

UP TO SPEED: MEDIA COVERAGE

THURSDAY 02 JULY



Lewis has still got it...he is a serious title threat

Mercedes are in driving seat but **GEORGE RUSSELL** refuses to count out Hamilton

A YACHT in Cannes. And an appointment with Reid Wiseman, commander of NASA's Artemis II space mission that orbited the moon in April.

The sun shines on the stern, and the beautiful folk sashay along the harbour. Nibbles are served to the clink-clink of ice cubes in white wine. It is a rarefied scene during Cannes Lions, one of the resort's renowned series of festivals, catering for marketing, advertising and creative communication types.

Sound swanky? It is, but the self-styled 'working-class' George Russell is too 'self-focused' to see even this privileged brush with lunar royalty as much more than a necessary sideline en route, he hopes, to his first world title.

Dozens of handshakes for the corporate guests at the Wiseman talk completed, Russell steps into the saloon to talk of his single-minded approach. Of how resilience was hammered into him by not being born with a silver spoon. Of how his young self could hardly believe he will take part in this weekend's British Grand Prix. And about why Lewis Hamilton is suddenly in the championship fight.

Russell will arrive at Silverstone with a bounce in his step. For he won last weekend's Austrian Grand Prix, ending a seven-race drought. Momentum was with his 19-year-old team-mate Kimi Antonelli, a raw Italian with pace to burn. After that fillip in the Styrian mountains, Russell is now 'only' 40 points off Antonelli.

As for the blinkered mindset sustaining him, Russell said: 'If I am liked, fine. If I am not liked, I am not going to lose sleep over it. I am not saying I am carefree now but in my younger days I was more conscious of pleasing fans or doing things that weren't authentically me, never saying "no". Maybe I cared more about the way I was perceived. Now I just want to be myself. I only care what those I love think of me.'

Like his predecessor at Mercedes, Nico Rosberg, Russell counts a mind coach among his retinue. 'I asked my psychologist if I was being selfish by concentrating on what I want, putting myself first. He said no, it

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

by Jonathan McEvoy

was being self-focused. But I am slightly more ruthless now. I turned down an invitation to a friend's wedding because it didn't work for me.

'I don't need or read positives. But I did hear on the grapevine there is chatter about favouritism (namely that Mercedes are pulling for Antonelli). It doesn't bother me — and nor is it true.'

'There are 2,000 people in the team and they are on a bonus if we win the constructors' championship, so why would there be favouritism? We are allowed to race, unless the team's overriding aim to win the maximum points available is under threat.'

After winning in Melbourne at the opening race of the season, Russell's next triumph in Austria came 112 days later. In another upturn, he has been assured by team principal Toto Wolff — a 'friend, guide and mentor' — that he will 100 per cent drive for



Resilient: Hamilton (left) is an inspiration for Russell GETTY IMAGES

Mercedes next season in an unchanged line-up. Ergo, Max Verstappen, for so long linked to his seat, is out of the reckoning.

But in the last few months, where did Russell mine the reserves of self-belief as Antonelli, whom he beat comfortably last year, found his stride?

'It comes from being brought up in a working-class family,' he argued. 'My family had to work to provide. I didn't grow up seeing people in fancy cars or private jets. When you get into Formula One you see the wealth and some people, through no fault or fortune of their own, have a slightly easier path.'

Russell's father Steve was a seed and wheat merchant in Norfolk. 'Success was making a profit,' said Russell, who has

since repaid the £1.5million his parents spent on his career by selling the family business.

Russell turns to his closest confidant, Carmen Montero Mundt, his Spanish girlfriend.

'Carmen's family were successful in the construction business and then lost everything in 2008 (the global financial crash),' he says. 'She and her four brothers had to move schools and universities. Giving up is not an option. You have to work to survive.'

Which is what Hamilton, 41, has done at Ferrari, taking his first Grand Prix win for the Scuderia in Barcelona last month.

'He will be a serious title threat,' said Russell of his garlanded former team-mate, who is six points behind him. 'He's still got it. He gives me the inspiration of

WATCHING BRIEF

BRITISH GRAND PRIX

Sprint: Sat 12pm. Qualifying: Sat 4pm. Race: Sun 3pm. TV: **LIVE** on Channel 4 and Sky Sports F1.

DRIVERS' STANDINGS

171 K Antonelli.....(Mercedes)
131 G Russell.....(Mercedes)
125 L Hamilton.....(Ferrari)

resilience. Everyone counted him out after his last season with me at Mercedes and with Charles (Leclerc at Ferrari) last year.

'He is on it again, and it's not because he has just woken up and remembered how to drive. It is that it has clicked for him. He is happy driving the car, he has faith in his team.'

'I had that "click" last year and the start of this, and I hope I am getting it again. I am working on the car, how I want it, and we saw the results in Barcelona (where Russell took pole and finished second) and Austria.'

As for Silverstone, Russell is upbeat despite unhappy results there — his record at his home track reads 14th, 12th, 18th, 12th, retired, fifth, retired, 10th. With 175,000 fans expected on Sunday, what blur of memories carries him there to Northamptonshire?

'I love the place,' he says. 'The fans are the purest of the year. Qualifying on pole two years ago was a highlight of my career.'

'I always remember 2009, the start and standing at Copse. The two Red Bulls were leading — and that buzz I need to be asked about this to remind myself of where I have got to, and to wonder what that 10-year-old kid would think of me 17 years on being in that race.'

And perhaps even winning it.



RUSSELL IS READY TO ROCK

Button keeping faith in George

BY PHILIP DUNCAN
HOW pivotal was George Russell's win in Austria?

