



F2'S DONINGTON DOUBLE ACT

THE HISTORIC FORMULA 2 CHAMPIONSHIP, RUN FROM THE UK BY THE HISTORIC SPORTS CAR CLUB, IS NOW FIRMLY ESTABLISHED AS ONE OF THE PREMIER HISTORIC SINGLE-SEATER CATEGORIES IN EUROPEAN HISTORIC RACING.

The double-header within the Donington Historic Festival marks the second of six race weekends for the F2 cars and one of only two British events. The superb calendar of double-header race meetings at classic European venues has attracted enthusiastic support from drivers from all over the world.

The championship is open to cars built to period regulations for Formula 2, Formula Atlantic and Formula B, starting from 1967 and running through to the end of the 1978 season. Later cars, designed to employ ground effect technology, are not permitted.

Right through the late 1960s and 1970s, Formula 2 was the absolute proving ground for drivers intent on making the step into Grand Prix racing. European Formula 2 champions of the era included Jean-Pierre Beltoise, Clay Regazzoni, Ronnie Peterson, Jacques Laffite and Bruno Giacomelli. Other drivers to make their mark in Formula 2 before moving into F1 included Jim Clark, Jochen Rindt, Graham Hill, Jackie Stewart, Niki Lauda, Jody Scheckter, Ricardo Patrese and Keke Rosberg.

The other legacy left by the success of Formula 2 through the 1970s is a fabulous diversity of cars, ranging from the classic wing-less designs of the late 1960s through to the highly efficient be-winged cars from a decade later. These cars are an absolute joy to drive and many experienced racers say that F2 cars are some of the most rewarding and enjoyable of all historic cars.

ON TRACK TODAY

A superb field of nearly 30 cars will line up this weekend and with as many as ten potential race winners, it really is wide open. The season started at Hockenheim in Germany two weeks ago, so there will be major form pointers to be drawn from those two races.

The out and out pace is likely to be set by half a dozen drivers including Cheshire racer Peter Meyrick, a regular winner in his ex-Toleman Group March 782. Meyrick is also racing his Spice Group C car this weekend, so he will be a busy man. As well as tending a gaggle of cars for customers, both Matthew Watts and Martin Stretton are proven F2 winners. Watts is back for a second full campaign in his ex-Norman Dickson March 772 after a clutch of race wins in 2010, while Stretton – the 2009 F2 champion – is back with his March 742 and hoping for a more straightforward start to the season. A year ago, brake problems resulted in a major crash at the season opener at Hockenheim.



Photo: Courtesy HSCC

Above: Matthew Watts, pictured here at Donington in 2010, is a race winner as well as the preparer of several cars at his Retro Track and Air business.



Above: Martin Stretton is always great value with his hard-charging style. His March 742 should be one of the quickest cars of all.

Photo: Paul Lawrence



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Richard Meins is a recent convert to Formula 2, having raced everything from a Mini Cooper to a Ford GT40 via a McLaren M23 Grand Prix car.

Set to be a big challenger for the podium is seasoned all-rounder Frank Sytner, who makes his Historic F2 debut after enjoying success in a spectacular array of historic racing cars. With nearly five decades of experience behind him, Sytner is very quick in anything he drives and the ex-Jean-Pierre Jarier March 782 last raced by Sean Walker is a potent weapon. Sytner, who established his garage business in Nottingham, is now a resident of Monte Carlo and will surely be very quickly onto the leading F2 pace.

Another massively experienced driver new to F2 is Ian Ashley, the former Grand Prix racer who has

been enjoying another chapter of his racing story on the historic scene of late. He's been a front-runner in Historic Formula Ford, but now steps up to F2 in the Formula Atlantic March 79B owned by his old friend Mike Smith. Like the other 1600cc Formula Atlantic cars, Ashley's March will be giving away a chunk of power to the 2-litre F2 cars, but he will still be chasing hard.

Back among the leading F2 cars is the March 762 of Hong Kong-based Richard Meins. Like Sytner, Stretton and Meyrick, Meins is another driver with bags of experience in DFV-powered Formula 1 cars. He's quickly getting to grips with his March, which is another car tended by Stretton's Worcestershire-based team. From the same >>



Hans Peter is one of the leading contenders from mainland Europe. His Ralt RT1 is one of at least three such cars on the grid.

Photo: Paul Lawrence