is why top global brands including Audi, BMW and Renault amongst others, have made the move to Formula E. The costs of running in this type of championship are significantly lower than the likes of the LMP1 category in the FIA World Endurance Championship and sportscar racing. >>

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This has been further bolstered by the fact that Porsche will also join the fully-electric series at the same time as Mercedes, having decided to pull the plug on its LMP1 efforts just a year after its sister brand Audi.

Automotive relevance has become just as important as success on track, as Mercedes is also looking to full-electrification as a future powertrain solution on its road cars. So embracing Formula E will help them to fast track their research and development towards a cleaner driving future.

The road car division has also been in the news regarding emissions as well, as it will have to recall three million diesel cars that were sold from 2011 onwards, with the repair bill set to be around 220 million Euros.

Mercedes-AMG Motorsport's Toto Wolff was clear in a recent interview with German TV channel SWR, saying that one of their reasons for

moving to Formula E was to do with having a consistent racing strategy, with Formula 1 also being a big part of their success in the new hybrid era.

WHAT'S THE NEXT STEP?

The biggest issue about the DTM having to go forward without its talisman after 31 years means that there is a lot of work for Gerhard Berger to do, having to fight for its survival.

The next 18 months will fly by for him and his team, but there will be no stone unturned to help DTM lick its wounds and return to halcyon days of glory, like the ones that we've experienced over the last 30 years.

What could I suggest to help the DTM get back on track? It's difficult to say, but one thing sticks in my mind above all: keep it in Germany and help a tradition stay alive.

Other ideas would include more compulsory spec parts to be used in order to help the teams in terms of cost-cutting, as well as even having a universal engine provided by an outside source. Cosworth for example.

But it is still too early to speculate on what direction DTM will head into for 2019, when the supposed "Class One" regulations are due to be introduced. But as a non-FIA ratified championship, Gerhard Berger was right in saying that the DTM needs to concentrate on itself, rather than worry about further expansion.

So could we see DTM go back-to-basics? Time will only tell, but there will be one heck of a party next October, when one legendary brand in touring cars says goodbye.

Drama für DTM?





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FLYING SCOT



DAVID BIRRELL

David Birrell wants to go into the record books as the first amputee to drive an unadapted car at Le Mans. With his fearless drive and dedication few will bet against him achieving his dream

SMAN

Driving ambition



Father of three David Birrell has a burning desire to win Le Mans. The winner of our MotorsportDays Clubman Driver of the Year Award in 2015 is looking to take his endurance motorsport career to the very top and make history in the process.

“

Motorsport makes me feel important

”

Of course, many drivers dream of racing at the Circuit de la Sarthe, but Birrell's ambition is unique. In April 2010, this former Scottish champion boxer – who bills himself as the BW Kilted Warrior – lost his legs due to an improvised explosive device (IED) while serving in Afghanistan with the

British Army. For many this would have been the end of any sporting dreams, but for Birrell it was the spur he needed to get into racing.

“Motorsport makes me feel important,” he says. “When something like that happens, you need to have a reason to live. Motorsport gives me that thrill that I got from my life in the military. I cannot imagine not having something in my life that gives me that adrenalin rush.”

Birrell also feels at home in the world of motorsport, highlighting the synergy between two very different organisations. “Motorsport is like the military,” explains Birrell. “You have your chain of command – the marshals, your team, you always know

who to speak to. It also gives you discipline, a schedule and the chance to set goals in your life. It's family related too. People will go out of their way to help you out.”

Perhaps not surprisingly, Birrell takes inspiration from two fellow amputees. “Alex Zanardi and Billy Monger, whom I drove down to meet recently. They lost their legs motor racing and have got back in a racing car. That is just incredible. I wouldn't want to go back into the boxing ring now, it would be too difficult.”

That is because boxing was Birrell's main focus before he signed up for the Army. “I have been boxing since I was 11 and was three-times Scottish champion. I was champion when I joined the military and did have the opportunity to turn professional, but took two years out to go to



Afghanistan and came home with two prosthetic legs!”

David Birrell now puts all that boxing training to good use to help him win in an adapted car on the racetrack. “Everything about boxing is all about your core and for me it’s the same in the car. I need the core fitness because my feet never touch the floor. Ok so my left foot gets a rest during racing, but my right foot is constantly off the floor and so fitness helps me manage that.

“Mindfulness training also helps, so you can push yourself without thinking about it. Getting yourself in that correct mindset is essential.”

Although Birrell might not have raced before he went to Afghanistan, he always loved cars. “I would probably buy a car every month or so and then trade it in to get something different – something faster or would modify it,” he says.

This led Birrell to Mission Motorsport, the organisation which helps in the recovery and rehabilitation of those affected by military operations through motorsport, although initially things did not go well for him. “Mission Motorsport advised me after my first trial and said, ‘you will never be able to use your prosthetic legs, you have no foot control’.

“That is why I went to the karting side of things” explains Birrell. “So I tried

“

Winning the MSD Clubman Driver of the Year award, which is for able bodied and disabled together – is quite thrilling

”

Kart Force and did pretty well with hand controls. Once I got prosthetics though I wanted to see if I could compete against able bodied racers and found that I could. I started winning, doing better than with hand controls, and started feeling well interested in this.”

This dedicated driver then entered the Want2Race competition with a chance to drive in a Ginetta GT5 Challenge at Donington. “I was racing against 300 able bodied people and finished in the top 10,” says Birrell proudly. “So Mission Motorsport came back onsite, no doubt thinking ‘he must be all right’. They invited me to do a race with them at Silverstone. Before that though, I had a race at Knockhill [in Christie Doran’s BMW].”

As Knockhill’s own end-of-season roundup for 2013 states: “The former soldier’s results probably didn’t quite reflect his impressive performance; but he will have won a number of fans for the bravery, determination and skill he showed out on track today.”

And Birrell is the first to admit that the support of the motorsport world has been invaluable in his long road to recovery. “Winning the MSD Clubman Driver of the Year award, voted by the readers, helped massively. To win an award like this – which is for able bodied and disabled together – is quite thrilling.”>>





“Le Mans is like going into battle – you don’t sleep on the battlefield and so the team will need to be fit enough to continue through the night”

“

My aim is always to win – to be a world champion. I know to win Le Mans would be extreme, but I am not going to say that it is not going to happen

”

So what next for this Britcar racer who doesn’t know the meaning of no? “No-one has raced outside the UK in a non-adapted vehicle so hopefully by next year I will be racing in Dubai. I will be the first amputee to race in a non-adapted car on a national circuit and by 2022, the 10-year anniversary of me losing my legs, I want to race at Le Mans 24Hours, which has never been done before.

“My aim is always to win – to be a world champion. I know

to win Le Mans would be extreme, but I am not going to say that is not going to happen. But to achieve that goal we will need to work together as a team. Le Mans is like going into battle – you don’t sleep on the battlefield and so the team will need to be fit enough to continue through the night. Dedication is the key when you are racing and I won’t want the mechanics to sleep – I need them to be fresh, not groggy

because they have just put their heads down.”

So what is the next step for Birrell and his team? “I am not sure. We are doing some more Britcar rounds and the 750 enduro racing at Spa and things like that. I have always wanted to do Spa, but am nervous about Eau Rouge – people tell me you can take it flat?”




And he probably will. Dedicated, fearless and passionate about motorsport, David Birrell is an inspiration to us all.

DAVID
BIRRELL



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UNDER PRESSURE

Ben Whibley chats with Toyo Tyres' Alan Meaker and Sarah Curtis on its motorsport family and why tyre set up is crucial be it track day or race meeting



Let's start with a question. You are setting up your car for a track day, so what should you focus on first: a, engine; b, suspension; c, tyres? The majority would answer a, but Alan Meaker from Toyo Tyres would select option c. Ok, I hear you cry, he's a tyre man so he would say that, but his argument for selecting c makes perfect sense.

"I think a lot of people start the wrong end of the car when doing a track day," says Meaker, the Technical and Motorsport Director at Toyo Tyres. "They start with engines, gear boxes, suspension

“

The last thing they think about are the tyres. You should start the other way around – put the tyres on first

”

and the last thing they think about are the tyres. You should start the other way around – put the tyres on first and work your way up. You don't need a fast engine – you won't go as fast as you think you will! Only when the engine is screaming all the way round is it time to put in another engine."

Meaker clearly knows what he is talking about. After 15 years at Toyo, he has seen what works and, more importantly, what doesn't work. Add to

that Toyo Tyres' own 70-year history of tyre manufacturer and suddenly we are all taking note. "People see suspension set-up and tyres as a bit of a black art," he adds. "But when you explain it to drivers they realise it is relatively simple. Although it does take time, you cannot do it in five minutes."

In addition to shedding light on this black art, Toyo Tyres can offer the personal touch to drivers at the racetrack too through its sponsorship of more than 20 championships each season. "I tell the championship organisers to give every competitor my mobile number so that they have a contact who can try and help them out," says Meaker. "I know that 50% won't ring because they know it all and only 25% of the remainder will ring me. But having been a competitor myself in club racing, I know that everyone wants a bit of help to start with."