It was really important to provide George with the confidence coming into the British Grand Prix.

George works extremely hard. He has meetings about meetings, and racing drivers don't normally like meetings.

I was a bit surprised at how difficult it was for him at the start of the year. His pace was there but he got unlucky, and the luck was on Kimi's side.

But when you win five races in a row, as Kimi did, you realise it is not all luck and that he's doing an extraordinary job.

That's difficult, because when you're the more experienced driver in the team, you feel like this is your year to fight for that championship, and suddenly a 19-year-old is 40 points ahead.

But George is a phenomenal driver. All the pieces of the puzzle are together and he's ready to rock.

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WHO is the championship favourite?

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that can fight for a championship, and you don't know when that opportunity will come again, so you have to give it your all.

But in doing that, you put a lot of pressure on your shoulders, and sometimes you tighten up a little bit. **IS Verstappen still in the championship hunt?**

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extraordinary things with his Red Bull last year to come so close to winning the championship, but he's 98 points behind and too far back. The Mercedes is so consistent, so it's between George and Kimi and Lewis, who is 46 points adrift. He is in that title fight which is great to see.

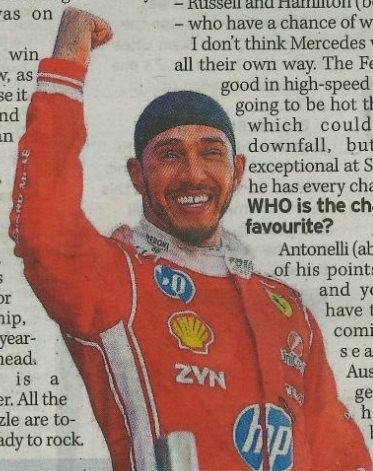
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For a racing driver, it's very difficult to pick and choose where you want to be in the future. You have to be selfish about it. It's very easy to make the wrong call, and that's it – your career is done.

■ Jenson Button was speaking at an event hosted by global ticket marketplace viagogo ahead of the British Grand Prix.





FORMULA ONE: BRITISH GRAND PRIX

DAILY STAR, Thursday, July 2, 2026 41

LET US SPRAY

Mercedes' George Russell celebrates victory in the Austrian Grand Prix last weekend



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Race winner George Russell of Mercedes celebrates on the podium after the F1 Grand Prix of Austria. (Photo by Clive Rose/Getty Images)

Russell gets Mercedes back to winning ways

Charlie Haffenden

BRACKLEY outfit Mercedes-AMG Petronas Formula 1 Team got back to winning ways as George Russell returned to the top step at the Austrian Grand Prix.

Russell, who had not won since the opening round in Australia, converted pole position to claim maximum points at the Red Bull Ring, building momentum ahead of this weekend's

home Silverstone Grand Prix.

The Brit just about survived a late charge from Red Bull Racing's Max Verstappen and Mercedes teammate Kimi Antonelli, who were both within two seconds at the checkered flag in the scenic Styrian hills.

In doing so, Mercedes claimed their seventh victory in eight races, bouncing back after losing out to Ferrari's Lewis Hamilton in Barcelona-Catalunya two weeks earlier.

For Russell, there was a great sense of relief as well as elation

as he has cut a frustrated figure for much of the season so far.

The former Williams man went four grands prix without a podium between Japan and Monaco, all while teammate Antonelli was enjoying a five-race winning streak.

"It's incredible to be back on the top step," Russell told interviewer David Coulthard in parc ferme.

"It's been a little while, so I'm definitely going to enjoy this one. A lot of hard work from my team to get us back on track.

"Obviously there was a tricky run of form at one point. Max and Red Bull were incredibly quick this weekend, so kudos to them, but thanks to everyone and thanks to the fans."

After eight rounds, Mercedes (302) have built up a 98-point lead to Ferrari (204) in the constructors' championship.

Meanwhile, in the drivers' standings, Russell (131) has reclaimed second spot ahead of Hamilton (125), though Antonelli (171) still has a healthy 40-point buffer.

Russell will be eager to build momentum at his home race this weekend, though this could be a very different-looking Silverstone with the new engine regulations.

It will also be tricky to hold off the improving Ferrari and Red Bull drivers, while McLaren's Lando Norris will be determined to impress in front of his expanded 'Landostand' at Stowe.

But Mercedes can take great confidence from Austria, where they proved they remain the team to beat.

World class musicians heading to Northamptonshire to play at British Grand Prix

David Jackson

THE British Grand Prix returns to Silverstone this weekend with a host of musicians joining the entertainment on offer which complements the on-track racing.

The four-day event begins today where the main stage will be headline by David Guetta.

The following night will be headlined by Richard Ashcroft, the Saturday by Chase & Status and the Sunday by James Arthur.

There will also be music at the TI Afterparty with DJ sets by John Newman, Rudimental, Pendulum and MK as well as a host of other entertainment across the circuit.

Joining Guetta on the opening night will be Anne-Marie.

The performance will be Guetta's only UK appearance of his global Monolith tour.

The Monolith show - hailed as the most ambitious production of Guetta's career - promises to be a visual, sonic and emotional experience.

Centred around a striking monolith-shaped stage, it takes fans on an immersive, futuristic journey where music, visuals and stage design fuse into something bigger.

Recently crowned the World's No. 1 DJ by DJ Mag, Guetta will kick off the celebrations with huge hits including 'When Love Takes Over' featuring Kelly Rowland, 'Titanium' with Sia, 'Remember' with Becky Hill and the BRIT nominated 'I'm Good (Blue)' with Bebe Rexha.

