

EVERY MONDAY - AROUND THE MOTORSPORT WORLD

FI » MotoGP » WRC

GP WEEK

ISSUE NO 096 MONDAY



THAT'S EIGHT IN A ROW

Loeb races away with Rally Deutschland

LAUDA AND FERRARI
IN VERBAL STOUSH



Taking it to the people: WRC rallying is a very 'interactive' sport ... last weekend's Rally Deutschland was no exception







2010 FORMULA 1

SINGTEL SINGAPORE GRAND PRIX



**NOTHING
ELSE COMES
CLOSE**

SEEING IS BELIEVING

SINGAPORE

MARINA BAY STREET CIRCUIT

24 • 25 • 26 SEPTEMBER 2010

**TICKETS NOW
AVAILABLE!**

WEB BOOKINGS: www.singaporegp.sg

PHONE BOOKINGS: +65 6738 6738

TITLE SPONSOR



SUPPORTED BY



The F1 FORMULA 1 logo, F1, FORMULA 1, FIA FORMULA ONE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP, SINGAPORE GRAND PRIX and related logos are trademarks of Formula One Licensing BV, a Formula One group company. All rights reserved.



EDITOR: ADAM HAY-NICHOLLS
adam@gpweek.com

Editorial Assistant
Naoise Holohan

MotoGP Editor: Michael Scott
michael@gpweek.com

Rally Editor: Martin Holmes
martin@gpweek.com

Production Artists (Australia):
Cedric Dufour, Kiernyn Hyde

Photography
Sutton Motorsport Images
www.sutton-images.com
Keith Sutton keith@gpweek.com

Publisher
Chris Lambden
publisher@gpweek.com

Published by:
Grand Prix Week Ltd
61 Watling Street, Towcester
Northants NN12 6AG
United Kingdom
P: + 44 1327 352 188
F: + 44 1327 359 355

ADVERTISING
UK, Europe, East Coast USA
European Media Services Ltd
(Richard Partridge)
49 Old Steine, Brighton
Sussex BN1 1NH
United Kingdom
gpweek@ntlworld.com
Ph: + 44 1273 232 566
Mob: + 44 7771 567 644

SE Asia, Australasia
GPWEEK (Australia)
PO Box 7072
Brighton, VIC 3187, Australia
Ph: + 61 3 9596 5555
Fax: + 61 3 9596 5030
publisher@gpweek.com

Material published in GP WEEK is copyright and cannot be reproduced (or photocopied) other than for individual personal use.

ISSUE 096

AUGUST 23, 2010



Flashback 12 months – Force India (and Fisi)'s finest hour. Pole position at Spa, 2009 ... (see feature, page 22)

>> GPWEEK NEWS

>> GO TO

Headline: Ferrari attacks its former champ ...
– plus the latest from the worlds of F1 and MotoGP

>> F1: MAY THE FORCE BE WITH YOU

>> GO TO

The big mover (forwards) in F1 has been Force India – Naoise Holohan looks inside last year's Spa pole-winners.

>> MOTO GP: FUELS RUSH IN ...

>> GO TO

As MotoGP becomes more and more economy-sensitive, how is it going to work when they go 1000cc?

>> WRC: ONE FOR THE MONEY

>> GO TO

And two, and three ... and eight. There's still no-one other than Seb Loeb who has won Rally Deutschland.

>> **CLICK ON ANY ADVERTISEMENT FOR MORE DETAILS**

Ferrari hits out at Lauda's "pasting" comments

FERRARI has issued a scathing attack on former driver Niki Lauda for the Austrian's negative comments amid the ongoing team orders controversy surrounding the recent German Grand Prix.

Lauda said in an interview this week that Ferrari was going to get "pasted" at next month's World Motor Sport Council (WMSC) meeting in Paris, with Ferrari subsequently issuing a damning statement against the triple world champion.

Speaking to the official Formula One website, Lauda was highly critical of the team orders Ferrari had imposed on Felipe Massa during the German Grand Prix:

"What they did in Hockenheim was against all rules," said Lauda.

"Either the rules are changed or everybody observes them. What they've done is wrong and they got an immediate punishment – and they will get a pasting from the World Council, that is for sure."

Then, in a column published on the Ferrari website on Friday entitled 'The Horse Whisperer – Moralists with short memories', the Italian marque

lashed out at Lauda for his comments:

"After events in Hockenheim, a wave of hypocrisy swept through the paddock, with so many pundits, young and old, keen to have their say: some were promptly brought back into line by his master's voice, while others continue to pronounce sentence willy-nilly," began the column.

"The latest missive comes from Austria, from a person, who having hung up his helmet, has never missed out on a chance to dispense opinions left and right, even if, on more than one occasion, he has had to indulge in some verbal acrobatics to reposition himself in line with the prevailing wind.

"This time, good-old Niki has missed out on a fine opportunity to keep his mouth shut, given that, when he was a Scuderia driver, the supposed Ferrari driver management policy suited him perfectly...

"That aside, where was all his moral fury when, over the past years, so many have been guilty of more or less overt hypocritical actions?"

Niki Lauda drove with Ferrari for four years between 1974 and 1977, and won two of his three world championships with them in 1975 and 1977.

Booth labels Ecclestone comments "damaging"

Admits "it is difficult for us at the moment"

TEAM principal of the new Virgin Racing outfit John Booth says he is not pleased about comments made by F1 supremo Bernie Ecclestone recently predicting the demise of Virgin and fellow new team rivals Hispania.

Speaking to the *Daily Telegraph* three weeks' ago during the Hungarian Grand Prix weekend, Ecclestone said he "wouldn't be surprised if one or two" of the new teams didn't make it as far as the end of this season.

In an interview with *motorsport-total.com*, Booth said he was "not particularly pleased" because such comments could cause major damage to a team as small as his.

"I was not particularly pleased, because comments like that for a

team like ours can do great damage," said Booth.

"It is difficult for us at the moment – as it is for other teams, and for all the new teams."

Booth insisted that his team continues to get closer to the front-runners and is on target at this stage of the year:

"If you look at what we have built up so far, it's not all bad," he continued.

"In Formula One there have been probably 30 or 40 new teams, some of which never qualified for a race. But we are there at the start of every race and, step-by-step, we are getting closer. We are where we expected we would be, and maybe even a bit further ahead than that."

Ferrari: "Good-old Niki has missed out on a fine opportunity to keep his mouth shut ..."



Lauda was a double world champion with Ferrari – but that hasn't stopped him calling it as he sees it ...





Pirelli very satisfied with two-day Mugello test

PIRELLI says it is very satisfied with the outcome of its two-day test in Mugello last week, after testing its 2011 prototype tyres on F1 machinery for the first time.

Pirelli won the contract to replace Bridgestone as Formula One's official tyre supplier in 2011 less than two months ago, but has already successfully completed its first test with last year's Toyota TF109, with former Mercedes GP test driver Nick Heidfeld at the wheel (see separate story).

The objective of the test, which was held in largely dry and sunny conditions at the

Mugello circuit in Italy on Tuesday and Wednesday, was to begin the process of determining the front and rear tyre profile and construction that will be used as the basis of the new Pirelli PZero Formula One tyre. The company's motorsport director said he was very satisfied with the tests:

"This was the first step of our return to Formula One and we are very satisfied with how the tyres performed and the information we were able to collect," said Paul Hembery, motorsport director at Pirelli.

"We concentrated on finalising the

profile and the construction of the front and rear tyres, which is a process that we will continue over the next few tests that we carry out.

"Mugello has quite an abrasive surface with long and medium-high-speed corners as well as hairpins and quick changes of direction so it is quite a good proving ground. We are on target and we come away from this test with lots of data to analyse, which is exactly the situation we hoped to be in."

Pirelli's next F1 tyre test will take place in Monza, Italy this week.

London High Court awards Aerolab €1m

Force India told to cough up the cash



FORCE India has been ordered by the London High Court to pay over €1m (US\$1.27m) in damages to wind tunnel operator Aerolab for unpaid service fees.

