

UP TO SPEED: MEDIA COVERAGE

SATURDAY 04 JULY



Sport British Grand Prix

From 'Grandpa' of karting circuit to F1 title challenger

George Russell's career has been a story of resilience coupled with obvious talent, as Molly Hudson finds when speaking to his inner circle

Silverstone has not been a kind home race for George Russell, who honed his driving skills as a child riding a quad bike around a turny field a few miles away from the circuit in Northamptonshire.

In eight home grands prix in Formula 1, he is yet to stand on the podium. Perhaps this weekend is finally the chance for Russell to do so — in a championship fight with teammate Kimi Antonelli and fresh from victory in Austria.

The 28-year-old is used to playing the waiting game, with a story of resilience and determination coupled with obvious talent, evident when The Times spoke to his inner circle. Russell had taken up karting when he was six — his older brother Benji was also talented but later realised he had started too late at 12 years old — while his dad worked long hours running a business selling seeds and pulses. His mum kept detailed handwritten notes of his lap times each weekend.

Given Lagnie, the Mercedes driver development adviser, first met Russell when he was 12. Even then his maturity stood out, focused on every micro detail and fiercely independent. One weekend he called his parents, suitcase in hand, asking when he was supposed to be picked up from a remote part of Italy.

In karting he was given the nickname of 'Grandpa' George because of the maturity he had way beyond his years.

There is a well-told story of how Russell, missing out of financial support and sponsorship on the cut-throat ladder to F1, approached Toto Wolff, the Mercedes team principal and, at 46 years old, arrived at his factory in a suit and he to give a



Russell, in 2020, looks seemingly to be in pursuit of Hamilton's signature

PowerPoint presentation on why they should sign him.

Eventually, they agreed, giving him a place on their driver programme. "The first thing I did when I arrived at Mercedes in January 2016 was to give him a call," Lagnie says. "He was about to sign his DTM [German racing series] with BMW. I said, 'Please don't do that. We maybe have a plan. We kept him in Formula 3 in 2016 and then we won GP3 in 2017. F1 in 2018 and we got him at Williams in 2019'."

In F2, he won the title beating Lando Norris and Alex Albon despite a series of early reliability issues that tested his resilience. When he reached F1, he repaid his parents more than £1 million in the way of financial sacrifice they had made to help him reach the top level.

Williams provided Russell with a coveted F1 seat, but after winning everything in the junior series he was frustrated as a backmarker in a struggling team.

"My argument was always, 'These years might be hard and you might be miserable right now, but they will stand you in good stead and provide a really strong platform and clock of resilience to call upon in your later years in Formula 1'." Claire Williams, his first team principal, says. Back then, he was "buttoned up and myopically focused," she adds.

In 2020, his sliding-door moment arrived. At 22m, while in the bathroom, he received a call from Wolff, informing him that Lewis Hamilton had contracted Covid, and Russell would instead drive his car at the Bahrain Grand Prix.

There is always a question around young drivers at the back of the grid, as to whether they have the ability to step up to a leading team. There were no questions by the end of that weekend. Russell was winning the race before a pitstop error and a late puncture cost him the chance of standing on the podium.

"He was just taking everything in, like a sponge, absorbing all this information," his race engineer, Marcus Dudley, remembers. "We weren't getting the practice starts all weekend, we gave him a target for the clutch position, and he was plus 6 per cent, minus 7 per cent, plus 6 per cent, but he kept working on it, we were slowly making progress, and then on race day he nailed it."

From that moment, he was destined to be a Mercedes F1 driver but needed patience until he got the seat in 2022. He arrived at a team that was trying to recover from the heartbreak of Abu Dhabi 2021 and the Hamilton eighth world title that never was.

The new era of ground-effect cars did not suit Mercedes and suddenly, after watching a race-winning team with just one win at Williams, he found life difficult. "In the four years [2022-25] the car wasn't good enough, in all the occasions where we gave George a car that could win a race, he put together a flawless weekend and won," Andrew Shovlin, the Mercedes trackside engineering director, says.

"George would occasionally joke that he arrived at the wrong time, but his mentality and his attitude was 100 per cent professional, that he was going to be part of a new Mercedes chapter."

Mercedes knew that for both Hamilton and Russell, they were not providing a strong enough car to match their drivers' talent. "Probably in another period of time at Mercedes he would have been already world champion — maybe two or three times," Shovlin says.

Russell used the time to set foundations for this season's championship charge. His team is purposefully stable in performance (with Alex Caceres having worked with him throughout his F1 career,



Russell, despite his relaxed look at Silverstone, above, has had to graft to gain Brazil in 2022, top right, for his first win and is trying to overhaul the 40-point

Lagnie has been an ever-present, and his girlfriend, Carmen Monteiro Mundt, whom he has dated since 2020, has helped Russell to navigate the stresses of the sport.

Casasnovas remembers thinking, "Wow, this guy is a very tall, the moment he first met Russell as a teenager. "If George was around maybe 30 years ago, maybe he would not have been a Formula 1 driver, just because there was no space in his cockpit."

To this day, Russell suffers more in a hot race because there is less space in the cockpit for his drinks pouch due to his 6ft 10in (206cm) height. Casasnovas and Russell also specifically worked on his neck strength because, as one of the taller drivers on the grid, the lever arm of his neck is bigger.

"He's been very open with absolutely everything when it comes to coaching, he's super smart," Casasnovas says, adding with a chuckle: "He'd do anything I ask of him, but if I tell him 53 minutes of

success, he beat his hero Hamilton in lead held by his team-mate Antonelli this, he'll do 53 minutes, not a second over."

"There's other things in life, and I think that's important as well, with how much pressure we have here [F1] it's like 'OK, let's do what we need to do, but no more and then I can do the things that I enjoy doing, whether it's reading or playing chess'."

With Casasnovas mostly focused on the physical side of performance, Monteiro Mundt has been crucial in helping Russell to decompress from weekends — and, simply, listening.



She has been described as a 'grounding' presence in his life by those close to Russell.

Austria, Wolff sent Russell a simple "just drive" message on team radio. "You can kind of get yourself in a spiral, not a spiral of negativity, more a spiral of overthinking — 'what can I do more, where do I need to improve?' Then sometimes you forget about the core message: just forget the car," Wolff says.

"Don't overthink the strategy, what Kimi is doing, drive the car as fast as you can, look at the tyre temperatures, and don't burn them. That's the only matrix you need to look at, that's what I was trying to say."

Russell prefers data-led feedback, he is not a driver who needs coaching or more general advice. "He's always thinking about the situation, trying to think two or three steps ahead, sometimes it might catch him out because he's overthinking it," Dudley says.

"I'm trying to stay a step ahead of him, almost trying to think, 'What is he thinking now?' Because he's so intelligent, you can fall into the trap of thinking he knows that he understands the race picture, he knows if he's on a two-stop versus a three-stop, but sometimes he doesn't, he's just lead down, absolutely flat out doing all his switch changes, trying to manage everything."

In engineering meetings, Russell will proactively look through his own data, providing an extra set of eyes for Dudley and his team.

Bradley Lord, the Mercedes deputy team principal, points out that Russell is notably generous with treating people to team dinners during the season, and giving gifts for the factory staff at Christmas.

"He's a real grafter, super hard-working, feet on the ground, and he doesn't actually take himself too seriously," Lord says. "You can have a good laugh in his company as well, but that isn't always the side that drivers in general choose to show when they're in this environment."

Even this season, the path has not been smooth for Russell, who was marked down as a favourite for the title at the outset. A multitude of issues and bad luck, including a retirement in Montreal, have left him chasing Antonelli. He trails his teammate by 40 points, going into this weekend.

"He's maybe unusual in that he's quick to zap. 'I didn't do a good enough job today. Actually, that is helpful — that's when you start to realise what might be leading to a difficult run of races,'" Shovlin says.

That is why at far as Mercedes are concerned, there is no doubt that Russell is well and truly in this title fight.

"If there's one guy that I would choose in this paddock, in terms of resilience, that would be George," Wolff says.

Hamilton on sprint pole as Ferrari hit back at Wolff

Molly Hudson

Lewis Hamilton claimed pole in sprint qualifying at Silverstone as his team principal Fred Vasseur rebuffed suggestions from Mercedes that they are at risk of breaching the cost cap.

In comments in Austria, which perhaps show the genuine threat Ferrari could provide in the coming weeks and months — Toto Wolff, the Mercedes team principal said: "The only ones who are not slowing down in upgrade are Ferrari, McLaren, Red Bull and ourselves, you can see we had one big one that we introduced in Montreal. They need to be running out of money soon, cost-cap money."

Silverstone is a power-dominant track where Mercedes and Red Bull were expected to be the strongest teams, but Hamilton topped the standings in the first practice session and then claimed pole by 0.01 sec at the circuit where he has won nine times.

It was the latest marker to suggest Hamilton could be a genuine contender in a title race which initially looked to be an inter-team Mercedes battle. Kimi Antonelli qualified second, with George Russell in fifth.

