

# AUTO ACTION'S 2023 PRE QATAR FORMULA ONE TEAM-BY-TEAM EVENT GUIDE

## ONE RACE AFTER RED BULL WRAPPED UP THE CONSTRUCTORS CROWN, MAX VERSTAPPEN COULD SECURE ANOTHER PIECE OF SILVERWARE IN QATAR.

VERSTAPPEN IS on the verge of taking a hat-trick of Formula 1 world championships, which will send him straight into the conversation of all-time greats.

After such a crushing season, the task for the flying Dutchman is simple.

Even if Sergio Perez wins the Saturday Sprint race, Verstappen will be champion if he finishes sixth or better.

Meanwhile the Mexican needs at least a podium finish and his Red Bull teammate to miss the points if he is to keep the championship alive for another day.

Even if that does happen, Verstappen would only need eighth in the Grand Prix to wrap it all up regardless of how well Perez does.

With Juan Manuel Fangio, Michael Schumacher, Sebastian Vettel and Lewis Hamilton the only drivers to record three-peats in the 73-year history of Formula 1, Qatar should be a historic weekend.

After Red Bull responded to a rare Singapore slip emphatically with Verstappen being at his dominant best at Japan, the mountain for teams to climb just to challenge for victory is steep.

Mercedes will bring a significant upgrade package to the W14 and hopes it can propel them ahead of their rivals.

The black arrows are in the middle of a battle for second in the constructors with

longtime rivals Ferrari and enjoy a 20-point advantage.

Despite not being in that particular battle, McLaren is the team Mercedes wants to catch.

The papaya squad enjoyed a new highlight in Suzuka with Australia's Oscar Piastri scoring his maiden career podium, one place behind runner-up Lando Norris.

There was no doubt McLaren was the second fastest car in Japan and it will be confident of carrying the momentum into Qatar which is also full of high-speed corners.

Drivers and teams will have to step two years back in time to find the one and only Qatar Grand Prix.

With that race taking place in 2021, this year will be an entirely unique challenge in the new cars.

On that occasion Mercedes was the team to beat with Lewis Hamilton enjoying a peerless run to the chequered flag as Verstappen had to fight for second following a power unit related grid penalty.

Piastri has never raced at Qatar and neither has Lawson, who could be suiting up for AlphaTauri for the final time in 2023.

With Bathurst going all day and Formula 1 racing under lights during the night, it is a dream weekend for motorsport fans.



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FOR JUST the second time Formula 1 will be racing under the Lusail lights in Qatar. The race made its maiden appearance in 2021, but was skipped last year due to the FIFA World Cup. Well known to MotoGP fans, the Lusail Circuit is fast and full of high to medium speed sweeping bends. The track itself was constructed in 2004 ahead of its MotoGP debut on the outskirts of Doha.



