

Beat: Sports

2020 Australian Grand Prix - Preview

Albert Park Circuit

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USPA NEWS - 2020 Australian Grand Prix - Preview

Looking ahead to the opening round of the 2020 Formula One season in Melbourne, Australia

Toto Talks Australia

We've had a very busy winter; not only did we develop, test and build a new car, we've also signed new principal partner INEOS and announced a bold commitment for sustainability. Our goals are very ambitious as we aim to cut our CO2 emissions by 2022. Starting this year, we will achieve a net-zero carbon footprint through a combination of reducing our emissions and CO2 offsetting. We hope that other teams will soon follow our lead and introduce an equally strong sustainability strategy.

It's finally time to go racing again and we're looking forward to the new season. The team has worked very hard to build a new car and we're excited to see what it can do when it's driven in anger. We managed to get through most of our programme as planned at the winter tests; however, we faced some reliability issues that we needed to resolve. We're glad that we encountered these issues in testing rather than at a race weekend as we could work on fixing them without any penalties.

The new season will be exciting to watch both on-track and away from it as everything we do this year will have a knock-on effect for our competitiveness in the future. We face the challenge of the biggest technical changes our sport has ever seen combined with a budget cap, so the work that we do this year will determine the start to 2021. This makes the 2020 season a massive challenge – a challenge that everyone in Brixworth and Brackley is looking forward to.

Celebrating the first decade of the Mercedes F1 works team

Saturday in Australia marks an important anniversary for the Mercedes motorsport family: 10 years ago, on 14 March 2010, the modern-day Mercedes F1 works team took part in its first race, the 2010 Bahrain Grand Prix. For the first time since 1955, a Mercedes works team was competing in Formula One again.

On 16 November 2009, Daimler AG announced that Mercedes-Benz would return to Formula One with its own works team. A few weeks later, the team announced that seven-time Formula One World Drivers' Champion Michael Schumacher would return to F1 to race for the three-pointed star alongside Nico Rosberg.

"2010 was an important milestone for us; it was the year that Mercedes decided to go – all in – and have a Mercedes Formula One team again," Toto said. "No one back then would have dared to dream of the success that this team would enjoy in the future. It was a bold decision by the Daimler board to join F1, but it paid off – today we look back on a very successful decade as a Mercedes works team in Formula One."

The Mercedes works team scored a double points finish in its first race, with Nico finishing the 2010 Bahrain Grand Prix in P5 in front of his teammate Michael in P6. Three weeks later, the team celebrated its first podium in Malaysia, when Nico finished the race in P3. Mercedes ended the season with a further two podium finishes in P4 in the Constructors' Championship.

The following season proved difficult, with Michael's fourth place in Canada being the best result of the year and the team finishing fourth again in the Constructors' standings. In 2012, the team marked the first Formula One victory for a Mercedes works team since 1955, when Nico claimed the win in the Chinese Grand Prix.

2012 was also a foundation year for the team's future success. Niki Lauda joined the team in late 2012 as non-executive chairman,

strengthening the team with his extensive experience, his total honesty and the relentlessness of a three-time Formula One World Champion. At the same time, Lewis Hamilton was announced as the successor of Michael Schumacher who retired from Formula One at the end of the season. In early 2013, Toto Wolff joined the team as Executive Director and managing partner.

"I joined an already strong team in 2013," Toto said. "People like Norbert Haug, Ross Brawn, Michael Schumacher and others had worked very hard for the team for many years and played an important role in building the foundation of our future success."

The 2013 season saw the performance of the team improve; Lewis and Nico claimed a total of nine podiums for the team, claiming victory in Monaco (Nico), Silverstone (Nico) and Hungary (Lewis). It was the first year where the Mercedes-AMG Petronas F1 Team could consistently fight for podiums and the team finished second in the Constructors' Championship.

In 2014, hybrid Power Units were introduced in Formula One "a step that aligned the technological journey of the sport with that of the road car world. The Mercedes-AMG Petronas F1 Team can look back at a 100% Championship win record in the hybrid era of Formula One, having claimed every single Drivers' and Constructors' Championship since 2014. Lewis won five of those six Drivers' titles (2014, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019) with Nico winning one (2016). At the end of 2016, Nico retired from Formula One and Valtteri Bottas joined the team in early 2017. Valtteri has claimed seven race victories and 36 podiums with the Mercedes team.

Since 2010, the Mercedes-AMG Petronas F1 Team has started 198 Formula One races, winning 93 of them, securing 194 podium places, taking 103 pole positions and finishing 48 races on the top two steps of the podium.

