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

THE DAUNTING SPA FRANCORCHAMPS AWAITS FOR ONE LAST BLAST BEFORE THE FORMULA 1 SUMMER BREAK.

WITH MCLAREN'S 35-year record for the most consecutive wins broken at Hungary, the question is can Red Bull even be beaten in 2023?

Whilst the famous 7km of celebrated tarmac weaving its way through the Ardennes Forest is one of the trickiest on the calendar to master, it brought out the best in Max Verstappen last year.

Belgium 2022 is one of Verstappen's most famous wins, soaring through the field in a flash to fly from 14th to first within 12 laps.

The Dutch driver was never troubled again as he cruised to a stunning 17s win and ominously the #1 showed similar form last weekend.

Despite having a "messy" quali lap, Verstappen enjoyed another "lovely" Sunday drive to secure his seventh straight win and Red Bull's 12th.

Belgium 2013 was the start of Sebastian Vettel's run to the most number of consecutive wins with nine and Verstappen could be on the verge of matching that if he completes a hat-trick at Spa.

His teammate returned to the podium, but did not do enough to arrest the doubters and would like a more complete performance to enjoy a quiet summer break.

Behind Red Bull the battle for second is spicing up between Mercedes and its own power unit customer McLaren.

Lewis Hamilton showed the new W14 work by taking pole, while McLaren proved its MCL60 can excel in high and low speed tracks with Lando Norris returning to the podium.

However, it could have been Australia's Oscar Piastri, who spent the opening stint in a stunning second after performing a calculated and composed move on both Norris and Hamilton at the first corner.

But sadly for a second weekend in a row the Aussie could count himself unlucky he did not become the first rookie to score a first-year podium since Lance Stroll in 2017.

Despite the recent disappointments, it will only be a matter of time if Piastri and McLaren continue their progression.

Daniel Ricciardo stunned all on his impressive comeback drive to 14th, which does not do justice to the performance considering he came in as raw as possible.

Meanwhile, Ferrari had another disappointing time making "too many mistakes" Aston Martin needs to regain some time and the Alpines have to stop taking each other out.

These teams may have to watch out for Ricciardo and Williams as they look to make some unexpected points appearances.

Sprint racing returns to Formula 1 with the revised format to make its first appearance at the historic circuit.

If any drama was needed, dire weather is forecast to soak Spa all weekend.

FORMULA ONE is in the heartland of the European season with the iconic Spa-Francorchamps awaiting drivers ahead of the summer break. Spa is one of the last classic European circuits remaining and is a beast of a challenge with iconic corners such as Eau Rouge, Pouhon and Blanchimont. The track is situated deep in the Ardennes Forest and was in the middle of the Ardennes Offensive in the Battle of the Bulge in WWII.

TRACK STATS

QUALIFYING LAP RECORD:
- Lewis Hamilton 1:13.45
- Mercedes W11 EQ Performance (2020)

RACE LAP RECORD:
- Lewis Hamilton 1:16.627
- Mercedes W11 EQ Performance (2020)