The decision was announced on Friday and comes amid heightened tensions between the companies, with more legal action expected to proceed in the coming weeks.

Along with the settlement of €1,074,730 in favour of Aerolab, the Italian firm was also awarded damages and interest at a rate of 8%, after Force India ended their

association with Aerolab in September of last year.

"The Queen's Bench Division in the High Court of Justice in London has issued an order compelling Force India to pay 1,074,730 Euros, plus damages and interest at the rate of 8%, to Aerolab," read an Aerolab statement.

Force India had previously lodged a counter-claim against Aerolab in Bologna, accusing it of illegitimately using their property to help Lotus Racing develop its 2010 car. Aerolab is now expecting

their director Jean Claude Migeot to be formally charged soon, but is confident of a positive outcome.

Further action by Aerolab could be forthcoming as soon as the Italian Grand Prix in Monza, taking place in three weeks' time, where Force India's assets will be present under Italian law. Aerolab says the race "could trigger further exchanges of action between the parties".

Lotus Racing denies any wrongdoing and has been indemnified by Aerolab in the court proceedings.



Heidfeld leaves Mercedes GP to become Pirelli tester

FORMER Mercedes GP driver Nick Heidfeld has been appointed Pirelli's official F1 test driver and kicked off its F1 testing activities in Mugello last week (see separate story).

Only two months ago Pirelli won the contract to become F1's official tyre supplier for three years from 2011 and had hoped to sign a non-affiliated driver to test its tyres between now and the end of the season.

Rumours suggest the Italian company had its eye on Kimi Raikkonen for the role, but with the Finn turning down the offer Pirelli had to opt for Nick Heidfeld, who was subsequently released from his role as test and reserve driver at Mercedes GP to avoid any conflict of interest.

"First of all I would like to thank Ross Brawn [team principal], Norbert Haug [Mercedes-Benz representative] and Nick Fry [CEO] for allowing me the opportunity to become Pirelli's official test driver," Heidfeld said during the week.

"The team has always said that they would not stand in my way if such a chance arose and they have kindly allowed me to take up this exciting new role. I would like to thank everyone at Mercedes GP Petronas for the great cooperation that we have had this year.

"I have greatly enjoyed supporting the team in my position as Reserve Driver and have felt welcome right from the outset. It was impressive to have the opportunity to work with the current World Champions and I wish the team all the best for the remainder of the season and beyond."

Mercedes GP told GPWEEK that they have "no immediate plans" to appoint another reserve driver in place of Heidfeld.

Hilton
RACING
hiltonracing.com

The formula for a great weekend

Our exclusive partnership with Vodafone McLaren Mercedes means you can stay in the centre of the F1 action when you book a Grand Prix weekend package. For more information or to book, please visit hiltonracing.com

Click here to book your **Hilton Racing package**

■ Mercedes GP's Michael Schumacher heads to Belgium this weekend in an upbeat frame of mind, despite his looming 10-place grid penalty. The German was penalised after the Hungarian Grand Prix but says he is looking forward to returning to Spa-Francorchamps. "Spa has always been my favourite racetrack and so for that reason alone, I am really looking forward to going back and racing there," said Schumacher. "Our weekend will obviously be handicapped by my grid penalty and consequently it will be difficult to expect special things from the race."

■ Renault is expected to run its interpretation of McLaren's innovative F-duct system at this weekend's Belgian Grand Prix, thereby becoming the eighth team to trial the device at a race weekend. Renault team principal Eric Boullier said last month that the team was targeting Belgium for its F-duct debut, with the two long, flat-out sections at Spa-Francorchamps making the F-duct a necessity. Red Bull, McLaren, Ferrari, Mercedes, Force India, Williams and BMW Sauber are all running an F-duct at the moment.

■ The rumours refuse to die down, but former world champion Kimi Raikkonen now says he will most likely never return to Formula One. The Finn has not yet confirmed his plans for 2011, amid rumours that he will not retain his seat at Citroen's junior team. "You never know but I will probably never return to Formula One," he told L'Equipe. "It's something I did for many years, I had many great moments. I won a world championship title, which is what I always wanted, but times have changed."

■ Despite pledging his allegiance to Virgin Racing for next year, speculation continues to surround Timo Glock's immediate future, with stories continually linking him to a Renault seat and others for 2011. He recently insisted that he was "fully committed" to Virgin for next season despite an under-par first half-season. "For someone like me who has won the GP2 title and been on the podium with Toyota several times, it is no secret that it is not easy to be at the back," Glock said more recently.

■ As Glock's future at Virgin Racing goes under the microscope again, Argentina's Esteban Guerrieri is investigating the possibility of landing a seat with the rookie team. Guerrieri has to raise \$8m in sponsorship to secure the seat, but will have the backing of the Argentine government. "I think the time is right to try. I have an invitation from the Virgin team and we're working on it, because in principle to get one of their seats we need to have about 8 million dollars," said Guerrieri.

McLaren hoping for outing in Belgium

Looking for more from current aero package

McLAREN is hoping to be closer to its title-challenging rivals at this weekend's Belgian Grand Prix, after enduring a tough Hungarian Grand Prix before the summer break.

A retirement for Lewis Hamilton and eighth place for Jenson Button gave McLaren just four points in Budapest, but after a three-week break and a clarification on flexible front wings, the team is looking forward to Spa-Francorchamps with optimism.

"We come into the Belgian Grand Prix knowing that we have some catching-up to do to; the whole team wants to get back to the front again as quickly as possible,"

said Jenson Button.

"While we're optimistic that the bodywork rules clarification will close the gap among the top teams, and that both Spa and Monza should suit our package better than the Hungaroring, it's still important that we regain the momentum we'd reached earlier this season."

The team is also looking forward to extracting more performance from their blown diffuser aerodynamic package, raced for the first time in Germany. Martin Whitmarsh explains:

"While we believe our recent upgrades have given us a downforce improvement, it appears that the package hasn't yet

Yamamoto retains HRT seat for Belgium

Chandhok again forced to sit-out weekend

JAPAN's Sakon Yamamoto will race in his fourth consecutive grand prix with Hispania Racing next weekend in Belgium, after being confirmed alongside Brazil's Bruno Senna for the historic event.

Yamamoto has been in the car since the British Grand Prix last month where he replaced Senna, but has been in Karun Chandhok's car since the German Grand Prix.

"I am looking forward to be back in action after the break," said Yamamoto on Friday.

"In 2007, I was already running in Spa-Francorchamps with Spyker F1. The track has a very famous corner, the 'Eau Rouge' and there are a lot of up and downs.

"The weather conditions are very unique and it may change very quickly. We will need a good speed in the fast corners and also a good downforce on the car. We expect that the track layout suits our car and we try to do our best again."

GPWEEK understands that a decision on who will be in the car at the Italian Grand Prix has not yet been made.

or better

Bahrain returns to shorter track layout for 2011

delivered to its full potential, particularly in terms of providing the drivers with a consistent, confidence-delivering platform," said the team principal.

"We were able to carry out some useful evaluative tests during practice in Hungary, which provided us with some useful data and avenues for experimentation. And we'll take that programme further in Spa, running floor rakes during practice to supply us with more information."

Hamilton and McLaren sit second in their respective championships, while Button lies fourth, just 14 points behind leader Webber.



THE original F1 layout of the Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) will be used for next year's race, organisers have announced, after deciding to ditch the extended 'endurance track' layout after just one year.

The change to the "endurance track" for this year's race was met with criticism from fans and drivers, but the 2011 event will be run on the same layout used up to 2009.

Organisers insist this year's event had been a "huge success" and explained that the extended layout, which added a series of slow turns between the old Turns 4 and 5, was used as part of F1's 60th birthday celebrations to give teams and drivers a new challenge. The added loop extended the track length by almost 900 metres, thereby reducing the number of race laps by 8. 2011 will see a return to the fast and

flowing 5.412 km layout.

"Since its inception in 2004, BIC has continually set new standards in the world of international motorsport. Known globally as the 'Friendly Race' it has been a favourite on the Formula One World Championship calendar for the past seven seasons," said Shaikh Salman Bin Isa Al Khalifa, Acting Chief Executive Officer of BIC.

