

JAMES ROBERTS

Bray accumulated quite some collection of silverware during 2025



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Despite his dominance in the points, Bray (r) didn't have things all his own way



THE UNDEFEATED CLUB RACING KING

Mazda MX-5 series are renowned for being close, but Ali Bray was unstoppable last year to comfortably finish atop the Ryan Motorsport Insurance Autosport National Rankings

STEPHEN LICKORISH

TABLE COMPILED BY **MARCUS SIMMONS**

Think of dominant motorsport champions in recent times and plenty of examples come to mind. It could be Max Verstappen blasting to the 2023 Formula 1 crown having won 19 of the 22 races. Or Ash Sutton matching the record number of British Touring Car Championship wins in a season also en route to success that year.

However, those achievements are dwarfed by Ali Bray's unbeaten campaign in the British Racing & Sports Car Club's Mazda MX-5 Championship during 2025 when he won all 23 contests. That is a remarkable result in itself, but especially when considering how close the category for Mk1 models of the sportscar usually is. And that consistency is even more impressive if you take into account it was Bray's first full season for nearly a decade.

This run of success also meant Bray breezed to top spot in the Ryan Motorsport Insurance Autosport National Rankings. Autosport's winners' table treats every car racing victory in the UK or Ireland equally, so Lando Norris's British Grand Prix triumph carries no extra weight to Giles Kirk's Saloon Car glory at Mallory Park on Boxing Day in a SEAT Leon. Bray ended up five wins clear of the opposition in the final table (see p132) – which he describes as an added "bonus".

Bray pinpoints two people as playing a key role in enabling such a dominant campaign to be possible. The first is his wife Niki and the second is Paul Austin, boss of the NHA Motorsport MX-5 squad. "I've always done the odd race here and there and I've been in the cars a lot," explains 32-year-old Bray. "I won the championship over the years running other people and then Niki said, 'You're getting on a bit, are you going to race a Mazda or not?' I've done it backwards to how Brian Chandler, Ben Short and Tom Roche have – they used to race themselves and then got customers by winning the championship. This year a few people knew a bit of my racing background, but a lot thought I was just a mechanic!"

The racing background Bray refers to includes a spell in club-level karting, having grown up around motorsport. His father, Neil, used to compete on short

> *"A few people knew a bit of my racing background, but a lot thought I was just a mechanic!"*

ovals and even enjoyed Classic Touring Car Racing Club success at the wheel of a Ford Capri and Fiesta, despite losing his right arm in a crash at Ipswich in the 1980s. With his dad also running a garage, Bray Jr had been tinkering around cars from a very young age and it was no surprise that he turned his hand to being a mechanic, working for several MX-5 squads.

"I joined a few teams and was just getting frustrated with how some people ran their outfits," Bray recalls. "I had a phone call the week after I left a certain team and it was a couple of customers and they were like, 'You've left? We're running in the team because of you.' That »



Bray's previous full season came in the MX-5 Cup in 2017

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was very flattering, and they basically said, 'Could you still run our cars?' I ended up running a couple of MX-5s out of the back of the house and built a car for myself because that was always the end goal. But it got round to January, and I couldn't afford to go racing so I turned it into a hire car.

"I was very good friends with Ben Tuck [World Endurance Championship LMGT3 racer] from karting and I rang him up and he was just about making the step from karting to cars. We came up with an agreement. I knew he was very quick, and the following year, when Ben started to win races, that's what kicked it all off.



The MX-5 star grew up around cars, with his dad being a CTCRC champion

STEVE JONES

At the end of that year, the phone rang and a lot of guys wanted me to run their cars. We needed to get a proper workshop and that's how AB Motorsport started."

Multiple MX-5 titles followed, and Bray did finally get to scratch the competition itch himself with a campaign in the 750 Motor Club's MX-5 Cup in 2017. Even though he finished runner-up, he was left wanting more. "It was very much on a wing and a prayer," Bray remembers. "I got loaned one of my customer's cars. It was nice to be out, but it was never the season I had in mind."