Ferrari have developed quickly and consistently to narrow the early season advantage Mercedes held and the battle is beginning to become more heated. While Vasseur and Wolff are friends off track, Wolff's comments had clearly lifted the Ferrari team principal, who responded before sprint qualifying.

"I found it quite ironic coming from Toto and Mercedes," Vasseur said. "But when Red Bull is developing or when Mercedes is developing, they are geniuses when we are developing we are cheating. I think you have to calm down with this. We didn't bring more parts than Red Bull or another team. I don't know if it was a joke or..."

Asked if he felt Ferrari were being accused of cheating, Vasseur replied: "If you think that we overbought the cost cap, for us, it's going into this direction [accusations of cheating], adding that it was 'better to avoid to speak' to Wolff about the issue."

Hamilton had suggested Silverstone could be a "completely different track" this weekend with the new engines and power deployment required, but added: "I love this place. I love this crowd, and I can't express to you how big a dream it is, and still to this day, when you're building up to this race. The car felt great today. We brought tiny little upgrades into here. Every weekend we're showing up with something."

Race 9 Great Britain

Sprint Today 12pm, Qualifying Today 4pm, Race Tomorrow 3pm
TV Sky Sports F1 & Channel 4
Highlights Channel 4 (Monday 12.00pm)



— Straight mode zone
Sector two

SILVERSTONE

Laps 52

Circuit length 3.909km

Race distance 105 laps

Lap record 1min 27.077sec

Max Verstappen (2020)

Drivers

Team Points

K. Antonelli Mercedes 171

G. Russell Mercedes 111

L. Hamilton Ferrari 105

O. Piastri McLaren 80

C. Norris McLaren 79

C. Leclerc Ferrari 79

M. Verstappen Red Bull 73

I. Händler Red Bull 42

F. Albon Alpine 41

L. Lawson Racing Bulls 30

Constructors

Points

Mercedes 286

Ferrari 204

McLaren 169

Red Bull 115

Alpine 57

Racing Bulls 44

M&S finds the right formula at Silverstone

Ibiza was the backdrop for Marks & Spencer's inaugural catwalk show in May. This week a pit lane at Silverstone was the location of its second (Prue White writes).

Before the British Grand Prix tomorrow, models in leather and spike-heeled stilettos hit the circuit. In looks that would not be out of place on the catwalks of Milan and Paris — blouson leather jackets and oversized sunglasses, reminiscent of Balenciaga's SS26 collection — the nation's favourite knicker store revved up its image with the Dress to Thrill range.

Although luxury fashion houses have held "cruise shows" in exclusive locations for years — Louis Vuitton at the Frick Collection in New York and Gucci in Times Square — the event is an escalation for the high street.

The opening look was a set of biker leathers, £280 for the jacket and £200

for the trousers, off-set with stilettos, priced £30.

Tailoring was key. One male model hit the track in an off-white single-breasted blazer, £129, with aviator shades. Equally on point for women was the cinched and belted black blazer, £48, teamed with balloon trousers, £28.

The show featured an extension of the Body by M&S lingerie collection, including non-wired crop tops, £16, and spaghetti-strapped dresses, £28, with built-in smoothing.

The sharply shouldered red blouson jacket that closed the show will be a hit with the chain's growing fashion-forward customer base, including Vogue editors and edgy fashion influencers.

Use of Silverstone and M&S's partnership with the Atlassian Williams Formula One team, not to mention the collection itself, have been designed to draw a younger audience. The age and size-inclusive model casting, however, is an attempt to maintain the loyalty of its existing one.

The chain's second catwalk show combined sharp tailoring and leather



SATURDAY 04 JULY – IN PRINT

The Daily Telegraph



Hamilton lifts home hopes
Ferrari's Lewis Hamilton (below) sends Silverstone's packed stands into raptures by claiming a stunning pole for today's sprint race, edging Kimi Antonelli by 0.011sec

AP/WIDEWORLD IMAGES

Silverstone now F1's Glastonbury

Strong leadership and a new deal have made British GP an all-singing, all-dancing affair with Wimbledon in its sights

By Tom Cary at Silverstone

There was a time not long ago when Silverstone's good name was dragged through the mud almost every year around British Grand Prix time.

In 2000, the Northamptonshire circuit's *annus horribilis*, when the race was for some inexplicable reason held in late April, relentless downpours turned Silverstone's green car parks into mudbaths more suitable for hippos. Approach roads became bogged down. Traffic jams stretched for up to 15 miles, with queues growing at an estimated rate of one mile per minute. Even the Formula One drivers of the day were caught up in the chaos. A Land Rover sent to drag David Coulthard's McLaren off the grass beside the track got stuck itself, leading to a red flag.

In 2012, after years spent trying to convince everyone that they had got on top of its issues, Silverstone's worst nightmare resurfaced. Organisers had to plead with tens of thousands of fans to stay away so the sodden fields would not be destroyed for the race. The circuit

shelled out £4m that year bringing in extra machinery, losing millions more on refunds.

These were the days when Bernie Ecclestone and the FIA held the circuit to ransom, regularly threatening to remove it from the calendar. Silverstone ended up signing a brutal race contract with F1's promoter, with a compounding annual "escalator" clause which caused the sanctioning fee to outpace gate revenues. At one stage during the 2010s, annual losses regularly added up to £5m, accumulating to an estimated £50m.

Fast forward to today and the picture is very different. Silverstone is expecting an F1 record crowd of 565,000 fans across this race weekend. That is roughly double Glastonbury's attendance record. And while punters are paying a lot for the privilege – "dynamic pricing" remains one major fan bugbear – they will be treated to an array of entertainment for their money, way beyond motorsport.

In fact, the British GP is now pretty much a motorsport Glastonbury. An all-singing, all-dancing festival with some elite motorsport thrown in. This year's musical offerings include David Guetta and Richard Ashcroft, with late-night DJ sets from Pendulum and MK. There are comedy tents and big tops. The campsites (an estimated 70,000 fans camp each year) have



Bogged down: A fan's car is pushed out of the mud at the infamous 2000 GP

their own entertainment. There is even some top-level darts being thrown in after the race this year, with world No1 Luke Littler, Luke Humphries, Michael van Gerwen and Fallon Sherrock all taking part in a Pro-Am.

Most importantly for the organisers, they will generate a tidy profit, both for the circuit (which is owned by the British Racing Drivers' Club), and for UK plc.

According to a new study commissioned from Sheffield Hallam University, Silverstone generated £167m in UK economic activity last year, second only to Wimbledon in

terms of UK sporting mega-events. And it has the All England Club in its sights. "We could [surpass Wimbledon]," Stuart Pringle, Silverstone's chief executive, says. "Absolutely. It's slightly apples and pears anyway. They are over two weeks and ours is a four-day race. But we're very conscious that we don't want to adversely impact the fan experience. It's about providing value for that money."

If there is one man responsible for turning around Silverstone's fortunes, from mudbath to champagne bath, it is Pringle. A lifelong motorsport enthusiast, he used to

be the BRDC secretary but was made chief executive of Silverstone 10 years ago. He has overseen an extraordinary transformation.

A lot of that, he admits, "has to do with the fortunes of the sport itself", which have improved out of sight since the advent of new owners Liberty Media allied to Netflix's *Drive to Survive* programme.

But a not-insignificant part has to do with the hard work of Pringle and his team. Crucially, in 2017, they activated a break clause in Silverstone's contract with F1, allowing them to pull out in 2019. There was a risk the race might not return, but the losses, Pringle insists, were "unsustainable". A new deal was signed on improved terms at the 11th hour and, since then, the race has gone from strength to strength.

"Yes, ticket prices are expensive," Pringle, who was given an OBE this year, concedes. "That is the case at all the big races, but we believe fans get value for their tickets."

There is still work to do, Pringle adds. There will be traffic jams, things will go wrong. But he is more excited now about what they can do with the place than worried by what might go wrong. "I've even raised the sacrilegious idea of potentially changing the circuit layout," Pringle admits.

Silverstone's facelift is not done yet, it seems.

SATURDAY 04 JULY – IN PRINT

The Daily Telegraph



▲ George Russell won last weekend's Austrian Grand Prix

FORMULA ONE: BRITISH GRAND PRIX

Sky One, 1.30pm, Channel 4, 2.30pm

The next twist in this fascinating Formula One title race comes at the home of British racing, with Britain's latest star, George Russell, riding high following his hard-fought victory in Austria last weekend. Yet his Mercedes teammate, Kimi Antonelli, still heads the drivers' rankings by a good margin and will fancy his chances of extending his lead this afternoon.

For all that Russell and Lando Norris (who won at Silverstone last year in a wet-dry epic) are popular on their home turf, a win for Lewis Hamilton at one of British sport's tentpole occasions – this being a prospect

which feels closer now than it has in years – would surely prompt cheers in Northamptonshire that would be heard all the way down to one of his houses in Monaco.

And who could rule out Max Verstappen or Oscar Piastri?

It should be a scorching day both on and off the track, where Channel 4 and Sky go head-to-head with their coverage, both available free to air. Channel 4's team is led by Steve Jones, David Coulthard and Claire Williams, while Simon Lazenby, Martin Brundle and Jenson Button take the wheel for Sky.