## TRACK STATS

### OLD QUAL LAP RECORD:

- Lewis Hamilton 1:20.827 Mercedes 2021

### OLD RACE LAP RECORD:

- Max Verstappen 1:23.196 Red Bull 2021

## TRACK FACTS



TRACK LENGTH:  
**5.419KM**



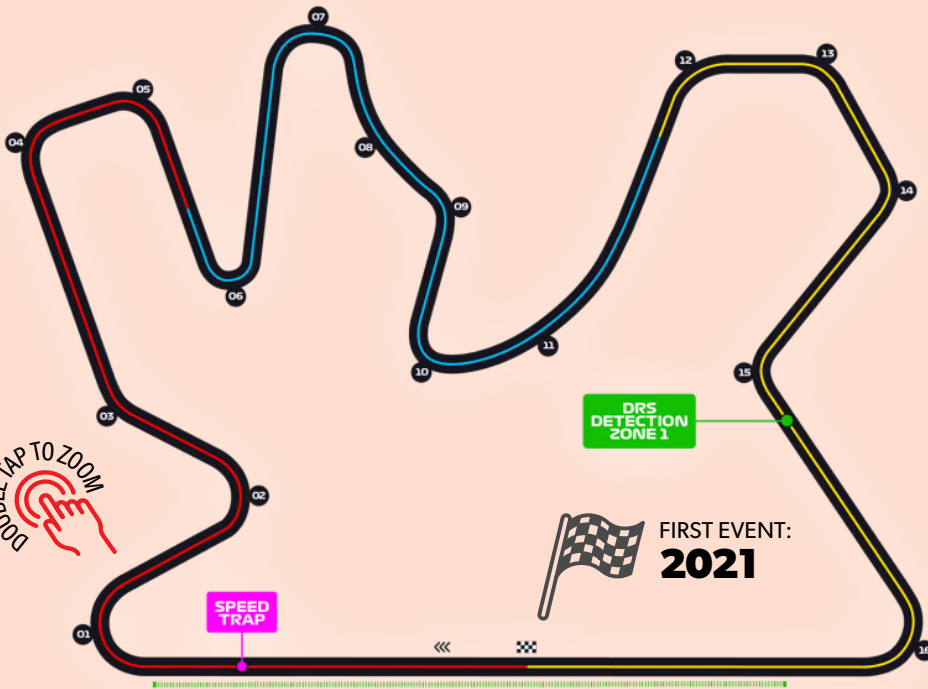
DIRECTION:  
**CLOCKWISE**



AVERAGE SPEED:  
**141 KM/H**



TOP SPEED:  
**329 KM/H**



## TRACK SCHEDULE (ALL TIMES AEST)

### SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7

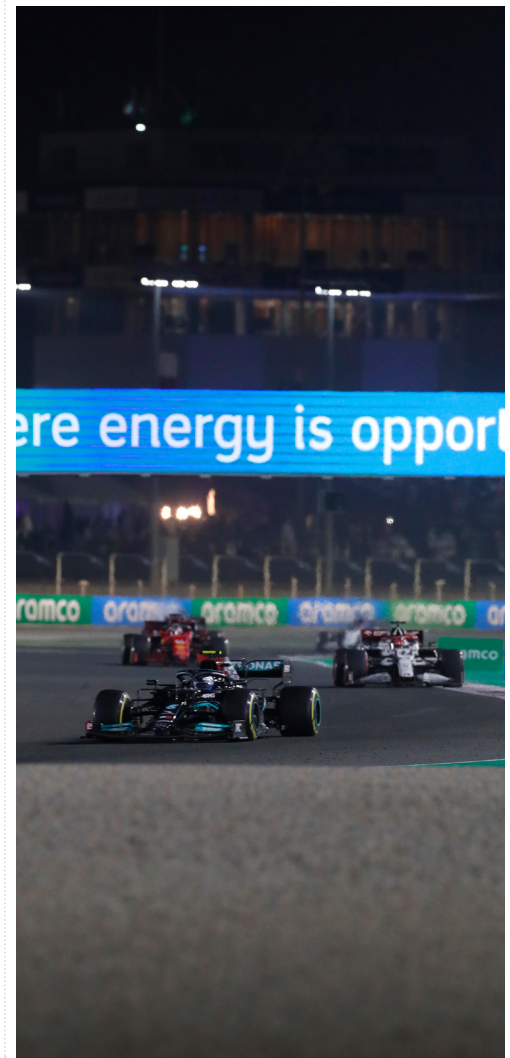
TIME	SESSION
00.30-01.30	Practice
04.00-05.00	Qualifying

### SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8

TIME	SESSION
00.00-00.45	Sprint Shootout
04.30-05.30	Sprint

### MONDAY, OCTOBER 9

TIME	SESSION
04.00	Grand Prix



## LIST OF RACE RESULTS

2021

- Lewis Hamilton
- Max Verstappen
- Fernando Alonso

1

## LIST OF POLE POSITIONS

2021

- Lewis Hamilton
- Max Verstappen
- Valtteri Bottas



## MOST WINS

1 Lewis Hamilton

1

## MOST POLES

1 Lewis Hamilton

2 1 3

## MOST PODIUMS

1 Lewis Hamilton  
Max Verstappen  
Fernando Alonso

**1ST**  
400  
POINTS

**RED BULL**

**MAX VERSTAPPEN**

AGE: 25  
DEBUT: Aus 2015  
STARTS: 179  
BEST QUAL: 1st (x29)  
PODIUMS: 92  
BEST RESULT: 1st (x48)  
AVG 2023 FINISH: 1.4  
BEST QATAR GP: 2nd 2021



**TEAM PRINCIPAL CHRISTIAN HORNER**

Max Verstappen should complete a near-perfect season with championship glory at Qatar. He simply needs to ensure Perez does not outscore him greatly to take a hat-trick. Verstappen bounced back from Singapore with a masterful drive in Japan. Finished second after starting seventh at Qatar in 2021.