After that experience, he was determined to leave no stone unturned for his 2025 attempt. "This is my first season of racing where I've had my own car and given it a real, proper stab," states Bray. "When the wife said I could do the season, we had a good shell out the back. The main reason for building a car was to try and up the standards of the championship and come up with my ideas of building things tidier. We went to work and it was so over the top! It was a full restoration and a lot of it wasn't necessary. The car was incredible but still had the normal AB Motorsport running gear on it."

Even with his new steed, Bray certainly was not expecting to end the year unbeaten. "We knew we would win races with the knowledge we've got of the cars and the support I've got around me," he says. "I had an inkling we would have a good shot at the championship. But to maintain that sort of momentum, not get lax and do the clean sweep was beyond my expectations. Especially considering the car at the beginning of December didn't have a single nut or »

bolt on it. To build it up and not have any mechanical failures all year is testament to the team and the car."

Bray admits to finding it difficult to pick out specific favourite wins from the 23, but says "crossing the line at Donington Park six hundredths of a second in the lead is far more enjoyable than winning at Cadwell Park by 12 seconds". "I dropped down to sixth or seventh with two laps to go in Donington race two and to blast back through in those last few laps was incredible," he continues. "We really had to fight for it and that's what I live for.

"We took it very seriously as a team but, at the same time, it was the most enjoyable experience of my life. My wife was always there, and the kids came to a lot. It's hard to put into words, it was like a bit of a dream."

Bray feels his in-depth understanding of the MX-5 was key to realising that dream. His mechanical knowledge meant that, when he went out in Friday testing, he instantly knew the tweaks that were needed to the car, while it took rivals far longer to get up to speed. "I also don't like finishing second!" he adds. "People tell me about the achievement and it's never been done before. To me it's just I got to race for a year."

And Bray relished being part of a competitive MX-5 field. "Bang for buck, the racing is far better than anything else," he says when asked what has kept him around Mazdas for so long. "Just because of the value, the access and also the people in that championship really do make it. There's so much talent there and they're in the same boat as me – they haven't got hundreds of thousands of pounds to chase a dream. The raw talent on the grid is incredible. Adam Sparrow [two-time runner-up] was always going to be at the front and Steve Foden was coming back as a previous champion. Tom Walker was phenomenal at places in his rookie year and Neil Chisnall came on leaps and bounds."

However, none of them were ultimately able to stop Bray's metronomic mastery as he swept to the title. Although he currently has no plans to defend his

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crown, he certainly does not want it to be the end of his competition story. "I want to race something, I really don't care what it is," he concludes. "It does just boil down to the financials. Last year was always going to be a one-off in Mazdas to tick the box. I would love to do some historic stuff – I'm a massive Ford fan and I love Escorts and Cortinas. This year I will go back to the tools and we're looking at doing more Fun Cup as a team."

Whatever the future holds, this will always be remembered as a remarkable campaign as Bray scored the most wins in a year since Autosport revived the Rankings in 2020. Not a bad achievement for a driver some dismissed as 'just a mechanic'!

P132 FULL TOP 100 LEADERBOARD



Smyth's late-season charge netted him second in the table

GARY HAWKINS

HOW BRAY TOPPED THE RANKINGS

Considering how Ali Bray ended the year undefeated, it is not a surprise that he also topped the Ryan Motorsport Insurance Autosport National Rankings. Bray assumed control at the head of the leaderboard in mid-May and was never displaced from there on. For a couple of weeks in October, his lead over the rest was a gargantuan eight victories, before Jason Smyth's end-of-season Formula Ford success left the final margin at five.

The only other driver to occupy first place last year was Steve Gambrell. The Porsche 911 GT3 Cup racer enjoyed a very strong couple of events to begin the campaign as he competed across multiple categories. But he soon slid down the table and ultimately ended up 77th with seven wins.

While Bray dominated, a host of other drivers had spells as his closest competitor. Ginetta Junior champion Rocco Coronel assumed second from Gambrell in May, while Radical Cup UK conqueror Marcus Littlewood and Pre-'66 Touring Car star James Ibbotson also had stints in second.

But for three months it was Monoposto master George Line who held the place, until he slipped back to third in the final table after not electing to contest the autumnal Tiedeman Trophy competition. Had he continued his domination into that, he would have been right with Bray's tally by the end of the year. Instead, he dropped to third behind Smyth, who also missed out on a couple of potential wins when the September Kirkistown FF1600 event was rained off.



