

JAGUAR RACING CARS

A MONTHLY SERIES - Part 16

By Neville Barlow

Formula E

Jean Todt, the President of the World governing body of Motorsport (FIA) conceived the idea of a city based, single-seater electric car motor racing championship. He presented his idea to two politicians, Alejandro Agag and Antonio Tajani and the Italian actor Teo Teocoli. Agag took the job of negotiating television contracts, sponsorships and marketing. What an unusual group of men to go motor racing!



Jean Todt and partners

The very first Formula E Championship consisted of twelve teams, each with two drivers. The cars were of course electric with some small resemblance to Formula One cars. Races generally took place on small temporary city centre circuits from 1.9ks up to 3.4ks in length.

For the first four seasons every team was supplied with a car built by Spark Racing Technology. The chassis was designed by Dallara, a battery system produced by Williams Advanced Engineering and Hewland produced the five-speed gearbox. Michelin was the official tyre supplier. For the first season 42 electric cars were available, 4 for each team and 2 spares. They had a top speed of 225km/h (140mph). In the first season all teams used an electric motor developed by McLaren. From the second season all teams could build their own electric motors, inverters, gearbox, and cooling systems, however the batteries and chassis stayed the same. For the first four seasons the drivers had to make a mandatory pit-stop to change cars because the batteries could not last the length of a full race. This caused absolute chaos! With the introduction of the Generation 2 car in the 2018 / 2019 season the new batteries lasted longer, thus avoiding a mid- race pit-stop.

The power of this new car was increased to 250kw, and the top speed increased to 280kp/h (170mph). Also, a new halo, a 'T' shaped safety cage, to protect the drivers was introduced.

In the 2020 /2021 season, for the ninth Formula E season, power went up to 300kws and regeneration was allowed. Spark Technology again built the chassis and supplied the front axle, Williams Advanced Engineering the batteries but Hankook the tyres. Again, all the cars were to be realistically the same.

All race days start with two free practice sessions. Qualifying takes place later in the day and lasts about an hour. The drivers are grouped into four groups of six and have six minutes to set their best lap. A one lap shoot-out for the top ten determines the grid placings for each race. In the 2020 /2021 season most race events sponsored 2-point scoring races.



The races themselves are set for 45 minutes plus 1 lap. Since all-weather tyres are designed to last the whole race, pit-stops are usually not required. The cars all start off the grid, but if a few drops of rain fall on the track, it is usually deemed too risky, and the race is Red flagged! How different from Formula One!

The race calendar for the 2020 /2021 season was to have races at the cities of Beijing, Putrajaya (Malaysia), Punta del Este (Uruguay), Buenos Aires, Long Beach, Miami, Monte Carlo, Moscow, London and Berlin. Covid had a big say in the eventual calendar and races took place in Diriyah, (Saudi Arabia), Rome, Valencia (Spain), Mexico, New York, London and Berlin.

The very first Formula E Prix was held at Beijing on 13th September 2014. The series was won by Nelson Piquet Jr. by a single point.

The second season started in October 2015. It consisted of 10 races in 9 Cities and was won by Sebastien Buemi by only 2 points. Jaguar did not start in these two seasons.

On 19th August 2016 Jaguar announced that they would contest the 2016 /2017 season with a car which had a power train developed by Jaguar. Drivers were to be Adam Carroll, the A1 GP Champion and New Zealander Mitch Evans. Panasonic was named as the team's main sponsor. The Jaguar team finished 10th in the Constructors Championship with the best finishes being 4th and 8th, meaning both cars scored points, at the 2017 Mexico ePrix. Carroll finished all 12 races.

In the 2017 /2018 season the Jaguar team had new sponsors GKN and Viessmann. Drivers were Nelson Piquet Jr, who won the inaugural E Championship and Mitch Evans was retained as the second driver. At the season's first event in Hong Kong, the Jaguars scored points in both races, with Evans's 3rd being their first podium. At Zurich ePrix Evans claimed the team's first pole position. Jaguar finished 6th in the Team's Championship.

