

UP TO SPEED: MEDIA COVERAGE

MONDAY 29 JUNE – WEDNESDAY 01 JULY



Russell revives title battle as luck

Molly Hudson
Formula One
Correspondent

The 112 days between George Russell's season-opening victory in Melbourne, and this win, will have felt like a lifetime. The favourite before a wheel was spun in this championship, everything that could go wrong, had gone wrong.

He knows, at this circuit nestled in the mountains, that he has one to climb if he is to reel in his teenage team-mate Kimi Antonelli, but this was a step in the right direction. Toto Wolff's advice to his driver was to "just drive", reduce the overthinking and the speed would naturally come. And so it did.

Dominant from pole to flag, in searing temperatures and with Max Verstappen breathing down his neck, he nursed his tyres to the chequered flag with a margin of only 1.6 seconds. "Yabadabadoo" was his trademark radio celebration, before he revealed his drinks system had failed.

The gap between the Mercedes pair is now 40 points, with this victory allowing Russell to leapfrog Lewis Hamilton into second in the title race. Hamilton could only manage fifth in a difficult race for Ferrari, who could not compete on pure pace and found little in the way of favourable strategy either.

"I think it's more of a reality check," Hamilton said. "We don't know why we were so competitive in Barcelona. That's a very strong track for me, I chose a strategy that from experience I knew would work, with the [degradation] that we had it was like 2021. But today I think we were hit more with reality, which is we do still have a good car but we are down compared to Mercedes just on pace — they just are quicker. We have to keep developing."

"It doesn't mean we can't close that gap [but] that one win doesn't mean we are going to be beating them all the time. It's the opposite — we've got a lot of work to do to try. We still have to put continue to add performance to the car, particularly power is where we're going to keep working."

Russell had crucially claimed pole in a chaotic end to qualifying, which

How they finished

1	G Russell Mercedes	1hr 26min 38s
2	M Verstappen Red Bull	+1.611s
3	K Antonelli Mercedes	+1.986s
4	O Piastri McLaren	+21.809s
5	L Hamilton Ferrari	+26.393s
6	I Hadjar Red Bull	+29.399s
7	L Norris McLaren	+31.505s
8	C Leclerc Ferrari	+45.659s
9	L Lawson Racing Bulls	+1 lap
10	A Lindblad Racing Bulls	+1 lap
11	G Bortoleto Audi	+1 lap
12	N Hulkenberg Audi	+1 lap
13	P Gasly Alpine	+1 lap
14	O Bearman Haas	+1 lap
15	F Colapinto Alpine	+1 lap
16	E Ocon Haas	+2 lap
17	A Albon Williams	+2 lap
18	F Alonso Aston Martin	+3 lap
19	L Stroll Aston Martin	DNF
20	C Sainz Williams	DNF
21	S Pérez Cadillac	DNF
22	V Bottas Cadillac	DNF

Overall standings

1	K Antonelli Mercedes	171pts
2	G Russell Mercedes	131
3	L Hamilton Ferrari	125
4	O Piastri McLaren	80
5	L Norris McLaren	79
6	C Leclerc Ferrari	79
7	M Verstappen Red Bull	73
8	I Hadjar Red Bull	42
9	P Gasly Alpine	41
10	L Lawson Racing Bulls	30

Fastest lap K Antonelli 1:10.374

Constructors'

1	Mercedes	302 pts
2	Ferrari	204
3	McLaren	159
4	Red Bull	115
5	Alpine	57
6	Racing Bulls	44
7	Haas	21
8	Williams	11
9	Audi	2
10	Aston Martin	1
11	Cadillac	0

proved so important on race day. Verstappen suffered an issue with his rear wing closing and crashed into the barriers on the exit of turn 9, causing yellow flags as the two Mercedes drivers finished their final flying laps. Antonelli was ahead of Russell on the track and arrived at the scene first, and mistook the yellow flags being waved as a double yellow (which would have caused his lap to be automatically deleted) so he aborted his effort.

It was a costly decision, feeling as though his lap would probably have been strong enough for the front row, but he ended up qualifying in fourth behind both Ferraris.

Russell lifted off the throttle enough to appease the stewards, registering the fastest time seconds before double yellows were waved. The delay caused controversy, with some in the paddock feeling that given the high-speed nature of the corner and Verstappen's Red

Bull in the barrier, a double yellow should have been waved initially.

Russell's actions could not be criticised — he simply played by the rules he had been given. Every opportunity like that will need to be maximised if he is to reel in Antonelli, who is exceedingly quick if still somewhat error prone. "I had a shit race, a shit start," was Antonelli's honest appraisal on the radio.

At the start, Russell got off the line well, but Antonelli was struggling to keep the other Mercedes between the white lines, veering off the track twice in three corners in his over-eagerness to progress.

Hamilton and Charles Leclerc went wheel to wheel with the Briton nudging ahead, while Antonelli attempted a rash move down the inside of Leclerc but could not slow his car down, going off track again. In giving the place back, Verstappen benefited from a perfect slipstream, leapfrogging Antonelli and



Russell dominated from pole to flag in Austria and held off Verstappen to claim

THE  TIMES

shines at last



his first grand prix victory since the opening weekend of the season in Australia

Leclerc. It was the perfect start, given there was clearly pace in the Red Bull which had been shown in flashes through the weekend, particularly in qualifying before the rear-wing issue.

"I think what was satisfying is that this was the first time I felt like actually I could fight for the win," Verstappen said after his last two stints left Russell looking in his mirrors.

Ferrari, despite their hopes of genuinely competing for the title, were a couple of tenths off the pace all weekend, perhaps struggling comparatively to Mercedes with their smaller turbo having to work harder at this high-altitude circuit.

That perhaps contributed to Ferrari's decision to again try an aggressive three-stop strategy, which worked so well in Hamilton's victory in Barcelona.

The possibility of that strategy was also partly because of the stifling conditions — over 34C and comfortably above 50C on track, which caused high degradation. Both Cadillacs struggled with overheating all weekend and they were forced to retire after the first couple of laps, their brakes catching fire. Liam Lawson reported on the radio that he could see fire from his own car but managed to continue.

Verstappen and Hamilton had a bril-

liant wheel-to-wheel battle in the first stint through turns 6 to 8, the Red Bull driver twice dipping a wheel into the gravel as he refused to yield.

Hamilton triggered the first round of pit stops, but even with fresher tyres he could not find the purple fastest sectors which accompanied his launch through the field in Barcelona. In the end, he could not even compete with Oscar Piastri, who was impressive for McLaren in fourth.

Carlos Sainz provided a virtual safety car pit window after his Williams stopped on the start-finish straight with a suspected electronics issue — Hamilton took it for a short, sharp stint on the soft tyre but carving through traffic only overheated his car in such warm conditions.

He was warned on more than one occasion to swap his power mode from "race" to "TS" — a type of temperature-lowering setting.

Antonelli was unlucky once again — pitting only one lap before the virtual safety car would have offered him a faster stop. He closed to within less than a second of Verstappen in the final lap but will be buoyed by the fact his championship lead was only cut by one point given that Hamilton was previously his closest competitor.

The Daily Telegraph



Russell 'really proud' as victory reinforces challenge for title

Mercedes driver tops podium for first time since opener Verstappen and 'incredible' Antonelli are kept at bay

By Tom Cary
SENIOR SPORTS CORRESPONDENT
at Spielberg

There were 112 days between George Russell's win at the season-opener in Australia in March and this one here in Austria yesterday. Not quite the 686 days between Lewis Hamilton's win in Spain two weekends ago and his previous victory in 2024. A tricky spell as opposed to a possibly career-ending barren period but, still, it was enough time for doubts to creep in.

It was interesting listening to Russell as he tried to sum up his feelings after this race; how proud he was of himself; how he had to keep reminding himself how good he was; how he had to block out the hype around his team-mate Kimi Antonelli.

"It has been a tough couple of months with races that felt like everything was going against me and then tough performances," Russell said. "And an incredible team-mate who is delivering spectacular performances."

"So for me going into Canada

[after a dismal performance in Miami] and Barcelona [after a similarly tricky race in Monaco], from quite a low point, I needed a lot of resilience to get back and deliver some strong performances.

"So to get the last two poles and a win here this weekend at a track which isn't suited to me, I am really, really proud."

He should be. This was a solid win, off the back of an impressive weekend's work. And he achieved it in the face of a stiff challenge both from Red Bull's Max Verstappen and Antonelli, both of whom were reeling him in towards the end.

Russell got away well at the start and initially appeared to be in control of the race as he built an advantage over Hamilton. The seven-time world champion had his hands full with Verstappen behind him, who was enjoying his newly upgraded, lighter Red Bull.

There were shades of 2021 as the two former rivals went wheel-to-wheel on lap 11, Verstappen passing Hamilton with a bold move up the inside of turn three, Hamilton regaining second place immediately, then Verstappen trying again around the outside of turn six, his wheels dipping into a bit of gravel. "That's a penalty! A clear penalty!" Verstappen told his team.