Gambrell was the only other driver to head the leaderboard in 2025

MICK WALKER

POS	DRIVER (CAR)	OVERALL WINS	CLASS WINS	TOTAL WINS
1	**Ali Bray** (Mazda MX-5 Mk1)	23	0	23
2	**Jason Smyth** (Van Diemen RF00/JL12)	18	0	18
3	**George Line** (Dallara F308)	15	0	15
4	**Aidan Hills** (Mazda MX-5 Mk3)	15	0	15
5	**Mark Smith** (McLaren 720S GT3)	15	0	15
6	**Simon Allaway** (Lotus Esprit V8)	14	0	14
7	**Jonathan Moore** (Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport)	0	14	14
8	**Matthew Highcock** (BMW 120i/BMW 116i)	13	0	13
9	**Marcus Littlewood** (Radical SR3 XXR)	13	0	13
10	**Callum Grant** (Merlyn Mk5/7/Van Diemen RF91/Merlyn Mk20A)	9	4	13
11	**Tyler Read** (Legends Ford Coupe)	12	0	12
12	**Paul Sibley** (MG Midget)	12	0	12
13	**Dan Thackeray** (Honda Civic EP3)	0	12	12
14	**Shane Stoney** (Radical PR6/Radical SR3 XXR)	11	0	11
15	**Steve Dickens** (Mallock U2 Mk29)	11	0	11
16	**Ross Wilkinson** (Mini Cooper S)	11	0	11
17	**Jack Robinson** (Jaguar XK8)	10	1	11
18	**Michael Cullen** (Raw Stryker/Lotus Cortina/Austin Mini)	9	2	11
19	**John Spiers** (Shelby Cobra 260/McLaren M1B/March 761/TVR Griffith/ Lotus Cortina/Ford Capri/Lister Knobbly/Ford Mustang)	7	4	11
20	**Hugh Simpson** (MG Midget)	0	11	11
21	**Ben Mason** (Legends Sedan)	10	0	10
22	**Ryan McLeish** (Legends Coupe)	10	0	10
23	**Matt Luff** (Audi TT 2.0 TFSI)	10	0	10
24	**Wilf Butler** (Citroen Saxo VTS)	10	0	10
25	**Adam Shepherd** (Cupra Leon VZ TCR/Honda Integra DC5/ Cupra Leon Competicion TCR)	10	0	10
26	**Craig Ewing** (Mazda MX-5 Mk1)	10	0	10
27	**Jonathan Corker** (Datsun 510)	8	2	10
28	**Oli Willmott** (Mini Cooper S)	8	2	10
29	**Niall Bradley** (BMW M3 E46)	7	3	10
30	**Connor Kay** (Lotus Elan 26R/MG Midget/TVR Tuscan)	6	4	10
31	**Ian Bower** (BMW M3)	5	5	10
32	**Aidan Mulready** (Ford Fiesta Zetec)	4	6	10
33	**Fraser Fenwick** (Lamborghini Super Trofeo)	1	9	10
34	**James Ibbotson** (Hillman Imp Super)	0	10	10
35	**Toby Broome** (Alfa Romeo 147 GTA)	0	10	10
36	**Ben Short** (Mazda MX-5 Mk1)	9	0	9
37	**Matty Cobb** (Volkswagen Beetle)	9	0	9
38	**Rocco Coronel** (Ginetta G40 Junior Evo)	9	0	9
39	**Fred Green** (Ginetta G40 Junior Evo)	9	0	9

POS	DRIVER (CAR)	OVERALL WINS	CLASS WINS	TOTAL WINS
40	**Matt Harbot** (AHS Dominator)	9	0	9
41	**Matthew Armstrong** (Caterham 7 420R)	9	0	9
42	**James Nicholas** (Ginetta G56 GTA)	9	0	9
43	**Simon Hill** (Volkswagen Golf GTI Mk5)	9	0	9
44	**Taylor O'Flanagan** (Caterham 7 310R)	9	0	9
45	**Gerry Hendry** (Ford Fiesta ST)	9	0	9
46	**Jack Wright** (Ford Ka/Volkswagen Golf/ Porsche 944 S2/Citroen Saxo VTS)	8	1	9
47	**Matthew Haughton** (Jedi Mk7)	8	1	9
48	**Max Watt** (Porsche Boxster S 3.2)	6	3	9
49	**Adrian Russell** (Condor S2)	3	6	9