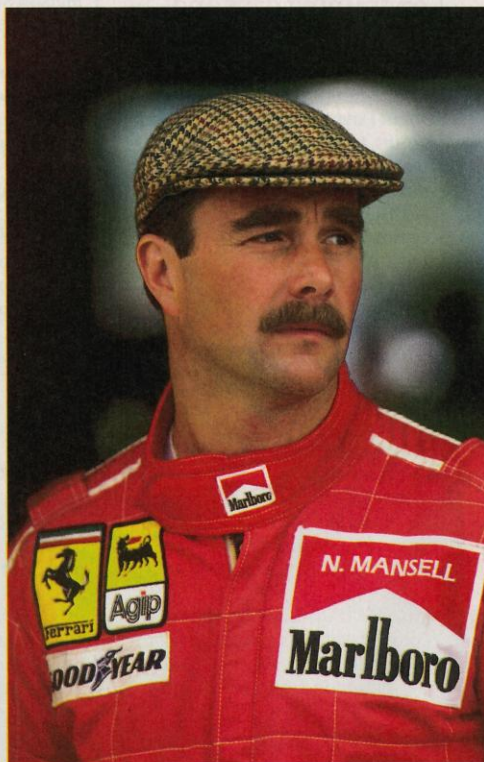
Gabriel Tate

The Daily Telegraph

With his signature moustache and no-nonsense Brummie manner, Nigel Mansell was the antithesis of a playboy racing driver. Looking back on his life in the 1980s and '90s fast lanes, where broken backs and lost lives were all too common, he tells Tom Cary about times good and bad – and his current passion

‘I grew up in a time when racing was life or death’

Flat-capped at the Canadian Grand Prix, 1990; San Marino, 1989



The Daily Telegraph

Racing Nigel Mansell down a zip wire in the New Forest was not what I imagined when I agreed to interview the 1992 Formula One world champion. But interesting things tend to happen in Mansell's company. They always have. Despite the famously dour Brummie monotone, which often made even his greatest victories sound like a minor inconvenience, Mansell has always been a man who has embraced life.

We arranged to meet at Avon Tyrrell, an outdoor activity centre operated by the charity UK Youth, of which Mansell has been the president since 1999. Mansell is in the process of raising £4 million for a new sports complex and has come to inspect the site.

We have barely said hello before he is coaxing me into a harness. There is no question of saying no. At 72, and despite various health setbacks (more on which later), Mansell is still a force of nature.

He is also, believe it or not, scared of heights. "Irony, isn't it?" says a man who thought nothing of going wheel-to-wheel with Ayrton Senna at 200mph, sparks flying literally and metaphorically. "My legs have gone to putty."

Whether he is bluffing, I don't know. But suddenly it is lights out and away we go. And Mansell is gone. A few hundred

metres later, having pulled up at the other end with a healthy lead, he comes over to shake hands. "I think I had an advantage because I'm heavier than you," he suggests magnanimously.

Mansell was always competitive. And fearless. His spectacular driving style, which contrasted amusingly with his gloomy public demeanour, became a definitive part of 1980s and 1990s pop culture, when he even had his own *Spitting Image* puppet. Armed with a massive moustache, Mansell was adored by everyone from Ferrari fans, who nicknamed him "Il Leone" during his two-year stint with the team, to British fans who referred to him affectionately as "Our Nige" and invaded the Silverstone track in their thousands when he won the British Grand Prix.

Mansell will be back at Silverstone for this weekend's race. It is sure to bring the memories flooding back. In total he won his home grand prix four times, prompting a full-scale track invasion in 1987, when he memorably passed teammate and bitter rival Nelson Piquet with a "dummy overtake" at Stowe, then again in

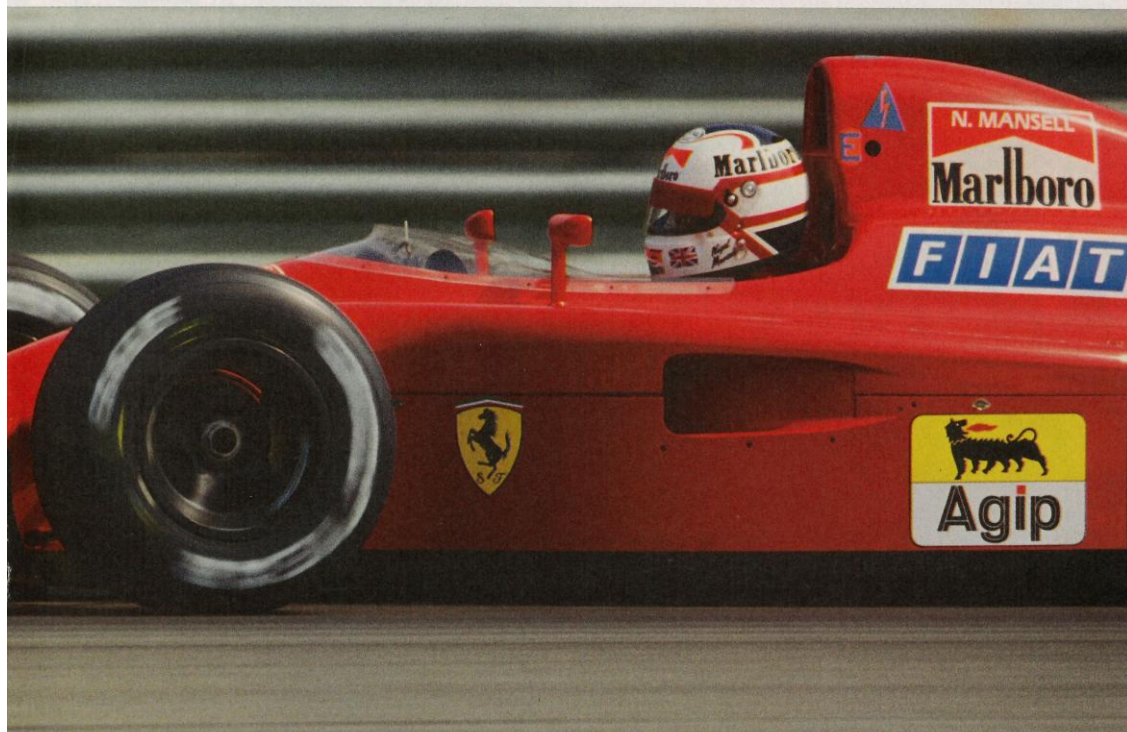
1992 at the height of what became known as "Mansell-mania".

It was a golden era for F1: Senna, Prost, Piquet, Mansell. James Hunt and Murray Walker in the commentary box. Walker's excitement would inevitably peak whenever Mansell's "Red Five" Williams pulled off a daring overtake or claimed a race victory.

"They were great days," agrees Mansell after we head inside for some lunch. "Going back to Silverstone is like going home, that's the only way I can describe it. You didn't have the same restrictions back then. So we had tents or a motorhome, and we used to stay with the fans at the BRDC club [British Racing Drivers' Club]. And we'd play football, or cricket, and have barbecues. It was... money can't buy those kinds of memories."

Mansell will be taking a couple of special guests to Silverstone this year. He is flying his surgeon and his surgeon's daughter over from America, where Mansell now lives for most of the year in the Tampa Bay area. "It's a bit of a thank you for saving my life a couple of times," Mansell explains.

'Relatively speaking, motor racing is not dangerous at all any more. It's fantastic for the drivers. It's like Christmas on sticks'



The Daily Telegraph

She later told Michael Aspel on *This Is Your Life* that she only got in because she thought he was someone else. "Best decision of my life to pick her up," he says.

How is Roseanne now? "She's terrific. I'm forbidden from saying too much. She's a very private person. All I'd say is that if you do your research, when people have major heart surgery, no matter what the surgery is, there's a timeline. And so we're very conscious that we make all our time very precious, which it is."

Mansell has been made more aware of that than he would like in recent years. He would rather not discuss every health issue with which he has had to contend. "We all have our hiccups," he says. But



From top: on the podium in Mexico, 1990, with Alain Prost (left) and Gerhard Berger; fans run on to the circuit after Mansell's win at Silverstone, 1992

even the "hiccups" he will discuss are eye-opening.

An avid golfer, Mansell has twice nearly died on the course in recent years. The first time he had a perforated bowel. "I fought for my life then and had quite a big operation to take a major part away," he says. Then, 18 months or so ago, he almost collapsed on the course in acute pain.

"I finished the round," he says. "You know, I always have to finish my round! But I said to my caddie, 'I need to go and see my mate in the hospital and get some

medicine.'" When they got there the doctor looked Mansell up and down and told him he had "maybe an hour to live". Mansell thought he was joking. "I said, 'Don't pull my leg. Come on, what's wrong?' He said, 'Your appendix has burst, and your gall bladder's gone. It's out of life. Finished. You're in trouble.' He said, 'One hour, you'll be dead'."

