



Verstappen wins the Singapore Grand Prix at his 10th attempt as Antonelli goes 102 points clear

Description

Max Verstappen won the Singapore Grand Prix at Marina Bay on Sunday 11 October, his first victory at the circuit at the 10th attempt, and Kimi Antonelli's third place took his championship lead to 102 points. The Red Bull driver beat Charles Leclerc by 7.335 seconds over 62 laps, in 1 hour 42 minutes 0.785 seconds. Antonelli finished 24.573 seconds back in third.



Verstappen won by 7.335 seconds at Marina Bay. Photo: Formula 1

It was the 73rd win of Verstappen's career, on his 250th Grand Prix start, and his second win in a row. He had already won Saturday's rain-hit Sprint and taken pole, so he leaves Singapore with 33 points from the weekend.

Holding Leclerc at Turn 1

Leclerc made the better getaway from second, and Verstappen cut across to keep the lead into the first corner. Verstappen called his start "just good enough". For the opening laps the Ferrari sat 0.6 seconds behind, close enough to use Overtake Mode, but never close enough to try a move.

The first interruption came early. Gabriel Bortoleto pulled off towards the pit exit with a gearbox problem, bringing out the Virtual Safety Car, and his Audi later caught fire while marshals put out the flames.

Verstappen had started on the soft tyre, like half the grid, and kept edging away. By lap 15 the gap was 2.6 seconds.

Ferrari split their strategies

Lewis Hamilton started third on the medium tyre and was the first driver to stop, switching to softs on lap 18. He passed Liam Lawson for sixth three laps later, but the move that shaped Ferrari's night came when Leclerc stopped on lap 24 and rejoined a fraction ahead of his team mate.

Hamilton lost two seconds in a single lap stuck behind Leclerc, and the two Ferraris were now on different plans. By lap 28, with Leclerc, Hamilton and Antonelli the only top-10 runners to have stopped, Verstappen led Lando Norris by 17.9 seconds.

Verstappen pitted on lap 32, moved from softs to mediums and came out still leading. A radio fault meant Red Bull had to use the pit board to talk to him for part of the race.

The second Virtual Safety Car

Lance Stroll's Aston Martin stopped at Turn 15 with a clutch problem, and the second Virtual Safety Car decided the podium. Leclerc and Antonelli both took a second set of tyres. Ferrari called Hamilton in too, but he missed the pit entry and chose to stay out and make one stop work.

On fresher tyres Leclerc set the fastest lap of the race, 1:35.202 on lap 41, and passed Hamilton for second on lap 46. He could not catch Verstappen, who controlled the gap through the last 10 laps.

Hamilton's tyres faded in the final laps. He ran wide defending against Norris, and Antonelli went through into Turn 16 for third. Norris passed him for fourth, then Oscar Piastri, who had made a second stop for a slow puncture, took fifth at the same corner.

"Sorry boys. I let you down today with that strategy. My call, and I lost us valuable points," Hamilton said on the radio after finishing sixth.

Russell's recovery and the rest of the points

George Russell started 19th after a power unit penalty and finished ninth, overtaking Esteban Ocon and Pierre Gasly on the way. Isack Hadjar came from the pit lane to take the last point in 10th for Red Bull. Lawson was seventh for Racing Bulls and Nico Hulkenberg eighth for Audi.

Antonelli's third place came despite a brake problem and a warning flag for track limits. He also reported fluid leaking around his feet, which Mercedes put down to heat soak.

Franco Colapinto stopped with a driveline problem, and Bortoleto and Stroll were the other retirements. Alex Albon retired late on but was still classified 18th.

What it means for the title

Antonelli now has 340 points to Russell's 238, with Hamilton third on 229, Verstappen fourth on 221 and Leclerc fifth on 215. Six rounds remain. Antonelli clinches the title at the United States Grand Prix in Austin, on 23 to 25 October, if he leaves Circuit of The Americas 125 points or more ahead.

Can I? Really? Let's not worry about that, Antonelli said when told the title could be settled at the next round. Mercedes lead the constructors' standings on 578 points, 134 ahead of Ferrari.

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