

# PSSSS

**"They made hypocrite judgements after the fact, but the name of the game is be hit and hit back."**

Warren Zevon's ode to newly minted Boxing Hall of Famer Boom Boom Mancini, whose career was forever linked to the death of Korean challenger Duk Koo Kim.



## The fast lane to sporting success



The Monash team on the track. Photos: Michael Kogan



bends. Of the four "dynamic" events, including timed 75-metre, one kilometre and figure-eight

loop races, the 22-kilometre race, which requires a driver swap half-way through, will be the toughest. Nearly every team has lost their car in this long run.

The stakes are high for these students. Amid a dwindling engineering job market, making a positive impression on the top industry players attending the event has become all-important. Yet the team leaders are eerily polite. They refuse to talk their opponents down. They insist they are all part of a collaborative team, sharing ideas, tools and working spaces.

But like any sport, subterranean rivalries persist. And the slightest pressing of sore spots reveals the politics at play.

Clear favourites are the Monash University team. In recent years, the army of 70 engineering, design and commerce students have dominated international student-level engineering design competitions, run by global body SAE International.

Their racing cars were ranked in the world's top three in the past three years, and they have won the past five Australasian Formula Student competitions.

"The traditional Melbourne-Monash rivalry plays up when we race," says Melbourne University's team leader **Matthew Neumann-Duffin**.

RMIT team leader **Gregory Page** echoes the sentiment: "Everybody is always trying to beat Monash. They're just so good."

The Monash vehicle, the M14, is fast and reliable. The turbocharged single cylinder engine, with CSIRO-produced 3D printed titanium suspension, and "wind tunnel validated aerodynamics package", is robust.

"We are considered world leaders in producing aerodynamics for the competition," team member **Simeon Berson** says.

"Our car has a wind-tunnel validated 100 kilograms of downforce at 60 kilometres per hour. That is, half of the weight of the car in downforce achieved at 60 kilometres per hour, which is unheard of in any other motorsport series."

The vehicle boasts stamina over speed; the team has spent months driving the car to ensure it is close to fail-safe.

"We know what's important," Monash team leader, **Andrew Trathen** says.

Monash faces a wingless, light weight and agile RMIT vehicle, and a high-powered car with strong "cornering velocity" from Melbourne University, among others.

Their biggest competition, though, will be the team from Auckland University. A mechanical breakdown in the 22-kilometre race let the high-performing New Zealand team down last year.

And the Curtin University

team, who came second in 2013, remain strong contenders.

The local competition is one of many that form the Formula SAE, an international competition involving 500 teams world-wide. Races are held all over Europe, America and in Australia throughout the year.

Formula SAE competitors taking part in the global competition have formed a community, spending hours trading tips on online forums and shared social media platforms.

They are bound, perhaps, by the mythology of racing; by the beauty of constructing a fast, roaring vehicle.

And by the shared struggle of the SAE competitions - a loved and loathed addition to their accumulating university workload. At the very least, they said, they are collectively surviving a month-long period of 20-hour working days.

And they demand to be taken seriously. They are not mere drag racers, nor are they callow car enthusiasts. They will soon be professionals, and some look likely to snag jobs in formula one and V8 Supercar racing.

"It's not like we're just sitting in our back shed doing up an engine," Page says.

"We're all trying to be really good at what we do. We're passionate about it. No matter how bad we may go, we will finish up with a project that has taken us a lot of hours to create. We will watch it go around the track, point to the many parts of the car, and say: 'I did this', before watching it fly around the corner."

## FROM THE CHEAP SEATS

### LEAPING LARRY'S WEEK

#### The stunner

Soccer numbers-fudging of the week, part one. We were told it's all systems go for the blast off of the Asian Cup excitement machine, with "fewer than 10,000 tickets remaining" for the opening match featuring the Socceroos at AAMI Park. Hold the bus. AAMI Park holds about 30,000 people, so that's about one-third shy of capacity. Whose threshold of excitement is so low that they could get pre-emptively excited about sales of two-thirds of a venue? They'd have to have spent about a year in a sensory deprivation chamber. Presumably the match WILL sell out, but when you're a month and change out from a major sporting event and the kick-off game, featuring the home team, has sold only 67 per cent of the tickets, you're arguably doing your best work if you keep your mouth shut about it. Incidentally, while gently palpitating with excitement, one can only imagine pre-sales on, for example, the Palestine v Jordan showdown at the same venue.