"They had to shave me head to toe, which I wasn't too impressed with. But he saved my life. I think what people don't realise, I certainly didn't, is that a burst

appendix is really serious. You can be in the wrong place at the wrong time, and no matter if you're Superman, you'll die."

There have been other hiccups. A full shoulder replacement. And another operation a few months ago to "take some more bones out of my feet".

"I've lived a very different life to most people and I've smashed myself up a little bit," he says, smiling. "So there's just a little bit of mechanic-ing we have to do occasionally to catch up."

Mansell is being modest. He smashed himself up a lot. His list of life-threatening accidents is too long to mention, but includes a broken neck, multiple broken vertebrae, first and second degree burns, spinal concussion, a broken foot (with which he competed for his entire title-

'Going back to Silverstone is like going home, that's the only way I can describe it... Money can't buy those kinds of memories'

GETTY IMAGES, SUTTON IMAGES

The Daily Telegraph

He is not exaggerating. Mansell's health, and that of his beloved wife Roseanne, to whom he has been married for over 50 years, are indirectly the reason we're here at Avon Tyrrell; the reason he is pushing so relentlessly to raise money for UK Youth.

Mansell woke up one morning during Covid-19 and had what he describes as an "epiphany". The pandemic had forced the closure of his car dealership and museum in St Helier, Jersey, meaning a new home was required for his lifetime of memorabilia. Then Roseanne needed heart surgery after complications following a vaccine booster jab. "It put her heart into failure," Mansell says, shaking his head. "And I've had lots of health complications since. And well, you just realise that... you know, you had better get on with life, otherwise life will pass you by."

Mansell decided to sell his memorabilia at auction in February, raising £82,000 for UK Youth in the process. Having agonised over the decision in advance, he says it felt like a "weight was lifted from his shoulders". Having already raised and personally donated millions of pounds down the years, he is now throwing himself into raising yet more, hosting a series of events this year in an effort to get up to the £4 million mark.

There was a dinner at Windsor Castle in April, hosted by Princess Anne, who became the charity's patron in 2003. "She's been a breath of fresh air," Mansell says of the Princess Royal. "Absolutely tireless. Just tremendous." Then there is the "An Evening with Nigel Mansell" roadshow, which is currently in progress. Eight

evenings in total, including four nights already this week in the build-up to Silverstone, in Coventry, High Wycombe, Tunbridge Wells and Northampton. The only night this week he was not on stage, Mansell was hosting a charity dinner in the Cotswolds, which McLaren team principal Zak Brown was due to attend.

At 72, it will take it out of him. "But all I have to do is come here. It's like an infusion of adrenalin seeing the faces of the young people. We get 20,000 coming through every year. Seeing how they grow in stature, in confidence, in self-esteem. Even at my ripe old age now, I never cease to be invigorated."

We are sitting in a quiet room in the main building now, armed with coffee and chocolate bars, which Mansell pro-

we wanted to carry on living, or we wanted to carry on working, we were forced to have the vaccine. That was wrong." He is adamant the vaccine was responsible, not only for Roseanne's heart failure, but for many of the health issues he has experienced since.

"I'm still bitter and angry, even today," he admits. "It's like a ticking time bomb in everybody who had it. I mean, I've had all sorts of things happen to me in this last number of years. I can't blame it directly on that, but it's as though, since I had the vaccine, my body fell apart. So many people have died. So many people have been totally incapacitated. I have friends who exercised a day after having the injection and then, overnight, became totally deaf. There are doctors who, at the heights of

The doctor told him he had 'maybe an hour to live'. Mansell thought he was joking. 'I said, "Don't pull my leg'"

duces conspiratorially from his pocket. Mansell, who has a grey-flecked beard these days rather than a luxuriant moustache, is wearing a blue blazer and patterned shirt and tie. We return to our earlier conversation about health.

Mansell is clearly still furious over the government's handling of Covid, which he describes as "criminal": the creation of vaccines which were rushed through; the profits made by certain individuals and organisations; the requirement to have the vaccine at all.

"I think one thing I really feel very disturbed about is that we were forced, if

their careers, can't operate any more..."

Mansell is aware that some will write him off as a conspiracy theorist, but he is beyond caring. "I can only say what's affected me personally, but when you have close family in rehab for months. And you meet all these other people in rehab and they've all got the same story... All I'd say is that it was an awful time for everybody in the world. It affected us catastrophically."

Mansell's devotion to his wife is touching. He was just 17 when he spotted Roseanne walking down Blossomfield Road in Solihull and pulled over to offer her a lift.



THIS AND PREVIOUS PAGE: GETTY IMAGES

Mauricio Gugelmin from Brazil turns upside down after colliding with Mansell in his Ferrari 640 at the start of the French Grand Prix in 1989

The Daily Telegraph

winning season), and a bleed on his brain. That last came after his tyre exploded at 240mph at the Le Mans 24hrs in 2010, which he had entered with his sons Leo and Greg.

"I woke up in hospital and I couldn't remember anything," he recalls. "I wasn't married, didn't have kids, didn't know who I was, didn't know who my wife was. I was being asked questions, which I could understand. But when I responded, it was the most ugly sound that came out of my mouth. 'Blueerrghh.' I turned around in bed thinking, 'Who the hell's just made that terrible bloody noise?' It was me. That was terrifying."

The Le Mans crash led to Mansell taking up magic as a form of therapy. "A friend of a friend who works with stroke patients told us it gets the brain to work backwards to go forwards," he explains. "So we got permission off the Magic Circle of London for people to train me." Mansell has since performed magic shows at the Royal Automobile Club and live on television. He nearly got tasered by Princess Anne's security detail once for a trick that involved setting fire to his speech.

The fact that Mansell did not just buy a magic set, like any normal person, but went the whole hog and got the Magic Circle involved, is typical of him. He never did anything by halves.

Take his decades-long stint as a special

Colin Chapman. The police ended up giving him an escort and taking him for a helicopter ride to a baseball game. "I became a special after that," he says.

Or his love of golf. Mansell, who counts Greg Norman as a close friend, entered various professional tournaments in the late 1980s and 1990s and later developed the 500-acre Woodbury Park Golf and Country Club in Devon. He won the World Senior Golf Championships five years in a row from 2014 to 2018. He still plays off eight now, even with his dodgy shoulder and feet.

Or his charity work. In 2010, for UK Youth's centenary, he embarked on a 13-day bike ride across the UK. Two years later, he and his sons rode from John O'Groats to Paris, knocking off 120 miles a day.

'I'd like to have avoided seeing some of the accidents, some of the deaths that I saw... You carry those forward'

"I broke a collarbone so I was riding in pain for two weeks," he says. "I look back at some of the things I've done and think, 'What did I do that for?' But it's all for this." That said, he does admit to some errors of judgment. "I should never have done Le Mans," he confesses. "I remember thinking, 'Thank God it's me who's going to die and not my son.'"

times than he cares to remember, but he wouldn't swap his career for anything. The camaraderie, the relationships, the cars. Mansell, it hardly needs saying, is not a great fan of the new electric-hybrid cars or *Drive To Survive*. "A lot of people like it because they have no idea. But I grew up in a time when you were really focused, and life and death was real."

"Our era was a real man's man's sport. And you can't knock what the FIA and the manufacturers have done for the safety of the drivers. But, you know, sometimes, only a few drivers, they moan about things they shouldn't moan about. You know? Get on and do the job. I mean, motor racing is dangerous. And, relatively speaking, motor racing is not dangerous at all any more. It's fantastic

for them. It's like Christmas on sticks."

Mansell laughs about football matches in which drivers and media used to compete, recalling a fight he got into with a member of Her Majesty's press and how he sent him flying. "I was a black belt in karate," he notes. It's true. Look it up. Mansell earned a Shodan (first-degree black belt) in Uechi-Ryu, a rigorous, traditional style of Okinawan karate. Of course, he travelled out to Okinawa to do the test.

"I'd like to have avoided seeing some of the accidents, some of the deaths that I saw," he concludes. "Like my late, great teammate Elio de Angelis. We tried to pull him out of a burning car upside down at Paul Ricard, and he died in front of us. You carry those forward. But no, I wouldn't turn anything back."

Mansell gets up to go. At Silverstone this weekend, he will cheer on a resurgent Lewis Hamilton. He will enjoy showing his guests around the paddock. But mostly, he says, he will just be thankful for the incredible life he has lived and is still living. For his long marriage to Roseanne. "To survive 56 years of an incredible life together... I feel very blessed. It was our 50th wedding anniversary last year. We went to Alaska, which I didn't want to go to, and my lovely wife said, 'If you don't behave yourself, I'll leave you there.'"

Mansell offers his hand, then surprises me by leaning in for a hug. He says he hopes my mum and dad will be OK. During our chat earlier, I had told him that both my parents had been affected by cancer in the last couple of years. Then he winces. "I think I might have popped my bicep on the zip wire," he says. "Don't tell my doctor."