Hamilton was unmoved. "He was

Taste of success: George Russell savours winning feeling at Spielberg

behind at the apex and should have backed out," was his verdict. But the truth is, Hamilton knew he could not hold off the Red Bull. He pitted at the end of that lap, committing to a three-stop strategy. But he never had the pace to make it work, as he did in Barcelona. Although he enjoyed another ding-dong with Verstappen on lap 22, they were on different strategies by that stage. Hamilton finished fifth,

his championship hopes taking a bit of a knock.

Russell and Verstappen were more of a match. The Dutch driver had moved to within 1.3sec of Russell by lap 43 when the Mercedes driver pitted. Instead of following him in and trying to match him, Red Bull opted to go for an offset strategy, keeping Verstappen out for another six laps, during which time he lost 10 seconds, and then pitting him, hoping he would be able to catch Russell on fresh rubber late in the race.

Austrian Grand Prix results and standings

Red Bull Ring, Spielberg 71 laps

- 1** George Russell (GB) Mercedes GP
1hr 26mins 37.979secs
- 2** Max Verstappen (Netherlands) Red Bull
+1.611secs
- 3** Kimi Antonelli (Italy) Mercedes GP
+1.90

- 4 Oscar Piastri (Australia) McLaren +21.809
- 5 Lewis Hamilton (GB) Ferrari +26.393
- 6 Isaac Hadjar (France) Red Bull +28.389
- 7 Lando Norris (GB) McLaren +31.505
- 8 Charles Leclerc (Monaco) Ferrari +45.659
- 9 Liam Lawson (NZ) RB at 1 lap
- 10 Arvid Lindblad (GB) RB at 1 lap

11 Gabriel Bortoleto (Brazil) Audi at 1 lap; 12 Nico Hülkenberg (Germany) Audi at 1 lap; 13 Pierre Gasly (France) Alpine at 1 lap; 14 Oliver Bearman (GB) Haas F1 at 1 lap; 15 Franco Colapinto (Argentina) Alpine at 1 lap; 16 Esteban Ocon (France) Haas F1 at 2 laps; 17 Alexander Albon (Thailand) Williams at 2 laps; 18 Fernando Alonso (Spain) Aston Martin at 3 laps

Not Classified Lance Stroll (Canada) Aston Martin 45 laps completed; Carlos Sainz Jr (Spain) Williams 23 laps; Sergio Perez (Mexico) Cadillac 4 laps; Valtteri Bottas (Finland) Cadillac 2 laps
Fastest Lap K. Antonelli 1min 10.374secs on lap 59
Pole G. Russell (GB) Mercedes GP 1:06.113secs

Driver standings 1 Kimi Antonelli (Italy) 17pts; 2 George Russell (GB) 131; 3 Lewis Hamilton (GB) 125; 4 Oscar Piastri (Australia) 80; 5 Lando Norris (GB) 79; 6 Charles Leclerc (Monaco) 79; 7 Max Verstappen (Netherlands) 73; 8 Isaac Hadjar (France) 42; 9 Pierre Gasly (France) 41; 10 Liam Lawson (NZ) 30
Constructor standings 1 Mercedes 302pts, 2 Ferrari 204, 3 McLaren 159, 4 Red Bull 115, 5 Alpine 57

Hamilton 'reality check' Briton seeks Silverstone boost

Lewis Hamilton admitted his fifth-place finish had come as a "reality check" after his win in Spain two weekends ago. But the seven-time world champion said he hoped his Ferrari might be more competitive at this weekend's British Grand Prix at Silverstone.

While Hamilton chose a similarly aggressive three-stop strategy at the Red Bull Ring as he had in Catalonia, he never had the pace to make it work.

Hamilton enjoyed a couple of lively wheel-to-wheel battles with his old nemesis Max Verstappen of Red Bull, but ultimately fell away, finishing almost 30sec behind winner George Russell.

Hamilton said that his battles with Verstappen had been "great" and "good fun"

but rejected the Dutchman's calls for a penalty for Hamilton for forcing him wide when he tried to go around the outside of him at turn six.

"He went off the outside," Hamilton said. "You don't expect to go around the outside of a champion. I wouldn't expect to go around the outside of him there and hold the line. He was behind at the apex and therefore should have backed out."

Asked about his momentum for Silverstone, Hamilton added: "It's more a reality check. We still have a good car, but we are down compared to Mercedes. It doesn't mean we can't close that gap. It's just that one win doesn't mean we're going to beat them all the time. It's the opposite. We've a lot of work to do."

Tom Cary

He very nearly did, although in the end it was all he could do to hold off Antonelli. The Italian had a very messy start, going off track repeatedly and dropping to fifth before working his way back.

"Other than for the first few laps, he had the best race time," Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff noted of Antonelli's race. "He attacked too much in the first few laps, which is what we want to see from a young driver. But that possibly cost him a shot at victory."

It leaves the championship nicely poised, with Russell closing to within 40 points of his team-mate, having been as far behind as 68 two races ago. Hamilton is a further six points back. It is Silverstone next weekend, and the 565,000 fans expected should be in for a treat.

The worry for Russell is he still does not understand why he sometimes struggles and why it suddenly clicks. We have seen the pattern now in Canada, in Barcelona, and again here in Austria – middling practice sessions followed by a blazing pole lap. "I don't really have an answer for that," he admitted. But the important thing is that he seems to be finding his form when it matters.

Wolff deserves credit for that. He clearly put Russell in a positive frame of mind this weekend. His "just drive" instruction in qualifying was exactly what Russell needed to hear. "Like every top athlete you can get yourself in a spiral – not a spiral of negativity but a spiral of overthinking," Wolff said of Russell's journey this season.

"Sometimes you forget about the core essence, and that is just driving the car. That is the only matrix to look at. That is what I was trying to say." It worked.



JONATHAN McEVoy
in Spielberg

GEORGE RUSSELL taped back together the script he had written for himself, the one fate and his team-mate had ripped up.

It had taken 112 days of worry, but he won the Austrian Grand Prix from pole position, his world championship dream relit.

It was Russell's first triumph since he launched his challenge with victory in Melbourne on March 8. Since then, he has watched his supposed understudy Kimi Antonelli steer matching Mercedes machinery to the top step five times.

But in this sun-baked valley high in the Styrian mountains, it was Russell's turn to move within 40 points of the championship leader. 'Cold-blooded', cooed team boss Toto Wolff. It had to Jackal-chilled because Max Verstappen was on his tail in the nerve-jangling middle of the race.

In the end, Russell's pace and assurance were too much, with Verstappen finishing a pugnacious second for Red Bull and Antonelli third after some early hot-rodding led him off track.

Russell deserved success ever since his blistering pole on Saturday, set despite a yellow flag coming out when Verstappen spun at the close of qualifying, compelling the Briton to lift off the throttle. He knew the rules and clear-headedly acted in accordance with them.

Verstappen richly warranted his runners-up place because the spill was not his fault. He was undone by a mechanical issue and condemned to start fifth. But, barring a change of fortunes, Verstappen is not contesting the championship. Russell is.

We can assert that with some authority after these 71 laps at the Red Bull Ring. Had he flunked it, or others outpaced him, his prospects would have headed to Silverstone this weekend in need of CPR, pronto. It was that big a weekend for him and not only



Champagne moment: Russell celebrates on podium
GETTY IMAGES

Cold-blooded Russell gets back on track to reignite title belief

owing to the mathematical equation becoming increasingly complex to compute.

His mind needed the balm, too. He had to prove to himself his pre-season self-belief was not a chimera. Then, he bore a film-star strut. That high-stepping air had been tempered in recent weeks, misfortune and Antonelli's

speediness assailing him. He maintained he still backed himself but must have suffered faint doubts by a thousand cuts.

He was clearly away and never much rattled, other than for one small lock-up as Verstappen asked questions on lap 36.

The curtain of opportunity revealed a glimmer of light to the

Dutchman, but Russell was quickly back into his stride. He produced enough fleet of foot after his second and final stop that when Verstappen pitted, he was nearly 11 seconds back.

If it was a revitalising day for Russell, it was less so for Lewis Hamilton, who started as Antonelli's closest rival for the

HOW THEY FINISHED

- 1 GEORGE RUSSELL (GB)**
Mercedes 1:26:37.19
- 2 MAX VERSTAPPEN (Ned)**
Red Bull 1:16:11s
- 3 KIMI ANTONELLI (It)**
Mercedes 1:19:6s

4 O. Piastri (A) McLaren +21.9s
5 L. Hamilton (GB) Ferrari +45.393s
6 I. Hadjar (F) Red Bull +1:05.9s
7 L. Norris (GB) McLaren +1:05.5s
8 C. Leclerc (Mon) Ferrari +45.1s
9 L. Lawson (NZ) Racing Bulls +1 lap
10 A. Lindblad (GB) Racing Bulls +1 lap
Drivers' standings: 1. Antonelli 17pts, 2. Russell 131, 3. Hamilton 125.
Constructors' standings: 1. Mercedes 302pts, 2. Ferrari 204, 3. McLaren 159.

title, 40 points back after his first win for Ferrari, in Barcelona.