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POS	DRIVER (CAR)	OVERALL WINS	CLASS WINS	TOTAL WINS
50	**Tyler England** (Ford Fiesta Mk4)	2	7	9
51	**Jack Ashton** (Rover Metro 100)	0	9	9
52	**Mark White** (Honda Civic Type R)	8	0	8
53	**Jake McAleer** (Porsche 997)	8	0	8
54=	**Tom Bradshaw** (Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 RS Clubsport/McLaren MP4/1)	8	0	8
54=	**Tom Ingram** (Hyundai i30 N Fastback/Jaguar E-type FHC)	8	0	8
56	**Jordan Harrison** (Lola T540E)	8	0	8
57=	**Alastair Kellett** (Ford Fiesta ST240)	8	0	8
57=	**Leo Richardson** (Mini Cooper)	8	0	8
59	**Steve Dance** (Ford Capri RS3100)	8	0	8



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All car races in UK and Ireland are included except qualification/repechage, consolation and handicap races. No races in other countries. Class wins are only counted when there are at least six starters in the class, except: when the race is part of a multi-stage event where six or more have taken part in earlier heats that feed into a semi-final or final; when multiple championships are merged in the same race, the 'overall' winner from the slower championship can count a class win as long as that championship has at least 10 starters across all classes. Only classes divided by car characteristics are included, not those divided by driver characteristics such as ability, professional status, age, experience (for example rookie or pro-am classes). Each race counts only once, so an overall winner's class win is not added. Where there is a tie, overall wins take precedence. Where there is still a tie, average grid size for a driver's wins determines the order.

POS	DRIVER (CAR)	OVERALL WINS	CLASS WINS	TOTAL WINS
60=	**Jack Harding** (Mazda MX-5 Mk3)	8	0	8
60=	**Gilbert Yates** (Ferrari 296 Challenge)	8	0	8
62	**Ronan Doherty** (Van Diemen RF00/Sheane FV94)	8	0	8
63	**Cian Walsh** (Honda Civic Type R EP3)	8	0	8
64=	**Will Blackwell-Chambers** (Mazda MX-5 Mk3)	8	0	8
64=	**Scott Jackson** (Legends Coupe)	8	0	8
66	**Mark Johnston** (Renault Clio)	7	1	8
67	**Peter Keen** (BMW 116i)	3	5	8
68	**Gordon Macmillan** (BMW Compact)	3	5	8
69	**Graham Crowhurst** (BMW M3 E46)	2	6	8
70	**Piers Grange** (Ford Escort/Ford Mustang)	2	6	8
71	**Ali Topley** (Ford Focus Cup Zetec S)	0	8	8
72	**Daniel Kell** (Ford Sierra Cosworth 4x4)	0	8	8
73	**Archie Johnson** (Mini F56)	0	8	8
74	**Ollie Reuben** (TVR Griffith)	7	0	7
75	**Daniel Garrett** (Locost 7)	7	0	7
76	**Shaun Traynor** (Toyota MR2 Roadster)	7	0	7
77	**Steve Gambrell** (Porsche 911 GT3 Cup)	7	0	7
78	**Ben Wheatley** (Caterham 7 270R)	7	0	7
79	**Paul Goldstein** (Caterham 7 310R/Caterham 7 Sigma 150)	7	0	7
80	**Dave Cockell** (Ford Escort Cosworth)	7	0	7
81	**Liam McGill** (Honda Civic Type R EP3)	7	0	7
82	**Will Self** (Honda Civic)	7	0	7
83	**Alex Sidwell** (Holden Commodore VF)	7	0	7
84	**Will Gibson** (Legends Ford Coupe)	7	0	7
85	**Louis Darling** (Caterham 7 270R)	7	0	7
86	**Nathan Williams** (Hyundai Coupe)	7	0	7
87	**Harry Senior** (Caterham 7 420R)	7	0	7
88	**Rory Smith** (Medina Sport JL18/Ralt RT4)	7	0	7
89	**David Maguire** (Ford Fiesta ST/SEAT Leon Supercopa)	7	0	7
90=	**Andy Hiley** (Chronos HR1S)	7	0	7
90=	**Josh Selvadorai** (Citroen Saxo VTS)	7	0	7
92	**Luke Cooper** (Swift SC20)	7	0	7
93	**Paul Cook** (BMW E46 M3)	6	1	7
94	**Dan Clowes** (Mittell MC-53/Jedi Mk6)	6	1	7
95	**Ray Harris** (Ginetta G40)	6	1	7
96	**Tom Hawkins** (Swift SC95)	6	1	7
97	**George Wright** (Ford Ka/Volkswagen Golf/Citroen Saxo VTS)	5	2	7
98	**Aaron Smith** (Mini Miglia/Austin Mini Cooper S)	5	2	7
99	**David Reid** (HRD Mk2)	5	2	7
100	**Nigel Greensall** (McLaren M1B/Lotus Cortina/Ford Capri/Shelby Cobra 260/Lister Knobbly/Ford Mustang)	5	2	7