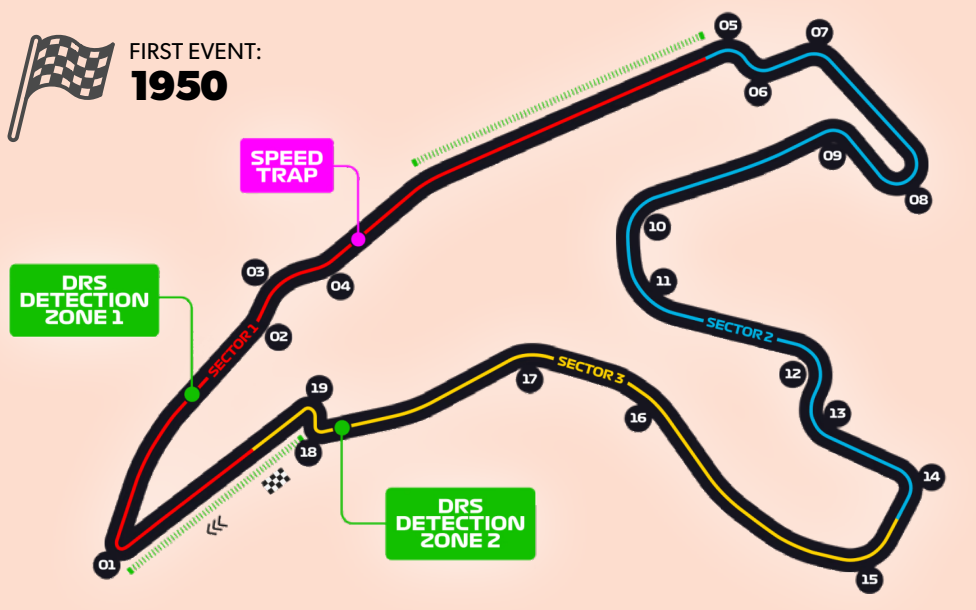🏁 **FIRST EVENT:** 1950

TRACK FACTS

TRACK LENGTH: 7.004KM

DIRECTION: ANTI-CLOCKWISE

AVERAGE SPEED: 230KPH

TOP SPEED: 362KPH

DOUBLE TAP TO ZOOM

TRACK SCHEDULE (ALL TIMES AEST)

TIME	SESSION
21.30-22.30	Practice 1

SATURDAY, JULY 29

TIME	SESSION
01.00-02.00	Practice 2
20.30-21.30	Practice 3
20.00-20.44	Sprint Shootout

SUNDAY, JULY 30

TIME	SESSION
00.30-01.30	Sprint
23.00	Grand Prix

LIST OF RACE RESULTS

2022: Max Verstappen	2015: Lewis Hamilton	2008: Felipe Massa
2021: Max Verstappen	2014: Daniel Ricciardo	2007: Kimi Raikkonen
2020: Lewis Hamilton	2013: Sebastian Vettel	2005: Kimi Raikkonen
2019: Charles Leclerc	2012: Jenson Button	2004: Kimi Raikkonen
2018: Sebastian Vettel	2011: Sebastian Vettel	2002: Michael Schumacher
2017: Lewis Hamilton	2010: Lewis Hamilton	2001: Michael Schumacher
2016: Nico Rosberg	2009: Kimi Raikkonen	2000: Mika Hakkinen

LIST OF POLE POSITIONS

2022: Max Verstappen	2015: Lewis Hamilton	2008: Lewis Hamilton
2021: Max Verstappen	2014: Nico Rosberg	2007: Kimi Raikkonen
2020: Lewis Hamilton	2013: Lewis Hamilton	2005: Juan Pablo Montoya
2019: Charles Leclerc	2012: Jenson Button	2004: Jarno Trulli
2018: Lewis Hamilton	2011: Sebastian Vettel	2002: Michael Schumacher
2017: Lewis Hamilton	2010: Mark Webber	2001: Juan Pablo Montoya
2016: Nico Rosberg	2009: Giancarlo Fisichella	2000: Mika Hakkinen

MOST WINS
6 Michael Schumacher
5 Ayrton Senna
Jim Clark, Kimi Raikkonen,
4 Lewis Hamilton

MOST POLES
6 Lewis Hamilton
4 Juan Manual Fangio, Ayrton Senna
3 Graham Hill, Alain Prost, Mika Hakkinen

MOST PODIUMS
10 Lewis Hamilton
9 Michael Schumacher
7 Alain Prost

1ST — 281 POINTS

RED BULL — MAX VERSTAPPEN

AGE: 25
DEBUT: Aus 2015
STARTS: 174
BEST QUAL: 1st (x27)
PODIUMS: 90
BEST RESULT: 1st (x44)
AVG 2023 FINISH: 1.18
BEST BELGIAN GP: 1st 21,22

Car #1

TEAM PRINCIPAL CHRISTIAN HORNER

Max Verstappen is driving so well on a Sunday, he appears almost certain to continue his winning streak in Belgium. Verstappen enjoyed his biggest margin of victory in Hungary, to extend his run of dominance to seven. Spa was the scene of one of his best wins ever, charging from 14th to first within 12 laps and winning by 17s.

2ND — 171 POINTS

RED BULL — SERGIO PEREZ

AGE: 33
DEBUT: Aus 2011
STARTS: 246
BEST QUAL: 1st (x1)
PODIUMS: 33
BEST RESULT: 1st (x5)
AVG 2023 FINISH: 4.45
BEST BELGIAN GP: 2nd 2022

Car #11

TEAM PRINCIPAL CHRISTIAN HORNER

The under fire Sergio Perez would have relieved some of the pressure off his shoulders, but not all of it in Budapest. The weekend started with an amateur crash in practice, while he finally made Q3, albeit only scoring ninth. Managed to salvage third, but was not entirely convincing. Has enjoyed a consistent Spa record since being caught up in the 2012 smash up.