There is a lot of focus in Formula 1 of warming up tyres and then keeping them warm. Surely all that fuss isn't necessary for a track day? "Our R888 tyre is a motorsport tyre," says Meaker. "You cannot just go out with a new set of tyres. You need to bed them in, bring them up to temperature. You also need to make sure your pressures are correct and the same for your caster and camber. If you are doing the track day in a normal road car, a car you use quite a lot in the week, then you won't have full race set up on it. If it's a weekend/summer day car you may have more of a race set up on it."

"You do get people who just bolt on a set of track day tyres without any of the other preparation. Of course, it will still show an improvement as the construction gives you a better feeling, but the driver will say it's not as good as they expected. So, I always

ask what else have you done? What's your pressures? What's your camber and they don't know.

“

You cannot adjust suspension or anything, but you can adjust the pressures and it transforms the car

”

"You have to set the tyres up - even on road tyres if you are doing a track day," adds Meaker. "When Toyo sponsored the Goodwood Breakfast Club track days I used to help set up guys' cars irrespective of what tyres they were using to give them an insight regarding pressure. You cannot adjust suspension or

anything, but you can adjust the pressures and it transforms the car. It's something you must do, doesn't matter if it's a race tyre or a road tyre. But with the race tyre you must bed them in - do a cycle to get the heat into tyres >>



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and then they will work. But if you go straight out and box they won't work."

Not surprisingly, Toyo Tyres is only too aware that a racing tyre is a very different beast to the common-or-garden road tyre and so it has altered its delivery policy to avoid any potentially dangerous situations.

Sarah Curtis, Toyo's Marketing Manager, explains further:

"We have now set up a network of motorsport dealers which we didn't have before so our Triple 888 family can only go to the right people who know not to fit them as a road tyre."

Actually, the word family is referenced several times throughout this interview and is part of Toyo Tyres' success on and off the racetrack. "I like to think we are different to the other brands," adds Curtis. "Of course, we take notice of what everyone is doing, but we are more a family brand. Even though we make high performance tyres - that is our point to market - we work with our customers"

"We all know each other. There is a tight-knit family feel going on. It's why we work with them because they keep coming back. A big bit of feedback that we regularly

get is that customers get something back from us. We are in that mid-range sector and so can afford a one-to-one with our customers."



So can motorsport learn anything from Toyo's road tyre tests? "Our motorsport range is limited," says Meaker. "Our main product is the R888, a track day tyre, although we have a small range of slick tyres and used to do a drag race tyre. Most of our motorsport tyres are road tyres and so it feeds both ways - road tyre development goes into the motorsport tyre. >>



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TOYO TIRES
driven to perform

"The Triple 8s are all road legal and meet the tyre grade regulations. They have got all the necessary labelling, wet grip, noise etc. You don't need to comply for racing, but Toyo made the conscious decision that all of its tyres are still a track day product which you can drive to and from the event. Other manufacturers' tyres don't meet the tyre grading and so effectively are not road legal."

Toyo Tyres might insist on all their tyres being road legal, but they have not compromised on performance. "The Triple 8 is a very progressive tyre," confirms Meaker. "Any tyre will let go at some point, but best description I have every had about the Triple 8

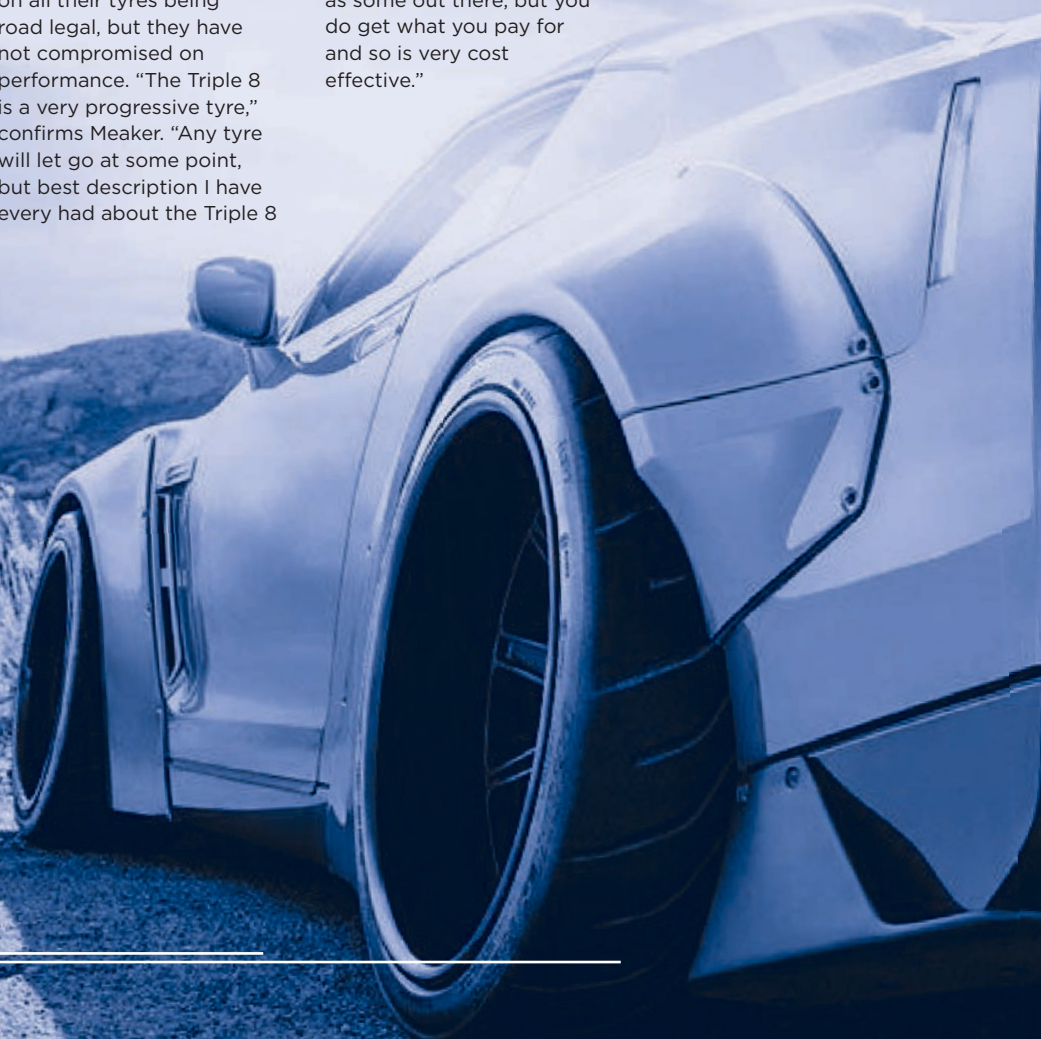
is from a GT2 Porsche driver who said, 'friendliest tyre he has ever driven on'. This tyre gives you lots of feedback and tells you what it's going to do. If it is starting to let go it won't just go bang; it moves and you can play it on the edge, bring it back. It has quite a quick warm up time - so if you are running it on a cold track day they start working at quite low temperatures.

"Cost-wise it is not as cheap as some out there, but you do get what you pay for and so is very cost effective."

But as the interviewer, Ben Whibley, interjects, "It's cheaper than buying a new front end!"

So, make sure that you ask your Toyo Tyre Championship organiser for Alan Meaker's number. Some free advice on tyre pressure and tyre set up might just deliver a podium finish.

UNDER PRESSURE



ALAN MEAKER'S TYRE TIPS

Tyre pressure depends on the weight of the car. Once you know the weight of the car you can work out a base setting out on what hot pressure should be. For example, a 1,000-kilo car would be around 30psi hot. But if you are just running air in the tyres it will depend on how dry the air is to work out the increase you get from a cold pressure to a hot pressure. You would probably about get 6 to 8 psi increase.

Go out and do some time on the track and then balance the pressure. Tyre pressure is fine tuning. You have to get your suspension and everything else right. Don't go out with your road pressure either as it will increase massively due to the heat and will go off and you won't be able to handle it.

People say, 'what should I do' and I say book a track day. They say, 'what should I do next' and I reply book another one. Time on the track is invaluable - making individual changes and seeing what works and record them. Get a base setting for that day - with track temperature, ambient air temp, pressure used, wet/dry/cold and you can use that going forward on different tracks. Most people with track day vehicles will end up with a compromise setting because drivers don't want to adjust things between tracks. Remember, with a track day you are not looking for 10/10ths - it's all about learning what works.

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The RACING MIND

By Gavin Gough

Motorsport psychologist Gavin Gough focuses on inner conflict and how racers must find a balance between their 'superman' conscious mind and their inner voice of caution to take top spot on the podium

When I was asked by MotorsportDays to write a piece on the contribution of the sports psychologist within motor sport, I said yes immediately. Then, at the point of sitting down and formulating the writing a thought occurred. Just where I should start and where should I end? You might be wondering why this might be a problem for me?