The seven-time world champion started third and raced well, yet came off second-best to Verstappen as they went wheel-to-wheel on two captivating occasions.

Hamilton fought hard, but fair in not allowing Max a free voucher. Verstappen ran his right wheels off the track as the duelled. A spray of gravel. Verstappen cried foul. The stewards rightly waved the protest away.

But Verstappen was not done and on lap 22 he passed Hamilton on the inside of Turn Six. He had tried to squeeze ahead there on the outside. Now the artful dodger inveigled himself precisely where Hamilton was not expecting him.

Hamilton is much improved from last year with three consecutive podiums but his attempt to recapture lightning in a bottle for a second successive race was not helped by the misguided decision to bring him in for a pointless tyre change during a virtual safety period, brought about by Carlos Sainz's Williams conking out.

Ferrari will be Ferrari. Hamilton fell from third to seventh, and eventually fifth. The leger chasing his eighth title is 10 points off Antonelli. 'A real check,' he admitted.

As for Russell, his margin was 1.6sec. 'Yabba-dabba-doo!' he exclaimed, relief bursting out. Formula One's Fred Flintstone before he received his winner's medal and guzzled the Moët & Chandon like the Great Gatsby.

MONDAY 29 JUNE – IN PRINT

DAILY EXPRESS



STOOP TO CONQUER
Brit George Russell marks his return to the top step

EYES ON THE PRIZE

Russell's sizzling display from pole shows he's still in title race

BY DANIEL MOXON

GEORGE RUSSELL admits watching his rivals rack up the wins had been a drain on mind and body after finally landing his second win of the season.

The Mercedes driver had not stood on the top step of the podium since the opening weekend in Australia, his team-mate Kimi Antonelli going on to secure five wins on the spin before Lewis Hamilton ended the Italian's hot streak in Barcelona.

Little wonder then that Russell was delighted at ending an agonising 112-day wait for victory, even if he conceded Max Verstappen made him sweat in sizzling Spielberg.

Russell started on pole and only ever lost the lead during pit stops, securing a confidence-boosting win (right) as championship leader Antonelli managed only third.

The Brit said: "It's incredible to be back on the top step. It's been a little while.

"Psychologically, it's been a tough few races for me.

"I've had a huge amount of support, which has helped me to stay resilient and to continue to believe in myself. The tough

races definitely test you and these last two weekends for me have been vitally important to remind myself I can do it."

His only complaint was that his drink system wasn't working – hardly ideal with the mercury approaching 40C.

And having a revitalised Verstappen on your tail never helps you to stay cool.

Red Bull's upgrades worked a treat and, finally not in an overweight car, the Dutchman showed pace that might have been enough to win had he not crashed late in qualifying.

A strategy blunder also gave Russell a reprieve as, having been as close as 1.2secs behind the Silver Arrows, Verstappen extended his second stint and slipped to more than 10secs adrift. He closed the gap again but ran out of time to catch Russell, although he fended off Antonelli's late charge.

Russell said: "I was really impressed and surprised by the pace of Verstappen.

"He put me under a lot of pressure. I only realised with about 10 laps to go that he wasn't going to catch me."

Verstappen is seventh in the drivers' standings and 98 points behind Antonelli. But

you would be a fool to rule him out if Red Bull can prove that their pace here was not just a one-off.

Verstappen was 104 points off the lead with nine rounds left last term and ended the season two points from glory.

He was quick to remind everyone that "there are more races left than last year".

But he added: "To fight for a title, we still have too many issues in the background." Antonelli had a messy start

which compromised his afternoon and, having dominated practice, he said: "I lost my rhythm. Maybe I relaxed a bit too much, or I was too confident. It's good learning and I'll be back stronger."

Ferrari only went backwards and Hamilton, after finishing fifth, said they are still lacking on the engine front, despite their upgrade this weekend. He

said: "We're going to have to push really, really hard to see when we can get the next power upgrade.

"It's just deployment – ours tails off and, Mercedes, theirs just keeps going.

"We've got to look at why and how we can improve that, but that's not going to come for a while."

The heatwave sweeping Europe made this the first race of the year to be run under F1's "heat hazard" rules, with drivers required to use cooling vests or carry an equivalent weight in ballast.

Overheating brakes were a problem, with Antonelli among those struggling to stop the car.

Both Cadillac drivers retired early, with a small fire on Valtteri Bottas' car before Sergio Perez reported smoke.



AUSTRIA GP RESULTS

1	G Russell (Gbr)	1:26:37.979s
2	M Verstappen (Ned)	+1.611s
3	K Antonelli (Ita)	+1.986s
4	G Piastri (Aus)	+21.809s
5	L Hamilton (Gbr)	+26.393s
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9	L Lawson (Nzl)	1 lap
10	A Lindblad (Gbr)	1 lap
11	G Bortoleto (Bra)	1 lap
12	N Hulkenberg (Ger)	1 lap
13	P Gasly (Fra)	1 lap
14	O Bearman (Gbr)	1 lap
15	F Colapinto (Arg)	1 lap
16	E Ocon (Fra)	2 laps
17	A Albon (Tha)	2 laps
18	F Alonso (Spa)	3 laps

Not Classified: L Stroll (Can) Aston Martin 45 laps completed, C Sainz Jr (Spa) Williams 23 laps completed, S Perez (Mex) Cadillac 4 laps completed, V Bottas (Fin) Cadillac 2 laps completed.

DRIVERS' STANDINGS

1	Antonelli (Mercedes)	171pts
2	Russell (Mercedes)	131
3	Hamilton (Ferrari)	125
4	Leclerc (Ferrari)	80
5	Norris (McLaren)	79

CONSTRUCTORS

1	Mercedes	302pts
2	Ferrari	204
3	McLaren	159

F1 AUSTRIAN GRAND PRIX

From **ISABELLE BARKER**

in SPIELBERG

GEORGE RUSSELL earned a cold bevvy after firing himself back to second in the title race.

The Brit said he was "a bit thirsty" after winning a scorching-hot Austrian Grand Prix with a drinks-system failure in his car.

It was his first win since the season-opener in Melbourne and cut the gap to Mercedes team-mate Kimi Antonelli at the top to 40 points.

Russell started on pole and was squeaky clean off the line, executing Mercedes' strategy perfectly as he soaked up pressure.

He has now leapfrogged Lewis Hamilton in the overall standings after the seven-time world champion finished a disappointing fifth.

Max Verstappen overcame a horror qualifying crash on Saturday to produce a blistering drive and finish second after starting in P5.

It is the Dutchman's best result all season on a weekend when tongues were wagging about his future and a potential move to McLaren.

Antonelli showed he still has what it takes to lead the title fight as he bulldozed around the final laps to finish third, just three tenths behind four-time world champ Verstappen.

Formula One chiefs had declared the race a "heat hazard", meaning temperatures were expected to top 31C during the weekend.

That was no surprise given the stifling European heatwave – and meant drivers could use extra measures to regulate their temperature.

With the mercury hitting 35C at the Red Bull Ring, Russell, 28, said: "Drink system failed, nice race for it to do so...I'm a little bit thirsty!"

"It's incredible to be back on the top step. It's been a little while, so I

I'M GEORGE THE THIRST

Russell earns bevvy with win

will definitely enjoy this one! It was a real fight. That pole position and the win today show I am capable of doing it. I've always believed that in the years gone by.

"This year I never doubted my ability, I just doubted the process.

"Looking how Lewis has bounced back – we don't forget how to drive, it's about understanding the package.

"Each race I'm making gains so, yeah, I'm feeling good. I love a big fight, you want the best drivers to be in that fight. More the merrier."

Nothing was getting in the way of

Russell – his judgment after Verstappen's qualifying crash, easing off enough to satisfy the rules but not enough to wreck his lap, was the difference between pole and fourth.

And Mercedes boss Toto Wolff raved: "Since Q3 yesterday, until now, perfect execution. He was quick, managed the tyres well, cold-blooded, really happy for him."

Russell started nicely but Verstappen was setting fastest laps early on as he gave chase.

Hamilton and Verstappen had an epic wheel-to-wheel battle from

turns four to seven on lap 11. The following lap, Hamilton stopped early for tyres and it sealed his fate as Russell and Verstappen stayed out.

A thrilling finale saw Verstappen hunting down Russell, with Antonelli doing the same behind the Red Bull.

Russell finished 1.6sec ahead of Verstappen, with Antonelli 0.3s back.

Verstappen said: "It was a very good race for us. The first few laps were fun and then it was trying to manage your tyres.