THE 2025 CLUB RACING CHAMPIONS

From drivers triumphing in a humble Toyota Aygo, to those achieving success in a more flamboyant Ferrari 296, and everything in between. Here's your list of last year's title winners

COMPILED BY STEPHEN LICKORISH

750 MOTOR CLUB

116 Sprint Trophy
Peter Keen

750 Formula Championship
Bill Cowley (Cowley Mk4)

Armed Forces Race Challenge
Mark White (Honda Civic)

BMW Car Club Racing Championship
Ben Pearson (M235i)

Classic Stock Hatch Championship
James Haslehurst (Peugeot 205 GTI)

Clio Sport Championship
Jack Kingsbury (197)

Club Enduro Championship
Oliver Harris/Joel Oswick/Jack Collins (BMW E36)

F1000 Championship
Matthew Higginson

Formula Vee Championship
Matt Harbot (AHS Dominator)

Hot Hatch Championship
Gordon Macmillan (BMW Compact)

Locost Championship
Daniel Garrett

Ma7da Championship
Martin West

Mighty Minis Championship
Olly Samways

MX-5 Cup
Oak Richardson

Radical Club Challenge
Gordie Mutch (SR1)

Roadsports Championship
Matt Creed (Renault Clio)

Sports 1000 Championship
Dan Clowes (Mittell MC-53)

Sport Specials Championship
Neil Turner (Caterham Seven)

Swift Sport Challenge
Adam Blair

Toyota MR2 Championship
Shaun Traynor (Roadster)

Type R Trophy
Trafford King

BRITISH AUTOMOBILE RACING CLUB

2CVs
Nick Crispin

Britcar Endurance Championship
Dom Malone/Adam Smalley/Charles Rainford (Porsche 911 GT3 Cup)

British F4 Championship
Fionn McLaughlin

British Touring Car Championship
Tom Ingram (Hyundai i30 N Fastback)

British Truck Racing Championship
Division 1
Ryan Smith (Daimler Freightliner)

Caterham Academy
Max Richardson

Caterham Graduates
Sigma 135 Tom McEwing
Sigma 150 Paul Goldstein

Caterham Roadsport Championship
William Harris

Caterham Seven 270R Championship
Ben Wheatley

Caterham Seven 310R Championship
Taylor O'Flanagan

Caterham Seven UK Championship
Matt Armstrong

Civic Cup
Liam McGill

CNC Heads Sports/Saloon Championship
Simon Allaway (Lotus Esprit)

Junior Saloon Car Championship
Oliver Kerr

MG Owners' Club Championship
Jim Baynam (MGB)

Mini Challenge JCW
Tom Ovenden

Mini Challenge Trophy
Alex Keens

Porsche Carrera Cup GB
Andrew Rackstraw

Porsche Sprint Challenge GB
Tom Bradshaw

TCR UK
Adam Shepherd (Cupra Leon VZ)