The human mind is of such a huge complexity – and all of us are different – so by extension the work of a sports psychologist can be very varied. So again, the question remains, which areas should I cover?

A few days later, I watched an interview with Craig Doyle in conversation with TT racer John McGuinness, who last month suffered broken ribs, cracked vertebrae and an open fracture of his right lower leg which resulted in a loss of bone. When questioned about his future as a racer, McGuinness described the conflict of feelings he had experienced. Part of him, he said, was smiling at the prospect of having to retire, while part of him was shedding tears at that very same prospect. This provoked the thought about the inner conflict we can all experience and so that is the subject of this conversation.

In the days of Ancient Greece, Socrates, in his study of human nature and behaviour, concluded there were two parts to the human character. He likened these two parts to two horses pulling a war chariot with the charioteer working the horses to get the best from each for the benefit of both. Socrates likened one horse to be perfect; a faultless specimen bred by the Gods, while the other a horse bred by man, a horse with the failings, the weaknesses of man. There is a little more to it than that, but as time and space is limited we shall press on. Ultimately, the job of the charioteer, as seen by Socrates, was to extract the best from both animals, to have them work together harmoniously in the face of battle.

Let's now fast forward to modern times. We humans do still have this two-part phenomenon, but we can now view it a little differently; in that the Gods' horse is our superman and can achieve whatever he sets his mind to. Man's horse we now know as our conflict part which, as some may suggest, can act as an internal balance to the superman to add caution, in order to survive. In John McGuinness it seems his superman is tearful at the thought of retiring, whereas his conflict part is happy about the impending retirement, delighted that the dangers of motorcycle road racing may become a thing of the past. >>

This two-part conundrum can be the single most important factor affecting human endeavour and performance and can hold back the racing driver. This is one of the first investigations that I work on with my drivers in order to discover how those two parts relate to each other.



The essential factor is that the two parts work in harmony allowing you, the racer, to look back at your race weekend with satisfaction and a sense of achievement



We can look at the superman part as being our conscious mind, that part of us which says, "yup I can do this, no problem". However, the conflict part may, at this point, stir in the unconscious mind at the prospect of something he perceives as being decidedly dangerous and may say, "oh no you don't, what happens should this all go wrong, you may get injured or worse, and, you may look a total idiot?"

Have you experienced feelings of anxiety when faced with pole position? Have you overdriven when under the pressure of qualifying or experienced "fear" of a particular track or first corner? In these instances your two parts can be in conflict and prevent you achieving your desired outcomes. It's worth mentioning that the conflict part is not necessarily a wholly bad thing. A fear of damaging the racecar, resulting in expensive repair bills, holds the driver back from overtaking. In the consolidation of a championship challenge, the two parts may work well together in taking P2 points rather than going for a win and ending up in the gravel. The essential factor is that the two parts work in harmony allowing you, the racer, to look back at your race weekend with satisfaction and a sense of achievement.





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*What we tell ourselves
we can or cannot do, who
we really are, comes from
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What we tell ourselves we can or cannot do, who we really are, comes from our own unconscious perception of who we are.

So this then is the challenge. How to be your own charioteer; how to manage your mind. Of course this conflict is not confined to racing drivers or athletes; it can affect us all in pretty much everything we do in all walks of life. Those with good horsemanship, those who manage their mind more effectively, will succeed where others may not. >>



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positive thinking

“

*In any internal
dispute of
the mind the
unconscious
mind will
always win
the argument,
it being the
stronger part of
the mind*

”

It's worth remembering that in any internal dispute of the mind the unconscious mind will always win the argument, it being the stronger part of the mind. It is within the unconscious that our true character, with all its strengths and weaknesses, is maintained.

It is the unconscious mind that I work with in my role as a sports NLP and hypnosis practitioner. I help my drivers manage their minds and bring the two parts of the mind into a more harmonious relationship, in order for them to achieve their goals in racing and in life generally. Without that harmony, life as a racer can be difficult and disappointing. By using neuro linguistic programming (NLP) techniques, a stronger conflict part can be engineered to achieve a more balanced racing mind.

Those less successful than John McGuinness, racers who might be wondering why they struggle to match expectations (of themselves or others), can take heart that even the "King of The Mountain" McGuinness has a conflict part with which he has to work.



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FERNANDO ALONSO

Got the whole world talking!

When a two-time World Champion decides to miss out on racing at the jewel of the Formula 1 calendar to go Stateside, it makes everyone stand up and pay attention, although there was good reason for Fernando Alonso to do just that. We take a look at how he helped to unite motorsport over one particular race, but not just any race...

I think that a lot of people were shocked and stunned in April of this year, including myself, when it was announced that one of the most talented drivers that currently compete in Formula 1, Fernando Alonso, was going to run in the Indianapolis 500, instead of racing alongside the Mediterranean, on the streets of Monte Carlo.

The Indy 500? Without doubt, one of the most iconic races across the globe that along with Monaco and Le Mans, makes up motorsport's version of tennis's "grand slam the "Triple Crown".

INDY 500

In many ways, the seed was already sown in the Spaniard's thought process, as he had visited the famed "Circuit de la Sarthe" back in 2014, thanks to his good friend and now retired sportscar ace, Mark Webber. Alonso was also named Grand Marshal, and had the honour of waving the "tricolore" flag at the beginning of the 82nd running of the event.

Since re-joining McLaren at the beginning of the 2015 season, with motorsport powerhouse Honda reunited with Woking, everyone, including the Asturias hero, was looking forward to getting back to winning ways, taking victories and titles in the process. Over the past 2½ years though, the frustrations race after race were very clear to see, with no real forward motion towards these goals for both the drivers and teams.

Relationships seemed at a knife-edge after just one season, with Alonso's radio transmissions getting more than just their fair share of attention, before the war of words were bounced around



“

the first driver to miss the Monaco Grand Prix in order to compete at the “Brickyard” since Jim Clark back in the 1960s

”

the motorsport media quicker than someone bouncing between two trampolines.

But it was a refreshing change for the Spaniard to become the first driver to miss the Monaco Grand Prix in order to compete at the “Brickyard” since Jim Clark

back in the 1960s, in an attempt to become another current Formula 1 driver to win the Borg-Warner Trophy.

Even though McLaren had not participated at Indianapolis for 38 years, the Woking-based outfit knew that the allegiance they had struck with Andretti Autosport, run by former

McLaren Formula 1 alumni, Michael Andretti, was a powerful one.

With special dispensation given to the two-time Monaco winner to carry out his Rookie Orientation Day just 72 hours after another difficult race at the Sochi Autodrom, Alonso impressed everybody, including the likes of Dario Franchitti, a now retired four-time Indycar series champion, who’s had his fair share of the winner’s milk in Victory Lane. Following on from that initiation, Alonso got faster over practice and “Carb Day,” pushing the limit of what the #29 orange McLaren-Honda Andretti could do, placing fifth in the final free practice. As these performances got better over the weeks leading up to >>



FERNANDO
ALONSO



raceday, we all saw a different Fernando Alonso. One of character and pure smiles of joy, knowing that he was a very happy racer.

When it came down to qualifying, where despite a nasty accident off Turn 2 for Dale Coyne Racing's Sébastien Bourdais, Alonso ended up going into the "Fast 9 shootout", to see if he could line up on pole position for his first ever Indy 500 as a "rookie".

The 35-year-old ended up fifth, looking calm and composed, increasing the speed on the car, with the minimum amount of steering inputs required, confirming man and machine were at one. This was despite the

car requiring an engine change before the session got underway - without an obscene amount of penalties.

A TRUE SPORTSMAN

The race itself even saw Alonso lead at one point, following a red flag incursion caused by an accident for record pole sitter Scott Dixon, who was unable to avoid fellow veteran Helio Castroneves. But with just 21 laps to go, disaster struck, as the engine let go on the main straight. But Alonso had earned the respect of the teams and drivers, and most of all the fans, receiving a standing ovation after he parked his racecar.

A true sportsman, despite all the naysayers and all the odds stacked against him.

Even on his last Indy 500 press conference alongside McLaren chief Zak Brown, he showed his humour to the media, taking a sip of milk, even though he didn't win. I have a feeling he'll be back there sooner than you might think.

FERNANDO
ALONSO



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CHASING THE DREAM

Oliver Withington always wanted to race, despite not having any connections in the sport or any money. Here he recalls his warts-and-all journey to winning the Britcar In-The-Night race and why BTCC is the ultimate goal

As I now have a lot of people liking me on Facebook who don't necessarily know who I am or the dream I'm chasing, I thought I should put my dreams into words. My will to succeed is influenced by a rollercoaster of a life that I'm sure, in places, many can relate to.

Following my parents' divorce when I was six, my three siblings and I lived with our dad in Uttoxeter in Staffordshire. I'm not ashamed to admit that the house was provided by the council. It was hard for my dad, who had worked hard all his life, to be in such a position. To his credit though, he stepped up to the mark and although we didn't have any money, we had a great upbringing.