3RD — 139 POINTS

ASTON MARTIN — FERNANDO ALONSO

AGE: 41
DEBUT: Aus 2001
STARTS: 366
BEST QUAL: 1st (x22)
PODIUMS: 104
BEST RESULT: 1st (x32)
AVG 2023 FINISH: 4.4
BEST BELGIAN GP: 2nd 2005

Car #14

TEAM PRINCIPAL MIKE KRACK

Spa has not been the kindest to Fernando Alonso, who is yet to win at the famous track. He failed to finish the Belgian GPs of his two near misses for Ferrari in 2021 and 2012. Last year was a step in the right direction scoring fifth, but Aston Martin need to arrest its mid-year drop off and fast to defend third.

4TH — 133 POINTS

MERCEDES — LEWIS HAMILTON

AGE: 38
DEBUT: Aus 2007
STARTS: 320
BEST QUAL: 1st (x104)
PODIUMS: 195
BEST RESULT: 1st (x103)
AVG 2023 FINISH: 4.36
BEST HUNGARIAN GP: 1st 10,15,17,20

Car #44

TEAM PRINCIPAL TOTO WOLFF

Lewis Hamilton is on the charge to snatch this spot in the championship from old rival Fernando Alonso. Despite missing out on a podium, fourth was enough to gain more valuable points in Hungary where he pulled off a magic lap to snare a 104th pole. He and Mercedes both clawing closer to their best.

5TH — 90 POINTS

MERCEDES — GEORGE RUSSELL

AGE: 25
DEBUT: Aus 2019
STARTS: 92
BEST QUAL: 1st (x2)
PODIUMS: 10
BEST RESULT: 1st (x1)
AVG 2023 FINISH: 5.44
BEST BELGIAN GP: 2nd 2021

Car #63

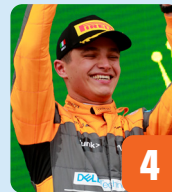**TEAM PRINCIPAL TOTO WOLFF**

George Russell had to fight like crazy, but a big comeback drive in Budapest saw him knockoff Sainz in the standings. Getting caught in traffic saw the #63 start down in 18th, but he soared up to sixth. Spa is one of his happier places having secured a sensational second for Williams in 2021.

6TH — 87 POINTS

FERRARI — CARLOS SAINZ JR

AGE: 28
DEBUT: Aus 2015
STARTS: 173
BEST QUAL: 1st (x3)
PODIUMS: 15
BEST RESULT: 1st (x1)
AVG 2023 FINISH: 6.73
BEST BELGIAN GP: 3rd 2022

Car #55

TEAM PRINCIPAL FRED VASSEUR

Carlos Sainz is on a points-scoring streak, but car #55 is not achieving the results he or Ferrari would like. Despite a fast start Hungary was a tough one as a questionable team call saw Sainz swap positions with Leclerc and finish eighth. The Spaniard did not have the best time at Spa until a podium last year.

7TH — 80 POINTS

FERRARI — CHARLES LECLERC

AGE: 25
DEBUT: Aus 2018
STARTS: 113
BEST QUAL: 1st (x19)
PODIUMS: 26
BEST RESULT: 1st (x5)
AVG 2023 FINISH: 6.22
BEST BELGIAN GP: 1st 2019

Car #16

TEAM PRINCIPAL FRED VASSEUR

Another underwhelming weekend puts Charles Leclerc and Ferrari desperate for a better showing at the scene of their famous first win together in 2019. Ferrari made "too many mistakes" with one of those a 9s pit leaving him seventh. Last year Leclerc had a grid Renault and started one spot behind Verstappen, but could only get sixth.

8TH — 60 POINTS

MCLAREN — LANDO NORRIS

AGE: 23
DEBUT: Aus 2019
STARTS: 93
BEST QUAL: 1st (x1)
PODIUMS: 8
BEST RESULT: 2nd (x3)
AVG 2023 FINISH: 10.27
BEST BELGIAN GP: 7th 2020

Car #4

TEAM PRINCIPAL ZAC BROWN

Only Verstappen can claim to having better form than Lando Norris right now. For the first time in his career Norris scored back-to-back podiums and did it in style. Does not have a great Spa record with just one points finish from four starts, but no better time to better that. In fact the Brit is driving so well he can get away with smashing trophies.