"But to be second and that close to a win is extremely positive."



SEE LEW LATER... Russell's Merc leaves Lewis Hamilton's Ferrari in his wake



FIZZ... third-placed Antonelli sprays runner-up Verstappen



POWER SHOWER... George Russell gets a soaking after only his second grand prix victory of the season in sweltering Austria

AUSTRIAN GRAND PRIX RESULT

70 laps
188.08 miles

NEXT RACE

British GP
Sun, July 5

1		George Russell (GB)	25pts
2		Max Verstappen (NED)	18pts
3		Kimi Antonelli (ITA)	15pts

4		Oscar Piastri (AUS)	12pts
5		Lewis Hamilton (GB)	10pts
6		Isack Hadjar (FRA)	8pts
7		Lando Norris (GB)	6pts
8		Charles Leclerc (MON)	4pts
9		Liam Lawson (NZ)	2pts
10		Aavid Lindblad (GB)	1pt

OTHER FINISHERS

11		Gabriel Bortoleto (BRA)	Audi
12		Niko Hulkenberg (GER)	Audi
13		Pierre Gasly (FRA)	Alpine
14		Oliver Bearman (GB)	Haas
15		Franco Colapinto (ARG)	Alpine
16		Esteban Ocon (FRA)	Haas
17		Alex Albon (THA)	Williams
18		Fernando Alonso (ESP)	Aston Martin

NON-FINISHERS

Carlos Sainz (ESP)	Williams
Sergio Perez (MEX)	Cadillac
Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Cadillac
Lance Stroll (CAN)	Aston Martin

DRIVER STANDINGS

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4		Oscar Piastri (AUS)	80
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CONSTRUCTORS' STANDINGS

1		Mercedes	302
2		Ferrari	204
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6		Racing Bulls	44

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BY DANIEL MOXON

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5	Norris (McLaren)	79

CONSTRUCTORS

1	Mercedes	302pts
2	Ferrari	204
3	McLaren	159





Time is money for Grand Prix

★ THIS new 50p coin celebrating 100 years of the first Grand Prix in Britain has been launched by The Royal Mint. It was unveiled at Brooklands in Weybridge, Surrey, which was world's first racing circuit.

★ The Mint's Rebecca Morgan said: "This coin is an absolute must-have piece of history."



STOOP TO CONQUER
Brit George Russell marks his return to the top step

EYES ON THE PRIZE

Russell's sizzling display proves he's in the fight

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5 L Hamilton (Gbr).....	46.393s
6 I Hadjar (Fra).....	49.399s
7 L Norris (Gbr).....	51.505s
8 C Leclerc (Mon).....	54.659s
9 L Lawson (Nzl).....	1 lap
10 A Lindblad (Gbr).....	1 lap
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3 McLaren.....	199

'Reality check' Hamilton rues Ferrari's poor performance

Giles Richards
Red Bull Ring

Lewis Hamilton said Ferrari's underwhelming performance at the Austrian Grand Prix represented a reality check for him and the team after the euphoria of his first win with the Scuderia at the previous round in Spain.

Hamilton finished in fifth at the Red Bull Ring, after a race where Mercedes's George Russell won from pole ahead of Max Verstappen, whose Red Bull had made great strides with upgrades the team brought to Austria. Hamilton had moved to second in the championship after the previous round and was being touted as a potential title contender, but he has dropped back to third, behind Russell and Kimi Antonelli, the championship leader.

Speaking after his car had suffered from a lack of pace, high tyre degradation and overheating as the team adopted a three-stop strategy that did not pay off, he conceded there was still much they had to learn. "It's more of a reality check," he said.

"We don't know why we were so competitive on Sunday in Barcelona. That's a strong track for me, I chose a strategy that from experience I knew would work, with the degradation that we had, it was like 2021. Then today we were hit more with reality, which is we do still have a good car but we are down compared to Mercedes just on pace. They just are quicker and we have to keep developing."

"It doesn't mean we can't close that gap [but] that one win doesn't mean we are going to be beating them all the time. We still have to just continue to add performance to the car, particularly power is where we're going to keep working."

Hamilton, who started third on the grid, did enjoy a spirited fight with Verstappen in the early stages, which the Dutchman at one point suggested should have earned his rival a penalty, when the British driver squeezed him wide at turn six. The stewards judged the racing had been fair.

"It was good fun," Hamilton said of their duel. "He went off the outside. You don't expect to go around the outside of a champion. I wouldn't expect to go around the outside of him there and hold the line. He was behind at the apex and therefore he should have backed out but didn't."

The Ferrari team principal, Fred Vasseur, said of the team's run in Austria: "Everything went in the wrong direction but it's a good lesson."



▲ Lewis Hamilton trails race winner George Russell at the Red Bull Ring



Russell holds off Verstappen and Antonelli in tense finale to win

Giles Richards
Red Bull Ring

There are legs still then in a Formula One world championship that continues to ebb and flow. At the Austrian Grand Prix, George Russell was riding the wave to win but only after a gripping battle with an almost shockingly resurgent Red Bull in the hands of Max Verstappen. Ferrari, heady victors in the last round, well, they were but flotsam in Austria.

The victory was of import of course to Russell who has been in sore need of making the point to his teenage teammate Kimi Antonelli that the British driver remains a force to be reckoned with. With Antonelli finishing third, after a grandstand finale in which Russell, Verstappen and the Italian were separated by just under two seconds, Russell has now closed the gap to him to 40 points.

It is large but crucially not insurmountable with 14 rounds still to go and via a pole sealed with perfect, split-second judgment under the intense pressure of sudden yellow flags and then a win ground out while being hounded by a flying Verstappen, Russell demonstrated the moxie that should keep him in contention, as he acknowledged. "The tough races definitely test you psychologically,"

he said. "These last two weekends for me have been vitally important to remind myself I can do it."

It was an achievement also noted by his team principal, Toto Wolff. "It's been a perfect execution," he said. "He was quick, managed the tyres well, cold blooded." Which is exactly what Russell needs to be to maintain the pressure on his teammate.

Russell's win was hard fought but deserved. He could not afford to put a foot wrong with Verstappen showing so much pace to follow him home from fifth after a crash in qualifying. His second place was significant given the speculation about the four-time champion's future, with rumours of a move to McLaren. Their team principal, Zak Brown, observed before the race that while he was happy with his lineup, of course he would sign the Dutchman if something happened to one of his drivers.

Verstappen, however, has always been clear that he wants performance more than anything and Red Bull know that if they provide that, he will stay. On this form, the swathe of upgrades they brought to Austria were indeed effective, at this circuit at least. Verstappen was absolutely rapid at the Red Bull Ring, the most competitive he has been all year, for his best finish this season and was genuinely in with a shot of the win. He vied with Hamilton to thrilling

effect in the early stages and was decisive when putting the move on him that mattered. Then for two stints he chased down Russell, dashing about with the verve of old, that has not so much been on display this year with an engine formula he dislikes.

He cut Russell's lead to four seconds by lap 34 and a second more two laps later, as Russell struggled for pace. He was within 1.5sec by lap 40 – only to then have to repeat the task after the final stops took place. Going long before his last stop, he emerged 11sec back from Russell with 21 laps to go. The gap was down to 6sec with



▲ George Russell after a hard-fought victory and his second of the season

Results and standings

1	George Russell GB	25.1
2	Mercedes	1hr 26min 37.979s
3	Max Verstappen Neth	
4	Red Bull	+1.611s
5	Kimi Antonelli It	
6	Mercedes	+1.986s
7	Oscar Piastri Aus	
8	McLaren	+21.809s
9	Lewis Hamilton GB	
10	Ferrari	+26.393s
11	Isack Hadjar Fr	
12	Red Bull	+29.399s
13	Lando Norris GB	
14	McLaren	+31.505s
15	Charles Leclerc Mnc	
16	Ferrari	+45.659s
17	Liam Lawson NZ	
18	Racing Bulls	+1.1
19	Arvid Lindblad GB	
20	Racing Bulls	+1.1

Also finished	
11	Gabriel Bortoletto Br Audi
12	Nico Hülkenberg Ger Audi
13	Pierre Gasly Fr Alpine
14	Oliver Bearman Gb Haas
15	Franco Colapinto Arg Alpine
16	Esteban Ocon Fr Haas
17	Alex Albon Tha Williams
18	Fernando Alonso Sp Aston Martin
Not classified	
RET	Carlos Sainz Sp Williams
RET	Sergio Pérez Mex Cadillac
RET	Valtteri Bottas Fin Cadillac
RET	Lance Stroll Can Aston Martin

Championship standings	
Drivers:	1 Antonelli 171pts; 2 Russell 131
	3 Hamilton 125; 4 Piastri 80; 5 Norris 79;
	6 Leclerc 79; 7 Verstappen 73; 8 Hadjar 4;
	9 Gasly 41; 10 Lawson 30; 11 Bearman 18
	12 Colapinto 16
Constructors:	1 Mercedes 302pts;
	2 Ferrari 204; 3 McLaren 159; 4 Red Bull 11
	5 Alpine 57; 6 Racing Bulls 44; 7 Haas 21;
	8 Williams 11; 9 Audi 2; 10 Aston Martin 1;
	11 Cadillac 0

12 remaining then 3sec off with the to go, even as Antonelli also closed him down to take their battle to the flag.