The following day will be headlined by Richard Ashcroft. As the former frontman of The Verve, Ashcroft helped deliver some of the defining records of a generation, including the UK Number 1 single 'The Drugs Don't Work' and the UK Number 1 album *Urban Hymns*.

With a solo career that includes a UK Number 1 album, *Alone With Everybody*, this is a headline set built for a crowd as big and vocal as Silverstone.

Support will be Alex James' Britpop Classical, with his orchestral reworking of Britpop favourites.

The Saturday night will see Chase & Status take over the M&S Mainstage.

Fans can expect to hear tracks including their UK Number 1 single *BACKBONE*, Baddadan and Disconnect with Becky Hill - who headlined the British Grand Prix last year.

Chase & Status have previously won the BRITs Producer of the Year award, recognition of the culture-shifting moments that have kept them at the forefront of UK electronic music.

Irish dance breakout Jazzy will join the Saturday night bill, bringing her sleek, club-rooted sound and one of the freshest voices in electronic music to Silverstone.

James Arthur will take to the stage following the racing action on the Sunday. Arthur rose to fame winning the ninth series of *The X Factor* in 2012.

His sixth album *Pisces* was released last year and reached number three in the UK Albums Chart.

He's best known for chart topping singles including *Impossible* and *Say You Won't Let Go* as well as *You're Nobody 'till Somebody Loves You and Rewrite The Stars*.

Aside from the racing and music, some of the biggest names in darts will also be at Silverstone for a special exhibition match with Luke Littler, Luke Humphries, Michael van Gerwen and Fallon Sherrock stepping up to the oche at the track's BOXPARK.

There will also be comedy from the likes of Jack Whitehall, Lou Sanders, Fin Taylor, Grace Campbell, Paul Chowdhry and Jack Skipper.

All of the concerts are free for racegoers with tickets also available for the opening concert for £50.

For more information about this year's British Grand Prix and to buy tickets, visit <https://www.silverstone.co.uk/events/formula-1-british-grand-prix>

Veteran punks Stiff Little Fingers are back in Northampton to headline the Roadmender this weekend.

The band formed in the late 1970s in Belfast, Northern Ireland and alongside the likes of The Damned, The Sex



Chase & Status.

Pistols and The Stranglers they were at the forefront of the punk rock movement.

Their debut album *Inflammable Material* was released at the height of The Troubles in Northern Ireland and mix songs about teenage boredom, conflict and polarisation.

Stiff Little Fingers is still led by original member Jake Burns and Ali McMordie who

are joined by long time members In McCallum and Steve Grantley.

They headline the Northampton venue on Saturday, July 11. Ticket costs £30 in advance before fees.

Kentucky seven-piece Doom Gong are headlining The Lab as part of a run of dates the band is playing across the UK and Europe.

Doom Gong formed in 2022, making a name for themselves with their self-created brand of 'denim psych' - melding psychedelic rock, jazz fusion, bedroom pop - and denim.

Their latest album *Megagong* was released last year. In April, the band were picked to play a live session for the acclaimed Seattle-based radio station and arts organisation

KEXP.

Support at the Charles Street venue in Northampton on Wednesday, July 8, is by National Opera and Weezy.

Doors open at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £12 in advance before fees or £13 for non-members.

For more information, visit <https://pickynew.com/events/08-jul-2026.html> and <https://linktr.ee/doomgong>

Drivers warned of delays as British Grand Prix returns

MOTORISTS are being urged to plan ahead and allow extra time for their journeys as hundreds of thousands of fans head to Silverstone for this week's Formula 1 British Grand Prix.

National Highways has warned drivers to expect heavy traffic throughout the four-day event, with up to 570,000 people expected to attend the Northamptonshire circuit between Thursday, July 2 and Sunday, July 5.

The busiest periods are expected over the weekend, when temporary traffic management measures will be in place to help manage the flow of vehicles.

A one-way system will operate on the A43 between the Towcester Relief Road roundabout and the B4525 inter-

change near Syresham on Saturday and Sunday, with the arrangement available as a contingency on Friday if needed.

Traffic will be directed towards the circuit between 5am and 3pm before reversing direction from 3pm until 11pm to help visitors leave the venue.

Dadford Road between Silverstone village and the circuit will also operate as a one-way route during busy periods.

National Highways is advising anyone travelling to the Grand Prix to follow the directions on their event parking pass and the official roadside signage from the M1 and M40, rather than relying on sat-navs or online mapping services.

Luke Thrussell, senior net-

work planner at National Highways, said: "The British Grand Prix is always well attended and residents nearby should expect some delays throughout the four-day event, especially during peak travel times on the weekend as people arrive for the start in the mornings and depart at the end of the day.

"Anybody heading to Silverstone should make sure they leave plenty of time for their trip and we would advise anyone else to avoid the area if possible."

Drivers are also being reminded to prepare before setting off by checking fuel or battery charge levels, inspecting tyres and lights, planning their route and carrying essentials such as water, snacks



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and a phone charger in case of delays.

Travel information, parking details and spectator guidance

are available on the Silverstone website: <https://www.silverstone.co.uk/events/formula-1-british-grand-prix/getting-here>

Live traffic updates throughout the event will be available via National Highways.