Evans and Piquet were retained for the 2018 /2019 season. In March Piquet left the team after a run of poor performances and was replaced by Alex Lynn. Evans won in Rome giving Jaguar its first win. Lynn finished 12th. In a rain-soaked Paris ePrix both cars were involved crashes. They obviously did not adhere to the rain restrictions. In Monaco both cars recorded points, the first time in that year. Evans picked up podium finishes in both races at the Swiss ePrix which elevated him to 3rd place in the Driver's Championship at that time.

Despite improved form in the second part of the season Jaguar could only finish 7th in the Teams Championship however Evans was 5th in the Driver's Championship with 105 points. He was the only driver to finish all the races.

Jaguar again announced Evans and Lynn as their drivers for the 2019 /2020 season. Jaguar formally confirmed Evans as the number one driver and signed him to a multi- year contract. On the same day they unveiled their new car, the I-Type 4, along with Castrol as the main sponsor after not using them for the past thirty years. At the Mexico City ePrix Evans gave Jaguar their second Formula E win. He was fastest qualifier. Using drivers James Calado, Tom Blomqvist and Chadwick, the season ended up rather disappointing, which meant Jaguar scored only 81 points in the Teams Championship and finished 7th again.

In July 2020 Jaguar announced Sam Bird would join Mitch Evans for the 2020 /2021 season. In October Jaguar unveiled another new car which was labelled I-Type 5 and the team now being called Jaguar Racing, quietly splitting from sponsor Panasonic. At the Diriyah (Saudi Arabia) ePrix Evans finished 3rd and Bird retired after a crash. In the next race Bird won his first race for Jaguar. The race was red flagged as ex Jaguar driver Alex Lynn crashed into Evans. This meant no points for Evans.



Jaguar Formula E Car

After this, Jaguar moved into the lead in the Teams Championship. However, at Valencia they failed to score a single point.

FIA President Jean Todt wanted more Formula E coverage in the media, but inadvertently got his way when the Valencia (Spain) ePrix proved farcical. Despite attempts to spin the race as teams failing to get their sums right, Formula E and the governing body cannot escape blame. The facts were that 11 cars slowed to a walking pace in the ePrix when they ran out of useable energy.



Jaguar I Type 4 Formula E Race Car

In the second race at Valencia Mitch Evans finished on the podium again, with a 3rd and Sam Bird added to Jaguars points with a 7th place finish.

At Mexico in race 8 Evans was 8th but Bird was involved in another crash. In race 9 Evans was 9th but bird finished outside the points.

New York was the venue for rounds 10 and 11.

If Jaguar wanted to have a crack at the Team's title, they needed to score big points here. Evans was hit again and had to retire in race 10 and Bird started 20th but earned points by finishing 9th. Race 11 was dominated by the Jaguars. Bird qualified first, won the shoot out and pole position. Evans started 2nd. Bird lead all the way with Evans either 2nd or 3rd but on the last lap he hit the wall and damaged his car and eventually finished 13th. With only 4 races left Evans was 4th in the Driver's Championship and Bird was 6th. This made Jaguar 2nd in the Constructors Championship, 4 points behind the Mercedes team.

London on the next venue and was not a happy time for either driver. In race 12 Evans was 14th and Bird retired. Race 13 brought a 3rd for Evans but Bird's car just stopped.

So, it was on to the last races in Berlin. Both drivers scored points in race 14. Evans came in 3rd and Bird 7th. However, in the last race of the year Evans was hit from behind on the grid and was out before he ever started. Bird collected some points with a 7th finish. Jaguar did finish 2nd in the Constructors Championship. Evans was 4th in the Driver's championship and Bird was 6th.



Mitch Evans & Sam Bird

The 2020 /2021 Formula E series was by far Jaguar's best by a long way. Had it not been for Evans' unforeseen collision in the last race of the season he may well have been champion driver and Jaguar would have won the Constructors Championship.



Mitch Evans

I am not a Formula E supporter. To me fragile cars making little audio response to excite the senses and crashing into each other on numerous occasions leaves me very uninterested. All most every race had at least 3 safety car events and many DNFs. In the last race along with the safety cars, in the last lap, there were at least 5 cars involved in smashing together. I guess the

venues they race on do not help by being city streets, very bumpy and narrow.

The speeds possible are not spectacular and even with regeneration now available little seems to have changed. However, Jaguar made a great fist of it this year. As they are determined to go down the electric way with all their cars in the future, that must be pleasing to them.

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