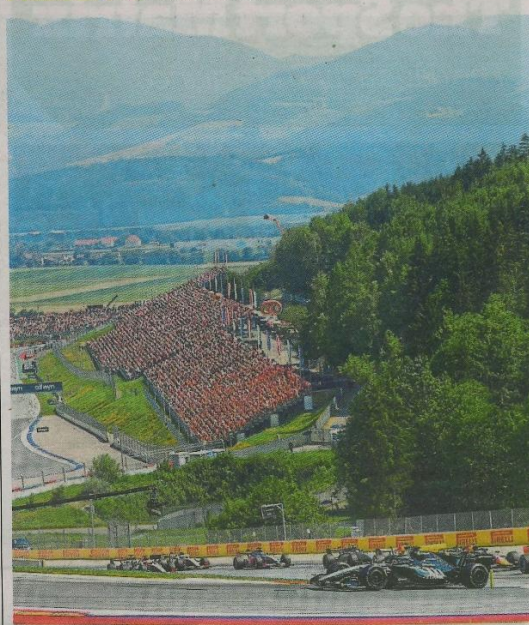
Verstappen is now 98 points behind Antonelli, a chasm, but as has been observed, fewer than the 104-point deficit from which he launched this title tilt that went to the wire year. Red Bull turned it round then and while the task of a greater this time out, Verstappen's drive in Austria was a salutary reminder of his fearsome talent.

Laurent Mekies, the team principal, was understandably buoyant knowing what it means to keep a driver in situ. "The most satisfying element is the pace. For the first time this season we have the pace to very close, to have enough to win."

Ferrari, however, so buoyed by Hamilton's win at the last round in Barcelona, were left deflated by a lack of pace, tyre degradation issues, overheating. Hamilton fought hard with Verstappen but was ultimately powerless against his pace and his teammate Charles Leclerc finished in fifth and eighth respectively, far from the lead and more only really in the fight with McLaren's Oscar Piastri and Lando Norris, who were fourth and seventh.

Lessons for the Scuderia? Antonelli, who admitted he was eager in the opening laps, repeated trying desperately to make up places. Too much too young then but Wolff has often observed, he was rather calm a charger than taking stick to a donkey and his pace at the end was formidable once more reminder for the victorious Russell that a long old scrap still lies ahead.

FORMULA ONE AUSTRIAN GRAND PRIX



George Russell edges ahead at the first corner in Spielberg (below) and celebrates his win (right) as Max Verstappen (below) had to settle for second REUTERS



Russell holds off Verstappen to roar back into title contention

By Philip Duncan

George Russell withstood Max Verstappen's challenge to end his 112-day wait for a race victory and breathe fresh life into his world championship bid. The Briton headed into the

eightth round of the season at the Austrian Grand Prix without a win since the opening race of the season in Melbourne back in March.

But the 28-year-old delivered an impressive performance to cross the line 1.6 seconds clear of Verstappen.

Championship leader Kimi Antonelli finished third in Spielberg, just three tenths behind Verstappen, allowing Russell to reduce the Italian's title advantage from 50 points to 40, a week out from the British GP. Russell's triumph also elevated him ahead of Lewis Hamilton in the standings after a three-stop strategy scuppered the Ferrari driver's challenge, a week after his win in Spain.

Hamilton ended fifth and is now 46 points off the championship pace, while Oscar Piastri finished in fourth, with Verstappen's Red Bull team-mate Isack Hadjar sixth and world champion Lando Norris a place further back.

"Yabba-dabba-doo!" yelled Russell as he channelled his inner Fred Flintstone after finally ending his victory drought.

His title challenge had been blighted by bad luck, indifferent form and an impressive Antonelli run of form

in recent months, but the Englishman will feel a weight has been lifted off his shoulders ahead of his home event at Silverstone next weekend.

After upsetting the form book to take a last-gasp pole position, Russell held his nerve on the stam-

pede to the opening corner with the main early drama unfolding behind his Mercedes.

Hamilton cleared team-mate Charles Leclerc for second on lap one before Antonelli moved into third position, only to drop two places after he ran off the road.

Verstappen crashed out of qualifying at the penultimate corner, but gained two positions to take third, with Hamilton in his sights.

On the 11th lap, Hamilton and Verstappen traded positions at turns 3 and 4 before the Red Bull driver dropped two wheels on the gravel at turn 6 and called for his one-time rival to be sanctioned.

"That's a penalty, a clear penalty," said Verstappen, aggrieved that Hamilton had left him with nowhere to go. The stewards noted the flashpoint but elected against any serious action.

Verstappen was beginning to reel in Russell, and by lap 40, the Dutchman was just over a second back.

But Mercedes moved quickly, bringing Russell into the pits for a second time, and when Verstappen stopped for tyres six laps later, he was the best part of 11 seconds behind the leader.

It was Russell's to lose from there, and although Verstappen would gain almost 10 seconds across 22 laps, he failed to face a significant challenge.

"It's incredible to be back on the top step," said a delighted Russell after taking the victory. "It has been a little while, so I am going to enjoy it this evening. Max was incredibly quick so kudos to them. It was toasty out there so I am looking forward to a drink now."

Austrian GP result

1	G Russell (GB)	Mercedes	1h 26m 37.979s
2	M Verstappen (Neth)	Red Bull	+1.611sec
3	K Antonelli (It)	Mercedes GP	+1.986
4	O Piastri (Aus)	McLaren	+21.809
5	L Hamilton (GB)	Ferrari	+26.393
6	I Hadjar (Fr)	Red Bull	+29.399
7	L Norris (GB)	McLaren	+31.505
8	C Leclerc (Mon)	Ferrari	+45.669
9	L Lawson (NZ)	RB	at 1 lap
10	A Lindblad (GB)	RB	
11	G Bortoletto (Br)	Audi	
12	N Hulkenberg (Ger)	Audi	
13	P Gasly (Fr)	Alpine	
14	O Bearman (GB)	Haas F1	
15	F Colapinto (Arg)	Alpine	
16	E Ocon (Fr)	Haas F1	at 2 laps
17	A Albon (Thai)	Williams	at 3 laps
18	F Alonso (Sp)	Aston Martin	at 3 laps

Not classified: L Stroll (Can) Aston Martin 4.5 laps. C Sainz Jr (Sp) Williams 23 laps. S Perez (Mex) Cadillac 4 laps. V Bottas (Fin) Cadillac 2 laps.

Drivers' standings

1	K Antonelli	171pts	12	F Colapinto	16
2	G Russell	131	13	A Lindblad	14
3	L Hamilton	125	14	C Sainz Jr	6
4	O Piastri	80	15	A Albon	5
5	L Norris	79	16	E Ocon	3
6	C Leclerc	79	17	G Bortoletto	2
7	M Verstappen	73	18	F Alonso	1
8	I Hadjar	42	19	N Hulkenberg	0
9	P Gasly	41	20	V Bottas	0
10	L Lawson	30	21	S Perez	0
11	O Bearman	18	22	L Stroll	0

Constructors' standings

1	Mercedes GP	307pts
2	Ferrari	206
3	McLaren	159
4	Red Bull	115
5	Alpine	57
6	RB	44
7	Haas F1	21
8	Williams	11
9	Audi	2
10	Aston Martin	1
11	Cadillac	0

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The Daily Telegraph



Lovely bubbly: Britain's George Russell celebrates with his Mercedes team after winning in Austria

Gary Anderson

Former Jordan and Jaguar F1 technical director



Why Russell must dent rival's lead at Silverstone

After a lengthy wait, George Russell stood on the top step of the podium in Austria and with it put himself back into second place in the drivers' championship.

With all we have seen in the first eight races of the season, a straight fight between Russell and Kimi Antonelli, his Mercedes teammate, now looks most likely.

How might the rest of the season play out between these two drivers? Are there some tracks that suit Antonelli more than Russell and vice versa? Yes, but it is a complicated picture with many other factors in play.

It is difficult to look too far ahead in the season and predict what might happen because the strengths and weaknesses of a car and its characteristics will change as development ramps up in the middle of the season.

Looking at the races in the autumn, you may as well toss a

coin. Still, it is not ludicrous to have a stab at the next run.

Russell will go into the British Grand Prix this weekend with confidence and momentum after a long-awaited win in Austria, as well as a decent result (and pole) in Spain. A home race often gives a driver a bit more in their tank, and the fast, flowing corners at Silverstone should suit his driving style. It is a true drivers' track.

The proviso here is that Silverstone is one of the worst tracks for energy management.