BRITISH GP

MONACO GP

LE MANS

AUTOSPORT

BRITISH GP 2026

How things are shaping up for the five home heroes



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UK £7.99
AUGUST 2026





Magazine

THURSDAY 02 JULY – IN PRINT



INSIDER

*Pat Symonds on preparing for
the British GP at Silverstone*

One question I am often asked is, how does a team prepare for a race? With Silverstone coming up I thought I would use this as an example of what the team does in the weeks leading up to the event, and how the new regulations for 2026 have changed the approach that is needed.

Many people talk about strategy as if it was the process around deciding when to make pitstops in a race and what tyres to use. In my book, strategy starts way before that. You may even argue that it starts at the point you design the car, but certainly it starts when you commence the planning for a race many weeks before the event itself.

This encompasses deciding on the basic configuration of the car, for example what bodywork is needed for cooling in the expected ambient conditions and what aerodynamic components are required. There will inevitably be upgrades, because it's common practice now for small incremental improvements to be made each race since these marginal gains are necessary just to keep up with the opposition.

As well as this, it is important to understand the characteristics of the circuit. If we take Silverstone in early July, we can expect average daily temperatures peaking at around 21C to 23C, but statistically there will be 11 rainy days with around 65mm of rain spread through these days. So we need to be able to ensure we have cooling configurations capable of dealing with this. Of course, because Silverstone is a former airfield, you also need to anticipate the inevitable wind that we always experience there both in terms of magnitude and direction.

The next factor to consider is the performance sensitivities of the circuit. Silverstone is a fast track with some high-speed corners that stress the tyres. The front-left in particular becomes very heavily stressed and indeed we have seen failures of this tyre occur in the past. The track has 18 corners and the lateral loads are

particularly high in the fast corners – Abbey, Copse, Becketts and Stowe. This will inevitably require high tyre pressures and hard compounds.

In fact, the stresses on the tyres are so high that drivers often prefer the harder Pirellis since they are less prone to feeling the car 'squirming' on the tyres – something that can destroy the driver's confidence in fast corners. The tyres will also run pretty hot at Silverstone, so the configuration of the brake cooling ducts needs consideration as these are also significant in controlling tyre temperatures.

With active aerodynamics, the approach to wing settings has changed somewhat. Prior to 2026, Silverstone had average sensitivity to downforce but very high sensitivity to drag, meaning that in the ranking of aerodynamic efficiency it placed sixth of the circuits we currently visit. Now, the majority of the drag is shed with the active wings that open up on the straights, meaning that in the corners, where drag is less important, a bigger wing might be used than would have been selected in the past.

This of course is linked to the fact that it ranks high in the power stakes. An improvement of 10kW will lower lap times by 0.3 seconds. When regulating the extremely complex energy management rules that have been introduced this year, the FIA now ranks circuits by what it terms the power limited distance. This means the proportion of the lap where the driver is demanding full power. In the case of Silverstone this distance is 3.833km (2.38 miles), or 65% of the total 5.891km (3.66 miles) lap distance.

What this means is that it is a circuit where a lot of energy is required and, as the braking energy is quite low due to the relative lack of low-speed corners and scarcity of hard braking points, we can see that there are limited pure recharge opportunities. This presents a challenge. Full electrical deployment is required at the start of each

***“Greater reliance than ever is
placed on simulation and this
can lead to increased jeopardy”***

straight but exactly how to deploy the power becomes a strategic question that is effectively a zero-sum game. As the drivers have constantly complained about, deploying too much in one section will lead to a deficit of power elsewhere. A significant amount of simulation is required to optimise the MGU-K deployment in the knowledge that a full lap of deployment is not possible, and the limited opportunities must be balanced for the greatest lap time benefit and racing ability.

It becomes something of a chess game; you need to look several moves ahead. This is particularly so in qualifying when an out-lap needs to be driven in a particular way to best prepare the tyres for a qualifying lap, while at the same time ensuring that the battery is fully charged at the start of the timed lap. The changes



Magazine

THURSDAY 02 JULY – IN PRINT



Drivers demand full power for 65% of the Silverstone lap distance



It's a British summer, so rain can never be discounted



Northants venue's fast corners put particular stress on tyres



Miami's energy management rule tweaks were no cure-all

made for Miami earlier in the year have helped this conundrum but not eliminated it.

