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AUTO ACTION'S 2023 PRE AZERBAIJAN FORMULA 1 TEAM-BY-TEAM EVENT GUIDE

After a strange month-long break, Formula 1 roars back to life on the speedy streets of Baku this weekend.

The Azerbaijan Grand Prix is the fourth stop on the 2023 F1 calendar, but first to stage a Sprint round.

A recently revised Sprint structure will be unveiled featuring two qualifying sessions to set separate grids for Saturday's 30-minute dash and Sunday's 51-lap main event.

The addition of a second qualifying session means there will be just the single practice session before things get serious.

The sole 60-minute practice on Friday only adds to the degree of difficulty for Australia's Oscar Piastri and the two other Azerbaijan rookies as they are offered little time to come to grips with the wild layout.

Despite the lack of track time, Piastri arrives in Azerbaijan fresh from scoring his first F1 points on home soil.

In a further confidence booster he will be driving an upgraded MCL60 fitted with a package promised to deliver greater competitiveness and speed by the team. All eyes

will be on Piastri and Lando Norris to see if the upgraded car can live up to its hype.

Ferrari hopes the long break can do wonders after a dreadful start to the season, but arrives a track where it's 2022 hopes literally blew up in smoke.

The fight at the front looks set to continue to be a Red Bull procession even if Australia did not go completely to plan.

Despite the increasingly competitive Mercedes jumping Max Verstappen off the line, the Dutchman still regained the lead with relative ease.

The combination of Red Bull's 'ultra' DRS and Baku's super-long straights should mean stopping the RB19 could be harder than ever leaving Fernando Alonso and the Mercedes to fight for next best.

But funny things can happen at Baku and the field might need another unexpected flat tyre to stop Verstappen, charging to another win.



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ROUND FOUR AZERBAIJAN GRAND PRIX APRIL 28-30

Sprint racing bounces into Baku for the first time as the tweaked format also makes its maiden appearance of the 2023 Formula 1 season. Baku is a fascinating street circuit being a mixture of Monza and Monaco with a super long main straight and an iconically tight castle section. Over the years Azerbaijan has developed a reputation for producing crazy action and the addition of Sprint racing spring should be no different.



TRACK STATS

QUALIFYING LAP RECORD:

- Valtteri Bottas 1:40.495
- Mercedes AMG F1 W10 EQ Power+ (2019)

RACE LAP RECORD:

- Charles Leclerc 1:20.260
- Ferrari F1-75 (2022)

TRACK FACTS



TRACK LENGTH:

6.003KM



DIRECTION:

ANTI-CLOCKWISE



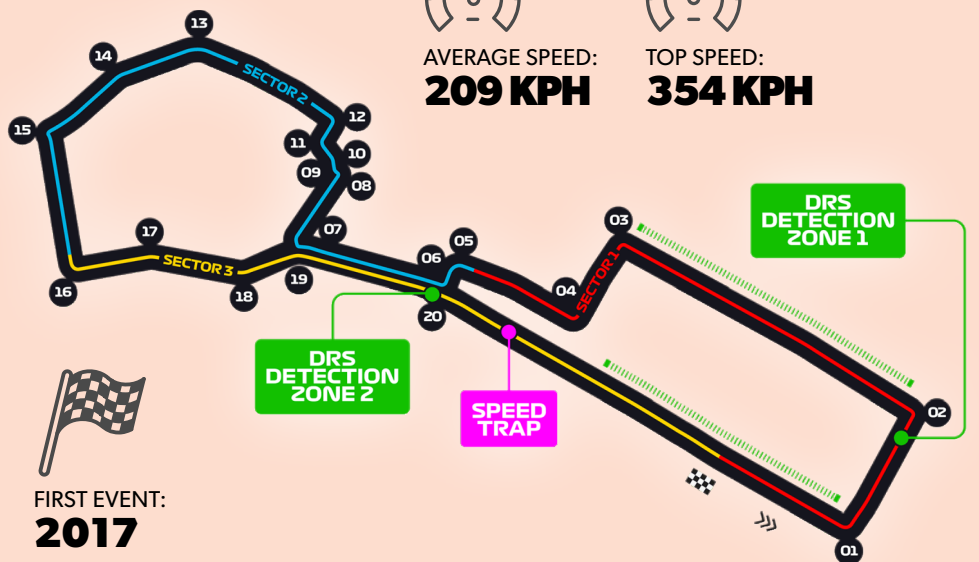
AVERAGE SPEED:

209 KPH



TOP SPEED:

354 KPH



FIRST EVENT:
2017

TRACK SCHEDULE (ALL TIMES AEST)

FRIDAY, APRIL 28

TIME	SESSION
19.30-20.30	Practice
23.00-0.00	Qualifying

SATURDAY, APRIL 29

TIME	SESSION
18.30-19.14	Sprint Shootout
23.30-00.00	Sprint

SUNDAY, APRIL 30

TIME	SESSION
21.00	Race



LIST OF RACE RESULTS

2022:
1 Max Verstappen
2 Sergio Perez
3 George Russell

2021:
1 Sergio Perez
2 Sebastian Vettel
3 Pierre Gasly

2019:
1 Valtteri Bottas
2 Lewis Hamilton
3 Sebastian Vettel

2018:
1 Lewis Hamilton
2 Kimi Raikkonen
3 Sergio Perez

2017:
1 Daniel Ricciardo
2 Valtteri Bottas
3 Lance Stroll

2016:
1 Nico Rosberg
2 Sebastian Vettel
3 Sergio Perez



MOST WINS

1 Nico Rosberg,
Daniel Ricciardo,
Lewis Hamilton,
Valtteri Bottas,
Sergio Perez,
Max Verstappen



LIST OF POLE POSITIONS

2022: Charles Leclerc
2021: Charles Leclerc
2019: Valtteri Bottas
2018: Sebastian Vettel
2017: Lewis Hamilton
2016: Nico Rosberg



MOST POLES

2 Charles Leclerc



MOST PODIUMS

4 Sergio Perez



1ST
69
POINTS

RED BULL

MAX VERSTAPPEN



AGE: 25
DEBUT: Aus 2015
STARTS: 166
BEST QUAL: 1st (x22)
PODIUMS: 80
BEST RESULT: 1st (x37)
BEST AZE GP: 1st 2022



Max Verstappen strengthened his grip on the 2023 title by scoring his first win on Australian soil. Despite his 22nd win far from his best he is still in the box seat to become the first driver to score back-to-back Baku wins.

2ND
54
POINTS

RED BULL

SERGIO PEREZ



AGE: 33
DEBUT: Aus 2011
STARTS: 238
BEST QUAL: 1st (x1)
PODIUMS: 28
BEST RESULT: 1st (x4)
BEST AZE GP: 1ST 2021



Sergio Perez hopes to regain points on his teammate at a happy hunting ground this weekend. "Checo" bounced back from a troubled Saturday to go from last to fifth at Albert Park. Azerbaijan is full of happy memories for Perez, being the scene of his maiden win in Red Bull colours.

3RD
45
POINTS

ASTON MARTIN

FERNANDO ALONSO



AGE: 41
DEBUT: Aus 2001
STARTS: 358
BEST QUAL: 1st (x22)
PODIUMS: 101
BEST RESULT: 1st (x32)
BEST AZE GP: 6th 2021

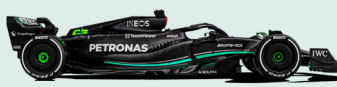


Fernando Alonso arrives at Azerbaijan on his best podium streak in 10 years. His form as been so strong that if he wins and Verstappen DNFs, the Spaniard could lead the championship for Aston Martin. Alonso has also been a consistent points scorer at Baku, but is yet to crack the top five there.

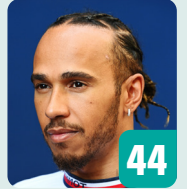
4TH
38
POINTS

MERCEDES

LEWIS HAMILTON



AGE: 38
DEBUT: Aus 2007
STARTS: 313
BEST QUAL: 1st (x103)
PODIUMS: 192
BEST RESULT: 1st (x103)
BEST AZE GP: 1st 2018



Standing on the Melbourne podium was a big boost for Lewis Hamilton and Mercedes. Hamilton has shown progress behind the wheel of the W14 in each race having started the year with a pair of P5s. Aside from his 2018 win, Hamilton has struggled to unlock his best at Baku, but enters 2023 in a confident frame of mind.

5TH
20
POINTS

FERRARI

CARLOS SAINZ JR



AGE: 28
DEBUT: Aus 2015
STARTS: 165
BEST QUAL: 1st (x3)
PODIUMS: 15
BEST RESULT: 1st (x1)
BEST AZE GP: 5th 2018



After losing P4 and dropping out of the points in Australia due to a penalty, Carlos Sainz will be a man on a mission. Sainz has battled hard for the struggling Ferrari and will be pushing for a PB at Azerbaijan with only one top five finish in 2018 for Renault.