That, however, might mean Mercedes are top of the pack as they have a better handle on that than most. Ferrari were strong in the longer corners in Spain, which might help them too.

Next up is Spa-Francorchamps, in Belgium, which has similar

characteristics to Silverstone with even longer straights. Again, it is a drivers' track, though less so these days. It is also an energy-hungry circuit. Russell has gone quite well here in the past and it was around this point last season that Antonelli went off the boil. Might that happen again? It is difficult to say.

As ever, it is likely to



Man at the top: Kimi Antonelli

between Russell and Antonelli I would lean towards Antonelli as he seems to be able to hit the ground running right at the front.

We have seen quite often this season the two-by-two "Noah's Ark" grids. I think it will be even more so at Monza in Italy as the lap time there is more or less dictated by the straight-line efficiency of the car and the driver has much less input in the lap time than say at Silverstone or Spa.

Ferrari, too, often pull something out of the bag for their home race. Last year Antonelli struggled to deal with the pressure in his home races at Imola and Monza, but this year things appear to be different. After his first win in China his level has barely dropped. The expectation from the home fans and media scrutiny could actually give him a bit of a boost at Monza this year.

The Madrigal in Spain is completely unknown as it is a new track. Everyone, each driver and each team, must experiment.

It will be the driver or team that does this most successfully that will triumph, but the car still plays a part. Again, Antonelli has so far been the better driver at getting up to speed sooner, so Madrid might work well for him.

Two street tracks in a row, in Azerbaijan and Singapore, kick off the flyaway races and the final third or so of the season.

The two Mercedes drivers are performing similarly and it has been a fantastic championship so far. Antonelli just needs to cut out the errors a little and he will be in a superb position. He has been more prone to mistakes than Russell and on street circuits like these, you can be punished for a small error.

You are always a blink away from destruction. That said, Antonelli was superb at Monaco when pushing to the maximum, but I think Russell's maturity will pay off here. Looking beyond this there are so many uncertainties about how the Mercedes car's characteristics may change – and whether they will still be the fastest team – that trying to work out which track will suit which driver is extremely difficult.

Between Antonelli and Russell, every circuit can go either way. Generally Russell is better at the faster, more committed circuits – like Austin and Interlagos – whereas Antonelli is better on the stop-and-go type circuits with good changes of direction that require a strong front end – like Mexico City and Abu Dhabi.

It is so hard to predict. It will come down to the car and making sure that no other teams nip in there, as happened in Austria when it was nearly a Ferrari front-row lockout. It will also come down to avoiding big mistakes and executing the qualifying lap on Saturday.

You cannot overstate how crucial this is. Russell has pulled a lap out of the bag for pole in both Montreal and Austria, but Antonelli has been more consistent at this so far in 2026.

He also holds a 40-point advantage which, while not enormous, is something you would rather have than not.

TUESDAY 30 JUNE – IN PRINT

DAILY  EXPRESS

FORMULA ONE

THE boss of Silverstone is "absolutely ready" to drive this weekend's British Grand Prix into the history books as the most-attended Formula One event ever seen.

About 565,000 fans are due to attend, 45,000 more than Adelaide's record, set in 1995. Silverstone CEO Stuart Pringle said: "It reinforces how important the British market is to F1. We are absolutely ready."

FORMULA ONE

Russell

bland!

WOLFF: KEEP EVEN KEEL, GEORGE

TOTO WOLFF urged George Russell to keep calm amid the "mania and depression" of Formula One's title race.

The Brit won the Austrian Grand Prix on Sunday to give his championship hopes a big boost. It meant he leapfrogged Lewis Hamilton for second place and is now just 40 points behind his 19-year-old Mercedes team-mate Kimi Antonelli, who tops the table. It has been far from a straightforward season for Russell, 28, who has endured pit-stop palavers, a DNF in Canada and penalty woes in Monaco.

But he has looked back to his old self in the last two races, with his win at Spielberg following second spot in Barcelona, where Antonelli did not finish.

Russell has all the momentum going into this weekend's British Grand Prix at Silverstone. But Mercedes boss Wolff warned his driver to stay on an even keel.

He said: "You have a young team-mate and it's your year – and then he's so strong and you have a DNF and you're falling behind. Like every top athlete, you can get yourself in a spiral."

"Not negativity but overthinking. What more can I do?"

"Sometimes, you forget about the core essence ... this

By ISABELLE BARKER

is just driving the car. In this sport, we tend to swing between mania and depression.

"One weekend we're the greatest and we're world champions and it's all fantastic... and five days later, it's a big depression and everything is s***."

"The upgrade didn't work, the engine is not what we wanted – but the weekend before it was actually the best."

"It's over the 22 races that we're going to have in the season."

"We need to optimise on that, rather than declare a state of emergency and everything is down the s***."

"If we would have spoken about George 36 hours ago, we would have said this campaign is not going too well, is he ever going to recover? Now after Sunday afternoon, he's the real deal."

Ferrari fell away with what seemed a combination of compromised straight line speed and overheating issues.

They arrived at the Red Bull Ring in Spielberg hoping to build momentum from Hamilton's win in Barcelona.

While Charles Leclerc and Hamilton qualified second and third respectively, they finished in a disappointing eighth and fifth.

Ferrari boss Fred Vasseur said: "We didn't have the pace to fight with Mercedes and Max Verstappen and over-pushed the first couple of laps and had to change strategy."

"Everything went in the wrong direction. It's a good lesson."



SPIELBERG BLOCKBUSTER
... Russell lifts Austrian Grand Prix trophy

F1 BOSSES READY FOR A FANTASTIC SILVERSTONE

Brit race set to be a record for attendance



**LEW
BEAUTY!**
Hamilton reigning
supreme at
Silverstone back
in 2019

BY PHILIP DUNCAN

THE boss of Silverstone said he is "absolutely ready" to drive this weekend's British Grand Prix into the history books as the most-attended Formula One event ever.

It is anticipated that an extraordinary 565,000 spectators will descend on Silverstone across the weekend for the ninth round of the season.

That will eclipse the sport's 31-year record – held by the Australian Grand Prix in Adelaide – by 45,000.

Silverstone has sold more than 175,000 tickets for Sunday's race alone, which is also a new record for the Northamptonshire circuit.

And Silverstone chief executive Stuart Pringle said: "What does it mean to be hosting the largest Grand Prix ever?"

"It feels entirely appropriate for the place which ran the first round in Formula One in 1950. The British fanbase and the history of strong

attendance makes it fitting that it is us (that breaks the record), and it reinforces how important the British market is to Formula One. This is a very big race in the calendar.

"We are absolutely ready. The whole thing has got an air of polish to it.

"We have been building up year-on-year, but this feels like a big step forward."

Lando Norris, returning as the defending champion, will get an enormous reception this weekend – not least from his huge sold-out Landstand.

But he knows back-to-back Silverstone successes are unlikely given McLaren's lack of pace.

He said: "The car is still behind the leaders in terms of performance, but that's something we know we need more time to improve.

"I'm excited for the home crowd. We're making progress, and if we tidy up a few things, we'll give ourselves a better shot next time."

AUSSIE RULES

The huge F1 crowd at Adelaide in 1995



INSIDE TOMORROW



DAILY
Mirror

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**TUESDAY 30
JUNE – IN PRINT**



◀ A frustrating weekend may lie ahead for Max Verstappen, who has been critical of the current formula

JAKUB PORZYCKI/
NURPHOTO/
SHUTTERSTOCK

Formula One

Silverstone ill-suited to grid's current engines, says Verstappen

Giles Richards
Red Bull Ring

Max Verstappen fears this weekend's British Grand Prix may fall flat, arguing that the new Formula One regulations will leave teams struggling to perform on what is considered one of the great circuits of the season. Verstappen said he had been left laughing at how Silverstone was neutered by the current engine formula when practising for the race on a simulator.

The four-time world champion finished second at the Austrian Grand Prix on Sunday, behind the Mercedes of George Russell, but his Red Bull showed greatly improved form after the host of upgrades the team applied at the Red Bull Ring. The place was hard earned, given he was also suffering from a technical problem at the rear of the car in the second half of the race.

Regardless of which, he was sceptical about how that might translate into next Sunday's race. "I love the track but I did a few laps on the simulator, I just started laughing," he said. "It felt like a different track to be honest. You barely have battery around the lap. It's just constantly flat. So yes, it's going to feel very different compared to what we are used to around Silverstone, because of the layout of the track.

"In Austria you have long straights and big braking zones, so you can charge the battery. There [at Silverstone] you have long straights but in a fast corner for example you can't really charge the batteries, and then the next straight you don't have a lot to spend. It's going to be a tough one."

Verstappen, like most drivers from the grid, has been a vocal critic of the current engine formula, which places an emphasis on energy management with an almost 50-50 split between power from the internal

combustion engine and the electrical battery and hybrid unit. The system makes some tracks where energy recovery is scarce, frustrating for those who cannot drive flat-out as they would like. The Dutchman fears Silverstone, with its long straights, fast corners and few heavy braking areas, will be punishing.

