

Sao Paulo Grand Prix 2026: Mercedes Eye the Constructorsâ?? Title as Camara Debuts at Haas

Description

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The Sao Paulo Grand Prix 2026 arrives at Interlagos this weekend with Mercedes on the brink of the Constructorsâ?? title and a Brazilian debutant at Haas. It is Round 20 of the season, and with Kimi Antonelli already champion, the team prize, the fight for second and a possible washout all add spice.

Sao Paulo Grand Prix 2026: Mercedes need three points

Antonelli sealed his maiden Driversâ?? crown in Mexico City, so the next target is the teamsâ?? trophy. Mercedes are 126 points clear of Ferrari with four rounds left. With no Sprints remaining, 172 points are still available, and that figure drops to 129 after Sundayâ??s race. In simple terms, if Mercedes extend their advantage over Ferrari by three points in Brazil, they are champions. A Mercedes double at Interlagos would also be their first Driversâ?? and Constructorsâ?? double since 2020.

Ferrari are not going quietly. They have outscored Mercedes by 34 points across the last four rounds, but they need far bigger hauls than that to keep the contest alive. If you followed our coverage of Verstappenâ??s win at the Singapore Grand Prix, you will remember how Antonelli was already in command of the title chase then.



Mercedes celebrated Antonelliâ??s Driversâ?? title in Mexico City. Source: Formula 1 official website (formula1.com)

Ferrariâ??s self-inflicted Mexican wound

Ferrari ran first and second on lap one in Mexico City with Lewis Hamilton and Charles Leclerc, then both went deep at Turn 4 while fighting for the lead. Leclerc took a time penalty, Hamilton lost a place to Max Verstappen, and the Dutchman won. Instead of a possible 43 points, Ferrari scored 30 for second and fourth, while Mercedes lost only nine with Antonelli third and George Russell sixth.

Team principal Fred Vasseur was unhappy and promised clear-the-air talks before Brazil. Watch how the pair race each other if they run close at Interlagos. In the standings Verstappen leads the fight for second by two points from Hamilton, with Leclerc fifth, five behind Russell and 16 behind Verstappen.

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Ferrariâ??s Mexico City opening-lap battle set the tone for Brazil. Source: Formula 1 official website (formula1.com)

Camaraâ??s home debut and Haas upheaval

The biggest off-track story is at Haas. Esteban Ocon was dropped before Saturday running in Mexico City, with Haas offering little explanation beyond saying it was not illness, and it has since been confirmed he will not return this season. Ryo Hirakawa covered in Mexico, but he is racing in the World Endurance Championship this weekend, so Haas have promoted their 2027 driver Rafael Camara early.

Camara, 21, leads the Formula 2 standings and makes his Formula 1 debut at his home race. The learning curve is steep. FP1 will be his first time in a 2026 car and only his second time in any Haas, after a test appearance in August. Haas say only that this weekend is confirmed, so Interlagos may be an audition for more.

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Rafael Camara (right) gets his F1 debut at home. Source: Formula 1 official website (formula1.com)

Bottas, Herta and Cadillacâ??s decision

Cadillac have a quiet crisis of their own. Sergio Perez has earned an extension to 2029, but Valtteri Bottasâ??s future is less clear. He has failed to finish 10 of 19 races, including a high-speed crash in Mexico caused by a front-left corner failure. Colton Herta will take Perezâ??s car in FP1 and needs a clean 100km to collect the final Super Licence point he requires, which keeps the pressure on Bottas.

Tyres, track and weather at Interlagos

Pirelli bring the C3 as hard, C4 as medium and C5 as soft, a softer step than last year. Each driver gets two sets of hards, three of mediums and eight of softs. Resurfacing between Turns 3 and 5 and between Turns 8 and 9 may change grip, and last year a two-stop plan was best.

Weather could matter even more. Friday looks mostly dry with a 30 per cent chance of rain. Saturday carries a 50 per cent chance, with the heaviest rain forecast after 2pm local time, which could hit qualifying. Last year Lando Norris won a chaotic dry race from Antonelli and Verstappen, with Safety Cars throughout.

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Singapore fans know how a changeable weekend can turn a race, and Interlagos, with its sweeping flow and fans packed beside the track, is one of the few circuits that rivals Marina Bay for atmosphere. For the build-up to what followed that title charge, read how Antonelli arrived in Singapore with an 84-point lead. We will keep tracking every session, and you can find more sports coverage on Little Big Red Dot.

Date Created
05/11/2026
Author
jadeyeo