



Verstappen wins Singapore's first F1 Sprint and takes pole for Sunday's race

Description

Max Verstappen won Singapore's first Formula 1 Sprint on Saturday 10 October and then took pole position for the [Singapore Grand Prix](#) at Marina Bay a few hours later, the first Singapore GP pole of his career. The Red Bull driver starts Sunday's 62-lap race at 8pm alongside Charles Leclerc, while championship leader Kimi Antonelli lines up fourth and his Mercedes team mate George Russell starts 21st after a 40-place engine penalty.



Verstappen won the Sprint by 2.591 seconds. Photo: Formula 1

A wet Sprint that turned on lap one

Rain hit the circuit 10 minutes before the scheduled 5pm start. Standing water at Turns 2 and 3 delayed the Sprint by half an hour, and the field set off behind the Safety Car on intermediate tyres before a standing start.

Russell beat polesitter Verstappen into Turn 1 and began to pull away. He then lost the car at the exit of the final corner on the first lap and hit the wall. "I'm fine. Sorry, sorry, sorry," he said on the radio.

That handed Verstappen the lead, and he never gave it back. He nailed the restart after lap 6 and managed his intermediates on a drying track for the rest of the 20 laps, finishing 2.591 seconds ahead of Lewis Hamilton in 39 minutes 48.162 seconds.

Hamilton had turned sixth into third at the start and inherited second when Russell crashed. Leclerc was third, 16.871 seconds back, on heavily worn tyres.

McLaren's late collision

The biggest swing came near the end. Oscar Piastri and Lando Norris were closing on Leclerc when their lines met at Turn 5. Norris tagged his team mate, both cars spun, and Piastri later stopped. He was still classified 14th, a lap down.

Antonelli took fourth and five points from the mess. Liam Lawson (Racing Bulls) was fifth, Oliver Bearman (Haas) sixth, Nico Hulkenberg (Audi) seventh and Norris recovered to eighth for the last point.

Only 14 of 22 cars were classified. Lance Stroll and Sergio Perez collided on the opening lap, Isack Hadjar and Franco Colapinto stopped early, and Gabriel Bortoleto, Valtteri Bottas and Alex Albon retired after a three-car tangle at the restart.

Verstappen by 0.054 seconds in qualifying

The track had dried by evening. Hamilton set the pace in Q1 and Q2 with a best of 1:31.529, but Verstappen's first Q3 run of 1:31.373 held up when most drivers failed to improve on their final laps.

Leclerc was the exception and moved up to second, 0.054 seconds slower. Hamilton settled for third on 1:31.496, ahead of Antonelli and Norris. Russell set the sixth-fastest time knowing it would not count for much.

Of course, I'm very happy to be on pole, because this is the one that I wanted," Verstappen said.

Piastri qualified seventh after the Sprint clash, ahead of Pierre Gasly (Alpine) and the Racing Bulls pair of Lawson and Arvid Lindblad. Hadjar's reliability problems continued and he failed to set a representative time.

Sunday's grid and the title picture

Russell's 40-place penalty for using additional power unit elements moves everyone who qualified behind him up one place. The front of the official starting grid reads:

- Front row: Verstappen, Leclerc
- Second row: Hamilton, Antonelli
- Third row: Norris, Piastri
- Fourth row: Gasly, Lawson
- Fifth row: Lindblad, Hulkenberg

Russell starts 21st and Hadjar 22nd.

Antonelli leads the driversâ?? standings on 325 points after the Sprint, 89 clear of Russell on 236. Hamilton is third on 221, Leclerc fourth on 197 and Verstappen fifth on 196. With Russell starting from the back row, Antonelli has a clear chance to stretch that lead further on Sunday night.

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