#### The snoozer

In a stunning development, a new formula has been devised to suspend play due to heat in the Australian Open. Presumably the players and spectators fainting, heaving and cramping were detracting from the entertainment.

#### The yak attack

Once again, the Essendon supplements saga and grill occupies this space, as most discussed, and disgust, sport story of the week. The producers of stage musicals can only dream of having a run like this. And with those, according to the hardier types who actually attend them, once in a while something happens and you come away whistling the tunes.

#### How far the cherry?

Central Coast Mariners v Melbourne Victory, as summarised by an ace reporter on Fox Sports News (name withheld on the basis of kindness, tending to clemency): "The lowest-scoring team in the league versing (sic) the highest-scoring side." Whose eight-year-old nephew is writing the copy in there? Is anyone minding the store at all?

#### Bozo of the week

Soccer numbers-fudging of the week, part two. During Foxtel's A-League commentary on Friday night's Central Coast v Victory, viewers were informed, a time or two, that 10,000 was the critical attendance figure to indicate that the (sort of) trial venue of North Sydney Oval was a success. When the official figure later came up as just shy of 7100, and the cheery-chappie word from the booth was that this was, nonetheless, a salutary number indeed, even the most arithmetically challenged minds in the home lounge room might be dropping a "Hey, wait a minute..." flag on the commentary play. Then B1 on the mike says you have to allow for the vicious storm not long before the match started, but his respected colleague B2 pipes up that the storm wasn't that close to the kick-off time. Right. The reality is that if an organisation is positioning itself as a major, mass-interest sporting concern, 7000 should barely inspire a half-hearted shoulder shrug and accompanying minor grimace. It would represent a hell of a turnout for a ballroom dancing comp or Christmas lunch, admittedly. Just not so much for a national sporting league. The thought occurs that, while it's probably meant to bamboozle us when those involved in sport fudge the numbers, most of the evidence to hand suggests they only wind up hoodwinking themselves.

### TIMNA JACKS



Ah, the world of fast cars. Some revel in the spectacle of speed and noise. Others indulge in the cliches - the flexed muscles, million-dollar vehicles and sprayed champagne.

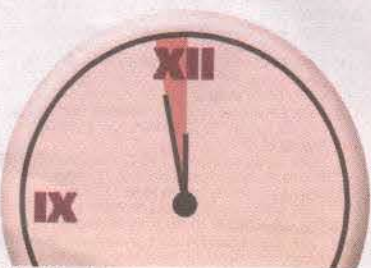
But behind all that glitz there's the hard work of engineering prowess. A single mistake threatens the brutal end of both man and machine.

After a childhood spent watching professional car racing, teams of engineering students at top Australian universities are now designing and building cars to race in the annual Australasian Formula Student competition, with the hard work to start on Thursday at Calder Park and running through until the finals next Sunday.

They are not yet building multi-million-dollar vehicles with top speed capacities of 230 km/h. Yet students from 25 Australian universities, in addition to teams from New Zealand, Poland and Japan, are building open-wheeled cars with a maximum 600cc engine, to fly up to 80 km/h around sharp, unpredictable

### THE WATCHMAN

**2 minutes to midnight for...**  
**Australia's first XI**  
Tuesday morning at the Adelaide Oval may still seem so soon.



### NUMBERS UP

**185** races at Red Bull for Sebastian Vettel.  
**4** drivers titles. **50** grand prix victories.  
**1** last visit to Milton Keynes factory to see the team trophies.



### LOCAL HERO

With Blind Sports Victoria establishing a soccer competition for blind players earlier this year it's now time to take this intriguing football to the people. At half-time of Sunday's Melbourne City versus Brisbane Roar clash at AAMI Stadium there'll be an exhibition match to mark Wednesday's International Day of People with a Disability. Before the game at 3pm there'll be a warm up in Gosch's Paddock where the public can also take part.

### SEPARATED AT BIRTH



Reader Mark Daffey knows a tough guy when he sees one, like Collingwood father-son recruit **Darcy Moore** and 1980s Hollywood tough guy **Dolph Lundgren**.