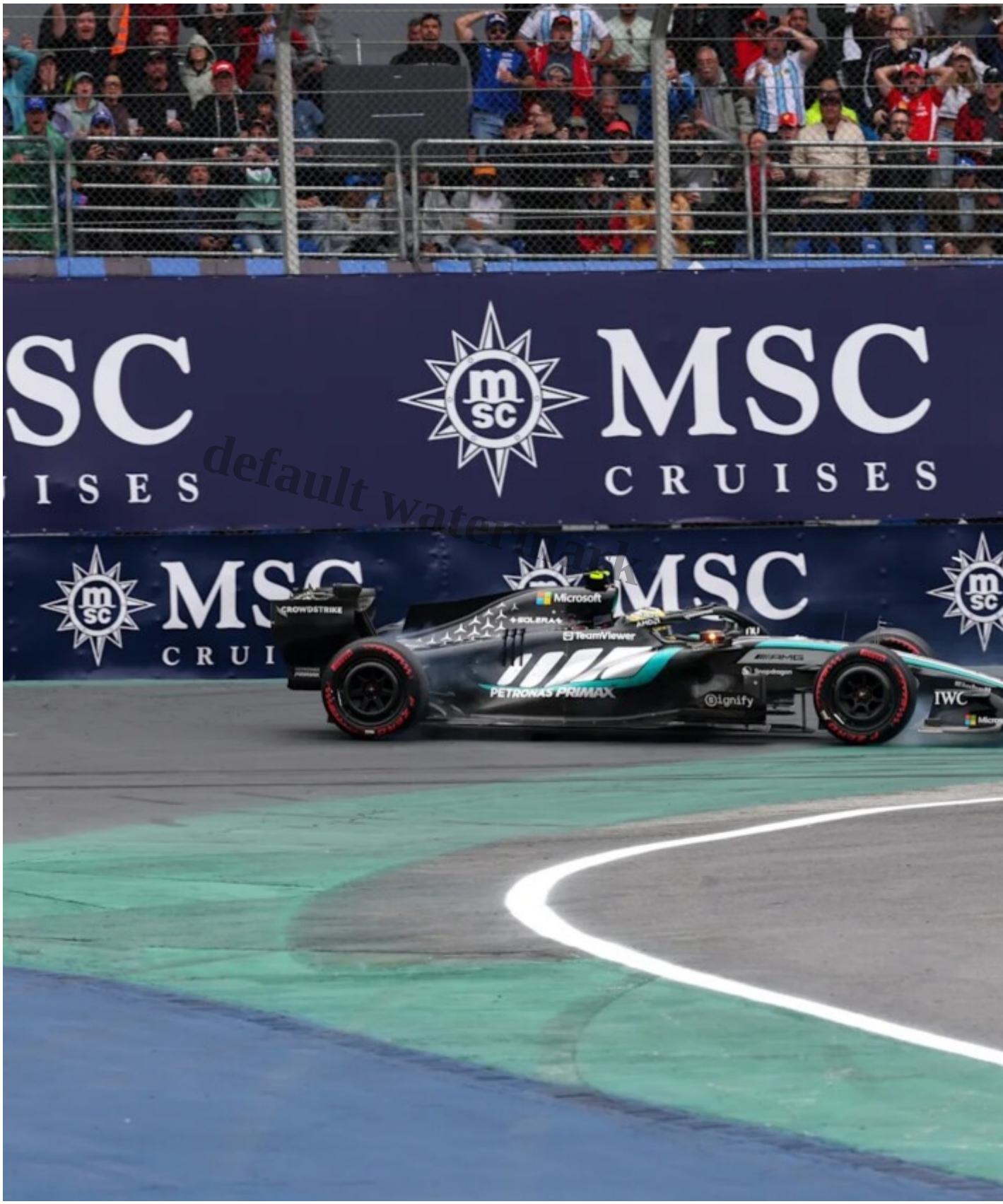


Sao Paulo Grand Prix 2026: Norris Wins Wet Thriller as Mercedes Take Title

Description

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The **Sao Paulo Grand Prix** on Sunday 8 November 2026 was chaos in the best possible way. Lando Norris won from pole by 14.6 seconds in a wet-dry-wet race, Max Verstappen climbed from 21st on the grid to second, and Mercedes clinched the Constructorsâ?? Championship.