However Lewis Hamilton, fifth in Austria after Ferrari had a disappointing weekend but who did enjoy a feisty scrap with Verstappen, was nonetheless impressed by Red Bull, deeming them genuine contenders and noting how the team had both shed the car's excess weight and developed it strongly.

"The weight that they dropped from the car is huge," he said. "It's showing that they've got a good car. Then they brought up lots of upgrades, so they're going to be a force to be reckoned with in the following races."

Verstappen's second place in Austria was his best result of the season and represented a real step forward for his team, who had opened the year off the pace and struggling for both grip and balance. They might expect to show good form at the British GP but if they are once more struggling for power it could instead prove to be a frustrating weekend for the 28-year-old.

Nonetheless the Red Bull team principal, Laurent Mekies, remained enormously positive at the strides his team had made across the opening eight rounds.

"We started the season more than a second away from the pace to win a race," he said. "The Miami package took us back to the half-a-second region and now it's great with the package we had on Sunday. We seem to be within the last 10th, certainly within striking range."

The acid test comes at Silverstone where Mercedes, who have demonstrated major advantages in the strength of their recharging and deployment of electrical energy this season, will expect to be enormously strong.

'I did a few laps on the simulator and started laughing'

Max Verstappen
Red Bull driver



TUESDAY 30 JUNE – IN PRINT

SPORT

Silverstone set for world record crowd

Silverstone is in pole position to put the British Grand Prix into the history books as the most-attended Formula One event ever. It is anticipated that 565,000 fans will descend on the Northamptonshire venue this weekend, eclipsing the 31-year record held by the Australian Grand Prix in Adelaide by 45,000.



THE TIMES

More female fans than ever, so why no women in F1's Piranha Club?

Formula 1 has never been more diverse but has not had a female team boss for six years, writes Molly Hudson



Walking down the Formula 1 paddock in 2026 is a very different experience than it would have been in decades gone by.

Particularly since Liberty Media took over the sport, and the Netflix series *Drive to Survive* catapulted F1 into the mainstream, the make-up of the paddock is more diverse, younger and more female, matching the fastest-growing demographic of 16-24-year-old women and girls who now watch the sport.

Formula 1 Academy, the all-female race series, is thriving, broadcast live on Sky Sports, with a Netflix show of its own, and will make its debut at Silverstone this weekend. Yet the representation of women in senior leadership—at the teams, at least—is sorely lacking.

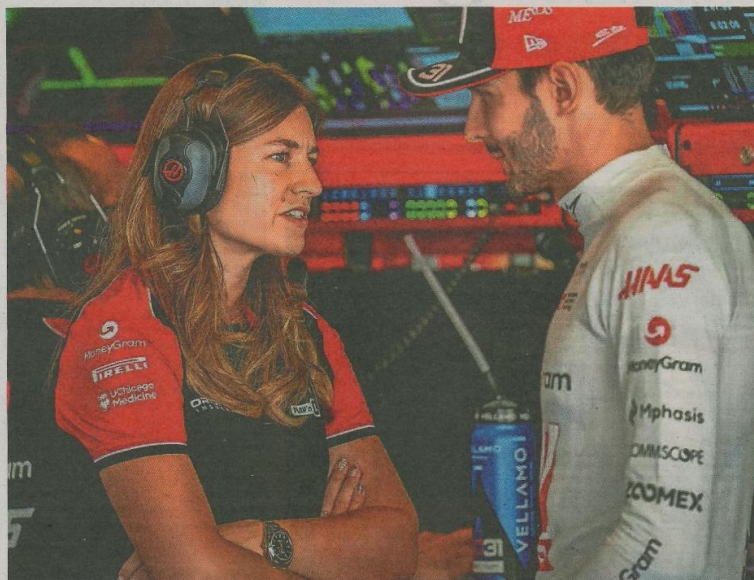
"I think it's important that we keep reminding people that there have been female team principals, because we now see 11 male team bosses," Claire Williams says.

Williams was team principal at the constructor founded by — and named after — her father Frank, from 2013-20. The first female team leader was Monisha Kaltenborn at Sauber in 2012.

Yet since Williams departed in 2020, there have been no other women in the team principal or chief executive roles. In those six years, the role has changed significantly.

"I saw this brilliant video online at the weekend from Barcelona of James Vowles [now the Williams team principal] going out on the balcony, kind of à la Michael Jackson, throwing baseball caps," Williams says. "It's not just a handful of drivers that are superstars in Formula 1 now. It's the team principals."

The "see it, be it" concept is particularly apt in high-level sports, and team principals have a huge platform. When Williams was in place, she was able to use that spotlight to increase the number of women in her team — from 9 per cent in 2013 (many in roles such as PR



Müller, as Ocon's engineer, and Red Bull's Schmitz, below, are F1 trailblazers, but the sport lacks a female team principal

and hospitality) to 19 per cent when she departed.

The number of women in teams generally has increased in recent years and The Times understands the gender split at Williams now stands at 21 per cent.

"Williams is proud to be continuing the team's long track record of opening up access to motorsport, whether that is giving the best young driving talent a route into F1 or backing brilliant engineers regardless of background," a spokesman told The Times.

F1 Academy has led the way in the hunt for a first female

driver in the sport, focusing on not only the race series itself, but the pathway from young girls taking their first laps in karting.

While progression up that ladder is both incredibly difficult and expensive, it is somewhat straightforward in its simplicity — move through the junior categories and Formula 1 is the end goal.

The route to team principal is more complex, however. Toto Wolff, for example, has a background as a venture capital investor. Both he and Christian Horner, the former Red Bull team boss, had spells in racing before realising they did

not have the talent to reach Formula 1.

The team principal role itself is also changing. "The greatest shift that I've seen is team principals now, they're not just the businesspeople in Formula 1," Williams said. "We've got this shift, which is quite interesting, where the majority of team principals — probably outside of Toto — have that engineering bias."

Where once team principals were the owners, their name on the door, now they are part of an increasingly complex leadership structure, often alongside a chief executive and different shareholders.

Hannah Schmitz, Red Bull's head of race strategy, is perhaps the most senior woman in a Formula 1 team, while last season, Laura Müller's appointment as Esteban Ocon's race engineer at Haas broke new ground in another key role. Susie Wolff, who is managing director of Formula 1 Academy, would un-

F1's 11 team principals

Mercedes Toto Wolff
Ferrari Fred Vasseur
McLaren Andrea Stella
Red Bull Laurent Mekies
Aston Martin Adrian Newey
Williams James Vowles
Alpine Flavio Briatore
Haas Ayao Komatsu
Audi Jonathan Wheatley
Racing Bulls Alan Permane
Cadillac Gaerne Lowdon

doubtedly have both the credentials (formerly CEO of a Formula E team) and the respect of her contemporaries, but the presence of her husband, Toto, as Mercedes principal would prove problematic if she had any desire to move into F1 team leadership.

"If I can do it, I don't see why anyone else can't," Williams says. "I was nothing special, and there are women that are far smarter than I am, and so why wouldn't there be another female team principal?"

While Williams undoubtedly downplays her talents, the reality is that not every woman fighting for a place at the top of the sport is the daughter of a team founder. The likelihood is that there are simply fewer women finding their way into senior engineering positions to have any chance of even showing the business acumen or leadership qualities required of a team principal.

Another possible barrier is the likelihood that by the time a woman was to reach the period of her career to have enough experience to lead a Formula 1 team, it could coincide with a wish to start a family.

Williams experienced this — giving birth in October 2017. She reflects on the period as incredibly difficult, to balance her job and being a mum. Back then, her suggestion of a crèche in the motorhome was not well received.

Steps forward have been made in that regard, with Laura Winter, the F1 TV presenter, recently praising the sport having been provided a mothering room for her newborn son, Alfie, during her return to the paddock in Montreal.

The Piranha Club — as F1's ruthless political landscape is often described — has had women at its top table in the past. That it has not for six years now is a missed opportunity in a sport growing and diversifying at a rapid pace.



WEDNESDAY 01 JULY – IN PRINT

Daily Mail

Aston Martin accelerate bid for Horner

By JONATHAN McEVOY

CHRISTIAN HORNER has again been approached by Aston Martin to turn around their ailing Formula One team, *Daily Mail Sport* understands.

Aston's Canadian billionaire owner Lawrence Stroll has coveted Horner for a long time and came agonisingly close to signing the former Red Bull boss a few months ago.

Should Horner, 52, join Aston, he would be following Adrian Newey, his design guru during 20 glorious years together at Red Bull.

Horner has not commented, while a spokesman for Aston said: 'We do not comment on rumour and speculation.'

