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SUSPENSION

# Australia's Number 1

## Shock Absorber, Steering and Suspension Specialists



### Neil's Corner



So many topics and so little space!!! We're on the eve of an all new and exciting motor racing season.

In V8 Supercars and Formula One, there's a huge amount of news to rake through.

The cars and equipment attached to the V8 Supercars Championship Series are all about to get bundled into the bellies of 2 Boeing 747 freighters to kick-start the Championship in the Middle East.

It's a great honour for the series, for Australian motorsport and our nation to be invited to "perform" in Abu Dhabi and Bahrain. It's a tribute to the quality of our entire show, Teams, cars and drivers.

Getting the series to the Middle East is a multi-million dollar exercise and when it comes to choice - the world is brimming with alternative series to ours, so the fact that we've been given the nod is pretty cool.

The first 4 races of the year will be held offshore across both venues then our domestic act starts at the Clipsal 500 in Adelaide. Now where do I start when it comes to changes and news?

The Yas Marina complex in Abu Dhabi is beyond a state-of-the-art motor racing facility. It's truly amazing and worth trawling around online for a closer look. Or better still. Go there...

Of the 29 entries in the field, I make it at least 20 significant changes. Meaning, something big has changed with the team, driver, car brand, sponsor, staff etc.

The big ticket item is the switch from Ford to Holden for Team Vodafone. That's got lots of

people wondering and there's heaps of other real points of interest too.

Initial testing at Winton in Victoria and Queensland Raceway near Ipswich threw up a few surprises.

Jason Bargwanna, driving the Rock Racing Holden for Kelly Racing, was fastest in Victoria and Shane Van Gisbergen, driving for Stone Brothers and SP Tools was the pin-up boy at QR. Reigning Fujitsu Development Series Champion Jonathon Webb also impressed in the Dick Johnson Racing Ford.

Technically, there's been some positive changes over Christmas. A fuel tank capacity reduction (from 120- to 80 litres) for the Sprint races will add an interesting strategy element.

There's also been some smart tweaks to the way we use the Sprint Tyre.

The Saturday Qualifying has also been tuned up to make it a better show for fans.

In other great news the Gold Coast event is confirmed and back on the radar. The SuperCarnivale will now represent a totally re-invigorated event on the Coast. The track will be changed and adding a real twist of spice is the invitation for a bunch of international mega-stars to join the game for one weekend. Drivers like Scott Pruett, Christian Fittipaldi and David Brabham are already confirmed.

Clearly as the V8 season unfolds there's going to be plenty of exciting stuff to discuss so stay tuned and once again Pedders is very much a part of the show.

In Formula One, one very special name is back, and it's a game changer. Michael Schumacher!

Since the last column, reigning World Champion Jenson Button has shifted to McLaren and his team mate Rubens Barrichello has joined Williams leaving two seat at Brawn GP.

However Brawn GP, (formerly Honda), is now Mercedes Grand Prix. You following me? How quickly things change in this game. And now those seats have gone to Nico Rosberg and 7 time World Champion Michael Schumacher. There's a whole column to do on Michael alone...

We all love the idea of Schuey back in a car, and I'm sure he will do very well. His presence has ignited series interest again in the face of a bunch of car makers all packing up and fleeing the sport! I just hope he doesn't undo any of the amazing work he's done since 1991? We're about to see.

The team mate match-ups are awesome. Fernando Alonso (Dual World Champ) v Felipe Massa (Back from injury) at Ferrari. Lewis Hamilton (Former World Champ) v Jenson Button (World Champ) at McLaren. Michael Schumacher (7 time World Champ) v Nico Rosberg (Son of World Champ) at Mercedes. Mark Webber (Grand Prix winner) v Sebastian Vettel (R/up last year) at Red Bull.

The cars also feature narrower front tyres, a weight increase and a ban on refuelling.

All this also adds up to some long, red-eyed nights staring at the box.

Early thoughts - get set for some sparkle from Alonso and Hamilton could rattle Button...



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