I had always wanted to go racing, but I couldn't afford it and neither could my dad. However, I did promise myself that when I started working one day I would go racing. I left school at 16 and went straight into work, washing >>

OLIVER WITHINGTON

“Setbacks are part of chasing a dream, but it's how you react to them that really matters”





We stretched all our resources to breaking point, but the car was not successful in any of the three races I entered. This was a real wake up call



dishes at a local pub and working for a local firm cutting grass. Three years later I joined JCB, where I still work to this day. Then, when I split from my partner at the age of 26 and we sold our house, I suddenly had a bit of money. It was under 10k, but I realised that this was my time! I was to fulfil my dream and go racing!

So I got my race licence and entered a race thanks to a hire firm who had a car they said they would let me use – a Seat Leon Super Copa. I entered the race as second driver to Guy Pettit, who owned the car. He put his faith in me to do the job and drive the car well and we went on to win.

This gave me the reassurance I needed. I felt great satisfaction that I'd answered a question that had been burning inside me for so long – could I be a winner? The answer was clearly yes! So what next?

I jumped in the deep end and purchased my own car in 2015 with the money from the house, a Honda Civic Type R. Of course I had a reality shock. Despite some massive help from my amazing brother Chris and my family, we couldn't compete. We were out of our depth. We stretched all our resources to breaking point, but the car was not successful in any of the three races I entered. This was a real wake up call. Fulfilling my dream was not going to be easy. Add that to the crash we had at Silverstone – 2015 really wasn't a good year! >>





WINNING THE WORLD OVER

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It was time to take stock. I sold the Civic and got some money to put back into my pot of diminishing racing funds and went into 2016 more cautiously, knowing bad results had made me look useless. I wanted to win again, but how? This is when I contacted Clive at Track Torque Racing. I didn't know Clive, but asked him if I could use his Seat Leon Mk2 Super Copa for an event. He helped me hugely with the cost and said we could enter the Britcar at Brands Hatch!

So in October 2016 we went racing. We won the Britcar Production In-The-Night race. I'd topped the podium for the second time - with the right support and direction!

So now I am wanting to race more than ever. Winning makes you hungry and the fact is that racing is all I'm good at. So this winter I spent my time and energy contacting companies to try and get some support. I had Dunlop UK share my success in Britcar which has helped beyond belief. It is hard getting people to believe in your own dreams, but I feel if you believe in them yourself then they can too.

I managed to convince the team at Viezu Technologies International HQ to listen to me and so in early January I paid them a visit. They pointed out that they don't normally

look to sponsor individuals, but the meeting went well to say the least and that brings us to today. We are going racing with Viezu Racing and I cannot thank them enough.

Yes, setbacks are part of chasing a dream, but it's how you react to them that really matters. I want to race in the British Touring Car Championship and I won't stop until I get there. I hope it will prove that you don't need a privileged upbringing to succeed. I've compressed my journey to the racetrack so much here - there are so many more people I should thank, but thank you for taking the time to read this. And remember what I've always said: **if you have a dream chase it, believe and you can achieve.**

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CATERHAM'S

GRAHAM

MACDONALD

Caterham CEO Graham MacDonald talks exclusively to Ben Whibley on the continued success of the Academy, life after Renault and whether a coupe could replace the Seven

Graham MacDonald practices what he preaches. Not only does he head up Caterham Cars – a post he has held for some 10 years – but this CEO is now putting his own, self-built Caterham through its paces on the racetrack. This makes MacDonald a full member of the ever-expanding Caterham family.

“Motorsport continues to go from strength to strength” says MacDonald. “Every year we sell all of our 56 Caterham Academy cars and have already sold 46 of the 56 allocation for 2018. We also have a very good retention rate going forward. I think the Caterham Roadsport Championship grid is something like 42/43 cars of the 56 academy drivers that took part last year.

“Part of our success is down to us having changed the package – we now run a handling day at Donnington and a track day solely for

Academy drivers. Another change is that most of the drivers have been putting in a lot of miles in. One guy I spoke to at the recent sprint at Aintree had put 7,000 miles on his Academy car already. Admittedly he was driving to the track and doing track miles before driving home, but this was all before the first sprint! People are taking it a lot more seriously, having tuition etc. “At Brands Hatch, there was an Aston Martin and a Porsche 911 – new ones, road cars. Although that amazes me – these drivers obviously like their motorsport and are relatively well off. But I think if you can afford that – with the consumables you will use on the day, tyres, brakes etc – why would you not buy a Caterham as you are still getting buzzed all the time by my little Academy car? These cars may take off on the straight, but I am all over the back of them on the corners, especially at the likes of the Brands Indy course. Also, you see them do five laps and then they are in. Caterham still offers one

“

Once they have driven it, they quickly realise how good it is on its consumables and how fast it thanks to its weight”

”

of the best value packages around,” says MacDonald. “A newcomer may initially view a Caterham as a 60-year-old car, but once they have driven it, they quickly realise how good it is on its consumables and how fast it is thanks to its weight.”

The Caterham Cars CEO continues: “Another benefit we extol to new owners is that you are likely to have an incident and an incident in a Caterham is probably, unless it’s a really big one, all rebuildable in half an hour. If you knock a Ginetta or Radical and crack a shell, you are into big money and big repairs. That is still an endearing feature of the Seven.” >>





An incident in a Caterham is probably, unless it's a really big one, all rebuildable in half an hour



Of course, Graham MacDonald now experiences these scenarios first hand. "It was nice to see a couple of G40's practising yesterday at Brands and my little 125hp Sigma shot right past it - no comparison whatsoever. Our competition is the G40 and I don't understand why a customer would choose that over a Caterham."

Although MacDonald has just celebrated a decade at Caterham, he never expected to become the brand's CEO. "I had always loved Caterhams and took a 50% salary cut when I joined as Financial Director in 2007 as I so wanted to work here. I took over as CEO in 2012 when Ansar Ali and Mark Edwards left to form

Zenos and I said to Tony [Fernandes] at the time - he had just bought it, we were about a year in - 'look the business is doing ok so I will hold the fort until you find someone else'. I ran the business for a couple of months and the next thing is I get a phone call, 'Graham come and meet me, come to Kuala Lumpur' in true Tony style. So I jumped on a plane on Sunday night and sat in front of him on the Tuesday morning, thinking he was going to tell me who the new boss would be and he said 'we would like you to run the business'. I was gobsmacked. I saw that as a huge privilege." >>



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One of the first things that Graham MacDonald had to deal with was the collapse of the deal with Renault for the new road car. “We couldn’t raise the right funding. It was a 150 million Euro project – 75 million on both sides – and it literally fell through about a month before we had to pay the next tranche. Unfortunately, we had to pull out with Renault, but on reasonably good terms. Renault said they were going to carry on doing it and if you look at the Alpine now it looks fabulous and not a million miles different from where we were two or three years ago.”

When MacDonald took on the CEO role, Tony Fernandes was still running his Caterham Formula 1 team, which he’d owned since 2010. Although the name was generating huge publicity for the brand, the team was still languishing at rear of grid and costing millions of pounds in shareholders’ own

funds. “At the end of 2013 Tony asked me to become Group CEO and tell him what had gone wrong! It was clear it was going to take a lot of investment to get us anywhere near the middle of the grid which is where I think Tony’s desires were. At the start of the 2014 season the Formula 1 team told us that they had ‘nailed this, we’ve got a quick car’. So we went to first testing and, of course, we were 2-3 seconds off the pace!

“We sold the business to Colin Kolles, but unfortunately it went bust three months later – still in our name as we couldn’t change the licence mid-season. So that caused a few wobbles and we still had

100 engineers. So I sat down with my executive team and said, ‘What do we do to drive this business forward?’

“We knew we needed to change our model range to bring it up-to-date, make it easy to understand. We had the R400, R300, R500 and that was easy, but then we had the Roadsport, Supersport and Superlight. It just became confusing. So we looked at the horsepower and the weight of the car and the R400 was about 210 hp, so that model became the 420. You then go down the line – 360, 310, 270 etc – and the price goes up depending on the power. You can buy the S pack, the softer road

“

What really appeals is a coupe with a proper lid, doors and maybe a bit of air con. But that would be moving away from Caterham’s DNA as we are all about lightweight

”

version, or the R pack which gives more racey, stiffer suspension. It's now a clear ladder and the customer can say 'I don't want anything too pricey or too powerful for my first car' and so may start with the 270 and then look at upgrading to the 310 etc.

"We also decided to concentrate on our core market. We shut down Caterham Midlands and appointed a series of dealers who already sell British bespoke cars, such as BookaTrack at Donnington. We have not looked back since and the UK market has boomed. We are also seeing volumes in France and Germany increase. Japan usually the second largest market to UK, is currently maintaining 100 units a year. We then brought out the 160 with the little Suzuki engine to meet the K car spec which means it can be sold in Tokyo with no taxes etc. We unveiled the Sprint last year too which they loved and, for the first time in 25 years, we took 600 orders in one year. We have only ever built 450 - 500, so we built 505 cars last year and have increased production to 550 this year."