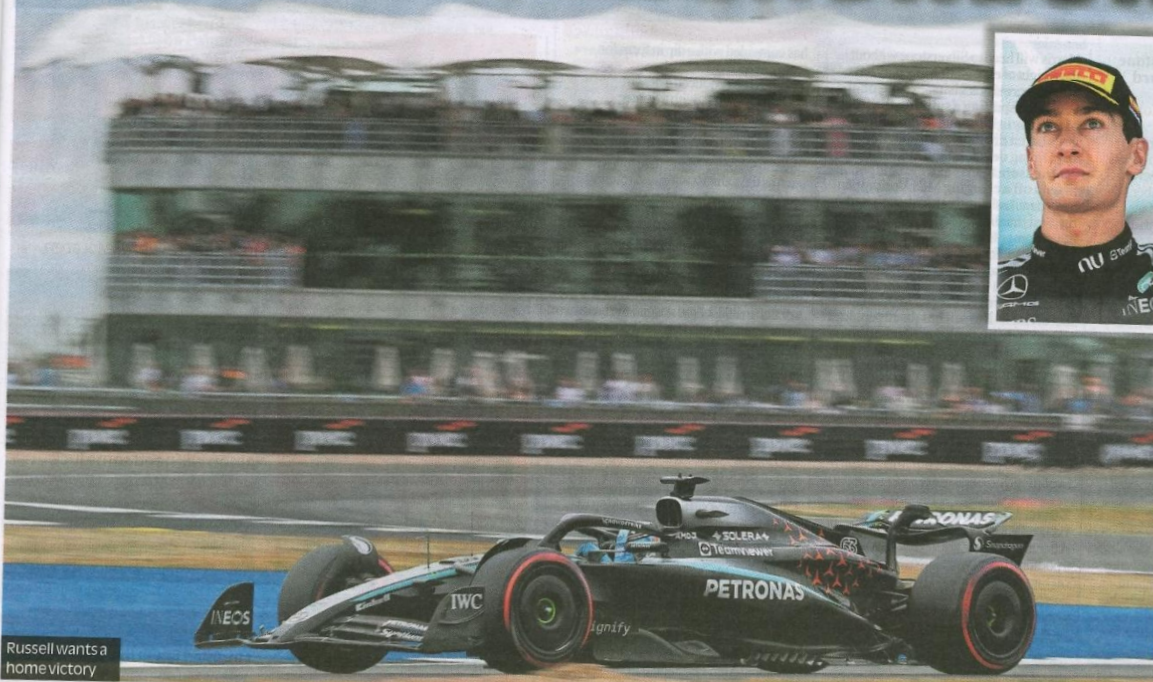
All of this is further complicated this year at Silverstone because, for the first time since 2021, it is a sprint event. This means that free practice is limited to one hour on Friday before the competitive element comes into play. With not much time for on-track optimisation, greater reliance than ever is placed on simulation and this in turn can lead to increased jeopardy. This is not necessarily a bad thing, because jeopardy is what makes sport the exciting action that fans love. ✱

Want to ask Pat a tech question for a future issue?
Let us know on autosport@autosport.com

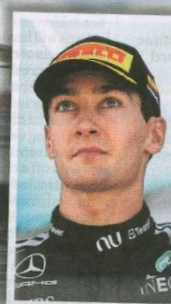
THURSDAY 02 JULY – IN PRINT

Mercedes man eager to reignite his championship charge with victory for home fans

RUSSELL'S TIME TO SHINE IN SILVERSTONE SHOWDOWN



Russell wants a home victory



By Matt James

Mercedes racer George Russell is determined to kick-start his 2026 Formula 1 World Championship aims with a strong performance in this weekend's British Grand Prix at Silverstone.

The 28-year-old's best finish in the UK's headline race is fifth place in 2023. His win in the Austrian Grand Prix last weekend has revitalised his title charge.

He sits second points behind his Mercedes team-mate Kimi Antonelli, with Ferrari's Lewis Hamilton in third place in the standings.

After winning at the Red Bull Ring last weekend, Mercedes racer Russell said: "I can't wait for this weekend because it's the best race weekend of the year, but once the helmet is on, for me, it's just another race."

"I'm not going to put any additional pressure on myself, and I'm not going to be too relaxed either. That's just the mentality I want and I need to have."

THE SUPPORTING CAST

YOUR GUIDE TO F1 ACADEMY, F2 AND F3 CLASHES

We look at the supporting events ahead of Silverstone **p31**



RETROSPECTIVE

WHEN BRITONS RULED THE PODIUM AT BRITISH GP

A reflection on the 1964 British Grand Prix at Brands Hatch **p34**



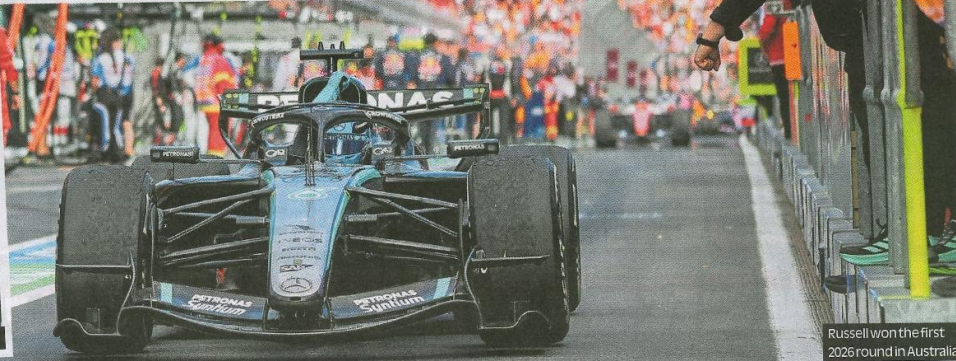
RULE, BRITANNIA

THE BATTLE OF THE BRITS

In the midst of World Cup fever, the British Grand Prix usually delivers a home win for the patriotic crowd, but who will succeed this year? By James Roberts



Russell needs to regain some ground in 2026



Russell won the first 2026 round in Australia

last year Silverstone reported a record crowd of half a million spectators across its four days, with a similar attendance expected this coming weekend.

Across that number, expect a three-way split between fans dressed in silver, papaya and scarlet, with another section backing the rest.

The candidates for British GP glory this year are Mercedes' George Russell, McLaren's Lando Norris and Ferrari's Lewis Hamilton, but we must not forget the likes of Ollie Bearman (Haas), Alex Albon (Williams) and rookie Arvid Lindblad (Racing Bulls), who will also want to perform on home turf.

As the spotlight of the motorsport world shines on Silverstone, let's consider who has the best chance of success.

For England, and St George

After starting the season as the bookies' favourite, King's Lynn's George Russell won the opening round of the 2026 season in Australia, and it looked as if the title might be a foregone conclusion. But since then, a dose of bad luck and unreliability has made that quest more challenging than it might have been. Additionally, his team-mate Kimi Antonelli has delivered an exceptional level of performance.