9TH — 45 POINTS

ASTON MARTIN — LANCE STROLL

AGE: 24
DEBUT: Aus 2017
STARTS: 133
BEST QUAL: 1st (x1)
PODIUMS: 3
BEST RESULT: 3rd (x3)
AVG 2023 FINISH: 8.56
BEST BELGIAN GP: 9th 2020

Car #18

TEAM PRINCIPAL MIKE KRACK

Lance Stroll clung on to a much-needed point at Budapest as he lost ninth in the championship race. Starting 14th, Stroll was able to work his way through the pack to return to the 10 after poorly missing out in Silverstone. Has never quite found his best at Spa with a best result of ninth.

10TH — 31 POINTS

ALPINE — ESTEBAN OCON

AGE: 26
DEBUT: Bel 2016
STARTS: 122
BEST QUAL: 3rd (x2)
PODIUMS: 3
BEST RESULT: 1st (x1)
AVG 2023 FINISH: 9.88
BEST BELGIAN GP: 5th 2020

Car #31

TEAM PRINCIPAL OTMAR SZAFNAUER

Seven years on from his debut Esteban Ocon returns to Spa needing to recapture the biggest strength from his young years. Ocon set a new record for the most consecutive finishes (27) from debut, but he is currently doing the opposite recording back to back DNFs. Hungary only lasted two laps after a teammate tangle.
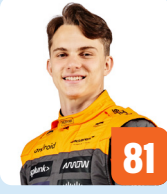
11TH — 27 POINTS — MCLAREN — OSCAR PIASTRI

AGE: 21
DEBUT: Bah 2023
STARTS: 11
BEST QUAL: 3rd (x1)
PODIUMS: 0
BEST RESULT: 4th (x1)
AVG 2023 FINISH: 11.2
BEST BELGIAN GP: N/A

81

TEAM PRINCIPAL ZAC BROWN

Whilst his teammate is taking the trophies it was Oscar Piastri, who got people jumping out of their seats in Budapest. Piastri soared from fourth to second with a smart move at turn one, only to lose out to his teammate through no fault of his own. Eventually dropped to fifth as he struggled on the hards, but Piastri is proving his star quality and the MCL60 is expected to be fast at Spa.
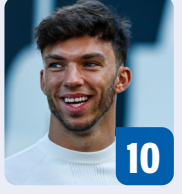
12TH — 16 POINTS — ALPINE — PIERRE GASLY

AGE: 27
DEBUT: Mal 2017
STARTS: 118
BEST QUAL: 2nd (x1)
PODIUMS: 3
BEST RESULT: 1st (x1)
AVG 2023 FINISH: 11
BEST BELGIAN GP: 6th 2022

10

TEAM PRINCIPAL OTMAR SZAFNAUER

Pierre Gasly cut a dejected figure as he and Alpine experienced a second straight double DNF. This time at the first corner where Gasly tangled with Ocon. Gasly can be confident of the rotten run ending however, having never failed to score points at the tricky Spa.

13TH — 11 POINTS — WILLIAMS — ALEX ALBON

AGE: 27
DEBUT: Aus 2019
STARTS: 69
BEST QUAL: 4th (x4)
PODIUMS: 3
BEST RESULT: 3rd (x2)
AVG 2023 FINISH: 11.4
BEST BELGIAN GP: 5th 2019

23

TEAM PRINCIPAL JAMES VOWLES

Spa is an emotional place for Alex Albon as he was unexpectedly thrown into the Red Bull seat as a rookie in 2019 and finished fifth. Even for Williams he has continued his points scoring streak at the 7km circuit. Has strung four strong races together and can be confident of pushing for more results this weekend having been surprised to challenge in Hungary.

14TH — 9 POINTS — HAAS — NICO HULKENBERG

AGE: 35
DEBUT: Bah 2010
STARTS: 190
BEST QUAL: 1st (x1)
PODIUMS: 0
BEST RESULT: 4th (x3)
AVG 2023 FINISH: 14
BEST BELGIAN GP: 4th 12, 16

27

TEAM PRINCIPAL GUENTHER STEINER

The 2023 season is following a particular path for Nico Hulkenberg, being fast on a Saturday, but struggle on a Sunday. However, he was "not too disappointed" post race in the bleached blonde hair. Another Q3 appearance was followed by no points in Budapest. Spa has been a strong track for the German, finishing fourth here twice for Force India.