Graham MacDonald has also overseen a fundamental change in the factory too, moving from line build to one man one car. "This decision has paid off as motivation and morale have increased and the guys now take pride in what they are doing."

Meanwhile, the introduction of a 620 Lego model is taking the brand to a new audience

- especially as half a million sets were sold in the three months up to Christmas 2016. There has also been strong demand for the Caterham Sprint, which was launched at Goodwood Revival as part of Caterham's 60th anniversary celebrations. "We limited it to 60 units in Europe and sold 25 on the stand alone and sold the remaining 35 within a week and took a reserve list. We then sold another 60 in Japan," says MacDonald with some amazement.

So what next for Caterham? "The Seven is great but think it's got a finite life. We have a good motorsport ladder and so could go all motorsport, a bit like Radical - we could sell enough volume to do that. Although Tony's desire is still to have a proper road car, which is why we went into partnership with Renault. I think that was too much the other way, but we could do something in the middle to produce the next Caterham. Of course, it's all down to funding, but we are starting to strategise about what the product will be.

"We do still own the intellectual property rights for the C120, but we don't feel that is quite right. What does interest us is developing the E11, the coupe. The biggest downfall of the Seven is the lack of a proper roof. It works fine in the UK - not too hot with the roof on in the winter and we get mainly dry days in the summer - but in hotter countries, such as Malaysia and Dubai, it's either pouring with rain or baking hot and



you cannot drive without a roof as you will burn yourself. The interior gets too hot too because as the engine warms up it starts to produce heat through the tunnel.

"What really appeals is a coupe with a proper lid, doors and maybe a bit of air con. But that would be moving away from Caterham's DNA as we are all about lightweight. It is a dilemma that we are struggling with."

Regardless of the direction the Caterham team take with the new model, one thing is certain - it will have some big shoes to fill. The Seven has been thrilling drivers for six decades and with an ever-increasing fan club, the next generation of car heading out of Crawley HQ will have to impress them first and foremost.

CATERHAM'S
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CIRCUIT GUIDE

How to handle

HOCKEN



HEIM

with Gary Paffett

The famed Hockenheimring, based in the leafy German state of Baden-Württemberg, holds many of the international racing events well known by racing fans, including the Deutsche Tourenwagen Masters and Formula 1. Mercedes DTM ace Gary Paffett, who has taken four of his 20 wins in the series here since he made his debut with the Stuttgart brand in 2003, was on hand to give MotorsportDays a welcome insight into this 4.574-km circuit



“The main characteristics of Hockenheim are that you have two main sections. The first two sectors are mainly straights with slow corners, while the last sector, the Motodrom, is all medium speed corners. So there are two different sides to the track,” explains Gary Paffett, the 36-year-old Brit who has competed in 153 races during his tenure in the DTM.

This German track has its fair share of fast straights, technical corners and heavy braking zones, including the fast, turn one right-hander, Nordkurve, which does make for some very interesting racing. This particular turn does see drivers go wide at times, trying to push their way through the field after lights out, otherwise a car will quite literally jump the outer part of the kerbing, as Edoardo Mortara discovered last year.

“It’s an enjoyable track to drive, and turn one is one of the most difficult corners on the track. It’s very bumpy around the apex and very easy to make a mistake and run wide over the kerb, so you can lose a lot of lap time,” reveals Paffett.

To get a good lap time and race pace in a DTM car, the Suffolk-based driver admitted that due to the different sections involved to go fast around the track, it’s all about compromise. “You need good straight-line speed and in the last section, you need downforce and corner speed, so it is a case of balancing it out. You can trim the downforce level down for the first sector especially, and you gain a lot of lap time on the straights, but lose time in the last sector. It is really a balance between the two.

“Going for lots of downforce is good for a fast lap time in qualifying, especially in the last sector where you can gain time, but for a race, you are going to be compromised down the Parabolika towards the hairpin at turn 6, and prone to be overtaken,” reveals Paffett.

Even though the track is smooth on the majority of the Tarmac, the

combination of bumpy surfaces and adverse cambers challenge drivers and teams on set-up, in addition to having to contend with the new regulations.

Sector three is the most technical part of the track, with rapid changes in direction. So drivers need to get the apexes correct to assist in keeping the momentum flowing towards the finish line. Apart from Nordkurve (turn one) and the Parabolika hairpin (turn six), another turn to provide some late-braking action is turn 12, Sachskurve. Different categories have their own approaches towards the best racing line entering and exiting this corner.



"Ever since I've first driven here, I've always found the outside line is always the best at Sachs," admits Paffett, who explains that the camber towards the outside line is more pronounced, the higher a driver goes before turning in. "It's the transition from being flat and on camber from entry to exit. It seems to only be on the DTM where the outside is used, whereas in Formula 1 and Formula 3 they tend to use and prefer the inside line a lot more. But in DTM, the

outside line seems to be the better way around."

As the DTM series now heads to the Norisring, on the banks of the Dutzendteich, for its mid-season race weekend, there has been a lot of learning by all three brands competing in this series. "With regards to the pace in qualifying, we have a little bit more power, but that is not too significant. The main differences

are the changes to the aero, where we have a little bit less aero, but it is more efficient," says Paffett, who is also having to cope with a raft of new regulations for the 2017 season.

ITR e.V., the Series' rights holder, which is now led by ex-Formula 1 ace Gerhard Berger, is trying to spice up the action for >>



How to handle

HOCKENHEIM

both drivers and the fans, resulting in a close fight in the drivers' championship so far. The changes include softer tyres from official supplier Hankook, no tyre warmers and heavily reduced radio transmissions between drivers and their engineers during the races, unless it's safety related.

Meanwhile, Hockenheim continues to attract plenty of racing fans, with the stands filled to bursting point with those in attendance cheering on their favourites year in, year out.

MSD would like to thank Gary for taking time out of his busy schedule, along with Mercedes-AMG Motorsport DTM Communications Manager Oliver Kapffenstein for his help in arranging this interview.



a brief history of **HOCKENHEIM**



Created in 1932, the Hockenheimring was introduced to replace the Wildpark-Circuit in Karlsruhe, which had been declared illegal to race on by German motorsport officials. With its long straights and heavy braking sections, Hockenheimring was also used by Mercedes-Benz and Auto Union (now Audi) in 1936, before further developments in the form of the now famous "Motodrom" section in the 1960s. This was a result of the A6 autobahn separating the track from the village of Hockenheim itself.

In its lengthy history, the track has claimed its fair share of victims, including the likes of two-time Formula 1 champion Jim Clark and France's Patrick Depailler - there is a memorial to Clark just off part of the old track where the Scot lost his life. As a result, there was a push towards further safety-related changes following protests from the FIA themselves, plus a need for a better layout for the fans, who were clearly missing out on the action taking place around the then 6.823-km, 16-turn layout.

From 2002, championships including Formula 1 and the Deutsche Tourenwagen Masters now race around the current variation of this circuit, delivering plenty of action, drama and controversy along the way.

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**THE
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WHO
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Its exhaust spitting flame, the black Ford Escort with the blue and gold stripes swoops past the Brands Hatch grandstands on its way to yet another win.

In a career spanning 44 years, winning is something Rod Birley has become rather good at. In fact, he's been first to the chequered flag more than 600 times and now there's really only one goal remaining for the 62-year-old racer: becoming Britain's most successful racing driver ever.

Although Birley understands that motor racing is unpredictable, his biggest problem now is knowing when to order the champagne. By the beginning of May, his victory total was standing at 607. The target to beat is 625 and he averages 15 to 16 wins a year.

So if 2017 is to be the year he needs more opportunities. "It's going to be difficult but if I can get some drives in a few other cars it might be possible," says Birley.

He's currently competing for two titles, the Quaife Modified Saloon Car Championship with the Escort Cosworth WRC and the Cannons Motor Spares Tin Tops Championship, driving the Peter Bevan-owned Honda Integra R.

Both are organised by the British Automobile Racing Club (BARC), of which Rod is a committee member, but the difficulties in settling the date for the British Grand Prix have had a domino-effect on this year's programme. For the BARC, says Birley, "we've got a lot of meetings in the second half of the year but there's an unusual gap, which means I might be looking for drives in June or July."

Another factor is the competitiveness of his regular mounts. Even though the Escort has won more than 300 races since Rod Birley first drove it back in 1999, the need to respond to frequent regulation changes has blunted some of its race-winning edge. As a result, Dale Gent has often been the man to beat in the Quaife series.

The Integra, too, was a winning car until a mysterious misfire developed halfway through 2016, threatened to push it down the order in what was,

Birley acknowledges, a "torrid year." Despite a winter rebuild by ace engine man, Boss Racing's Dave Singleton, the car still isn't quite there.

"I can get it on to pole position," says Birley, "but come the race.... We've pulled the fuel system out because the car just seems to lack get-up-and-go on the first lap even after the engine re-build. It seems to need two or three laps to get going."