To donate to Nigel Mansell's UK Youth appeal, visit donorbox.org/avon-tyrrell-capital-appeal



At Buckingham Palace with Roseanne and children Leo and Chloe to receive his OBE in 1990

police constable, first with the Isle of Man Constabulary then the Devon & Cornwall Police. We are now sitting in another wing of the building where *The Telegraph's* photographer, Sam, has got Mansell wearing a grey zip-up jumper for some portrait shots. Mansell tells us a story about how he once got stopped in Long Beach, California, for speeding as he was running late for a meeting with his Lotus team boss,

Mansell says the fact that he never did (die) partly explains his determination to give so much of himself to his charity work. "All the accidents I've survived... it's like you have an angel or something. And when, invariably, I'll have a real bad accident or whatever, if there's something I can donate, something to make a difference, I do."

Mansell may have broken every bone in his body and cheated death more

Sprint pole an 'amazing surprise' for Hamilton

And fellow Brit Russell can't quite believe it, either!

JUST the beginning. But a darn promising one. Or as Lewis Hamilton put it: 'Holy c**p!'

That was after the Ferrari star, so often the Batman of Silverstone, took pole position for the sprint race today. He was 0.011sec ahead of Kimi Antonelli, and the fact was as much a tribute to the man as his red machine. He jostled his car through the final sector, not letting it slide away from him as it threatened to do, again bending the old airfield to his

will. But this was not a flash conjured in the final moments of qualifying but reflected his superiority throughout the session. Top in Q1, top in Q2 and now top in Q3.

The only cruelty is that the sprint winner at the end of 17 laps takes eight points, the runner-up seven. It would hardly make a dent in the Englishman's 46-point deficit to Antonelli if they were both to finish where they start.

But the boon is obvious. Hamilton is clearly quick on an engine-reliant track that is theoretically not suited to Ferrari's supposed engine limitations (albeit a handicap mitigated by a power-unit upgrade introduced last weekend in Austria). This suggests a successful weekend in prospect.

'Wow! I like it,' said Hamilton, 41, after stepping out of his missile, offering a V-for-Victory salute. 'I love this place, I love this crowd, and I can't express to you how big a dream it is. Still to this day, when you're building up to this race you think about



JONATHAN McEVOY
at Silverstone

every corner and the flow you can get into if you get the set up right and have a good team behind you.

'The car felt great today thanks to everyone back at the factory. Everyone's pushing to the max. I was quick through all the session but it was only 10 milliseconds, so it was very close.

'We didn't expect we would be competing this far up but this is

an amazing surprise and I am ecstatic. I don't remember the last time I started on the front row here!'

It was 2021, in fact. He went on to win, clinching the eighth of his nine triumphs here. A measure of Hamilton's impact on the timing screens was that the other scarlet car of Charles Leclerc was only fourth best, a place ahead of George Russell.

That was a disappointment for the Briton after his morale-boosting win in Austria last Sunday. He needs momentum this weekend, and this was a brake on that ambition.

'It's kind of the story of the year,' lamented Russell. 'Always on the back foot. Usually, come

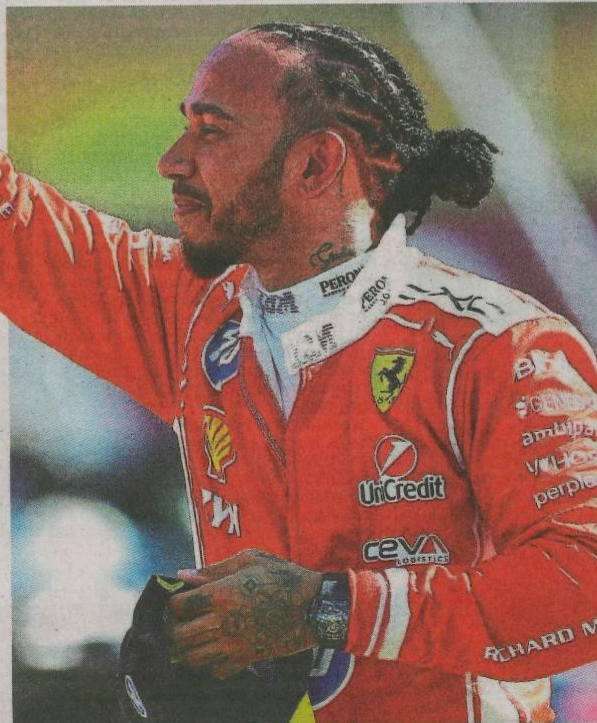
Q3, I can generally make a step. Today, that was not the case.

'At least, tomorrow is the more important day. I'm very surprised by Ferrari. They've been on the back foot with the PU (power unit) and energy management, and here they look the best. We've always known they have a great chassis, but some things aren't quite making sense.

'If I were to have predicted, I'd have said Ferrari quick last week and us quick this week.'

World champion Lando Norris, suffering a broken brake duct, qualified sixth for McLaren and team-mate Oscar Piastri seventh. So not the dream afternoon for Norris. He had hoped to turn on a fine display for 16,000 punters inside the 'Landostand' at Stowe.

A predictable day for Williams, fallen British giants of the grid, as Carlos Sainz and Alex Albon were only 15th and 16th quick-



Home win: Hamilton salutes his fans after claiming pole REUTERS

WATCHING BRIEF

BRITISH GRAND PRIX



Sprint: 12pm. Qualifying: 4pm.
Race: tomorrow 3pm. TV: **LIVE** on Channel 4 and Sky Sports Fi.

est. It was a familiar story at the bottom of the timing screens, with the two Haas cars, the two Cadillacs and the two Aston Martins all eliminated from Q3, in that order from 17th to 22nd.

The Astons of Fernando Alonso and Lance Stroll were a second behind the rest and three seconds off the summit.

No such concerns for Hamilton, though, as he went back to his motorhome on the vast campus. Yes, it was early in the weekend, with hotter and less helpful weather forecast over the next two days.

But the seven-time world champion's upturn in form, capped by his win in Barcelona three weeks ago, is increasingly tangible. And, anyway, Silverstone is where he has long written his own scripts, regardless of logic or convention.

76 Daily Express Saturday, July 4, 2026

DXST

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HAMILTON GETS OFF TO A FLIER AT SILVERSTONE
British GP: Page 71

Fever Pitch 3 CROWNING GLORY

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WORLD CUP LAST 16

FORMULA ONE: BRITISH GRAND PRIX

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And as fellow Brits George Russell (inset) and Lando Norris managed only fifth and sixth respectively, the undisputed king of Silverstone stepped up once again to deliver for the locals.

Not that the nine-time British Grand Prix winner was expecting that to happen. "We didn't expect coming to Silverstone that we would be competing for the front row - we really, really didn't," beamed Hamilton.

"So, this is an amazing surprise. I'm ecstatic."

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He said: "We're ahead of Mercedes. These guys and the Red Bulls, they have so much power."

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THE OVERTAKE

Daniel Noxon at the British Grand Prix



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Lew's gold and Silverstone

By ISABELLE BARKER

LEWIS HAMILTON bagged a perfect pole position for the Silverstone sprint race.

The seven-time world champ continued his super run of form to pip Kimi Antonelli by 0.011 seconds.

Max Verstappen nabbed the final spot for today's front row ahead of fourth-place Charles Leclerc and George Russell in P5, while Lando Norris was sixth.

It is a major boost to Hamilton, hunting a record-making TENTH British Grand Prix win tomorrow. He already has the most with nine.

He got off to a wonderful start after topping practice and then all three segments of sprint qualifying to fire a warning shot to his Mercedes rivals, Antonelli and Russell, who were tipped to rule the weekend.

Hamilton said: "Wow! I like it. I love this place, I love this crowd, and I can't express to you how big a dream it is."

"And still to this day, when you're building up to this race and you think about every corner and the flow you can get into at this track if you get the set-up right and the right team behind you."

"The car's felt great today thanks to everyone back at the factory, just continuing to push. We brought tiny little bits here."

"Every single weekend we're showing up with something. Everyone's pushing to the max."

"I'm really grateful to get that pole. I was quick through all the session but still, it was only ten milliseconds, so it was very close to these guys."

"The team really deserves it, so a big, big thank you to everyone here."

It is the seven-time world champion's first pole position in either of F1's qualifying formats since last season's sprint race in China, which he won.

Hamilton has undergone an epic turnaround from this time last year in his miserable first season with Ferrari.

He went without a podium place for the first time in his career but this year has appeared there on four occasions already.

That includes taking a first victory with Ferrari at the Barcelona-Catalunya Grand Prix last month.

He has also had a skip in his step since going public with new belle Kim Kardashian, who The Sun revealed he was dating in February. Hamilton even blew her a kiss from the Monaco podium as she attended her first race in person since the relationship hit headlines.

At Silverstone, when asked about his positive mood by Sky Sports broadcaster David Croft, the Brit made a rare comment about his happiness with Kardashian.

Initially sidestepping the question a bit, Hamilton replied: "Once you spend a year with this team, Ferrari is the most iconic team of all time, and they've had a difficult period of

Silverstone

STAR HAMILTON SPRINTING PAST YOUNGER BRITS



BRITS ALL GOING RATHER WELL... Hamilton (right) is all smiles after taking pole position for this afternoon's sprint race at Silverstone



time. It's such an amazing team and they've been so welcoming."