Antonelli's success has ever so slightly increased the strain within the Mercedes garage, especially as both have raced each other hard. Canada was a brilliant watch as the pair engaged in a dogfight, but the risk is their wheel-banging could lead to full-blown war.

It feels like a recurring narrative, but the pressure will be on Russell more than Antonelli going into Silverstone. The high-grip, high-speed nature of the circuit should suit the British driver, despite the fact his best finish here is fifth place in 2023.

Lando, hope and glory

As reigning World champion and winner of last year's British GP, Bristolian Lando

Norris will head to Silverstone without the weight of expectation that may have affected previous visits, except, of course, for putting a smile on the faces of the fans in his grandstand at Stowe.

McLaren did the right thing, sacrificing development on its 2026 car to ensure Norris had the equipment to fend off a charging Max Verstappen last year. And although he hasn't had the best machinery so far, the high development rate has seen McLaren come to the fore in recent races.

He was in contention in Miami, third on the grid in Canada, and a podium in Barcelona proved the pace is almost there. But as Russell has discovered, reliability with the Mercedes battery has caused the power unit to falter.

A double DNS in China, and more gremlins in Monaco, underlined the issue at McLaren, underlining the issue at McLaren, underlining the issue at McLaren. Norris benefited from Piastri and Verstappen making mistakes behind a safety car at Silverstone last year, and a touch of good fortune could put him in contention once more.

Send him victorious, happy and glorious

After his first year in 19 without scoring a podium, many were keen to write off Stevenage's Lewis Hamilton. But when he crossed the line in Barcelona to score his first win for Ferrari, on the back of second places in Montreal and Monaco, suddenly the talk shifted to whether he could seriously mount a title challenge this year.

While there were certainly some grievances with the ground-effect cars that impacted the past few seasons, he demanded changes at Maranello to kick-start the spark that took him to seven World titles.

Hamilton asked for a change in race engineer after a series of tense exchanges with former incumbent Riccardo Adami. During the Barcelona race, there was strong encouragement from new man Carlo Santi, whom Hamilton has dubbed the "Italian Bono." He has also had input in the development of the SF-26, notably in the switch to Brembo brakes, which

has coincided with a dip in form for team-mate Charles Leclerc.

Ferrari has produced a decent package for 2026, with a lighter, smaller turbocharger, and a car with good mechanical grip that rotates well in slow corners but lacks the high-speed downforce of the Mercedes. Innovations such as the exhaust wing and rotating rear wing are just two examples of where rival teams have followed with their own interpretations.

The one last thing that could help Hamilton here is rain. It led to his first win at Silverstone in 2008 and was instrumental in that dramatic return to the top step in 2024. And despite the heatwave so far this summer, you can't discount rain at the windswept former airfield.

Britain rules the waves

Eight of the 11 F1 teams consider Silverstone their home race, and always strive to put on a decent performance.

Although Haas is American-owned, the Banbury-based team is hoping to regain some of the performance it enjoyed at the start of the year. Chelmsford's Ollie Bearman suffered something of a nightmare at his debut home race last season, crashing in the pitlane in FP3 under a red flag and picking up a 10-place grid penalty.

Surrey's Arvid Lindblad is the only rookie in this year's field and is the first Red Bull junior not to face the scrutiny of former motorsport advisor Helmut Marko. Although Racing Bulls team principal Alan Permane will show little sympathy for failure.

Born to a Swedish father and a mother of Indian descent, Lindblad has impressed this year, especially after he ran fifth at the end of the opening lap. He has Formula E champion Oliver Rowland as a mentor and driver coach.

London-born Thai racer Alex Albon will also be flying the flag for Williams, but unless there is an odd random element, rainstorm or disenfranchised priest causing havoc, don't expect the Grove-based team to add to the eight wins they have secured at Silverstone in the past. ■



Lando Norris has shown an upturn in recent races for McLaren



Hamilton returned to the top



Albon will need some luck



Lindblad is a British GP rookie



Bearman will want to put the bad memories of 2025 behind him

PALMOWSKI: SILVERSTONE WIN "WOULD MEAN EVERYTHING"

The championship leader is set to take part in her first British Grand Prix weekend when F1 Academy races at Silverstone. She spoke to **George Sanderson**

Alisha Palmowski was a winner in Montreal



Red Bull-backed Brit is on top of the standings

This weekend, Alisha Palmowski will compete at the British Grand Prix, having first queued to enter the event a decade ago as a nine-year-old fan.

F1 Academy has been part of the FIA Formula 1 support bill since 2024, but this year marks the first time it has competed at Silverstone. Championship leader Palmowski, now 19, is excited to be part of the British Grand Prix line-up.

"I can't stop smiling just thinking about it," she said. "[Silverstone] was the first place I witnessed the speed of the cars, the sound, the smell."

"It is where my passion for motorsport was really unlocked. I remember getting my dad up at 6am to queue with our deckchairs at the gates so we could get the best view. To be on the other side of that fence and racing on the same weekend is a really special feeling."

The 2026 season has started strongly for Palmowski, with the Red Bull-backed driver earning two wins from the first five races to lead the drivers' standings by 25 points. "It's been a very good start to the season," acknowledged the Campos Racing driver. "It's not been perfect, there

have still been a few mistakes, but I'm still learning."

She demonstrated this development by delivering a dominant performance in Montreal in May, taking two lights-to-flag victories. In race one, Palmowski set the record for the biggest winning margin in F1 Academy, before beating her own record in race three.