"As the inaugural round of the Formula One World Championship's 60th anniversary season, it was important for us to celebrate this momentous occasion by doing something very unique and different. One of the major tasks we undertook to mark this milestone was implementing changes to our FIA approved track layout, giving the participating teams of the 2010 Bahrain Grand Prix a completely new challenge."



For your daily dose
of Formula 1 news ...

ESPN F1





ETIH
AIR

The F1 FORMULA 1 logo, F1, FORM

HOW WILL YOU CELEBRATE 14 NOV?

BOOK YOUR SEATS TODAY!

+971 (0) 2 446 0384
www.yasmarinacircuit.ae

YAS MARINA
CIRCUIT
حلبة مرسى ياس

F1
Formula 1

ETIHAD AIRWAYS
ABU DHABI
GRAND PRIX

YAS MARINA CIRCUIT
12-13-14 NOVEMBER 2010

FORMULA 1, FIA FORMULA ONE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP, ABU DHABI GRAND PRIX and related marks are trade marks of Formula One Licensing BV, a Formula One group company. All rights reserved.

■ Norton, one of racing's most famous names, is set to make a return in 2012, with the new 1000cc MotoGP regulations. Dorna has accepted two provisional entries from the revived British name, according to German-language publication Speedweek.

■ MotoGP insiders will have a sneak preview of GP racing's new junior class at Indy next weekend. The national 12-16-year-old class using Moriwaki MD250H 250 singles, with Honda engines, is on the MotoGP programme. Similar bikes will replace 125s in 2012.

■ The 2011 calendar, usually announced each year at Brno at least in provisional form, has been delayed this year by attempts to rearrange Laguna Seca and Indianapolis so the two US races can run back to back.

■ Rossi's greatest relief at signing? "Everyone in Italy, from the newspaperman to the people who make the coffee say: 'When will you go to Ducati?' This will be more easy now.

■ Jorge Lorenzo has given the new Aragon circuit his seal of approval, after testing there in a street R1 Yamaha. The brand-new Motorland circuit there was put on the calendar to replace the twice-cancelled Hungarian round.

■ Rotund motoring enthusiast and sometime chat show host Jay Leno will perform the role of Grand Marshal at Indianapolis, giving star-struck MotoGP riders a second chance to touch the hem of his garment: he hosted them at his collection of bikes and cars before the Laguna race earlier this year.



Jorge in control of cut-s

TITLE points leader Jorge Lorenzo underlined his clinical race win at Brno, dominating time sheets at abbreviated tests on the following day, a quarter of a second faster than Dani Pedrosa's pole time for the race weekend, and fully half a second ahead of the next-best tester, Casey Stoner.

The test was important ... the last before the end of the season. But while conditions were good in the morning, after fears that rain would ruin the day, proceedings were cut short at about 15:30 when the weather did break, cutting short the plans of many.

The morning was busy:

- Yamaha had a prototype of next year's bike, reserved for Lorenzo and Rossi's factory-team replacement Ben Spies. Lorenzo was almost as fast as on his current machine on the new bike, but said it needed work on handling.

- He and Rossi also tested power-up engine parts; but only Lorenzo the new

Öhlins forks ... he didn't like them. Rossi was fourth overall, Spies ninth.

- Honda had a new chassis for Pedrosa closer to that used by Dovizioso, that the Spanish rider used to set third-best time. He might use it later in the year, he said.

- Suzuki, still seeking elusive cold-track grip as well as engine durability, had two new chassis to try as well as revised electronics ... and an extra rider: Sylvain Guintoli had been drafted in from the Superbike team.

- Randy de Puniet did not take part after his hurried return from breaking his leg; but a determined Nicky Hayden shrugged off pain from the chipped bone in his arm.

- Last-ever 250 champion Hiro Aoyama made his return to the track eight weeks after suffering a fractured vertebra at Silverstone. Although he ran competitive times, he delayed his decision on whether to return for Indianapolis for the week of the race.

Cracks start to show at Yamaha

Rossi denied test chance, Brivio plans to quit

JUST one day after the honeyed words of Yamaha's official announcement that Rossi was leaving, the cracks became obvious between the rider and the team he will leave behind.

Banned from testing the latest Öhlins forks as well as the 2011 machine, Rossi fulminated: "there are still eight races left this year".

At the same time Davide Brivio, who engineered the original move by Rossi from Honda to Yamaha and currently manages that side of the garage, revealed he expected to quit the factory team in Rossi's wake. He plans to move into rider management.

Ducati is being kept waiting to hear if Rossi will be released from contract by Yamaha to test his new machine the day after the final round at Valencia.

And Yamaha is waiting to hear the

decision of Rossi's crew chief Jerry Burgess. A valued member of the development team, he will also be need to be kept away from 2011 developments, should he decide to go follow Rossi to Ducati. At present, Burgess is reserving judgement, although a lukewarm invitation by Ducati chief Del Torchio, who said "it is Valentino's decision", might influence him to stay put.

Rossi said the tests had revealed one possible reason for his inexplicable front-end feel problems in the race, and that power-up parts were promising. But he was unhappy that he had been denied a chance to try the new forks:

"We have eight races to go and not two or three, and I want to make like always 110 percent of my effort for the second part of the season and my last races on the M1. And I expect also the same effort

from Yamaha.

"They said to me that they use this fork for 2011 not for this year. It's easy to see because the new fork looks different. So we will see if this is the truth or a lie," he said.

Although team-mate Lorenzo is set, barring disasters, for a runaway title win, 134 points (better than five full race wins ahead of Valentino), Rossi can still claim a championship one-two for the team. Dovizioso, Stoner and current runner-up Pedrosa are within reach, with Dani just 57 points clear.

But while the rider questioned Yamaha's commitment to him, former World Champion Wayne Gardner has done the same to Valentino. The Australian wrote on his website that "Rossi has stopped pushing", after his strangely lacklustre run to fifth in the Czech Republic GP.

Short testing



Biggest deal in racing “not about the money” – Rossi

At a rumoured 30-million Euros (US\$38m) for two years, Rossi's move to the Marlboro Ducati team will be the biggest financial rider deal in the history of MotoGP. But the rider was quite clear ... it was not about the money.

“In fact, what they offered was exactly the same as at Yamaha – zero difference,” he said.

And the decision had been far from straightforward, he told reporters after the Brno test, and he had started thinking about it at the beginning of the year, when he first spoke to Ducati. He had found them “a lot more open than in the past to fix all the important things of the contract.” Details such as PR duties (Marlboro

generally demands a lot in this regard) and off-track requirements would be more flexible, he thought.

Even so, he had wavered back and forth before reaching the decision.

There were a couple of key issues. The first was the imminent compulsory retirement of Yamaha director and racing chief Masao Furusawa:

“For seven years he was always the number one at Yamaha for me. Without him, I don't know what will happen.”

The second was the feeling “that my work here at Yamaha is finished.” The development of the M1 had culminated in a couple of fast young riders on the machine, Lorenzo and Spies.

“So it looks like for me here the time is finished.

“I need a new adventure, some new experience, but especially a new motivation,” he said.

Another crucial draw had been his admiration for Ducati technical chief Filippo Preziosi:

“I always speak with Filippo, and I see in him similar behaviour as in Furusawa in 2004. He wants me and he trusts in me, and he thinks that together we can improve the Ducati. So I am curious.”

The Ducati at present, he thought, was similar to the Yamaha, perhaps slightly inferior: “not a big difference. The potential of the Ducati is quite good.”



Testing famine to be eased

Extra pre-season sessions will help Stoner, Rossi

MOTOGP teams are expecting a concession that will boost the number of pre-season tests next year by one, and introduce a greater variety -of tracks. At the same time, Dorna's curtain-raising showpiece tests at Jerez will also be reinstated.

Complaints from riders and engineers have been rife over the past two seasons since the previously generous testing schedule was slashed to cut costs.