"It's never easy to acknowledge something special while it is happening, but I hope that when we look back at the first decade of the modern-day Mercedes works team, we feel pride of what this amazing group of people in Brackley, Brixworth and Stuttgart has achieved between 2010 and 2020," Toto said. "We're now starting into our second decade as the Mercedes-AMG Petronas F1 Team and we're very ambitious "both in terms of our on-track results, but also in terms of our efforts to make F1 more sustainable. We're working hard to drastically reduce the carbon footprint the sport; at the same time, the 2021 regulations offer us the chance to make the series financially sustainable as well. It's a great foundation for our long-term commitment to Formula One which has become the most important marketing platform for Mercedes."

Many team members have been with the Mercedes team from the very beginning; overall, more than 250 colleagues from Brackley will be able to celebrate a decade with the three-pointed star this week. The list includes a number of senior team personnel, including Chief Operating Officer Rob Thomas, Chief Designer John Owen and Performance Director Loic Serra.

Four out of five people on the pit wall can also look back on ten years with Mercedes: Trackside Engineering Director Andrew Shovlin, Sporting Director Ron Meadows, Motorsport Strategy Director James Vowles and Chief Engineer Trackside Simon Cole. The two race engineers, Peter "Bono" Bonnington and Riccardo "Riki" Musconi, as well as Chief Mechanic Matt Deane will also be able to celebrate a decade of Mercedes on Saturday.

And it's not just team members that have been very loyal to Mercedes, but also many team partners. PETRONAS have been title partner since 2010 and celebrated six constructors' and six drivers' championships. Monster and UBS have been with the team for a decade as well and can look back on the same impressive achievement.

While the year 2010 marked the return of Mercedes-Benz to Formula One as a works team, the three-pointed star had already manufactured Formula One engines from 1994 when the brand entered into a partnership with the Sauber team, marking over 25 years of continuous works involvement in the sport. It was built on previous achievements racing sports cars, which saw Sauber-Mercedes win the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1989 and the World Sports Prototype Championship in 1989 and 1990. When Sauber made its F1 debut in 1993, its engine came from Brixworth in the United Kingdom "the same place, where the hybrid and fully electric Mercedes engines for Formula One and Formula are still built today. The 1993 engine was labelled "Concept by Mercedes-Benz"; one year later the brand returned officially to F1.

In 1995, Mercedes entered into a partnership with McLaren. It was the beginning of a long-standing and successful partnership. Together, the two partners won their first race in 1997; one year later, the Mercedes-powered team won the Constructors' Championship and Mika Häkkinen the Drivers' Championship - an achievement he would repeat again in 1999. In 2007, Lewis Hamilton won his first ever F1 race driving a Mercedes-powered McLaren; in 2008, he won his first drivers' championship with a Mercedes engine. Lewis has started every one of his 250 Formula One races with a Mercedes-Benz engine in his car. In 2009, Mercedes-Benz engines powered the Brackley-based team Brawn GP to its world championship double "the same team that would

one year later become the Mercedes works team.

Fact File: Australian Grand Prix

The pit lane distance “” measured from the pit lane limiter line to the pit lane exit line “” at the Melbourne Grand Prix Circuit is the shortest on the Formula One calendar, at just 280.6 metres.

The Australian Grand Prix is one of just five races on the F1 schedule to have a 60 km/h speed limit in the pit lane, rather than the 80 km/h speed limit. The other races to have a 60 km/h speed limit in the pit lane are Monaco, France, Singapore and Russia.

Melbourne’s F1 track is tied with Spielberg for the second-highest percentage of lap time spent at full throttle (72.3%). It also has the fourth-highest percentage of lap distance taken at full throttle (79.3%). Only Monza features a higher wide-open-throttle percentage, with 76% of lap time and 84% of lap distance at full throttle.

Drivers experience some of the highest g-forces of the season through the quick Turn 11 at the Melbourne Grand Prix Circuit, reaching a maximum of 5.1 G laterally.

The circuit at Albert Park is bumpy and features many aggressive kerbs, which makes it very tough on the tea tray (the first part of the floor, behind the front wheels) and can cause damage to the cars.

The 11-hour time difference between Australia and the UK make the first race of the season particularly tricky for the industrial placement students and the engineers who support the team from the Race Support Room (RSR) in Brackley and the Track Support Office (TSO) in Brixworth. The teams have access to a sleep schedule, to help shift over to the different time zone, but everyone approaches it differently “” from making the shift gradually in the build-up to the race weekend to going all-in from Wednesday onwards.

From Thursday onwards, the support team in England will not only watch all the sessions live, but also join all engineering meetings at the track remotely. This makes for some unusual working patterns: Thursday’s shift starts at midnight and finishes around lunchtime, with Friday beginning at midnight and concluding around 3PM in the afternoon. Saturday’s shift starts at 1AM and ends at lunchtime. On race day, the teams arrive at the factories at 2am and wrap things up mid-morning “” most certainly looking forward to a good night’s sleep in the following night.

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