"The first year was very tough but to finally see the hard work we've been putting in, it's finally got us back to where we want to be."

But he then added: "And, of course, of course, it's Kim."

Elsewhere in qualifying, McLaren's reigning world champion Norris carried car damage through the first two segments before repairs ahead of SQ3.

He pipped team-mate Oscar Piastri to sixth but his team looked off the pace and had no chance of claiming pole position.

But Norris (next) is still leading the way in the home drivers' popularity contest at Silverstone.

His cheeky happy persona continues to win over hearts at the British GP, despite his compatriots Russell and Hamilton performing better on track.

Norris' 'Landstand' at Silverstone, which debuted in 2025, expanded

from around 11,500 seats to more than 16,000 this time around.

It is particularly popular with young

female fans, with women making up more than 70 PER CENT of last year's sales.

His gaming and lifestyle brand, Quadrant, also announced a record-breaking year and a link-up with Spain's Carlos Sainz, Brit Ollie Bearman and Brazilian Gabriel Bortoleto.

When Norris was asked about how he has achieved such popularity in the sport, he said: "First of all, I was streaming on Twitch even way before Covid."

"That's very different from the Fernando Alonso, Lewis Hamilton, Seb Vettel era of where you always had to look like the bad guy that never laughed."

"That certainly changed with me, and it certainly changed when me, George Russell, Alex Albon and Charles Leclerc started to come through."



SPRINT RACE - FRONT OF GRID

1 Lewis Hamilton	3 Max Verstappen	5 George Russell	7 Oscar Piastri
2 Kimi Antonelli	4 Charles Leclerc	6 Lando Norris	8 Isack Hadjar

DRIVERS' STANDINGS

1	Kimi Antonelli	171
2	George Russell	131
3	Lewis Hamilton	125
4	Oscar Piastri	80
5	Lando Norris	79



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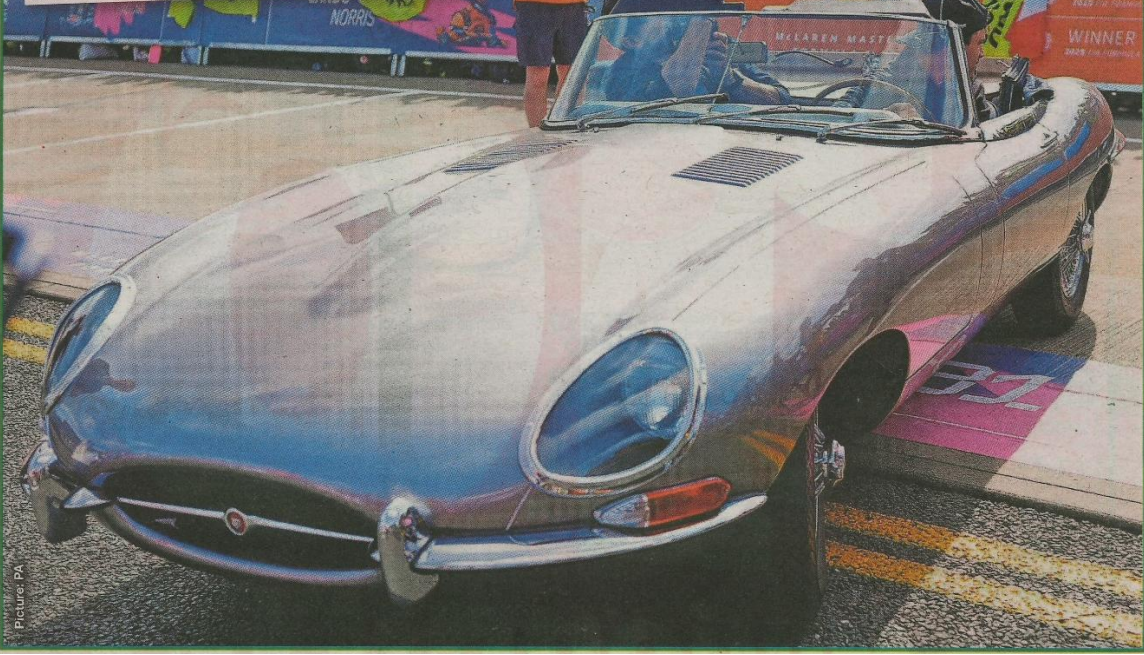
A small inset photograph showing Lando Norris sitting in the driver's seat of a classic silver Jaguar convertible. He is wearing a racing helmet and a dark shirt. The background shows a crowd of spectators and other people on the track.

Race's in Jag, Lando

★ Lando Norris arrives at the British Grand Prix driving a classic silver Jaguar. The F1 World Champion turned up to the Silverstone circuit in the vintage E-Type ahead of Sunday's big race.

★ It kicks off a massive weekend for 26-year-old Norris as defending British Grand Prix champion.

★ The McLaren driver, who lives in Monaco, returned to the UK backed by an expanded "Landostand" cheering section and massive home crowd.



A large photograph of Lando Norris in a silver Jaguar convertible. He is wearing a racing helmet and a dark shirt. The car is parked on a track, and a crowd of spectators is visible in the background. A man in an orange shirt is standing next to the car. The car has "MCLAREN" and "NORRIS" written on it. There are also "WINNER" banners in the background.

Picture: PA



FORMULA ONE

Hamilton 'ecstatic' after snatching sprint pole from leader Antonelli

By Philip Duncan
AT SILVERSTONE

An "ecstatic" Lewis Hamilton said he is in love with Silverstone after he ramped up his world championship bid with a pole position for today's sprint race at the British Grand Prix.

The 41-year-old Ferrari driver (below) rose brilliantly to the occasion in front of his adoring home crowd in qualifying to see off Mercedes' Kimi Antonelli by just 0.011 seconds and take the prime spot for the 17-lap dash to the chequered flag.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen will line up third, one place ahead of Hamilton's teammate Charles Leclerc. George Russell finished a disappointing fifth.

Hamilton insists he is not thinking about winning a record eighth crown, but his performance here will do little to dampen a growing feeling that he is now a genuine title contender.

The pressure was on Hamilton after championship leader Antonelli laid down a marker.

But the Englishman, as he has done so often before at the British Grand Prix – where his nine victories are a record for any driver at a single race – pulled out a magic lap with one sling at glory.

Hamilton punched the air before standing on top of his Ferrari and performing a two-fingered victory salute beneath the scorching Silverstone sun. "Holy c**p," said Hamilton. "Wow. Okay. I like it. I love this place. I love this place and I love this crowd," he continued.

"I can't express to you how big a dream it is – when you are building up to this race, and when you think

 Christian Horner is expected to make his Formula One comeback at this weekend's British Grand Prix. Horner was relieved of his duties as Red Bull team principal 48 hours after last year's event at Silverstone.

about every corner, and the flow you can get into at this track if you get the setup right. And if you have got the right team behind you. The car has felt great today.

"We brought tiny little bits here, and we are showing up every single weekend with something, and everyone has pushed to the max. I am really grateful to get that pole. I was quick through all the sessions but it was only 11 milliseconds in the end.

"We didn't expect we would be coming to Silverstone and competing for the front row – we really, really didn't – but this is an amazing surprise and I am ecstatic."

Hamilton called on Ferrari to replace him last year amid a dreadful first campaign in red, which arrived off the back of three underwhelming seasons at Mercedes.

But he is a man revitalised and after his first Ferrari win in Barcelona three weeks ago, Hamilton is just 46 points back in the championship hunt with 13 rounds still to come after this weekend's event.

Hamilton last began a Silverstone race on the front row four years ago. An opening lap for the ages ended with title rival Verstappen in the wall at Copse. The Dutchman will be starting behind Hamilton for today's sprint.



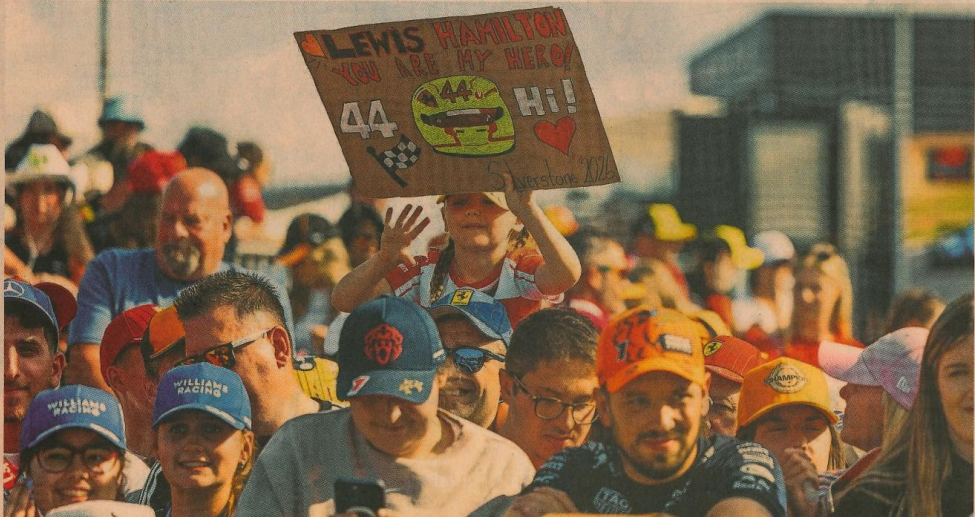
Revved up
Hamilton lifts
hopes of win
at Grand Prix

Lewis Hamilton raised hopes of another Silverstone victory yesterday as he set a commanding pace in the sole practice session ahead of sprint qualifying at the British Grand Prix.

