



Belgian Grand Prix 2026: Antonelli's Title Lead Under Siege at Spa

Description

The **Belgian Grand Prix 2026** gets under way this weekend at the iconic Spa-Francorchamps circuit, and the timing could not be better for a title fight that has turned from a procession into a genuine three-way battle. Free Practice 1 fires up today as Formula 1 heads into the final double-header of races before the August break and the championship is suddenly alive.

Antonelli's Lead Is Crumbling Ahead of the Belgian Grand Prix 2026

Cast your mind back to the Spanish Grand Prix just three rounds ago. Kimi Antonelli headed to Barcelona with a 66-point advantage over teammate George Russell at the top of the Drivers' Championship. The Mercedes prodigy had won five consecutive races his first five F1 victories and looked set to run away with the title in his debut season.

Then it all started to unravel. Reliability issues at the Red Bull Ring cost him a likely podium. A wheel shield failure at Silverstone, where he was running comfortably for second, handed Charles Leclerc a dramatic race win and Antonelli a DNF. The result? A championship lead trimmed from 66 points to just 25 over Russell, with Lewis Hamilton only 32 points off the pace. One disaster weekend at Spa could wipe out everything Antonelli has built.



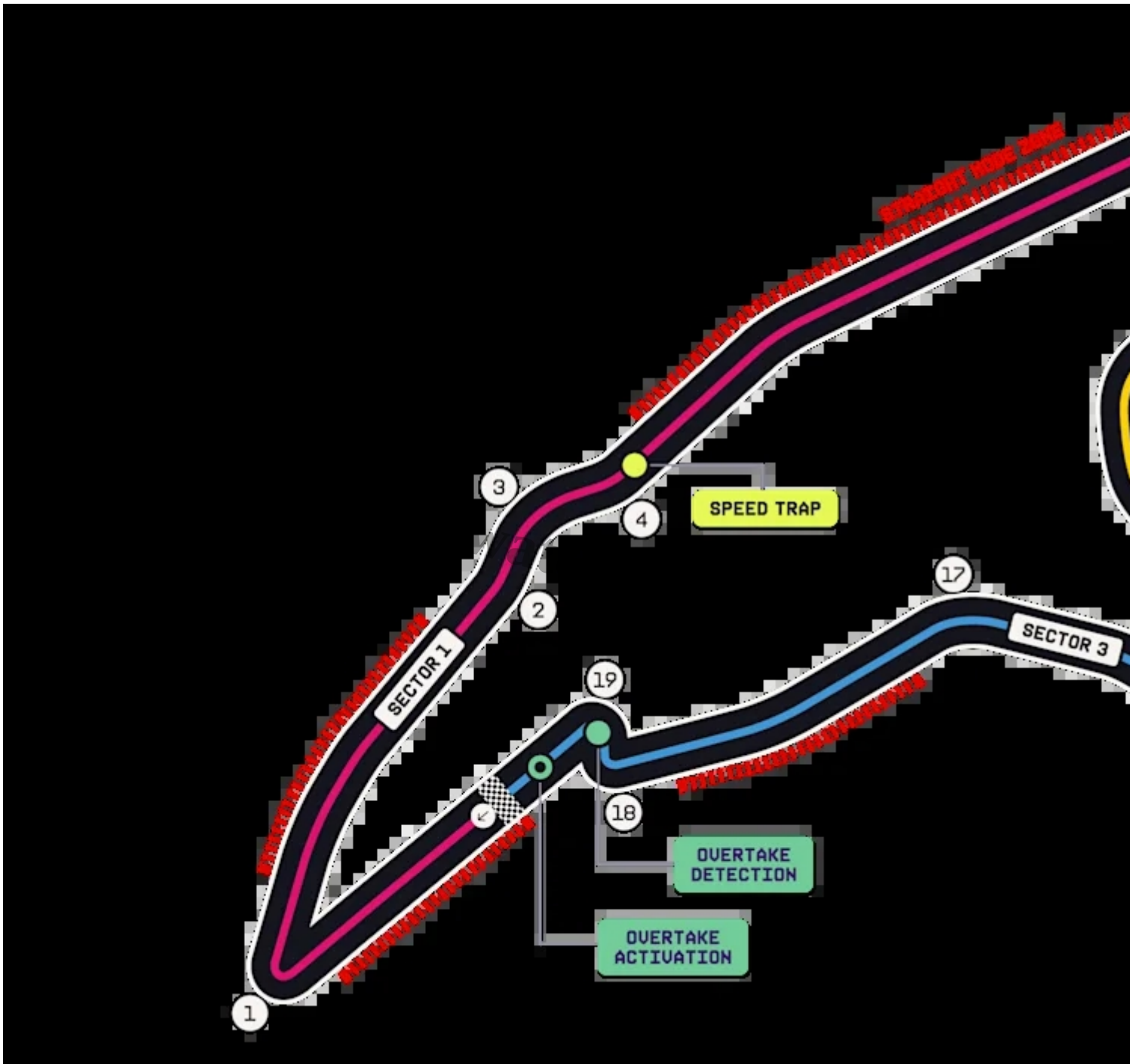
Source: Formula 1 official website (formula1.com)

The Circuit: Spa-Francorchamps 7.004km of Pure Drama

There is no track quite like Spa. At 7.004 kilometres, it is the longest circuit on the 2026 calendar, with 44 laps to the race distance of 308.052km. The circuit winds through the Ardennes forest with vertiginous elevation changes, from the compression under La Source through the legendary Eau Rouge and Raidillon sequence arguably the most iconic stretch of tarmac in motorsport to the Pouhon double-left and the final chicane on the Kemmel Straight where brave overtakes are born.

The 2026 technical regulations mean these new cars are at Spa for the very first time in a race weekend. How they respond to Raidillon's huge high-speed demands, the long Kemmel straight, and the constant direction changes through Pouhon is a genuine unknown. Teams have had limited data. Expect a steep learning curve during Friday's practice sessions and if the rain arrives, expect chaos.

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Source: Formula 1 official website (formula1.com)

Will Spa Deliver F1's First Wet Race of 2026?

Spa's location in the Ardennes means weather is always a wildcard. Meteorologists are forecasting a real risk of rain across all three days of the Belgian Grand Prix 2026 weekend, which brings an extraordinary sub-plot: Formula 1 has not yet seen a wet race in the 2026 season. None of the new-specification cars have completed a meaningful wet session. Teams have done some wet testing with Pirelli, but the 2026 regulations brought new aerodynamic philosophies and nobody knows

precisely how the tyre warm-up, handling, and spray characteristics will play out on a rain-soaked Eau Rouge. If the heavens open on Sunday, everything changes.

Weekend Schedule: How to Watch

Free Practice 1 kicks off today at 13:30 local time (19:30 SGT), with FP2 at 17:00 (23:00 SGT). Saturday brings FP3 at 10:30 (16:30 SGT) and Qualifying at 14:00 (20:00 SGT). The race on Sunday, 19 July fires up at 13:00 local time (19:00 SGT) â?? with a World Cup final and a potential British Open champion being crowned on the same day, it is one of the most loaded Sundays of the sporting year.

For all the F1 action across the season, read our race reviews including [Leclercâ??s Silverstone victory that shook the title race](#) and the [pre-season analysis of what Spa holds](#). Stay across the action at our [Sports section](#).

Date Created

17/07/2026

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