She is hoping to take victory in front of her home fans this weekend but is mindful of the bigger picture regarding her championship fight. "It would mean everything," she said. "This is the race that I want to win the most, but I am approaching it in the same manner as any other race weekend. I need to make wise decisions, keep a cool and calm head at all times and not get overwhelmed by the external noise of it being my home race."

Palmowski has had success at Silverstone in previous years but is yet to be victorious at the Northamptonshire venue. In both her 2023 Ginetta Junior campaign and her GB4 season in 2024, when she was runner-up, she finished on the podium in a third of her races at the self-styled Home of British Motorsport. Her second year in Ginetta Juniors began Palmowski's rise through the ranks of junior motorsport. Competing in a field that featured

STANDINGS

F1 Academy 2026 (after 2/6 meetings)			
POS	DRIVER	TEAM	PTS
1	Alisha Palmowski	Campos Racing	78
2	Emma Felbermayr	Rodin Motorsport	55
3	Megan Bruce	Campos Racing	37
4	Payton Westcott	Prema Racing	36
5	Martina Prast	Prema Racing	35
6	Nina Gademan	MP Motorsport	30

FIA Formula 3 and Audi junior driver Freddie Slater, Palmowski impressed to finish fifth overall with 10 podiums.

Slater was dominant throughout, taking 16 wins and two additional podiums from his 21 races, and remains one of the brightest prospects of his generation in British motorsport. Palmowski recalls the experience of racing Slater, with whom she shared a podium on five occasions as a sobering one.

"I often say [it] was the best and worst thing that happened to me racing against him," she laughed. "It made my life a lot more difficult than it could have been but equally, developed me into a wiser driver. It was an invaluable experience."

Palmowski made the step up to the GB4 Championship for the 2024 season, remaining with the Elite Motorsport team she had raced with in 2023. Once again, the Briton made her mark,

finishing as runner-up with three wins and eight additional podiums.

"GB4 was a bittersweet year," she admitted. "There were a few mistakes and a bit of bad luck which ultimately contributed to me not winning the championship. Nevertheless, it was still a huge learning curve in my first year in single-seaters, but I loved it."

Palmowski has not only impressed fans on-track but has also built a large following off it, thanks to her humble character and dry sense of humour. The Glossop native jokes that she is "boring" away from the track, saying that "if I couldn't [drive], I'd be doomed because there are no other skills in me."

She is, however, a big karaoke fan and told *Motorsport News* how she got to meet one of her heroes recently. "On my helmet this year, I've got one of Barry Manilow's lyrics," said Palmowski. "It's the opening lyric to the song *I Made It Through The Rain*, which is one of my favourite songs. Barry has a Facebook group chat which is full of 80-year-old women and me, and I did a post showing my helmet."

"[Barry's team] invited me backstage to meet [him], show him my helmet and thank him for being an utter legend. What a dream come true." ■



Palmowski with Barry Manilow



Palmowski progressed in GB4

FIA F2: BRITISH TEST FOR FUTURE GRAND PRIX STARS

Irish racer Alex Dunne has been writing headlines of his own already in his career, and the Rodin Motorsport driver comes into the Silverstone meeting in the heart of the battle for Formula 2 success.

He is currently fourth in the points. The standings are headed by Gabriele Minni in his MP Motorsport machine, but Dunne has had five podiums so far and has kept the pressure on. In his second full F2 campaign, Cian Shields has scored 10 points

STANDINGS

FIA Formula 2 (after 6/14 meetings)			
POS	DRIVER	TEAM	PTS
1	Gabriele Minni	MP Motorsport	108
2	Nikola Tsolov	Campos Racing	106
3	Rafael Camara	Invicta Racing	82
4	Alex Dunne	Rodin Motorsport	80
5	Noel Leon	Campos Racing	62
6	Dino Beganovic	DAMS	55

For AIX Racing, level with Brazilian team-mate Emerson Fittipaldi Jr. Shields is 19th in the drivers' standings and secured his first F2

points with fifth in the Montreal feature race.

John Bennett took a sensational maiden victory in Austria in the Sprint race after a lengthy on-track battle with Sebastian Montoya. The Trident driver retired twice from top-10 positions in Montreal, at fault for neither, before finishing seventh with the fastest lap in Barcelona, so will be looking to maintain his recent upturn in form. Polish Briton Roman Bilinski is 16th with one podium.

FIA F3: SLATER WANTS HOME WINS

Freddie Slater has emphasised his reputation as one of Britain's finest young talents in motorsport with a strong start to his debut FIA Formula 3 campaign.

The 17-year-old is the only Briton to be competing in F3 this season and is second in the drivers' standings with four podiums from eight races. Slater took second place in the Melbourne feature and Barcelona sprint races, as well as a third place with the fastest

STANDINGS

FIA Formula 3 (after 4/9 meetings)			
POS	DRIVER	TEAM	PTS
1	Ugo Ugochukwu	Campos Racing	78
2	Freddie Slater	Trident	62
3	Theophile Niel	Campos Racing	52
4	Bruno del Pino	Van Amersfoort Racing	49
5	Brando Badoer	Rodin Motorsport	41
6	Noah Strømsted	Trident	41

lap on the streets of Monaco.

Fellow debutant Fionn McLaughlin is yet to score a point after stepping up from British F4. The Irishman has a best finish of 13th.

Russell gets Mercedes back to winning ways

GETTY IMAGES

Charlie Haffenden

Brackley outfit Mercedes-AMG Petronas Formula 1 Team got back to winning ways as George Russell returned to the top step at the Austrian Grand Prix.