15TH — 5 POINTS — ALFA ROMEO SAUBER — VALTTERI BOTTAS

AGE: 33
DEBUT: Aus 2013
STARTS: 211
BEST QUAL: 1 (x20)
PODIUMS: 67
BEST RESULT: 1st (x10)
AVG 2023 FINISH: 13.3
BEST BELGIAN GP: 2nd 2020

77

TEAM PRINCIPAL ALESSANDRO ALUNNI BRAVI

Hungary appeared to be a golden chance for Valtteri Bottas to score his third points appearance of the season after qualifying a solid seventh. However, the Finn was "compromised on lap one" and eventually crossed the line down in 12th. Has not finished in the 10 at Spa since 2020.

16TH — 4 POINTS — ALFA ROMEO SAUBER — ZHOU GUANYU

AGE: 23
DEBUT: Bah 2022
STARTS: 33
BEST QUAL: 9th (x2)
PODIUMS: 0
BEST RESULT: 8th (x1)
AVG 2023 FINISH: 13.5
BEST BELGIAN GP: 14th 2022

24

TEAM PRINCIPAL ALESSANDRO ALUNNI BRAVI

The Hungarian Grand Prix was a forgetful one for Zhou Guanyu. Zhou caused the first corner carnage by spearing into the back of Riccardo, which sparked a chain reaction taking out both of the Alpines. Outside of his Baku retirement, 16th was his equal worst finish of the year.

17TH — 2 POINTS — ALPHATAURI — YUKI TSUNODA

AGE: 23
DEBUT: Bah 2021
STARTS: 53
BEST QUAL: 7th (x2)
PODIUMS: 0
BEST RESULT: 4th (x1)
AVG 2023 FINISH: 13.09
BEST BELGIAN GP: 13th 2022

22

TEAM PRINCIPAL FRANZ TOST

Having had a relatively easy time against de Vries, Yuki Tsunoda knows he has a challenge on his hands against Ricciardo. Despite having 10 more races of experience in the AT04 and not getting caught up in turn one chaos, Tsunoda was overwhelmed by Ricciardo. Needs to hit back at Spa where he is yet to get points.

18TH — 2 POINTS — HAAS — KEVIN MAGNUSSEN

AGE: 30
DEBUT: Aus 2014
STARTS: 152
BEST QUAL: 1st (x1)
PODIUMS: 1
BEST RESULT: 2nd (x1)
AVG 2023 FINISH: 15.27
BEST BELGIAN GP: 8th 2018

20

TEAM PRINCIPAL GUENTHER STEINER

With 17th being an equal best result in the last six races, its telling how tough the second season of Kevin Magnussen's comeback is becoming. Magnussen was questioning the strategy in Budapest after starting 19th and finishing last on the road, a lao down in 17th. The Dane has also battled at Spa in the past with 18th his only top 10.

19TH — 0 POINTS — WILLIAMS — LOGAN SARGEANT

AGE 22
DEBUT: Bah 2023
STARTS: 11
BEST QUAL: 14th (x1)
PODIUMS: 0
BEST RESULT: 11th (x1)
AVG 2023 FINISH: 16
BEST HUNGARIAN GP: N/A

2

TEAM PRINCIPAL JAMES VOWLES

After a pleasing trip to Britain, Budapest proved to be a tougher assignment for Logan Sargeant. His race ended with a spin into a third retirement of the season three laps short of the chequered flag. Hopes to maximise the FW45 at a track which should suit its strengths.

20TH — 0 POINTS — ALPHATAURI — DANIEL RICCIARDO

AGE: 34
DEBUT: GB 2011
STARTS: 233
BEST QUAL: 1st (x3)
PODIUMS: 32
BEST RESULT: 1st (x8)
AVG 2023 FINISH: 13
BEST BELGIAN GP: 1st 2014

3

TEAM PRINCIPAL FRANZ TOST

Despite never driving AT04 before, Daniel Ricciardo showed he had not lost his skills and gave his teammate a touchup. A rare AlphaTauri Q2 appearance was followed by an impressive 13th considering being an innocent victim in the first-corner shenanigans. Spa is another special track for Ricciardo and with a race under his belt, expect an even wider smile.