The 41-year-old, who is chasing a record-extending 10th Silverstone success to build on his first win for Ferrari in Spain last month, was 0.213 seconds quicker than championship leader Kimi Antonelli.

The Italian's title lead was cut to 40 points last weekend as Mercedes teammate George Russell clinched an impressive victory in Austria.

The 52-lap Grand Prix begins tomorrow at 3pm.



Sara Ruffoni/ZUMA via Reuters

The Guardian

Hamilton has swagger back after finally clicking with Ferrari

Driver has recovered from low ebb and is a force again as he returns to circuit where he has a record nine wins

Giles Richards
Silverstone



Smilting and relaxed, Lewis Hamilton cuts the figure of a man savouring being able to do what he does best once more at Silverstone, demonstrating to the onlookers that he remains a force to be reckoned with at this weekend's British Grand Prix.

In the buildup to tomorrow's race Hamilton is as old as the circuit that is all but his lifeblood. He has nine wins here since his debut in 2007 – a record for any driver at one circuit – which began a love affair for the meeting that he shares with the fans and has never diminished.

His easy demeanour and renewed passion for the sport this weekend stands in stark contrast to what must be considered the British driver's annus horribilis in 2023, when he made his debut with Ferrari.

With his car off the pace and adjusting to a new team after 12 years with Mercedes, he was at the lowest ebb of his career. Yet here we are now. The horse is prancing and Hamilton has the swagger of a young gunslinger again after a first win for the Scuderia at the Barcelona-Catalunya GP last month.

Ferrari's car is far superior to last year's, albeit perhaps a

little underpowered to challenge Mercedes on the high-speed rollercoaster of Silverstone and while some of the changes wrought since last season have been technical, they have also been a factor of Hamilton's personality. His will, his ability to be a differentiator.

Hamilton observed that this process has been a matter of making relationships with his new colleagues work from bottom to top. "Re-adjusting some of my team and how they connect, realising myself with the higher powers within the organisation so that we're making sure that we're on the same track and we're allies rather than foes," was a factor he noted in the step up this season, intimating just quite how hard that initial adjustment to Ferrari had been. Albeit it is one which may make senior figures at Ferrari wince somewhat.

"That's enabling us now to just move forward in synergy, also each weekend was a really difficult weekend last year," he added. "So naturally people tend to listen to you less. Why are we going to listen to you when you're getting these results?" So that's taken a long time to build that trust. That trust is now there and things that I ask for get done.

"It's a two-way street, naturally. We're really pushing each other along and the collaboration is finally there."

The "finally" is telling. At points last season Hamilton was so disheartened he questioned his own abilities. "I am just remembering who I am," he said earlier this season. "Last year I sometimes forgot who I was."

It is an extraordinary admission but also an endearingly human one from a driver who has always



▲ 'The collaboration is finally there,' says Hamilton of his Ferrari progress

been unfraid to wear his heart on his sleeve. At the time it seemed from the outside he might have been approaching the dying of the light, yet Hamilton was muscularly exercising his will.

It was clear he was frustrated by the previous set of regulations.

Driver standings

1	Kimi Anttonen II (Mercedes)	37pts
2	George Russell II (Mercedes)	13pts
3	Lewis Hamilton II (Ferrari)	12pts
4	Oscar Piastri (McLaren)	10pts
5	Lando Norris II (McLaren)	7pts
6	Charles Leclerc (Ferrari)	7pts
7	Max Verstappen (Red Bull)	7pts
8	Nick Heidfeld Jr (Red Bull)	4pts
9	Pierre Gasly Jr (Alpine)	4pts
10	Liam Lawson II (Racing Bulls)	10pts

Constructor standings
1 Mercedes 30pts, 2 Ferrari 10pt, 3 McLaren 15pt, 4 Red Bull 11pt, 5 Alpine 5pt

The ground effect aero did not suit his driving style and the new rules this season have been more to his liking but importantly he also set about moulding the car and team around him.

Hamilton has had the team change the front suspension of the car to one he helped develop last season, then to change the brake disc manufacturer from Brembo to Carbone Industrie. A minor tweak? Well, no. In a sport measured in the tiniest of increments, he now has the discs that fit what his late-braking style requires.

He also has an enthusiastically developing relationship with his race engineer, Carlo Santini. "The Italian Bono" Hamilton called him in reference to Peter Bonington, his engineer during his success at Mercedes. Santini was initially temporarily in the position but such has their successful rapport been he looks sure to remain.

Another jigsaw piece in place. Noticable too has been how Hamilton has outtraced his teammate Charles Leclerc. Leclerc, with Ferrari since 2019, had the better of the British driver in 2023, seen in some quarters as an indication that Hamilton at it would not match his young teammate, a decline Leclerc would make definitive.

A prognosis that was as premature as it was egregious. Now Leclerc looks somewhat at sea and Hamilton the force at Ferrari. Three podiums and a win ensures the British driver still believes he can still be in the fight with the title leader, Mercedes' Kimi Anttonen.

There was no little celebration at Ferrari and in F1 at Hamilton's win in Barcelona, he remains the sport's biggest global draw, possibly more so now in the rosso corsa of the Scuderia, but the result was followed by the reality check of a more sobering run in Austria, Hamilton finishing fifth.

He is not expecting miracles at Silverstone but once again reveling in his task at his home race, nothing can be ruled out. "Every single person at Ferrari is so good up and pushing as much as they can, that's all I can ever ask for," he said with a broad smile. Regardless of whether the old airfield will once more fall to his genius, he should enjoy the ride.



LUCA BERTOLINI / F1 PICTURES

Home favourite thrills faithful at Silverstone with surge to sprint pole

Hamilton edges out Anttonen by just 0.01 seconds with flying lap on home track

Giles Richards

Lewis Hamilton gave the home crowd reason to roar as he took pole position for the sprint race at the British Grand Prix for Ferrari, beating the Mercedes of Kimi Anttonen into second, with Red Bull's Max Verstappen in third.

The pole for the short format race to be held this morning at Silverstone must be considered somewhat against the odds, as Ferrari had been expected to be somewhat on the back foot to Mercedes, at the power dominated track.

Yet Hamilton and Ferrari defied expectations from the moment they took to the track yesterday. He had been fastest from Anttonen in first practice and went on to top the time sheets in each session of sprint qualifying, including the one that mattered when he had the finest of margins on Anttonen, who leads the

world championship by 40 points from his teammate George Russell and is 46 ahead of Hamilton. Russell was fifth in sprint qualifying.

Indeed despite his superb form Hamilton appeared somewhat taken aback that he had managed to put one over on the Mercedes and Red Bull but with nine wins here, the British driver knows how make the most of every inch of the old airfield.

'I love this crowd, I can't express to you how big a dream it is'

Lewis Hamilton
Seven-time world champion

"I love this place, I love this crowd, and I can't express to you how big a dream it is," he said. "I'm really grateful to get that pole. I was quick through all the session but still, it was only 10 milliseconds, so it was very close to these guys."

"Still to this day when you're building up to this race you think about every corner and the flow you can get into at this track if you get the setup right and if you've got the right team behind you."

With the single lap-shoot underway in Q3, Oscar Piastri set the opening pace for McLaren, only to be pipped by his teammate Norris. Anttonen was rapid behind them, briefly taking the top spot. Yet Hamilton was immense through the middle sector and claimed pole from the Italian by 11 thousandths of a second, with a time of time of 1 minute 28.376

seconds. Verstappen claimed third but was a full three-tenths back. Charles Leclerc was fourth for Ferrari, with Norris and Piastri in sixth and seventh.

Earlier in the day Norris had welcomed the changing demographic across Formula One as the sport has

expanded to attract a larger female audience than at any time in its history. This weekend's British Grand Prix will attract record numbers and more of them than ever are women and girls, for which the defending world champion believes F1 should be celebrated.

Approximately 570,000 are expected across the race weekend at Silverstone, breaking the record held by previous highest attendance of 520,000 at the Australian GP in 1995, but most striking is the make up of those numbers.

Female attendance now makes up 43% of sales at the British GP. The driver's dedicated Landstand on the outside of Stowe corner, bedecked in his fluorescent yellow colour scheme, has been increased to a 20,000 capacity this year and last year 70% of ticket sales there were to female fans.

"The fact of just more women getting into the sport in the first place is a good thing," he said. "So, it's nice to know that I've played a part in it, bringing a newer, younger generation and an audience to Formula One."