In 2010, two visits to Sepang in Malaysia were followed by one night test at Qatar.

Stoner is one rider who was immediately critical:

“Whatever works at Sepang doesn't work anywhere else, and with the night test there's not a good chance to get the bike set up,” he said earlier this year.

Others to complain include Hayden, whose switch to Ducati last year was made much more difficult, and Rossi, who

repeated his comments at Brno, when contemplating the task of adapting himself to the Ducati for next year, and vice versa.

“Everybody understands that like this it is not enough,” he said, with World Superbikes having more than twice as much testing time. Before we had too much testing; now not enough.”

The proposed schedule put forward at Brno returns Australia's Phillip Island and Jerez to the schedule, but cuts out Qatar.

Movistar link boosts Lorenzo's asking price

JORGE Lorenzo has been keeping Yamaha hanging on, delaying the signing of his contract as his asking price has kept rising.

Now, without the burden of Rossi as his team-mate, Yamaha is reported on the brink of agreeing a fee of 10-million Euros (US\$12.7m), according to Spanish website Motocuatro.com.

This more than doubles his current contract, thought to be 4-million Euros (US\$5.1m) for this year alone. Official confirmation of his new contract is expected at next weekend's Indianapolis GP.

But there might still be enough left over for Ben Spies, also expected to be confirmed as the second factory Yamaha rider at the US venue. Spanish sponsor Telefónica Movistar is expected to take over from Fiat as naming-rights sponsor of the Yamaha team.

This represents a return to bike racing for the Spanish communications giant, which left in a huff after being sidelined when pet rider Dani Pedrosa was taken from them into the Repsol Honda team.

Pedrosa is also expected to be confirmed to stay with Honda alongside Stoner at Indy, with Dovizioso still left dangling as he waits to see if the factory will have a full factory bike for him.



Preziosi: Valentino and I are still enemies!



DUCATI design genius Filippo Preziosi has been talking to Valentino Rossi for some years on and off ... but only "as an enemy". And until the end of this season, "the position is the same."

Speaking exclusively to GPWEEK, Preziosi spoke of the excitement he felt about developing a motorcycle with the legendary rider. But so far they had only been able to speak in general terms.

"We have spoken a lot over the years, but we have never been able to have a discussion in depth because we were always enemies. We still cannot have this sort of discussion ... but I am very much looking forward to working closely with Valentino as soon as possible," he said.

ESTEBAN GUTIERREZ

Esteban Gutierrez is dominating the inaugural GP3 season with four wins from six race weekends. Now it seems it's just a question of time before he makes his F1 debut. Adam Hay-Nicholls asks the Mexican where he gets his speed – and when we're going to see him in a Sauber.

Did you expect to be this dominant when you started the GP3 season?

Not really because from the experience I had last year [finishing ninth in the F3 Euro Series]. I knew [2009] was going to be a tough year, coming from Formula BMW where I was champion, coming to Formula 3 which is one of the toughest championships in Europe.

In the end it was a really good year because I learned I can apply myself in a very positive way. Even now I'm applying it and learning new things as well. From the beginning I like to have a really cool head, I don't like to think, I don't like to fantasize. I don't think too much about the championship, I only look as far as the next race. You have to work on the present. The championship is the sum of all the races so it's nothing that you can really live.

In the team the atmosphere is really positive. We have always been very focused on what we have to do, and we manage to enjoy ourselves too.

Talking about keeping a cool head, it's clear you can do that because you've made no mistakes in 2010 really. Is it difficult to balance that with the aggression you need to come up through the field? And do you have to bear in mind that in GP3 that you're racing against guys that are quite hot-headed and susceptible to making mistakes?

You will always have every kind of situation as a driver. You just have to be prepared for all kinds of situations that a driver can live.

We know it's not possible to win every race or to have a podium at every race or to score points at all the events. We have always been looking for progression, to improve ourselves, not to compare with the other drivers, just focus on ourselves, trying to make it even better each time. I have no problem with any driver, I like to have good relationships, I like to be fair, I love competition. This is why it's positive because everything I do I enjoy it and I really like to live in the moment.

Are you finding the car easier to drive than in F3? Because you've gone from midfield in the Euro Series to absolutely dominating in GP3...

Formula 3, from a technical point of view, is a really good school for a driver. This year was really a year that I could open my eyes and see a lot of things and live a lot of things that maybe I wouldn't have lived if I hadn't done that season. Formula 3 was a really tough year, and as tough as it is you have to fail before you succeed. You cannot have success the whole time.

For sure I will make mistakes, for sure from the mistakes I have done I have always taken the positive things and this is what I did all last year, because there were quite a lot of mistakes from my side, and I think it made me stronger this year.

Basically we arrived to this year in GP3 with the same team, with the same engineer with the same mechanics and we built a really good relationship. As long as you put in your best then the rest will come by itself.

You went from driving the F3 car to testing for Sauber, which is a big leap, but within five laps you were able to set the fastest time of the day, which is incredible. Didn't you find it daunting?

I did quite a lot of preparation, especially for the neck, and I did some testing days in GP2. It's not only for the driving that I drove the Formula One car – it also includes a lot of things around that I enjoyed a lot, the team, you have one person for each specific thing in the car, or in the engine or whatever, and all these people are there for you, only for you, and you have to understand the way of working because it's very different from having only one engineer and two mechanics to maybe 30 people working only for you.

I took it like an experience to visualize what can come in the future, to really absorb everything. I didn't put pressure on myself, I didn't want to do the quickest lap-time, I didn't want to impress anybody. I went there just to learn, just to live the

moment and to do my best. You don't want to crash the car or go off the track.

In the end the goal was accomplished and then after that things followed naturally. I went to the workshop with Sauber before the test to do the seat fitting with the mechanics, it was a really good atmosphere. When I arrived at the test everybody was supportive and it felt just like a regular test day in Formula BMW. I felt so comfortable.

When are you joining Sauber as a race driver?

Well I don't know, it's not my responsibility right now. Right now my focus is to win the GP3 championship. I try to separate everything in my mind that cannot affect what I'm living in the present, because if you leave the present then the rest will also be gone. You cannot start to think about something that's going to happen in six months when you are preparing for the next race.

But your preference is to do GP2 isn't it? You don't want to rush it?

Why do I need to rush when I'm only 18 years old?

If you got called up to race for Sauber at the next race, do you feel you would be ready? Would you say yes if you were offered the chance to race at the next race?

Right now, no, because I haven't won the GP3 championship yet, which is my main focus.

Singapore?

I will have to analyse the situation.

Do you think that you could perform well even at this early stage?

To go into a new series, to go into a higher step, you cannot expect a lot from a driver. Of course I would prepare myself in the best possible way, but I don't say that I could be performing. I would say that the only thing I could assure you is that I will do my best.



Email us

Something to say?
Email us at
mail@gpweek.com

We're all going on a Summer Holiday

God I'm bored. This 'holiday time' for F1 is, as publisher Lambden pointed out last week, a bit rich.

Thank goodness that other 'world sport' Football has kicked off again in the past two weeks, or I would be suicidal.

Seriously, as the Publisher's piece said, imagine if Football took a three-week mid-season break?

For sure, start the F1 season two weeks later, or finish it earlier, but let's have some continuity.

Having said that, what a delicious venue to recommence hostilities this weekend, at Spa, given the contest that has taken place so far this year. And thanks to GPWEEK for helping me get through the break, with some interesting editorial. Good to see Peter Windsor join the team.

*Nigel Mathieson
Ruislip, UK*

Treading the fine line

I was interested to read Peter Windsor's interview on the fall-out following the collapse of the USF1 team.

While it was insightful to read his comments, mainly on the effect the closure had, there wasn't too much on the actual cause of the failed venture. You know – naming names, who promised who and didn't deliver. Maybe it is a bit too soon after the event for that?

*William Rashid
Bournemouth, UK*

ED: Yes, there is undoubtedly more to be revealed over the USF1 collapse – Peter is, we believe, limited on what can be said publicly in relation to cause etc given that some form of legal action usually follows events such as this these days – particularly in the US!