BRITISH RACING & SPORTS CAR CLUB

Audi TT Cup Racing
Matt Luff

BMW Supercup
1 Series Millie Hart
Compact Cup Connor Grady

British GT GT3
Kiern Jewiss/Charles Dawson (Mercedes-AMG GT3)

British GT GT4
Jack Brown/Marc Warren (McLaren Artura)

CityCar Cup Championship
Ben Spencer (Toyota Aygo)

Cockshoot Cup
Keith Egar (MG Midget)

Fiesta ST150 Challenge
Dillon Davis

Fiesta ST240 Championship
Alastair Kellett



Harbot again proved to be the Formula Vee dominator



Porsche crew topped the table in revamped Britcar

RICHARD STYLES; OLLIE READ

Fiesta Junior Championship
Isaac Doble

Fun Cup
Team Olympian (Chris Dovell/ Riley Phillips/Simon Rudd)

Ginetta GT Academy
James Nicholas

Ginetta GT Championship
Archie Clark

Ginetta Junior
Rocco Coronel

Mazda MX-5 Championship
Ali Bray

Mazda MX-5 Clubman Championship
Jordan Pimley

Mazda MX-5 Supercup
Pro Will Blackwell-Chambers
Clubman Sam Middleton

MG Metro Cup
Jack Ashton

Super Classic Pre-'99 FF1600 Championship
A Tom Hawkins (Swift SC95)
B Christopher Stones (Van Diemen RF88)

Supersport Endurance Cup
David Drinkwater/Adam Read (BMW Compact)

CASTLE COMBE RACING CLUB

Castle Combe FF1600 Championship
Luke Cooper (Swift SC20)

Castle Combe GT Championship
Dylan Popovic (Ginetta G50)

Castle Combe Hot Hatch Championship
Sam Williams (Honda Civic)

Castle Combe Saloon Car Championship
Michael Good (Vauxhall Corsa)

CLASSIC SPORTS CAR CLUB

Jaguar Championship
Jack Robinson (XK8)

Midget & Sprite Challenge
Hugh Simpson (MG Midget)

Ramair BMW Championship
Graham Crowhurst (M3 E46)

CLASSIC TOURING CAR RACING CLUB

Blue Oval Saloon Series
Tim Mizen (Fiesta Mk3.5 Zetec)

Classic Thunder Championship
Ian Bower (BMW M3 E36)

Pre-'66 Touring Car Championship
James Ibbotson (Hillman Imp Super)

Pre-'83 Group 1 Touring Car Championship
Jonathan Corker (Datsun 510)

Pre-'93 Touring Car Championship
Ian Bower (BMW M3 E36)

Pre-'03 Touring Car Championship
Dave Cave (BMW 328 E36)

Super Tourers
Roger Stanford (Vauxhall Astra Sport Hatch)

HISTORIC SPORTS CAR CLUB

70s Road Sports Championship
Simon Baines (Porsche 924)

Alfa Romeo & Italian Intermarque Championship
Toby Broome (Alfa Romeo 147 GTA)

Classic FF1600 Championship
Jordan Harrison (Lola T540E)

Guards Trophy
Andrew Hibberd (Lotus 23B)

Historic Formula 3 Championship
Peter de la Roche (Alexis Mk17)

Historic FF1600 Championship
Sam Mitchell (Merlyn Mk20)

Historic FF2000 Championship
Graham Fennymore (Reynard SF81)

Historic Road Sports Championship
Mark Godfrey (Lotus Seven)

IRELAND

BOSS Formula Libre Ireland
Darragh Daly (Dallara World Series Formula Renault 3.5)

Irish Fiesta ST Championship
David Maguire

Irish Fiesta Zetec Championship
Sean McGovern

Irish Formula Sheane
Richard Kearney

Irish Formula Vee Championship
Gavin Buckley (Sheane Vee)

Irish Super Future Classics
Mark Johnston (Renault Clio)

Irish Historic Racing Cars
Gareth Thompson (Ginetta G10)

Irish Junior Mini Challenge
Leo Richardson

Irish Legends Cars
Scott Jackson

Irish Stryker Sportscar Championship
Kevin McGrath

Irish Touring Car Championship
Cian Walsh (Honda Civic Type R EP3)

SEAT Supercup Ireland
Max Turley »