By which time the Civics of Daniel Fisher and Chris Whiteman have usually blasted past. "It's a competitive series," Birley acknowledges, "and I think five of us are usually separated by a fifth of a second. If anything goes wrong you're back to fifth and it's very difficult to get past them because they're all hard, forceful drivers."

As was the late Gerry Marshall, the man widely regarded as being Britain's most successful driver and the one Rod Birley wants to knock off his pedestal. But he denies it's been a long-term aim in his racing career. "The target initially," he says, "was just to win races and beat people like Gerry. The first milestone came when I hit 500 wins and people said there weren't many drivers who'd done that."

It helps to be in racing for a long time and being able to plant your bum in the right cars doesn't hurt either. "I've been lucky," Birley reflects, "because over the years different people have asked me to drive their cars. Of course, some have been good and other not so good..."

Clearly, though, he's managed to pick the good drives more often than the indifferent ones. In his career, Rod Birley has won races in 15 makes including, at the start, a Bevan-prepared Hillman Imp, a two-litre Pinto-powered Ford Escort RS 2000 in hot rod racing and later various hugely powerful Cosworth-powered Ford Sierras as well as a Honda Prelude, also Cosworth-motivated, running in the popular Thundersaloons series, dreamed up by former Brands boss John Webb.

The most memorable car, but not necessarily for the right reasons, was another Sierra, but this one was fitted with an ex-Le Mans Porsche 956 engine. Not surprisingly, there were a few problems which never got sorted. For a start, the engine was air-cooled and, in the 956, lived at the back of the car where it was integral with the ground effects system. "In the Sierra we had this great big fan on the top

driving the air through and it was going under the car. The net result was it was trying to lift it – the bloody thing was like a hovercraft.”

At Oulton Park, the car took off coming over Clay Hill, “and I had a change of underwear afterwards.”

It was later fitted with vented side skirts. This seemed to tame its wayward handling somewhat. At Snetterton, Birley shared the car with Barrie “Whizzo” Williams. They were doing well and even seemed to be in with a chance of winning until Williams came trickling into the pits with a broken crown wheel and pinion in the Jaguar transaxle.

The final outing was at Zandvoort. “The car was blindingly quick down the straight, but awful round the back section,” Birley recalls. On the ferry home the decision was made to call it quits. He had bought the engine with his own money and sold it to a Swedish Porsche aficionado who

installed it in a 962. Today it’s in a museum in Sweden.

Experiences like these taught Birley that speed isn’t everything. “Good preparation is the key to success,” he insists. “Quite often other people have had cars which are faster or potentially faster, but either they don’t get their act together or they don’t prepare their cars very well.”

Even something as fundamental as spanner-checking your car can make a big difference. “Everything comes loose because you’re putting a car into an abnormal situation on the racetrack,” explains Birley. “It’s subjected to much higher stresses and strains than on the road. With the cornering speeds, acceleration and braking, everything is subject to far greater forces than on the road, so it’s vital that you check everything. We’ve sometimes been surprised at the things that have come loose.” >>

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him off his perch, Birley has had to find other ways of beating them. "That means harassing them by being on their tail and causing them to make a mistake so I can take the victory, or make them work harder than they expected so something goes wrong with their car," he explains.

Racing has been compared to a game of chess: you're never quite sure what the opposition is going to do. And there can be other variables like track conditions and weather, which can lead to the unexpected emergence of rivals who shine in the wet. Changeable conditions, such as were encountered at the May Day Brands meeting can mean difficult, last-minute tyre choices.

In the pair of all-comers' races, Birley won the first, his four-wheel drive Escort revelling in the wet, but in the second it was a case of pressing on with the track drying or choosing discretion as the better part of valour and preserving a valuable set of wets which could be handy when championship points are at stake.

"Sometimes you need to temper the natural competitive urge with a bit of common sense," reflects Birley.

Readers who've been paying attention will note that Rod Birley prefers to race with a roof over his head. That goes back to before his motorsport career had even started. In 1973 he went to Snetterton to try a Lotus 51 Formula Ford. "It was February," he recalls. "It was snowing and it was cold and I thought 'I really don't like this.' That put me off single seaters."

Although Formula 1 wasn't a career ambition for Birley, turning professional was something he seriously considered. The big chance came in the early 1990s, following the demise of Thundersaloonss. Honda was seeking drivers for its Accords in the British Touring Car Championship (BTCC). At a test session involving two other drivers, there was just a tenth of a second between them.

"I felt quite good," Birley says. "I thought I was going to be a works Honda driver." But this was Honda UK and there was no backing from the Japanese parent company, "so they said they needed us to find some sponsorship."

Birley raised £30,000 to £40,000 from sponsors, supplemented by something from his own pocket. But it wasn't enough. "Honda said it was going to cost me over 100-grand. I told them

I hadn't got that sort of money and they said: 'keep in touch.' And that was it. That was how close I got."

But Birley has few regrets. Today, he runs a successful tool business, selling mainly to the motor trade, which helps him make valuable contacts for potential sponsorship. He owns the now legendary Escort, which is maintained in the garage adjoining the bungalow - a stone's throw from Brands Hatch - which he shares with his wife, Sue. And, who knows, a BTCC career might not have put Rod Birley where he is today - Britain's most successful racing driver.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

1970s

1973 First race and first class win in Hillman LMP

1980s

1981 First of three Hot Rod Championships

1983 Achieves 100th race win

1986 Wins Autosport Golden Helmet award for most wins in UK

1988 Runner-up, Thundersaloon championship

1990s

1991 Thundersaloon class champion

1994 Second of two consecutive outright Thundersaloon championships, including fastest-ever saloon car lap of Brands Hatch

1996 Formula One Silhouette champion

2000s

2000 First of three BARC Sidney Allard Trophies for most wins in a year by British driver

2007 Wins first of two BARC Dunlop Track and Race Championships, victorious in all 20 rounds

2009 Achieves 500th win

2010s

2011 Dunlop Motorsport News Saloon Car Champion

2016 BARC Motorsport News Saloon Car Champion

2017 (April) achieves 600th win

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Mid Season REVIEW



750 CLUB RACING FROM DAWN 'TIL DUSK

MotorsportDays reflects on the continued popularity of 750 Motor Club, thanks to a variety of competitive championships

As well as being the mid-point of the 750 Motor Club's 2017 season, highlighting some very close championship battles, the Club's recent Anglesey meeting showcased the huge popularity of endurance racing at the affordable end of the motorsport scale. Cartek Club Enduro took to the coastal circuit for a three-hour "Day-to-Dusk" event, offering unrivalled track time for the costs involved in what was the series' longest race to date.

Andy Marston and Brett Evans eventually triumphed at the head of the field as overall and Class A winners in their E46 BMW M3, where it took not only pace and consistency, but also tactical nous and quick thinking to make the most of safety car periods and outwit their rivals. Series newcomers Charles Graham and Wade Eastwood won Class B, whilst Scottish duo Andrew Winchester and Josh Orr pedalled their BMW E36 Compact to victory in Class C, ahead of longstanding Mazda RX-8 rivals Liam Crilly and Jonny MacGregor.



“Two retirements for habitual Vee racer Ben Miloudi at Anglesey have shaken up the championship table”

The Ravenol Formula Vee Championship celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2017 and the 29th-30th July Festival at Cadwell Park is the main event of another hugely popular season for the longstanding single-seater formula. Two retirements for habitual Vee racer Ben Miloudi at Anglesey have shaken up the championship table; bringing Irish Vee racer Adam Macaulay back as a leading title contender as the formula heads into the second half of the season.

The Raceparts 750 Formula Championship is one of the oldest running race formulae in the world, and never

disappoints with the quality of racing upfront from the affordable, often home-built 1.1-litre sports-racing cars. Robin Gearing is looking to defend his 2016 title to become back-to-back champion, but evergreen front-runner Bill Cowley is once again not letting him run away with it in the family team's fabled Cowley MkIV. Having fended off Gearing in both Anglesey outings, his sights will be firmly set on making the most of two Cadwell Park outings.

Having found a home with 750MC in 2017, the MTEC Brakes BMW 330 Challenge continues to add new cars to growing grids in this formula's inaugural season, thanks to offering an exciting 250bhp rear-wheel-drive package with revised 750MC regulations that produce minimal build costs. With four different drivers having already graced the top step of the podium and yet another new car making its debut at Silverstone International, the future looks bright for the Club's newest one-make formula.

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Mid Season REVIEW



BRSCC DELIVERS STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

Mega grids and top racing, plus down to the wire title fights, has resulted in the British Racing & Sports Car Club delivering a “cracker” of a season, and there’s still more to come...

So far this season the British Racing & Sports Car Club (BRSCC) has seen some tremendous racing and healthy competition across its vast portfolio of championships and series. One of the success stories of 2017 so far has been the incredibly competitive Mazda MX-5 SuperCup, with a plethora of top drivers all tackling the Mk3 MX-5 sports car. Their Mk1 counterparts in the MX-5 Championship have also seen a rise in popularity with typically large grids, meaning that on any given weekend some 90+ Mazda MX-5s will take to the track overall.