MotoGP Strangulation?

Am I the only one that believes that MotoGP is going too far in its fuel restriction/number of engines limits?

The last thing I want to see in MotoGP is some form of 'reliability run'. Bikes have always been an economic form of transport anyway – unlike F1 there's no need to justify MotoGP's existence with this power strangulation.

*Matt Hornish
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

Rossi: An expert a



MICHAEL SCOTT
MotoGP Editor

Well, of course he can. Rossi, that is. Win races on the Ducati. That question was easily dealt with, once the long-awaited move was officially confirmed. Luminaries from Agostini to Schwantz and back were as confident as the rest of us.

Can he win the championship again?

Well now. It doesn't look as though he'll be able to do it this year, with Lorenzo on the same motorcycle. Not unless something really awful happens to Jorge.

I'd venture to suggest the same will be true next year, when they are on different kinds of bike. Jorge plus the Yamaha developed by Rossi and Burgess is pretty much flawless; Rossi knows well that the current

Desmosedici has some lessons to learn.

It is on 2012 that Rossi's and Ducati's attentions are directed.

The difficulty for next year is that the design of the 2011 Ducati, like that of the Yamaha, is pretty much finalised. It's not like when he went to Yamaha in 2004. That move cannily coincided with a major engine rethink and the birth of the definitive cross-plane-crank M1 engine, the in-line four that thinks it's a vee. Rossi's riding made the bike a winner first time out, his work with Burgess made it suit pretty much every rider.

There was another difference: his rivals then were Max Biaggi and Sete Gibernau. Another 'venture to suggest': Jorge is a higher class of rider than either.

The important thing about 2012 is that everybody will be changing engines: new rules and the return to 1000cc mean the major rethink will be universal.

End team orders



ADAM HAY-NICHOLLS
GPWeek Editor

Niki Lauda is terrified of horses. Fact. It's all to do with a run in he had with a stallion at Monza one year. I'm not quite sure if it bit him or what. But I do know he took a mauling last week by the teeth of Ferrari's rather unguarded blog, which goes by the name The Horse Whisperer.

The official blog responded to Niki's public view that Ferrari were wrong to issue team orders in Germany, and are going to "get a pasting" at the WMSC hearing.

Ferrari has accused the triple-champ of missing out on "a fine opportunity to keep his mouth shut". And go on to point out that he never complained when he was getting the preferential treatment at the Scuderia.

Which is, of course, a fair point. But it doesn't make what Ferrari did admissible.

We've had a month now to reflect on Hockenheim. We know that team orders are rife and difficult to police. It's generally good for the teams (unless they're exposed, which is damaging to their brand and sponsors). It's not so good for the sport.

People have pointed to McLaren, which escaped so much as an investigation when it ordered David Coulthard to yield for Mika Hakkinen

at changing for the better

Rossi will be involved from its inception; the 2012 Duke will be his bike even more than the M1 Yamaha.

This improves his chances significantly.

He leaves a company about to lose the senior guiding hand of Masao Furusawa, architect of Yamaha's MotoGP success, and the influential voice on the board that kept sufficient budget available for racing, even while sales were slumping badly. Without him, it's easy to see a major change in policy, with racing on the back burner, and the 2012 Yamaha seriously compromised as a result.

Over at Ducati, Rossi will be working hand in hand with Filippo Preziosi, a remarkable engineer who has overcome paralysis (bike crash) to head the design of the highly successful Italian alternative. His record is good: Ducati adapted fastest to the new 800cc rules, winning the 2007 title with Stoner.

The possibility that Preziosi and his new partner can do it again gives Valentino his best chance (short of rejoining Honda) in becoming the first ever champion on three different makes.



– by banning radios

at Jerez '97. Those directions were all to be heard on the radio. Others have hit out at Eddie Jordan for criticizing Ferrari, in light of the orders that were issued at Spa '98. But that was different, because Ralf Schumacher was instructed to hold station and not attempt to pass Damon Hill for the lead. Jordan did not order a change of position. That's just risk management.

And Coulthard and Hakkinen, at Jerez, didn't trade the lead – they were second and third at the time. Should that make a difference? Probably not, but it isn't as in your face as a change of position for the lead.

I think the WMSC need to consider this now and in future. Team orders can be tolerated to an extent, but when you're changing the lead – manipulating the

result, to use an Alonso phrase (ironically) – you really are sticking two fingers up at the sport.

So it needs to be communicated to the teams that orders at the very front will not be tolerated. I have to say – and I've said it already – a \$100,000 fine isn't sufficient. That won't even buy you the engine in a 458 Italia. But I disagree with Lauda – I believe the FIA will want everyone to move on, and will therefore sweep it under the carpet.

If you want to curb team orders – and I think we're agreed this is what the public wishes to see – you need to ban pit-car radios.

I like having the radio transmissions broadcast, it provides some interesting insight and often some juicy quotes. But teams are able to use imaginative codes.

A ban on radios wouldn't prevent teams briefing their drivers beforehand:

"Felipe, if Fernando is behind you, you pull over. Capiche?" But without the instruction being repeated in the race, in the heat of the moment, only a complete doormat of a driver would agree to relinquish the lead. Felipe had to be told to yield repeatedly before he actually did so.

Of course, going back to Coulthard and Hakkinen, DC did hand the Finn the lead in Melbourne '98, on the basis of their 'gentlemen's agreement' without any radio encouragement. Doormat or honorable chap, it's open to interpretation. I'm sure Coulthard felt it was the best career move.

But I think a proper racing driver should be prepared to piss on his own chips if he's got a victory in sight.



MAY THE FORCE BE WITH YOU

Twelve months ago, Force India surprised everyone by claiming an unlikely pole position and second place in the Belgian Grand Prix, having failed to score a single point in 2009, up until then. GPWEEK's Naoise Holohan looks at the massive improvements at Force India in the past couple of years and what the team is aiming for in the future.





THE date is Saturday 29 August, 2009, the time precisely 14:59:25 CET, and Giancarlo Fisichella has just posted a laptime of 1m46.308s in Q3 to take the most unexpected pole position of the season, at a team without a points finish in almost two years.

A day later and Fisichella has scored the team's first podium finish with a second place – and is disappointed, having hounded the KERS-powered Kimi Raikkonen for almost 300km. The weekend still lives strong in the minds of all Force India workers, none least Fisichella's then race engineer Jody Eggington:

"We'd got to Spa and it was a nondescript Friday," recalled Eggington.

"We made a set-up change in the front wing package overnight and right from the very first thing in third practice the drivers were saying 'wow, this is it, this is special, I'm really feeling good in the car, it's transformed.' And we just carried on in a certain direction, got to the end of FP3 and thought we might bag Q2.

"We got into Q2 and right into the dying

seconds of Q2 he was quickest, so into Q3, wow! We decided on a fuel load which we thought was super-aggressive to get a good qualifying position, as it transpired everyone else had gone the same route.

"He went out and he did the lap. We realised on the screen that it was quite special and then he crossed the line and he was asking where he was, and we said "not bad mate, not bad, you're on pole!

"In the race we thought we'd be in the top eight. He got a good start and he was away.

"With the Safety Car and the restart we got caught, Raikkonen with a KERS system. To be fair to him, Raikkonen didn't put a foot wrong, his car wasn't as good as ours that day, and we couldn't get past him. We left the race disappointed – it was clearly quicker. A very small amount of disappointment followed by a huge amount of happiness."

Even under the 2010 scoring system, Force India would have gone to Belgium with just six points in 2009, but flash forward some 12 months and the team is a regular in Q3 and has already amassed some 47 points.

Having shuffled through the hands of four separate owners in five years, from Jordan to Midland to Spyker and finally to Force India in 2008, the team is finally beginning to reap the rewards of proper investment by Dr Vijay Mallya after years of uncertainty and under-funding. The journey has been far from easy, as team manager Andy Stevenson explains: "It's been a very tough journey," began Stevenson.