Russell, who had not won since the opening round in Australia, converted pole position to claim maximum points at the Red Bull Ring, building momentum ahead of this weekend's home Silverstone Grand Prix.

The Brit just about survived a late charge from Red Bull Racing's Max Verstappen and Mercedes teammate Kimi Antonelli, who were both within two seconds at the checkered flag in the scenic Styrian hills.

In doing so, Mercedes claimed their seventh victory in eight races, bouncing back after losing out to Ferrari's Lewis Hamilton in Barcelona-Catalunya two weeks earlier.

For Russell, there was a great sense of relief as well as elation as he has cut a frustrated figure for much of the season

so far.

The former Williams man went four grands prix without a podium between Japan and Monaco, all while teammate Antonelli was enjoying a five-race winning streak.

"It's incredible to be back on the top step," Russell told interviewer David Coulthard in parc ferme.

"It's been a little while, so I'm definitely going to enjoy this one. A lot of hard work from my team to get us back on track.

"Obviously there was a tricky run of form at one point. Max and Red Bull were incredibly quick this weekend, so kudos to them, but thanks to everyone and thanks to the fans."

After eight rounds, Mercedes (302) have built up a 98-point lead to Ferrari (204) in the constructors' championship.

Meanwhile, in the drivers' standings, Russell (131) has reclaimed second spot ahead of Hamilton (125), though Antonelli (171) still has a healthy 40-point buffer.

Russell will be eager to build



Race winner George Russell of Mercedes celebrates on the podium after the F1 Grand Prix of Austria. (Photo by Clive Rose/Getty Images)

momentum at his home race this weekend, though this could be a very different-looking Silverstone with the new

engine regulations.

It will also be tricky to hold off the improving Ferrari and Red Bull drivers, while McLaren's

Lando Norris will be determined to impress in front of his expanded 'Landostand' at Stowe.

But Mercedes can take great confidence from Austria, where they proved they remain the team to beat.

THURSDAY 02 JULY: LINKS TO ONLINE COVERAGE

Headline	Media	Links
Gary Anderson's theory on Cadillac's costly F1 problem	The Race	https://www.the-race.com/formula-1/gary-andersons-theory-on-cadillacs-costly-f1-problem/
Norris 'happy I have the pain of this year for the glory of last'	BBC Sport	https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/formula1/articles/c36y3p1xj4jo
Why this looks like Russell's best chance yet at the British GP	Autosport	https://www.autosport.com/f1/news/why-this-looks-like-russells-best-chance-yet-at-the-british-gp/10834833/
Red Bull theory put forward by Lewis Hamilton after Verstappen battle	Planet F1	https://www.planetf1.com/news/lewis-hamilton-red-bull-upgrades-max-verstappen
Adrian Newey's Aston Martin masterplan is finally about to face its verdict	Planet F1	https://www.planetf1.com/news/adrian-newey-aston-martin-amr26-gamble-could-change-everything
British GP predictions: History or disappointment for Hamilton, an all-British podium or Antonelli fight back	PlanetF1	https://www.planetf1.com/features/british-grand-prix-2026-predictions
Lewis Hamilton addresses Ferrari journey as belief intensifies	RacingNews 365	https://racingnews365.com/lewis-hamilton-addresses-ferrari-journey-as-belief-intensifies
Red Bull handed 'game-changer' message as F1 development war intensifies	RacingNews 365	https://racingnews365.com/red-bull-handed-game-changer-message-as-f1-development-war-intensifies
Charles Leclerc F1 struggles explained aimed 'toughest moment of his career'	RacingNews 365	https://racingnews365.com/charles-leclerc-f1-struggles-explained-amid-toughest-moment-of-his-career
Oscar Piastri forced into unnatural change after 'important analysis'	RacingNews 365	https://racingnews365.com/oscar-piastri-forced-into-unnatural-change-after-important-analysis
Carlos Sainz "not really" considering F1 future beyond Williams until summer break	MotorSport	https://www.motorsport.com/f1/news/carlos-sainz-not-seriously-considering-f1-future-beyond-williams-until-summer-break/10835458/
Why this looks like Russell's best chance yet at the British GP	MotorSport	https://www.autosport.com/f1/news/why-this-looks-like-russells-best-chance-yet-at-the-british-gp/10834833/

THURSDAY 02 JULY: LINKS TO ONLINE COVERAGE

Headline	Media	Links
'Bizarre' FIA rule detail hands Mercedes a major F1 title edge	GPfans	https://www.gpfans.com/en/f1-news/1087070/mercedes-f1-2026-title-edge-bizarre-fia-aduo-rules-flaw/
F1 team turned down €40m for driver signing and did something way better instead	GPFans	https://www.gpfans.com/en/f1-news/1087063/f1-team-force-india-otmar-szafnauer-40m-sergio-perez-pastor-maldonado/
In numbers: how well do drivers performer at their home race- and who might become a first-time home winner in 2026?	F1	https://www.formula1.com/en/latest/article/in-numbers-how-well-do-drivers-perform-at-their-home-race-and-who-might-become-a-first-time-home-winner-in-2026.2mHNaj0RuyivAggRduAiLf
F1 drivers to take to Lego minicars at British GP	AutoSport	https://www.autosport.com/f1/news/f1-drivers-to-take-to-lego-minicars-at-british-gp/10835478/
'I would love Max Verstappen to be my team-mate' – Lando Norris reacts to McLaren rumours	Crash.net	https://www.crash.net/f1/news/1099968/1/i-would-love-max-verstappen-be-my-team-mate-lando-norris-reacts-mclaren-rumours