6TH
20
POINTS

ASTON MARTIN

LANCE STROLL



AGE: 24
DEBUT: Aus 2017
STARTS: 125
BEST QUAL: 1st (x1)
PODIUMS: 3
BEST RESULT: 3rd (x3)
BEST AZE GP: 3rd 2017



As he continues his recovery from a pre-season cycling accident, Lance Stroll his best start to a season. At Australia Stroll scored his best finish in three years with fourth. It fuels the Canadian with belief he could return to the Baku podium having finished third in a Williams during his debut season.

7TH
18
POINTS

MERCEDES

GEORGE RUSSELL



AGE: 25
DEBUT: Aus 2019
STARTS: 85
BEST QUAL: 1st (x2)
PODIUMS: 9
BEST RESULT: 1 (x1)
BEST AZE GP: 3rd 2022



Despite his campaign only lasting 17 laps, George Russell was one of the stars of Melbourne. Russell immediately took the fight to Verstappen and led the early stanza before pitting under the red flag and eventually retiring due to power unit dramas. Finished third here last year and can aim for a repeat result.

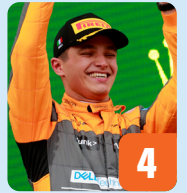
8TH
8
POINTS

MCLAREN

LANDO NORRIS



AGE: 23
DEBUT: Aus 2019
STARTS: 85
BEST QUAL: 1st (x1)
PODIUMS: 6
BEST RESULT: 2nd (x1)
BEST AZE GP: 5th 2021



Lando Norris was the big mover at Australia, rising from 20th to eighth in the championship standings. This was possible after a composed drive to P6 and he hopes even more could be possible in the upgraded MCL60. Has never missed the points at Azerbaijan.

9TH
6
POINTS

HAAS

NICO HULKENBERG



AGE: 35
DEBUT: Bah 2010
STARTS: 184
BEST QUAL: 1st (x1)
PODIUMS: 0
BEST RESULT: 4th (x3)
BEST AZE GP: 9th 2016



Returning veteran Nico Hulkenberg is on a high after picking up his first points in Haas colours down under. Hulkenberg has gradually improved in each race at his new team. The German has not scored points at Azerbaijan since F1 first came there in 2016.

10TH
6
POINTS

FERRARI

CHARLES LECLERC



AGE: 25
DEBUT: Aus 2018
STARTS: 105
BEST QUAL: 1st (x18)
PODIUMS: 24
BEST RESULT: 1st (x5)
BEST AZE GP: 4TH 2021



Charles Leclerc is hurting after his "worst" start to a season with a poultly six-point tally. The latest blow was Australia when he got spun at Turn 3. Baku was where his 2022 championship started to struggle with a costly blow out, which ended a strong one of form at the street circuit.

11TH
4
POINTS

ALFA ROMEO SAUBER VALTTERI BOTTAS



AGE: 33
DEBUT: Aus 2013
STARTS: 202
BEST QUAL: 1 (x20)
PODIUMS: 67
BEST RESULT: 1st (x10)
BEST AZE GP: 1st 2019



Valtteri Bottas hopes his experience can prove decisive in the frantic Azerbaijan GP weekend and get car #77 back into the points. After a P8 in Bahrain Bottas has missed out on points in the last two races and needs to rediscover his speed in the Ferrari powered C43.

12TH
4
POINTS

ALPINE

ESTEBAN OCON



AGE: 26
DEBUT: Bel 2016
STARTS: 114
BEST QUAL: 3rd (x2)
PODIUMS: 2
BEST RESULT: 1st (x1)
BEST AZE GP: 6th 2017



Esteban Ocon needs to get some consistent finishes under his belt after a troubled start to 2023. Two non finishes bookend a P8 at Saudi. But before the Alpines took each other out, Ocon was compiling a strong drive and can take encouragement from the earlier speed, but has a patchy Azerbaijan record.

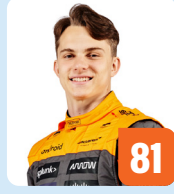
13TH
4
POINTS

MCLAREN

OSCAR PIASTRI



AGE: 21
DEBUT: Bah 2023
STARTS: 3
BEST QUAL: 8th (x1)
PODIUMS: 0
BEST RESULT: 8th (x1)
BEST AZE GP: N/A



Fresh from scoring his first points on home soil, Oscar Piastri will be readjusting his sights for his first taste of F1 Sprint racing. Piastri has shown great composure when dealing with each challenge thrown his way. A big opportunity awaits with an upgraded MCL60 at his disposal, which is promised to be more competitive.

