



F1 Belgian Grand Prix 2026 Preview: Leclerc and Antonelli Head to Spa

Description

The **F1 Belgian Grand Prix 2026** is next on the calendar, with Formula 1 heading to the legendary Spa-Francorchamps circuit on 17th–19 July for one of the most eagerly anticipated weekends of the season. After a dramatic British Grand Prix at Silverstone last time out, championship leader Kimi Antonelli and the red-hot Charles Leclerc head to the Ardennes with form, momentum, and ambition all pointing in different directions.

F1 Belgian Grand Prix 2026: The Championship Picture Heading to Spa

Kimi Antonelli has had a remarkable debut season in Formula 1. The 19-year-old Mercedes driver leads the World Championship with 179 points, 25 ahead of his team-mate George Russell on 154 points. It has been a campaign defined by controlled aggression – Antonelli taking the sprint race at Silverstone before an unfortunate technical issue in the main race handed initiative to his rivals. That setback will only have sharpened his focus for Spa, where the long straights and fast sweeping corners of the Raidillon section should suit the Mercedes package.

Russell sits second in the standings, and the Briton will be desperate to close the gap on his team-mate on home soil – or rather, on one of his strongest circuits. Russell has a superb record at Spa, and his consistency through the first half of the season makes him a genuine threat wherever Formula 1 pitches up. For Ferrari, the opportunity is to capitalise on any internal Mercedes friction and close what is now a two-car lead at the top of the standings.



Charles Leclerc stormed to victory at the 2026 British Grand Prix, giving Ferrari real momentum heading into the Belgian round.

Leclerc's Silverstone Form and What It Means for Spa

Charles Leclerc arrives at Spa-Francorchamps in the best form of his 2026 campaign. After a run of near-misses in the early part of the season, the Monégasque driver delivered a composed, dominant performance at Silverstone – passing Russell in the closing stages and holding off a late challenge from Antonelli's team-mate to take the win. For Ferrari, it was a statement result: evidence that the SF-26 has genuine pace across a variety of circuit layouts, and that Leclerc has the mental resilience to convert that pace into points when it matters.

Spa historically suits Ferrari's high-downforce package in the first and third sectors, while the long Kemmel Straight can be a vulnerability if engine power lags behind Mercedes and Red Bull. Ferrari's engineers will be studying their Silverstone data carefully to optimise for the Belgian circuit, where straight-line speed is at a premium. If they can find an additional few tenths through the high-speed Eau Rouge and Raidillon complex, Leclerc could be a genuine pole position candidate.

We covered Leclerc's Silverstone triumph in detail in our [British Grand Prix race report](#), and Antonelli's earlier [sprint victory at Silverstone](#) underlined just how competitive the front of the grid has become this season.

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Kimi Antonelli leads the 2026 F1 World Championship heading into the Belgian Grand Prix at Spa-Francorchamps.

Key Storylines to Follow at Spa

Beyond the championship battle at the top, Spa-Francorchamps always produces sub-plots of its own. Max Verstappen, who has endured a difficult 2026 by his own extraordinary standards, will be looking to the Belgian round — a circuit where he has four previous victories — to reignite his title challenge. Red Bull have shown flashes of their former dominance in qualifying trim, and if the RB21 can find its sweet spot in the Ardennes, Verstappen could spring a surprise.

The Belgian weather will, as always, be an unpredictable variable. Spa sits in a microclimate that makes accurate rain forecasting near impossible; in recent seasons, changeable conditions have produced some of the most chaotic and memorable races on the calendar. Tyre strategy will be central to the outcome, particularly given that the Kemmel Straight puts enormous thermal load through the rear tyres — teams that manage their rubber best tend to be rewarded.

Practice begins on Friday 17 July, qualifying on Saturday, and the race on Sunday 19 July at 15:00 CET (21:00 SGT). Follow all the action from the [Little Big Red Dot Sports](#) page as we bring you the latest from one of Formula 1's most iconic venues.

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