"Right from the days when the team was sold from Jordan to Midland, we were struggling. We didn't have a new car, we had to adapt a Toyota engine to fit in to a car that was designed for a Cosworth, hence the performance wasn't that great. Also we had to sign two rookie drivers because it was very late in the day for us to commit to any top-line drivers, but no top-line drivers would come because we were a very unknown quantity.

"We went for a few years like that, which I would have preferred to miss out on.

"Then, when the team was taken over by Dr. Mallya, we decided with he and Rob Fernley [deputy team principal] that we needed

FISHER

PREMIUM

ROYAL
CHALLENGE



The partnership with McLaren – encompassing Mercedes engines and gearbox supply, has been a big plus in the evolution of Force India.



to put a plan into place and structure the company to turn it back into a successful racing team, which has been done by investment and the tie-up with McLaren Applied Technologies and Mercedes-Benz High Performance Engines has given us the stability to design a car which is now a competitive race car."

With the team changing hands three times between 2005 and 2008, survival was the aim. Adding performance to the car took a back seat and the team remained bolted to the back of the grid. Despite all the hardship and uncertainty, Stevenson insists it played an integral part in making the team what it is today:

"You could say it was destabilizing but I wouldn't really agree. We've basically got the same people here now as we did back then, so the team stuck together as a whole. It's all led to what we've got now, they were all building years," continued Stevenson.

"I think each year was very important and I wouldn't say I wish we hadn't done any of them because the team would be long gone. Each of those years has helped us

achieve what we've become – it's helped in our experience. It's helped in our technical knowledge as well because we've had a lot of hard lessons to learn and without being in that situation we wouldn't have done it.

"We were still rebuilding from the Jordan days because the budget wasn't there and the team did change a lot when Eddie [Jordan] moved away. We lost a lot of people that had been with the team for a while so we had to rebuild it. And to rebuild a team takes time. I don't believe you can go out and just hire the best people – you have to hire the best people that are able to work within the environment that you're able to offer them."

As mentioned by Stevenson, key to Force India's progress in recent years has been the partnership with Mercedes and McLaren. Announced late in 2008, the deal included the supply of Mercedes-Benz engines and McLaren gearboxes, allowing the team to avail itself of arguably the best power train on the grid. The partnership also allows Force India to free up more resources, where previously their gearbox was designed

in-house.

"The partnership with Mercedes and McLaren has been very important for stability. It's obviously a well-known fact that the Mercedes engine is one of the best of the grid. It's enabled us also to design our cars specifically for those engines which is such an important thing, which has helped the performance again," explained Stevenson.

"Knowing what you're going to race each year and working as closely as we do with Mercedes-Benz, that is a gain, it's a big positive.

"We have a gearbox from McLaren and that is all we have. The suspension is our own – all the rocker assemblies, all the geometries are our own design. But what it does allow us to do is to free up the people in our drawing office to concentrate on the areas that we were a little bit weaker in. Now we're stronger [in those areas] and hopefully going on into this year and into 2011 we'll just get stronger and stronger in those areas."

The team is also closely aligned with the European Aeronautic Defence and





Economy run (left): Liuzzi and Sutil get around by pedal-power. On the bench (below, L to R): Team Manager Andy Stevenson, Otmar Szafnauer (Chief Operating Officer) and outgoing Chief Operating Officer Simon Roberts.



← Space Company (EADS), the parent company of aircraft manufacturer Airbus, helping the small Silverstone-based team to tap into another rich stream of knowledge and experience.

"We work alongside EADS and we'll ask their advice on certain things, on what we should be doing technically to develop the parts of the car that we're looking at. Basically we have meetings with them and use their knowledge on how they can help us and move things forward, which has been a very important partnership.

"With us being such a small team it's quite difficult sometimes to get hold of the hardware required to do some of the design development that we want to do, and that's where their partnership is invaluable because they've obviously got access to the best equipment in the world."

Staff retention has been a bit of a problem for the team of late however, with numerous high-profile members of the technical team leaving to join former boss Mike Gascoyne at Lotus Racing. Despite the obvious downside of losing a member of the team, Stevenson looks on the situation as one of opportunity and being able to promote younger members of the team higher up the food chain.

"People move on all throughout the industry, it just seems the press has picked

up on the fact that certain people have moved to Lotus. If you look at any team, people are moving around all the time. We've got some fantastic young designers working for us now and what it allows us to do is to promote from within the company which again is very important to Force India. We don't just want to hire in the best people, what we want to do is to develop the guys that we have, and we have some really, really good people."

So what is in store for Force India in the future? Despite having one of the smallest teams on the grid, Stevenson insists the budget being supplied is not holding it back.

"I wouldn't say we're constrained by budget. We're working to a budget that's agreed at the start of the year and we're given goals to reach. At the moment we're probably slightly under that goal – we were asked for fifth in the championship, and we're currently sitting sixth. I would say that what we've achieved is pretty good, but the important thing for us now is to make sure we don't lose that."

Looking further down the line, you'd be mistaken to think this team is happy where it is – not by a long shot. With the famously secretive Resource Restriction Agreement (RRA) set to reduce team sizes in the coming years to bring bigger teams closer in staff numbers to the smaller outfits like Force India, the target is to win. Not just race wins

but world championships.

"We're going to win! The aim is to keep building and ultimately we want to win races and we want to win championships, but we have to be realistic about it all," said Stevenson.

"As long as we keep moving forward with the rate of development we are, I think we're going to be satisfied. What we have to do is take each year and see where we are and just try and improve on it. If we finish fifth this year, we'll probably want to finish fourth or third next year."

But can that be a realistic aim for a team when giants such as Ferrari, McLaren, Red Bull, Renault and Mercedes are among their competitors?

"I think so," answers Andy.

"Resource restriction should change [team sizes] in years to come, which will theoretically put the teams on a far more even footing. I don't think it's a far-fetched theory of ours or a thought of mine that we can win championships in the future. We're definitely not here just to compete – we're not just an also-ran.

"But we have to be realistic and we have to build up the team so that we can support that and we can do that. That's certainly the plan."

The fight spirit of Eddie Jordan is alive and well within the walls of his old factory.



FUELS RUSH IN...

MotoGP has been playing 'economy run' for nearly 10 years. So what happens when bigger engines come back in 2012?

Michael Scott ponders







Confirmation of the 1000cc sanction at Brno was a mere formality. Engineers have long since been running complex computer prediction programmes and even casting the metal for a new family of racing engines – the 81mm bore size.

The new bikes will hit the tracks in 2012, at the same time as the 125-replacement, Moto3 singles, which share the same maximum bore size. And there are some intriguing questions as to what will actually turn up.

On the one side, CRT (Claiming Rule Teams) bikes will be able to use production-based components ... even more-or-less complete engines.

On the other, Ducati's engineering maestro Filippo Preziosi has suggested the Italian factory might make an undersize engine. This would preserve heavily oversquare dimensions with that bore size in order to maintain a trademark capacity for high revs, which exploits Ducati's exclusive use of desmodromic valve gear.

One question affecting everybody concerns fuel consumption.

In spite of the increase in capacity, there has been no increase in quantity of 100-130-octane unleaded, close to premium pump fuel in specification, which can be used. Two hundred more cc's – an increase of 25 percent – will still have to finish races of the same length on just 21 litres of the stuff.

Except for the CRTs, that is. Controversially, the new regulations allow CRTs not only twice the number of engines for a full season – 12 against just six; they also get an extra two litres of fuel. Factory

team insiders, already worried that these supposedly humbler bikes might prove surprisingly hard to beat, think this generosity is misplaced.

GPWEEK took a look at how restricted fuel has already affected racing, for riders, engineers and spectators; and at what effect the new rules will have.

The restrictions came in step by step, in line with a nod towards environmental issues: unleaded arrived back in the two-stroke days, when the 500s carried 32 litres of fuel, sometimes iced to an amazing 30 degrees below zero, to increase density and squeeze in another 10 or more percent.

The four-stroke 990s arrived in 2002 with 26 litres. This dropped to 24 in 2005, and then to 22 in 2006. The final cut to 21 came in 2007, along with the switch from 990cc to 800cc.