"Most that I've seen today were girls and women, which is a cool thing. It's just good to know that Formula One has moved on from that point of view," he added. "I don't think it's necessarily lost the amount of guys that love it, it's just more of the girls and women that are getting into it, which is a bonus because there's just more of an audience altogether."

Today Sprint race 5.50pm Sports TV/Channel 4, 12pm. Qualifying 5.30pm/4pm; highlights 12.50pm
Tomorrow Grand Prix 5.30pm/4pm; highlights 4.12.20pm



Fans at Silverstone enjoy Lewis Hamilton's dazzling performance



SCOOT AND ABOUT Russell wants an end to his Silverstone hoodoo

I NEVER DARED DREAM OF THIS

Russell admits prospect of glory at Silverstone seemed crazy as a kid

GEORGE RUSSELL reckons he's never had a better chance of claiming an emotional win at the British Grand Prix.

But victory at Silverstone on Sunday would not be the realisation of a childhood dream for the Englishman.

That because he never allowed himself to dream of one day winning his home GP when growing up in Norfolk.

As a kid, I guess it was so far-fetched," he said. "I'm not even sure it was a dream because it was just not even possible to comprehend that."

"I remember dreaming of having a Massey Ferguson tractor when I was a kid because that was what was achievable if I succeeded."

"[Winning at Silverstone] was so far out of reach that it wasn't even possible to dream that could be a reality."

Russell still has not bought that Massey Ferguson tractor.

Nor has he ever had much success at Silverstone, having never won nor stood on the podium at his home race before.

He started the 2024 race on pole but retired with a water-system issue as then-team-mate Lewis Hamilton

BY DANIEL MOXON

won. And Lando Norris was the one who sent the locals wild last year.

Russell is best placed to make it a hat-trick of British winners – his Mercedes car for this year's race is certainly no tractor.

"For sure it's my best shot," said Russell. "But it's not something I really think about."

"I'm focused on my processes, focused on working hard with my team, because I know that's what translates into victories."

"Not dreaming about it – working towards it."

Hamilton remains the king of Silverstone and the cheers for the seven-time world champion were enormous as he arrived yesterday.

He has won nine times here before but was downbeat about the prospect of a record-extending 10th British GP success.

"We've had some great performances before but the fact is, and you could see it in the last race, we lose quite a lot of time," said the Ferrari star.

"We've got a fundamentally great car. We've just got to continue to maximise what we can and get the best results we can, score as many as points as we can, until we can close that deficit."

LANDO PLAYS DOWN MAX AT McLAREN

LANDO NORRIS is sure he could beat Max Verstappen if the four-time world champion joined him at McLaren.

Verstappen's Red Bull future is up in the air but Norris joked yesterday that the Dutchman is not the only one keen on joining. He said: "To be honest, a lot of drivers want to come to McLaren. I don't know why you just highlight Max."

"It's a cool thing, a good thing that a four-time world champion wants to potentially join the team. I don't know how much of it's true. It's not a serious thing."

"Oscar Piastri and I both have our names penned in at McLaren for much longer."

In the unlikely event that Verstappen was to join McLaren, it is widely expected Piastri would be the one to make way.

The Australian at the top of Red Bull's list of replacements should they lose their star man.

Norris thinks he has the speed to win if he were pitted against Verstappen.

He said: "I do believe I can beat any driver. What makes Max so incredible is how he is over a season. Every single weekend, performing to the level he does, it's impressive."

SATURDAY 04 JULY: LINKS TO ONLINE COVERAGE

Headlines	Media	Link
Hamilton takes pole for Silverstone sprint race	BBC News	https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/formula1/articles/c5yzw13683no
Vasseur bites back against Wolff's Ferrari F1 upgrade "cheating" claims	Autosport	https://www.autosport.com/f1/news/fred-vasseur-hits-back-against-toto-wolffs-cheating-claims-on-ferraris-f1-upgrades/10835880/
Why gloves are now off between Ferrari and Mercedes amid Vasseur anger	Autosport	https://www.autosport.com/f1/news/why-gloves-are-now-off-between-ferrari-and-mercedes-amid-vasseur-anger/10835984/
"They scared me yesterday" – Hamilton expected Ferrari to be six tenths off at Silverstone	Autosport	https://www.autosport.com/f1/news/they-scared-me-yesterday-lewis-hamilton-expected-ferrari-to-be-six-tenths-off-at-silverstone/10835962/
Lewis Hamilton eyes British Grand Prix Sprint victory after taking 'amazing surprise' pole at Silverstone for Ferrari	Sky Sports	https://www.skysports.com/f1/news/12433/13560062/lewis-hamilton-eyes-british-grand-prix-sprint-victory-after-taking-amazing-surprise-pole-at-silverstone-for-ferrari
Frederic Vasseur: Ferrari team principal unhappy with Toto Wolff over 'cheating' accusation at British Grand Prix	Sky Sports	https://www.skysports.com/f1/news/12433/13560061/frederic-vasseur-ferrari-team-principal-unhappy-with-toto-wolff-over-cheating-accusation-at-british-grand-prix
F1 ACADEMY: BATTIG ACHIEVES HISTORIC POLE POSITION ON WILD CARD DEBUT AT SILVERSTONE	Formula 1	https://www.formula1.com/en/latest/article/f1-academy-battig-achieves-historic-pole-position-on-wild-card-debut-at-silverstone.3WmrzotZyiK13TbONqAbAz
McLaren missing out on key Mercedes upgrade at British GP	PlanetF1	https://www.planetf1.com/news/mc-laren-zak-brown-mercedes-engine-upgrade
MAX VERSTAPPEN EXPECTING DEFENSIVE BRITISH GP SPRINT RACE VERSUS GEORGE RUSSELL AND CHARLES LECLERC	Motorsport	https://www.motorsport.com/f1/news/verstappen-expecting-defensive-british-grand-prix-sprint-race-versus-russell-and-leclerc/10835979/

**SATURDAY 04 JULY:
LINKS TO ONLINE COVERAGE**

Headlines	Media	Link
MAX VERSTAPPEN EXPECTING DEFENSIVE BRITISH GP SPRINT RACE VERSUS GEORGE RUSSELL AND CHARLES LECLERC	Motorsport	https://www.motorsport.com/f1/news/verstappen-expecting-defensive-british-grand-prix-sprint-race-versus-russell-and-leclerc/10835979/
Lewis Hamilton delights home crowd with pole position for British GP sprint race	The Guardian	https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2026/jul/03/lewis-hamilton-british-grand-prix-formula-one-ferrari
British Grand Prix: Lewis Hamilton edges out title leader Kimi Antonelli to take epic sprint pole	ESPN	https://www.espn.co.uk/f1/story/_/id/49224438/british-grand-prix-formula-1-silverstone-lewis-hamilton-edges-title-leader-kimi-antonelli-take-epic-sprint-pole
'My team' - Lewis Hamilton issues Ferrari rallying cry at British Grand Prix	GPFans	https://www.gpfans.com/en/f1-news/1087191/lewis-hamilton-issues-ferrari-f1-rallying-cry-british-grand-prix/
Explained: Why McLaren is the last team waiting for Mercedes' latest F1 engine	Crash	https://www.crash.net/f1/news/1100119/1/explained-why-mclaren-last-team-waiting-mercedes-latest-f1-engine
'Some things aren't making sense' Russell perplexed by Ferrari sprint pole after disappointing Silverstone result	Crash	https://www.crash.net/f1/news/1100115/1/some-things-arent-making-sense-russell-perplexed-ferrari-sprint-pole-after
Sainz predicts British GP races will be entertaining for 'wrong reasons'	The Race	https://www.the-race.com/formula-1/entertaining-for-wrong-reasons-f1-yo-yo-racing-tipped-to-return/
Mercedes finds legal way to revive banned F1 qualifying trick	The Race	https://www.the-race.com/formula-1/mercedes-finds-legal-way-to-revive-banned-f1-qualifying-trick/
'Incredible' Ferrari step at Silverstone shocks Mercedes drivers	Racer	https://racer.com/2026/07/03/-incredible-ferrari-step-at-silverstone-shocks-mercedes-drivers

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LINKS TO ONLINE COVERAGE

Headlines	Media	Link
Lewis Hamilton on sprint pole as Ferrari hit back at Toto Wolff	The Times	https://www.thetimes.com/sport/formula-one/article/lewis-hamilton-silverstone-ferrari-fred-vasseur-cqkm0llvf
HAMMER TIME Lewis Hamilton snatches British GP sprint pole ahead of Antonelli and Verstappen as he hunts historic 10th home F1 win	The Sun	https://www.thesun.co.uk/sport/39639988/lewis-hamilton-f1-british-gp-sprint-pole-antonelli-verstappen/
F1 latest: Lewis Hamilton's fears unfounded as Ferrari boss makes 'cheating' remark	The Daily Express	https://www.express.co.uk/sport/f1-autosport/2225257/lewis-hamilton-ferrari-british-grand-prix-silverstone
Round-up: Russell surprised by Ferrari's pace at Silverstone, and more	Race Fans	https://www.racefans.net/2026/07/04/round-up-4th-july-2026/