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Source: Formula 1 official website (formula1.com)

Sao Paulo Grand Prix race report: wet start, wild opening laps

The drama began before the lights went out. New World Champion Kimi Antonelli ran wide at Turn 12 on his reconnaissance lap, spun on the wet grass and had to return to the garage for checks. He emerged unscathed, and when the lights went out he beat polesitter Norris off the line and led from second on the grid.

Norris eased into Turn 1, which let Liam Lawson sneak around the outside and take second for Racing Bulls. Further back, Lewis Hamilton was flying from 20th, up to ninth by the end of lap one, while Verstappen moved from 21st to 13th.

Tyre gamble and the pit-lane spin

As the track dried, intermediates overheated and Hamilton became the first to pit for slicks on lap 14. Norris, George Russell and Isack Hadjar stopped at the end of lap 16, and Russellâ??s race unravelled when he spun backwards on pit exit and glanced the wall.

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Antonelli rejoined still ahead, but only by two seconds. He reported that â??something is weird with the carâ?• and spun at Turn 1 on lap 20, handing Norris the lead.



Source: Formula 1 official website (formula1.com)

Norris controls, Verstappen charges

From there Norris was untouchable. By lap 23 the track was dry, he led Hadjar by 3.3 seconds, and the margin stretched towards ten as the race settled into a rhythm. Verstappen, who had been chasing hard since lap one, took second from his team-mate on lap 38 and kept applying pressure.

A rain shower threatened late on, and drivers scrambled for intermediates at the end of lap 61. Norris managed the conditions calmly, and he took his third win of the 2026 season by 14.6 seconds. Verstappen finished second, Hadjar third, completing a Red Bull double podium that few could have predicted from 21st on the grid.

Race result: top six

- **1.** Lando Norris (McLaren), 1:35:23.504
- **2.** Max Verstappen (Red Bull), +14.602s
- **3.** Isack Hadjar (Red Bull), +24.485s
- **4.** George Russell (Mercedes), +33.991s
- **5.** Kimi Antonelli (Mercedes), +41.017s
- **6.** Oscar Piastri (McLaren)

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A race of two halves

The first half of the race was about reading the track. Whoever pitted at the right moment for slicks gained time, and the Mercedes pit-exit spin cost Russell dearly. The second half was about nerve, with Norris holding a gap of around ten seconds while the Red Bulls swapped strategies and rain threatened to reshuffle everything.

Red Bullâ??s decision to split their strategy kept both cars in the fight. Hadjar ran long on one set of tyres before stopping, and Verstappenâ??s earlier stop and pace let him take the runner-up spot and hold it.

Mercedes celebrate, Ferrari lament

Fourth for Russell and fifth for Antonelli were enough to give Mercedes the Constructorsâ?? title. Antonelli spun twice, once before the start, but the team still got the result it needed. Our Sao Paulo Grand Prix preview flagged this as the weekend Mercedes could seal it, and they did.

For Ferrari it was a rough day. Charles Leclerc was seventh on the road after passing Lawson on the penultimate lap, but a five-second penalty for causing a collision with the Racing Bulls driver swapped them back. Hamilton finished ninth on his 400th Formula 1 start, having started 20th and spun along the way. Nico Hulkenberg completed the top ten for Audi.

Elsewhere, Rafael Camara finished 20th on his debut for Haas, Gabriel Bortoleto was 16th in front of his home crowd, and Valtteri Bottas was wheeled off the grid with a Cadillac issue before the start.

The Singapore connection

Singapore fans will remember how the title picture looked a month ago. After Verstappen won the Singapore Grand Prix at his tenth attempt, Antonelli led the championship by 102 points. Sundayâ??s Interlagos result closed out the constructorsâ?? side of the story for Mercedes.

The verdict

Sao Paulo delivered what it often does: rain, strategy mistakes, spins and a winner who kept his head. Norris showed the composure that has marked his best wins, Verstappen showed the aggression, and Mercedes showed enough resilience to take the title despite their own errors.

For more Formula 1 coverage and weekend reports, browse the Little Big Red Dot Sports section.

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