Technicians agreed that the issue had been blurred by the simultaneous capacity change: the 800s themselves changed the racing, with higher revs and higher corner speeds. The first demanded pneumatic valve springs; the second made riding more precise and overtaking more difficult. The fuel was a side issue.

All the same, it wasn't easy adapting to the restrictions.



One strategy was to keep icing the fuel. But four-strokes are different from two-strokes, which prefer carburettors – attempts to develop electronic injection for two-stroke racers remain inconclusive. The new EFI systems didn't operate well at such low temperatures. And in 2003 a rule was passed: no cooler than 15 degrees below ambient. Enough, according to the FIM Technical Director Mike Webb, to add about 300cc:

"With a fuel-saving map, it'll get them round the sighting lap for free."

Another was the double sighting lap – riders have five minutes and can reel off two laps before stopping on the grid. Nicky Hayden explains:

"We'd go out on the back-up bike, go hard to heat and scuff the tyres, then back to the pit. On the race bike, on back-up tyres, we'd go as slow as possible to save gas. Then on the grid they'd fit the scuffed tyres from the spare bike."

All bikes already had programmes measuring fuel use, set to lean out the mixture if the rate of consumption meant they'd run out before the flag: EFI systems have all the data readily available, by their very nature. Now it became more critical.

Valentino Rossi remembers how a sudden

lean-out would turn a peaky 800 into a handful:

"The bike would become a lot more aggressive and difficult to control. Now is much better. You feel you lose a little horsepower – maybe 20, but the feeling on the throttle in general is the same. A lot of progress."

The systems didn't always work: Hayden, then riding a factory Honda, lost a certain third at Assen in 2008, when his bike ran out on the last corner. That was after another electronic problem had spoiled the performance:

"I was braking deeper and the throttle was open a lot more everywhere to make up for it. It should have got me to the end, but something was so off in the motor that it threw the calculation. And it ran out."

"After that Honda got real conservative. I'd get mad after the race when I'd see them drain the fuel, and keep on draining."

This year, Rossi ran out on the slow-down lap after winning the race at Qatar: proof just how accurate these systems have become. He was able to race hard to the last drop:

a scenario of perfect efficiency. But why then doesn't that happen every race? His famed crew chief Jeremy Burgess:

"Because if the bike is set at optimum mixture, what we call 'full rich', the engine simply can't burn any more fuel. You might argue we could go to a stronger-spec engine for those tracks, but with the six-engine rule you don't really have that chance."

In fact only two tracks – stop-start Montegi and Misano, with three first-gear corners – will definitely take the bikes into lean-out territory; although Qatar can be tricky. In other words, the current generation has matured to match performance and consumption to the rules.

What will happen when the big bikes come back?

There is a real question whether they will use more or less fuel than the 800s.

Rizla Suzuki's veteran crew chief Stuart Shenton echoes a general query:

"The new bigger engines will be slower-revving, so though they will draw in proportionately more fuel every stroke, they won't be burning it as many times per lap."

There is a proviso. Some hope big engines will bring back wheelspin and tail-steering. Not with these 21-litre tanks, it seems:

"Wheelspin is one thing that really burns up a lot of fuel," says Shenton.



ONE FOR THE MONEY

Two for the show, and one more made another Citroen 1-2-3 as Sebastien Loeb continues to set new records, this time in Germany. Martin Holmes was there









THE Citroën steamroller progresses inexorably towards new titles. With a 1-2-3 result on the asphalt Rallye Deutschland, Sebastien Loeb has now won the event for a record eighth time – every time the event has been held as a world championship round, another ground breaking achievement in his career.

Sordo was back as Loeb's teammate for this event and earned his place. His pace was such that he had to be restrained from pressuring Loeb unnecessarily, eventually realising that the most he would be allowed was, once more, for the 15th time in his career, to be runner-up.

Ford drivers Mikko Hirvonen and Jari-Matti Latvala hung in as close as they could behind the C4 WRCs and this time the Fords were measurably less uncompetitive as they had been in the previous asphalt event (Bulgaria). Latvala found himself easily matching the pace of his team-mate – and then Hirvonen was twice forced to stop with transmission trouble. Latvala had been lying third for a long way before eventually submitting to pressure from Sebastien Ogier, who gave Citroën one more 1-2-3 result.

The vineyard, public roads and military plains were host again to the world championship, after a one year gap.

The only thing missing this time was the traditionally changeable weather. Unusually, it stayed dry all the time. The stage route was the longest for a WRC event for six years, but the endless sharp turnings were there to test the suitability of the handbrakes of the cars. This was specialist driving territory.

Citroën brought tarmac specialist Sordo back into the Total team and left Ogier in the secondary Junior team on this occasion, while Ford enlisted the Belgian driver Francois Duval, a driver absent from WRC events for 20 months, as the driver of a Stobart team car. Duval found it difficult to acclimatise himself to the current pace of the cars but after falling back with a puncture he was gradually improving. At the end of Day 2, however, he crashed when back up to fifth place.

A driver who once again was full of determination to succeed was Petter Solberg, but his hopes were dashed when a tyre came unexpectedly off its wheel rim on the first stage dropping him to 53rd. He surged back, reaching eighth place by Stage 5, only to suffer another puncture. By the finish he was fifth.

Matthew Wilson finished sixth after suffering endless brake issues but had a battle all event against Kimi Raikkonen, who was delayed by anti roll bar problems, a slipping clutch and set-up generally.

The event ended well, when Kimi won his first WRC scratch time, on

the Trier downtown stage around the historic Porta Nigra monument. Unfortunately for Raikkonen he didn't win the stage by enough to snatch sixth place from Wilson.

As has become another tradition, the event attracted many Gentlemen drivers who normally run World Rally Cars in their native Holland, and finishing in ninth place was Mark Van Eldik in a Subaru Impreza S14.

No fewer than 20 World Rally Cars took part on this event, the greatest number for half a year, and those driving arrived in a miscellany of types including Ford, Subarus, Mitsubishi's and a Skoda. The event was also notable as the first time no fewer than four support championships (the S2000, Production Car and Juniors, together with the Pirelli Driver cars) were running on the same event.

Even though the rally stayed dry all the way, this was once again a mental battle-ground in choosing the correct tyres. Competitors on asphalt rounds in WRC events have on offer both hard and soft compound tyres, the latter to cater for rain, each supplied in sufficient quantities to suit. Soft tyres were soon chosen by teams for the dry stages, run in slightly cooler conditions in the mornings.

Cats play with mice, as teams placed stickers on the sides of the tyres they were fitting, hiding the tell-tale explanatory compound codes, hoping to deceive their rivals.

Rally Japan comes next in the WRC and the odds are looking strong for Citroën to continue their title winning ways, even though Japan is an event on which Ford finished 1-2- the last time it was run two years ago.

But two years is a long time in the endless development work of rally engineering, and in the rally car development race Citroën still seems to be pulling ahead.

In the Manufacturers' championship Citroën Total leads BP Ford with 308 points compared with 222, extending its lead over BP Ford to 86 points, exactly two-events worth of maximum points! Loeb extended his lead by a further 10 points in the Drivers' series, still ahead of Ogier in second place. Latvala remains the highest placed Ford driver in third and the only non-Citroën driver with a possible chance of the title, but 74 points behind. Following Hirvonen's non-points score leaves him 105 points adrift – he has lost his battle for the title this year.





Sebastien Loeb makes it eight in a row ...

WAS this the perfect weekend?

Yes, it really was a perfect weekend. I had a big battle with Dani (Sordo) at the start. He was pushing hard. I was not able to make a big difference, until the first long Panzerplatte stage, the first time where I could pull out some time on Dani.

After that stage I felt more comfortable but not truly safe. When you know that you have 58 kilometres to go again you cannot be sure of anything. There are lots of fast narrow parts, which require

precise driving. It is easy to hit something. I was concentrating until the end. I missed a junction on Friday, but that was all, it lost me a couple of seconds!