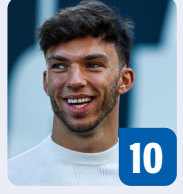
14TH
4
POINTS

ALPINE

PIERRE GASLY



AGE: 27
DEBUT: Mal 2017
STARTS: 111
BEST QUAL: 2nd (x1)
PODIUMS: 3
BEST RESULT: 1st (x1)
BEST AUS GP: 3rd 2021



Despite his fortunes taking a hit in Australia, Pierre Gasly hopes to continue his solid momentum in pink. After starting with a pair of P9's, Gasly looked set for a strong top-five result until it came to a crashing end. The Frenchman also knows how to produce results at Azerbaijan.

15TH
2
POINTS

ALFA ROMEO SAUBER ZHOU GUANYU



AGE: 23
DEBUT: Bah 2022
STARTS: 25
BEST QUAL: 9th (x2)
PODIUMS: 0
BEST RESULT: 8th (x1)
BEST AZE GP: DNF



Fresh from his first points of 2023, Zhou Guanyu is looking to close the gap on his Alfa Romeo teammate. Zhou started down in 17th, but stayed out of trouble to snag ninth. His only F1 race at Azerbaijan was not a nice experience being one of four Ferrari related mechanical DNFs.

16TH
1
POINT

ALPHATAURI

YUKI TSUNODA



AGE: 22
DEBUT: Bah 2021
STARTS: 45
BEST QUAL: 7th (x2)
PODIUMS: 0
BEST RESULT: 4th (x1)
BEST AZE GP: 7th 2021



Having just missed out on points in the first two races, Yuki Tsunoda finally broke through albeit with a bit of luck in Australia. Tsunoda has started his third season well by constantly beating his rookie teammate and it will be interesting to see if the Japanese youngster can push further with points under his belt.

17TH
1
POINT

HAAS

KEVIN MAGNUSSEN



AGE: 30
DEBUT: Aus 2014
STARTS: 143
BEST QUAL: 1st (x1)
PODIUMS: 1
BEST RESULT: 2nd (x1)
BEST AZE GP: 7TH 2017



Kevin Magnussen will be looking to re-establish himself as the Haas team leader having been out driven by Hulkenberg so far. Was unlucky in Australia when his right-rear tyre departed his Haas VF-23 six laps from the finish, sparking the red flag chaos. The Dane has not scored points at Azerbaijan since 2017.

18TH
1
POINT

WILLIAMS

ALEX ALBON



AGE: 26
DEBUT: Aus 2019
STARTS: 62
BEST QUAL: 4th (x4)
PODIUMS: 3
BEST RESULT: 3rd (x2)
BEST AUS GP: 11th 2019



Alex Albon's strong start to 2023 came to a heart-breaking halt in Australia. After a strong 10th in Bahrain and mechanical dramas forcing him to retire at Jeddah, Albon rebounded well to qualify eighth, only to spectacularly crash out. Hopes to get back into his stride at a place he is yet to taste points at.

19TH
0
POINTS

WILLIAMS

LOGAN SARGEANT



AGE: 22
DEBUT: Bah 2023
STARTS: 3
BEST QUAL: 16th (x1)
PODIUMS: 0
BEST RESULT: 12th (x1)
BEST AZE GP: N/A



American Logan Sargeant showed some promising signs in his first two Grands Prix, but battled down under. After qualifying 18th, Sargeant made his first major mistake crashing into de Vries to the red flag restart, But it won't be easy at a demanding track like Baku with just one practice to get up to speed.

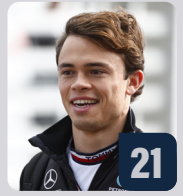
20TH
0
POINTS

ALPHATAURI

NYCK DE VRIES



AGE: 28
DEBUT: Ita 2022
STARTS: 4
BEST QUAL: 8th (x1)
PODIUMS: 0
BEST RESULT: 9th (x1)
BEST AZE GP: N/A



Nyck de Vries is yet to hit top gear in AlphaTauri colours and will be aiming to get his 2023 campaign off the mark in Baku. P1 at Melbourne was the first session de Vries could beat his teammate, but he struggled to replicate that pace again despite breaking into Q2 before being taken out in the finish.