As always, it’s been an exciting year so far for the British GT Championship and the British Formula 4 Championship, with both contests too close to call at this stage. We are proud that these championships call the BRSCC home and are pleased to see the levels on driving talent increase every season.

Another talking point has been the sheer strength of the Britcover National Formula Ford



1600 Championship with Avon Tyres, as drivers compete for the coveted Mazda Road To Indy Shootout prize. Grids have been practically full at every meeting so far and the new class structure for Pro and Clubman drivers has helped bring a vast number of talented drivers to the grid, along with top racing to boot.

A grand prize is also on offer in the BRSCC Fiesta Championship, as the overall champion will get a coveted test drive in a Motorbase Ford Focus BTCC car. Thanks to this prize, competition levels have gone through the roof and they’re only getting stronger! This year’s crop of talented young stars in the Fiesta Junior Championship has also been mightily impressive, with the title fight as close as ever.

The Nankang Tyres BMW Compact Cup has built on its sensational season last year with superb, door-to-door, tin-top racing on a budget as its main attraction, while the Toyo Tires Porsche Championship has benefited from a new aero package for the Race Boxster class and new tyres in the 924 Class; all of which have been branded successful by the drivers. Let’s not forget that it’s also remained pretty close in the Alfa Romeo Championship and

“The BRSCC will be organising the highly anticipated, all-new TCR UK Championship next year”

Teekay Couplings Production GTIs, both of which have been hard fought as ever. In addition, the superb Excool OSS Championship has continued its momentum from last season, with mega grids packed full of powerful sports prototype machinery tearing up the UK’s race circuits. Caterham Motorsport has also been celebrating 60 years of the Seven sportscar in style this season, with the magnificent Caterham Festival at Donington Park in July adding to the occasion as well as a European trip in May to the legendary Spa-Francorchamps circuit and close racing throughout the year so far. All of this, plus record numbers in the ever popular FunCup Championship, the relaunch of Formula Jedi as the Formula 1000 Championship and the exciting news that the Club will be organising the highly anticipated, all-new TCR UK Championship next year means it’s been a cracker for the BRSCC in 2017 to date – and it’s only going to get better!

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Mid Season REVIEW



SPA PROVES POPULAR FOR CSCC IN 2017

A packed fixtures list, including a first event at Silverstone and record entries in Belgium, add up to a great first half of the season for the Classic Sports Car Club

The halfway mark of the CSCC 2017 season has now passed, with excellent grids and just one shower at Spa Francorchamps in June marring otherwise dry race weekends. Having enjoyed a strong 2016 season, the Club was in a position where it could once again freeze all membership, registration and UK race entry fees. With no new race series for 2017, the focus was on exciting calendar changes.

Snetterton 300 traditionally starts the season, with a record 362 entries plus second drivers, many of whom were novices or racing with the CSCC for the first time. Father (Colin) and son (Steve) Simpson won the packed 45-car CSCC Tin Tops race in their bright blue Peugeot 206, only their second ever outright race win.

Thruxton welcomed us back at the end of April. The circuit was rewarded with huge grids once again, going one entry better than at the debut event last year. A full grid (with



reserves) of Adams & Page Swinging Sixties Series' cars gave a brilliantly close tussle for the full 40-minute pit stop race, with Raymond Barrow (Chevrolet Camaro) taking Group 2 victory by just 1.5 seconds.

A first ever visit to the Silverstone International layout proved to be a great success, with over 350 entries and well in excess of 400 drivers enjoying the Wing and vast garages. The Advantage Motorsport Future Classics Series for 1970s and 1980s models had its podium places decided on the last lap, a close and fair battle to the line. Bill Lancashire (TVR Tuscan) took the honours for the 1980s cars, with Aston/Tony Blake (Porsche 911) winning the 1970s group. They were also first and second, across the line showing how closely matched cars from two decades can be.

The Spa Summer Classic at the end of June has been the centrepiece of the CSCC calendar for 10 years now.

“Every CSCC member with a National A licence has the opportunity to race at Spa as part of this high profile, club event ”

Every member with a National A licence has the opportunity to race here as part of this high profile, club event. With the CSCC an official promoter for the showpiece 3 Hours race it was once again full, with the Club making entry easy to this prestigious event. More than 250 drivers took part across four races, making this the most popular overseas meeting in the Club's history.

With five remaining rounds, including split 1970s/1980s grids at Donington, and day and night races to finish the season at Brands Hatch, the second half of the CSCC season should be just as exciting and popular as the first.

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Highlights for the remainder of 2017:

- Mintex Classic K Series race at Brands Hatch GP on 10th September
- Separate 1970s and 1980s Advantage Motorsport Future Classics races at Donington Park
- Night races at Brands Hatch



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BRANDS HATCH 11 - 12 November



Mid Season
REVIEW

SRO
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CHAMPIONSHIP CONTENDERS HAVE FIGHT ON THEIR HANDS IN BRITISH GT

With just two rounds remaining, there is still plenty to play for in the 2017 British GT Championship.

The Lamborghini of Minshaw and Keen is battling Parfitt and Morris's Bentley in the seniors, while the Ginettas of Tregurtha/Middleton and Reed/Pittard are determined to take the GT4 to the wire

It's only August, but the 2017 British GT Championship is already approaching its home straight with just two of this season's 10 rounds remaining. Indeed, only a pair of two-hour races, staged at Brands Hatch (August 5/6) and Donington Park (September 23/24), separate this year's title contenders from the GT3 and GT4 crowns.

Both classes have become virtually two-horse contests, with Jon Minshaw and Phil Keen (Barwell Motorsport Lamborghini) up against Rick Parfitt Jnr and Seb Morris (Team Parker Racing Bentley) for the senior championship, while Will Tregurtha and Stuart Middleton (HHC Motorsport Ginetta) are battling Alex Reed and David



Pittard (Lanan Racing Ginetta) for GT4 honours.

Having come close to sealing their maiden GT3 title last season, Minshaw and Keen hit the ground running by claiming both victories on this year's opening weekend at Oulton Park. Two more followed at Snetterton and Spa as the pair expertly navigated British GT's pitstop success penalty system, which is intended to prevent one crew from dominating.

Winning half of this year's races would, ordinarily, have left Minshaw and Keen with one hand on the title by now. Instead, Parfitt Jnr and Morris remain only 12 points adrift thanks to a combination of consistency and two endurance race victories (including the series' blue riband Silverstone 500), each of which are worth more points than the 60-minute sprints dominated by their Barwell rivals.

Reigning champions Derek Johnston and Jonny Adam have endured a tough title defence by their own high standards, but sit fourth in the points - behind Macmillan AMR's impressive GT3 debutants James Littlejohn and Jack Mitchell - thanks, in part, to their sole victory at Snetterton. Ian Loggie and Callum Macleod (Team Parker Racing Bentley) are the other crew to have stood

on the top step this year after winning at Spa.

GT4 is much closer, with just 2.5 points separating Tregurtha and Middleton from Reed and Pittard. No other crew has led the class standings this season and, with just two races remaining, their personal battle looks set to go down to the wire.

HHC's teenage crew - both Tregurtha and Middleton are just 17 - became the youngest to start and win a British GT race earlier this year. Although their two victories have also been cancelled out by a pair of DNFs, allowing their more consistent rivals to remain within touching distance. Indeed, Reed and Pittard have yet to finish lower than sixth in eight outings, half of which have resulted in podiums (including one win).

Adam Balon and Adam Mackay have also starred this season thanks to two victories in their and track-club's debut GT4 campaign. But bad luck derailed their championship bid at Spa, where Matthew Graham and Charlie Fagg's race-by-race-entered Ebor GT Maserati surprised many with its pace en route to both victories. Ciaran Haggerty and Sandy Mitchell claimed the other GT4 win, at Snetterton.

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Mid Season REVIEW



FULIN TOPS ETCC AT SUMMER RECESS

Czech driver benefits from Christjohannes Schreiber's misfortune to lead the European Touring Car Series at the break

P Petr Fulín and Zsolt Dávid Szabó were the winners ahead of the FIA European Touring Car Cup's (ETCC) summer break, triumphing on the streets of Vila Real in Portugal in what were two significant victories in their SEATs.

For the Czech Fulín, the result propelled him into the lead of the ETCC standings for the first time in 2017. For Szabó, 19 years Fulín's junior, victory in race two was the first of his career in his first full season of competition and ultimately led to him being promoted to Zengő Motorsport's World Touring Car Championship attack for WTCC Race of Argentina in mid-July.

While Fulín and Szabó left Vila Real in late June buoyed by their respective wins, it was a weekend to forget for Christjohannes Schreiber. The Swiss Honda driver was seemingly out of reach in the title chase after claiming his third win from four at the Hungaroring in mid-May. But a disastrous Nürburgring Nordschleife meeting later that month when



“After taking a podium double in his native Hungary, Norbert Nagy finished second from pole in Vila Real's first race only to suffer a heavy crash in the second”

he crashed out of the first race with a puncture and was unable to start the second due to car damage, was followed by another non-score in Portugal. After eight races, Schreiber is 13 points behind Fulín and just two ahead of Norbert Nagy and Igor Stefanovski, who are equal third in the standings.