WEDNESDAY 01 JULY – IN PRINT

Buckingham and Winslow
ADVERTISER

Silverstone set to shine

By James & Freddie Beckett
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This weekend's British Grand Prix looks like being a record breaker.

An expected capacity crowd of 570,000 is set to attend the event across the weekend, which will officially establish the race as the most visited F1 event of all-time.

The current season is shaping up nicely. Mercedes man Kimi Antonelli leads the way after an impressive start to the year, although he's being chased by British trio Lando Norris, Lewis Hamilton and George Russell, all of whom will be roared on by their home crowd this week.

Norris, the reigning world champion, will be boosted by 21,000 fans sitting in a dedicated 'LandoStand' at the track's Stowe Corner. Oliver Bearman (Haas) and Arvid Lindblad (Racing Bulls) complete the British line-up.

Born out of a wartime airfield, Silverstone is now one of the world's leading motorsport facilities, and many new crowd-enhancing features have been installed for this weekend, including fan areas, and an increased array of concerts.

World darts champion Luke 'The Nuke' Littler will also be on the oche at the cir-



Silverstone will break more records this weekend. Picture: Bryn Lennon/Getty Images

cuit's Night of Darts in its new BoxPark area, alongside fellow darts players Luke Humphries, Michael van Gerwen, and Fallon Sherrock.

Silverstone will host an F1 Sprint race for only the second time on Saturday, followed by the main event at 3pm on Sunday.

Aside from Mercedes, re-

gional interest in the big race will focus on the Silverstone-based Aston Martin and Cadillac teams.

Neither have enjoyed a good season to date, and in Austria last week three of the four cars representing the two teams were retirements. Fernando Alonso and Lance Stroll will drive for Aston

Martin at Silverstone, while Valtteri Bottas and Sergio Perez race for Cadillac.

The weekend will also see on-track support race action for the FIA Formula 2, Formula 3 and Formula Academy championships.

Marc Gene, the former University of Buckingham student who is the brand am-

bassador and test driver for Scuderia Ferrari, will be at Silverstone to represent the team and Italian television.

He said: "Silverstone is so special to F1. The track has an amazing history and British fans love the sport. The season is so exciting, and the new regulations have certainly made things interesting."

MONDAY 29 JUNE TO WEDNESDAY 01 JULY: LINKS TO ONLINE COVERAGE

Headline	Media	Links
F1 Austria Notebook: McLaren, Aston Martin And Audi Face Big Questions	Autoweek	https://www.autoweek.com/racing/formula-1/a71771149/f1-austria-mclaren-aston-martin-audi-face-big-questions/
Cadillac Unveils Patriotic Formula 1 Livery For British Grand Prix	Autoweek	https://www.autoweek.com/racing/formula-1/a71796256/cadillac-patriotic-f1-livery-for-british-grand-prix/
Adrian Newey Explains Why Aston Martin is Struggling in Formula 1	Autoweek	https://www.autoweek.com/racing/formula-1/a71783006/newey-explains-aston-martin-f1-struggles/
Russell impresses and Verstappen bounces back- driver ratings	BBC	https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/formula1/articles/c4gy3xqdg0jo
Did Russell's pole set dangerous precedent? F1 Q&A	BBC	https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/formula1/articles/c79yxx3ve9do
Why F1 should stop considering a return to refuelling in 2031	Autosport	https://www.autosport.com/f1/news/why-f1-should-stop-considering-a-return-to-refuelling-in-2031/10834960/
McLaren still to investigate why it's losing to Mercedes on the straight, despite same PU	Autosport	https://www.autosport.com/f1/news/mclaren-still-to-investigate-why-its-losing-to-mercedes-on-the-straights-despite-same-pu/10835343/
Williams plans "almost entirely new car" by Azerbaijan GP	Autosport	https://www.autosport.com/f1/news/williams-plans-almost-entirely-new-car-by-azerbaijan-gp/10835267/
It's Race Week: 5 Storylines We're Excited About Ahead of the 2026 British Grand Prix	F1.com	https://www.formula1.com/en/latest/article/its-race-week-5-storylines-were-excited-about-ahead-of-the-2026-british-grand-prix.3X03x5D9dDs8qErnrCH3d1

MONDAY 29 JUNE TO WEDNESDAY 01 JULY: LINKS TO ONLINE COVERAGE

Headline	Media	Links
What you need to know about the growing battle for a 2027 F1 seat	The Race	https://www.the-race.com/formula-1/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-growing-battle-for-a-2027-f1-seat/
Williams racing Unveils Union Jack-inspired Livery For British Grand Prix	DailyCarBlog	https://dailycarblog.com/2026/06/williams-f1-unveils-union-jack-inspired-livery-for-british-grand-prix/
Lewis Hamilton will be confident of challenging for victory at British GP, says his former team-mate Jenson Button	Sky Sports	https://www.skysports.com/f1/news/12433/13558996/lewis-hamilton-will-be-confident-of-challenging-for-victory-at-british-gp-says-his-former-team-mate-jenson-button
Mercedes boss Toto Wolff questions Ferrari's rate of car upgrades amid rapid F1 2026 development race	Sky Sports	https://www.skysports.com/f1/news/12433/13559276/mercedes-boss-toto-wolff-questions-ferraris-rate-of-car-upgrades-amid-rapid-f1-2026-development-race
'One of those pinch-me places': Silverstone's school facilitating a fast-track into motor sport	The Guardian	https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2026/jul/01/silverstone-university-technical-college-motor-sport-f1-british-grand-prix
Max Verstappen fears British Grand Prix is ill-suited to current F1 engine formula	The Guardian	https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2026/jul/01/silverstone-university-technical-college-motor-sport-f1-british-grand-prix
Liam Lawson gets clear Racing Bulls verdict as Nikola Tsolov question lingers	PlanetF1	https://www.planetf1.com/news/liam-lawson-future-racing-bulls-boss-responds-nikola-tsolov-links
Verstappen says Red Bull has to find more consistency to make another 2025-style comeback possible	RACER	https://racer.com/2026/07/01/verstappen-says-red-bull-has-to-find-more-consistency-to-make-another-2025-style-comeback-possible
Why aren't female F1 team principals more common?	RACER	https://racer.com/2026/06/29/why-aren-t-female-f1-team-principals-more-common-
Explained: How Every Silverstone Corner Got It's Name	F1.com	https://www.formula1.com/en/latest/article/explained-how-every-silverstone-corner-got-its-name.idMlxFC2gfN2ApcPmifxN
'There's Only One Place I'D Ever Be Interested In' - Norris Explains If He Sees Himself As A One-Team Driver At McLaren	F1.com	https://www.formula1.com/en/latest/article/theres-only-one-place-id-ever-be-interested-in-norris-explains-if-he-sees-himself-as-a-one-team-driver-at-mclaren.1UBzQKywqKa6oRekNeZMuC

MONDAY 29 JUNE TO WEDNESDAY 01 JULY: LINKS TO ONLINE COVERAGE

Headline	Media	Links
McLaren searching for answers behind losses to Mercedes on straights, despite same F1 power unit	Motorsport.com	https://www.motorsport.com/f1/news/mclaren-still-to-investigate-why-its-losing-to-mercedes-on-the-straights-despite-same-pu/10835296/
Cadillac marks 250 years of American independence with British GP livery	Motorsport.com	https://www.motorsport.com/f1/news/cadillac-marks-250-years-of-american-independence-with-british-gp-livery/10835349/
Hulkenberg (Aldi) after sensational Silverstone GP: “I will never forget it”	SPEEDWEEK.com	https://www.speedweek.com/a/formel-1/huelkenberg-audi-nach-sensations-gp-silverstone-werde-ich-nie-vergessen
Max Verstappen: “Then I’ll go to Tibet for two months to meditate”	SPEEDWEEK.com	https://www.speedweek.com/a/formel-1/max-verstappen-dann-gehe-ich-zwei-monate-in-den-tibet-zum-meditieren
Williams outlines timeline of F1 upgrade plan for “completely new car”	Crash.net	https://www.crash.net/f1/news/1099963/1/williams-outlines-timeline-f1-upgrade-plan-completely-new-car
Audi driver expresses biggest “surprise” of their Austrian GP	Crash.net	https://www.crash.net/f1/news/1099961/1/audi-driver-expresses-biggest-surprise-their-austrian-gp
Toto Wolff sets clear stance on Max Verstappen joining Mercedes	Racingnews365.com	https://racingnews365.com/toto-wolff-sets-clear-stance-on-max-verstappen-joining-mercedes
Lewis Hamilton hands Ferrari instructions after Austria ‘reality check’	Racingnews365.com	https://racingnews365.com/lewis-hamilton-hands-ferrari-instruction-after-austria-reality-check
Newey Aims to Secure Alonso’s Aston Martin Seat for the 2027 F1 Season	FormulaNerds	https://formulanerds.com/news/f1latestnews/newey-aims-to-secure-alonsos-aston-martin-seat-for-the-2027-f1-season/