And what was the thing you liked the most about the rally?

Winning! In fact, it is nice for me because although I am French this rally is traditionally the closest to my home territory in Alsace, where the Rallye de France will be held later this year.



SWRC Sandell takes a close one

MAYBE the race for outright victory in SWRC in Germany was run at a measured pace but the battle for the lead in the Super 2000 championship category was anything but.

Fiesta driver Martin Prokop from Czech Republic held the lead for the first half of the event closely pursued by the Swedish Skoda drivers Per-Gunnar Andersson and Patrik Sandell. Running a slight distance behind in fourth place was Eyvind Brynildsen after a hectic few weeks following a change of team.

Andersson took the lead mid-way through Day 2 and at the end of the day only 5.8 seconds covered the top three drivers. On the first stage of Day 3 he broke a wheel rim, and had to



stop and change this so Sandell took the lead and scored his first win in the category this season ahead of the still pursuing Prokop who finished second.

Just before the finish Andersson recovered enough to pip Brynildsen to take third place.

Current championship leader Xevi Pons had a bad event, not helped by an ineffectual handbrake and limped home fifth. Michal Kosciuszko, whose Skoda had been updated into a wide bodied version, had an adventurous rally – which at one point involved crashing headlong into the vineyards.

Pons retains the lead in the SWRC series though both Andersson and Prokop have reduced his advantage while Sandell's result brings him up to fourth

■ Rule changes seem to come every rally. This time the series promoter North One Sport had decreed that the newly defined spectator-friendly layout plan in service park, in which cars entered their designated location from the rear of the service area and spectators could see work on the engine compartment, was bad. They ordered a return to the earlier system, in which cars entered from the front, showing spectators the rear of their cars. The original system was considered more commercially prosperous for the event organisers

■ VW could not let the occasion of the return of the FIA world rally championship to Germany go past without being seen to be present, even if basically this was in the form of the presentation of the 2011 Dakar team. In addition, however, VW engaged their Dakar experts Carlos Sainz and Nasser Al Attiyah to drive a special bio natural gas powered Scirocco R as a Safety Car, running in support to the official cars. The car had a 275 bhp one-make championship engine, the ride height was raised and an undershield was fitted, while tyres were supplied by Dunlop.

■ Rallying is running on autopilot. No plans have yet been made to run the Pirelli Star Driver scheme for 2011, and will not be until the whole WRC tyre situation for 2011 has been settled. Meanwhile plans are being made to select drivers who should be considered for the 2011 awards! A regional shoot-out was held in Sweden, the result of which Fredrik Ahlin and Craig Breen were told they would be sent through to the European shoot-out, if the 2011 scheme ever gets that far.

■ So far M-Sport has built 97 Focus World Rally Cars which includes two part-built in case of emergencies later in the WRC season. Although M-Sport states that the production line is not closed and won't be till the season is over but currently it seems the line-up will end at 97.

Mads Ostberg: learning from the great man

MADS Ostberg's private four year old Subaru finished seventh in Finland, and only a puncture denied him a sixth place position.

It was nevertheless a career-making result following an eighth place in Sweden and seventh in Portugal earlier in the year. But it was a result which raised more questions than answers for a driver whose career has been locked into the family Adapta company, which has had a long time allegiance to Subaru. With no sign of a new Subaru rally car, how should this 22 year old develop his career? It was therefore a ground breaking decision for the Ostberg family that Mads should drive a Ford Fiesta S2000 on Rallye Deutschland:

"I think there are a couple of reasons for that. One of them is that I definitely need more experience on tarmac as I don't have a lot of experience of them. I think maybe I have done five tarmac rallies – three small ones in Norway and the other two were Spain and Corsica in 2008, so really I have no experience on tarmac.

"It is also good to get this experience now in the S2000 which is the new car as for next year, the platform for the WRCar, and also a good way get to know another team. I have worked with Adapta for some years now and that is the only team I have been in. It is good to see what it is like to work with a big team like M-Sport."

Mads has tested a Peugeot – what did he think of their Super 2000?

"I really enjoyed driving the car. Both the Peugeot and this Ford are really good cars. They are easy to jump in to and find a good rhythm straightaway, because the balance, the set up, everything is very good.

"But driving Super 2000s is a little bit tricky because the power is much lower than I've been used to. You need to plan a bit more in your driving. For every corner you need to be on the right gear and have the right power. There is really no real torque in the car so it is very different power-wise, but the cars are really good to drive.

"When I did my test, Sebastien Loeb was there and he gave me a lot of good advice. I got to sit with him in the car, which is probably the best thing I could ever do. That



was a great experience. His driving style is very special and as you know he is unique. So probably it is only he that drives that way.

"For me he didn't feel very quick although I understand it is quick because I can see it on his times! Everything is just so stable, smooth and nice. There is really no drama. It feels like you are on a Sunday trip but really it is quick because of the lines he chooses, how he brakes into the corners, and the speed he carries through corners. Everything is just perfect. It was a great experience to see that."

Ostberg has very little rally experience outside Subaru:

"The first car I rallied was an Opel back in 2004 when I was 16. Then I did some rallies with the Volvo 740, the big limo rally car, when I was 17.

In 2006 I went straight in to the Subaru and I have been there ever since. So this is the first big rally I have done with a different car. My plan now is to do Rallye de France with the S2000 car but then Saaremaa Rally in Estonia and then Rally Wales in the Subaru."

And what to do in 2011?

"I think it was a really good plan to join the Ford team now and maybe we can continue working with them in the future." For 2011 Mads definitely wants to be in a WRC car and do the full WRC championship.

"That is our main ambition for now and I really hope we can do that."

In what make of car, is the question.



PWRC

Araujo maintains lead with win

COMPLETELY outclassed by the Super 2000 cars were the orthodox Group N cars, in which the very heavy Evo X of Armin Hohenberg was pursued relentlessly by the Evo X of guest driver Hermann Gassner.

Araujo led all the way but Paddon impressed, this being the first important asphalt event in his career.

Fifth place was Ott Tänak despite stopping on Day 1 with steering arm failure. Toshi Arai also stopped with gear selection problems on Day 1 as well.

Fortunes were mixed for the PSD crews. Peter Horsey stopped to help when a car caught fire in front of him, only to leave his helmet at the scene of the incident and had to stop for the rest of Day 1. He then

had a fire extinguisher empty itself inside his car and was stopped from carrying on, for the rest of Day 2! Alex Raschi stopped on the final day with transmission failure.

Fire became a major issue on the event. Three Mitsubishi Lancer Evos were destroyed by fire (Florian Niegel, Michel Jourdain and non-championship driver Jasper van den Heuvel). Vd Heuvel's car was damaged when it hit a concrete barrier at the flying finish line and exploded when a differential unit punctured the fuel tank. The driver and co-driver Martine Kolman were evacuated urgently to hospital suffering burns.

Araujo maintains his lead in the PCWRC still ahead of Flodin, Paddon and Arai, but Tänak has now risen to fifth, two PSD drivers now in the top five!



Junior WRC

Hans all the way

CITROEN C2 S1600 driver Hans Weijs had the easiest time of the event, eventually winning the JWRC category by over five minutes, helped when Dutch colleague Kevin Abbring crashed his Clio R3 on the opening stage, and then when Thierry Neuville stopped with engine problems at the end of Day 1, after a blade from the engine's plastic cooling fan became detached and damaged the radiator.

German driver Aaron Burkart, the championship leader, set high hopes of success but damaged his car badly after a puncture caused the

car to spin into a barrier. Eventually the misfortunes of others allowed him to climb back to finish second ahead of Karl Kruuda. Guest driver Christian Riedemann finished fourth over 20 minutes behind the winning Weijs.

The results have turned the JWRC championship standings around, Burkart's result enough to put him in the lead ahead of Kruuda by seven points, while Abbring dropped back to third now 12 points behind the leader. Weijs' win saw him rise from seventh to fourth ahead of the still fifth placed Slavov.





Sunday afternoon drive in the German countryside – Francois Duval gets some air ...