After taking a podium double in his native Hungary, Nagy finished second from pole in Vila Real's first race, only to suffer a heavy crash in the second. Meanwhile, Stefanovski, a double FIA Hillclimb Champion, is in his second season of ETCC action and his first running his own team. A winner at the Nürburgring, the Macedonian was on the podium again in Portugal to maintain his title push.

While his home event delivered plenty of frustration for Fábio Mota, two podiums in Germany ended a tough start to the

season for the Portuguese. He is sixth in the table behind ETCC stalwart Peter Rikí and equal on points with Szabó.

Andreas Pfister is eighth in his older-specification SEAT, the talented German often losing out in terms of outright performance. Serbian Mladen Lalušić is ninth, while Bulgarian Plamen Kravlev, an ex-single-seater racer and the ETCC's sole Audi RS3 LMS exponent, lies 10th on the back of his first podium in Vila Real. Meanwhile, Alexandr Artemyev and José Rodrigues have impressed as wildcards, with Rudolf Pesovic and Anett György both scoring.

**Next up is Zolder:
from 15-17 September.**



Mid Season REVIEW



ALL TO PLAY FOR IN WTCC

This year's World Touring Car Championship is looking like it will go to the wire, with the top seven drivers all still in with a chance of winning the title

The 2017 FIA World Touring Car Championship (WTCC) is the most wide-open for nearly a decade, with eight winners from the first 12 races, all five manufacturers scoring victories, 10 drivers leading for a lap or more and 65 points covering the title-chasing top seven heading into the summer break.

Honda's Tiago Monteiro tops the standings by 12 points, courtesy of wins in Morocco and Hungary, with Thed Björk second for Volvo Polestar, having triumphed twice in Italy and Germany.

Monteiro's factory-Honda team-mate Norbert Michelisz is up to third in the table after scoring back-to-back wins in Portugal and Argentina, where Nicky Catsburg was heading to the second victory of his campaign only to drop back with a puncture.

Despite his non-score in South America, Catsburg is only 41 points adrift of Monteiro in fifth, one place behind double winner Mehdi Bennani, Sébastien Loeb Racing's Citroën-driving privateer. However, with a maximum of 60 points up for



grabs at each of the remaining four weekends, Catsburg remains firmly in title contention for Volvo Polestar.

“Huff produced arguably the drive of the season when he fought back from last to fifth in the Main Race on the streets of Vila Real”

Briton Tom Chilton won the Opening Race at Monza and is sixth in the standings, 12 points ahead of compatriot Rob Huff, the 2012 WTCC Champion. Huff, who returned to the ALL-INKL. COM Münnich Motorsport line-up for 2017 to pilot the German team's ex-works Citroën, is without a win this season despite landing front-row starts in Hungary and Portugal. And it was in Portugal where Huff produced arguably the drive of the season, when he fought back from last to fifth in the Main Race on the streets of Vila Real.

World Championship motor racing history was also made in Portugal with the introduction of the rallycross-style “joker” lap. Drivers took the alternative route in both the Opening and Main Races as part of a

pioneering plan to spice up the action on a street circuit where overtaking isn't always possible. This innovation prompted praise from home hero Monteiro: “Two podiums wouldn't have been possible without the ‘joker’ lap,” he said afterwards.

While Néstor Girolami has struggled for form – and good fortune – in the third factory Volvo, fellow Argentine Esteban Guerrieri began the season with victory on the streets of Marrakech in a Campos Racing Chevrolet. Meanwhile, Yann Ehrlacher, the 21-year-old nephew of Yvan Muller, scored a breakthrough victory in Argentina and is tipped for the top.

The 2017 season resumes at the all-new Ningbo International Speedpark, south of Shanghai, from 13-15 October.



TCR

A PLATFORM ON THE RISE



Marcello Lotti's efforts to bring TCR to the forefront of global touring car racing have borne welcome fruit, as the established categories have a new rising star to contend with. MSD's Alex Goldschmidt takes a look at the "young upstart"



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Tin-top racing has always brought its fair share of action to the masses, with the likes of the “established guards”, including WTCC, BTCC and DTM, entertaining people around the world on a weekly or fortnightly basis. But the latest challenger to these ranks, TCR, headed up by former WTCC promoter Marcello Lotti, has helped both young chargers and old hands to get racing and has been flourishing ever since.

Car manufacturers are seeing the impact that this has from not just a customer racing aspect, but also in the promotion of the models that represent them out on the public roads. The likes of Kia and Hyundai are the latest to follow a growing trend of high-profile companies to embrace this well-structured motor racing concept.

Audi, along with sister companies Volkswagen and Seat, have also thrown their hand into the TCR

battleground with the new RS3 LMS, which was unveiled by Audi Sport GmbH boss Stephan Winkelmann at last year’s Paris Motor Show. The Ingolstadt marque has sold 90 units to date, with two of them being provided to new TCR International Series outfit ComToYou Racing, with defending champion Stefano Comini being partnered by Frédéric Vervisch as of the round held at Spa-Francorchamps. The new addition to the manufacturer ranks also secured its first victory via Audi Hong Kong’s 17-year-old driver Jasper Thong at Zhuhai, with several more since, including two from Comini himself, who is in the hunt for a third successive championship in the headline category.

The calibre of the drivers that are also taking part is something to take notice of now, as many drivers, including Rob Huff, Tom Coronel, Jaap van Lagen and Gianni Morbidelli, have taken part in either regional events, or the

“ADAC TCR Germany has single-handedly collared the biggest grid for 2017, with an impressive 44 cars registered for the seven-race weekend calendar”

International Series itself. Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL Racing’s Hugo Valente made the switch to TCR International this year from the WTCC, along with Gabriele Tarquini, the man charged with the development of the new i30 TCR racer, which set to make its debut later this year.

ADAC TCR Germany has single-handedly collared the biggest grid for 2017, with an impressive 44 cars registered for the competitive seven-race weekend calendar that kicked off at Motorsport Arena Oschersleben in the penultimate weekend of April. Britain’s Josh Files was a last-minute returnee and the defending champion got back to winning ways with Target Competition, who are also looking to defend their team title.

Along with the national and international championships that have embraced this cost-effective platform, it has >>





“The racing is action-packed from start to finish, including more than just a bit of paint-swapping and panel-bashing at times”

also seen the likes of the VLN Endurance Championship and Japan's Super Taiyaku jump onboard. Meanwhile, Creventic is running a TCR-specific class in the Touring Car Endurance Series (TCES) from its inaugural season last year. With many of these championships underway, the racing is action-packed from start to finish, including more than just a bit of paint-swapping and panel-bashing at times.

As budgets in championships like WTCC and BTCC have increased in years past, it shows how the business that is motorsport is also having to change, especially with financial sponsorship becoming increasingly competitive for drivers to find. But when you consider the value for money that the drivers have, as well as a base technical platform which ensures a lot more parity for all those competing, it makes the “bang-for-buck”

statement that TCR has more appealing for all those considering their next move in the world of motorsport.

Further emphasis in terms of bringing in new talent has been bolstered by the introduction of the TCR International Academy, which will be based at Italy's Adria International Raceway, the venue for the TCR Europe Trophy this coming October.

So it seems that you don't need to go out and find a significant budget to race professionally. TCR is quite literally re-writing the rulebook on what touring car racing should be about - great value, fantastic action and new names to watch out for. The future is clearly bright for TCR.

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TAKING THE



CAN YOU IMAGINE...

...Rio Ferdinand or John Terry during LIVE commentary on TV, being asked to step in



and play football 45 minutes before kicking off? Nope, unheard of, but effectively this is what Paul Di Resta did for Williams earlier this year

Before the F1 mid-season break, Felipe Massa unfortunately became ill which came apparent late on Friday afternoon during testing at the Hungarian GP. So when reserve driver Di Resta got the call 45 minutes before Qualifying he faced a considerable challenge, given that the cars in F1 have changed substantially since losing his Force India drive in 2013.

The 31-year-old qualified 19th and lapped only 0.766s slower than team mate Lance Stroll having run just five flying laps.

It was truly a phenomenal performance echoed as an “Unbelievable job,” by Team Manager at Mercedes, Toto Wolff.

“The 31-year-old qualified 19th and lapped only 0.766s slower than team mate Lance Stroll”

The race unfortunately was a different matter, with Di Resta having to retire after an oil leak towards the end of the race.

So what makes this so remarkable?

now the lesser motorsport enthusiast would expect him to be quick. Possibly even finish top ten - an expectation shared even by Crofty from SkySports F1. However, given that he'd never even driven the car, had no experience of the different tyre compounds or running on high fuel, even qualifying was a major feat. Stepping-up like this is all testament to just how much of a class act Di Resta is and why F1 is home to the very best drivers this world has to offer.

Here's us wondering what a GP2 driver would have done...

There's a thought! ■

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