**2ND**  
223  
POINTS

**RED BULL**

**SERGIO PEREZ**

AGE: 33  
DEBUT: Aus 2011  
STARTS: 251  
BEST QUAL: 1st (x3)  
PODIUMS: 34  
BEST RESULT: 1st (x6)  
AVG 2023 FINISH: 4.33  
BEST QATAR GP: 4th 2021



**TEAM PRINCIPAL CHRISTIAN HORNER**

After a tough weekend in Japan, Sergio Perez must be at his best to keep his near impossible dream of being F1 world champion alive. Needs to beat his teammate which will be a big ask having spun Magnussen and retired early from in a disappointing Japanese performance. Missed Qatar Q3 in 2021 but fought back to fourth.

**3RD**  
190  
POINTS

**MERCEDES**

**LEWIS HAMILTON**

AGE: 38  
DEBUT: Aus 2007  
STARTS: 326  
BEST QUAL: 1st (x104)  
PODIUMS: 196  
BEST RESULT: 1st (x103)  
AVG 2023 FINISH: 4.47  
BEST QATAR GP: 1st 2021



**TEAM PRINCIPAL TOTO WOLFF**

The only ever winner of the Qatar Grand Prix returns with back to back wins likely out of the picture but still fighting. Hamilton is a strong third in the points but will be pushing to beat Ferrari and McLaren as the former closes in the constructors title. Was peerless in the only ever Qatar GP while improved from seventh to fifth in Suzuka.

**4TH**  
174  
POINTS

**ASTON MARTIN**

**FERNANDO ALONSO**

AGE: 41  
DEBUT: Aus 2001  
STARTS: 371  
BEST QUAL: 1st (x22)  
PODIUMS: 105  
BEST RESULT: 1st (x32)  
AVG 2023 FINISH: 4.23  
BEST QATAR GP: 3rd 2021



**TEAM PRINCIPAL MIKE KRACK**

Qatar holds a special place in Fernando Alonso's heart, as it was here where he scored his first podium in seven years. Then driving for Alpine, Alonso produced a faultless performance to take a popular third by holding off a charging Perez. Although he has scored a further seven podiums this year, he will have a fight on his hands as McLaren come charging.

**5TH**  
150  
POINTS

**FERRARI**

**CARLOS SAINZ JR**

AGE: 28  
DEBUT: Aus 2015  
STARTS: 178  
BEST QUAL: 1st (x5)  
PODIUMS: 17  
BEST RESULT: 1st (x2)  
AVG 2023 FINISH: 5.93  
BEST QATAR GP: 7th 2021



**TEAM PRINCIPAL FRED VASSEUR**

After a trip to the Ryder Cup Ferrari's Carlos Sainz hopes to rekindle his strong form. Japan was far from ordinary with a clean and composed drive to sixth, but it was two spots behind teammate Leclerc who the Spaniard had the measure of recently. Started fifth and dropped to seventh in 2021.

**6TH**  
135  
POINTS

**FERRARI**

**CHARLES LECLERC**

AGE: 25  
DEBUT: Aus 2018  
STARTS: 118  
BEST QUAL: 1st (x19)  
PODIUMS: 27  
BEST RESULT: 1st (x5)  
AVG 2023 FINISH: 5.58  
BEST QATAR GP: 8th 2021



**TEAM PRINCIPAL FRED VASSEUR**

Japan was an important weekend for Charles Leclerc as he was able to get back on top of his teammate. Sainz had held the upper hand especially at Italy and Singapore, but Leclerc hit back finishing fourth, two spots ahead and easily the best behind Verstappen and the McLarens.

**7TH**  
115  
POINTS

**MCLAREN**

**LANDO NORRIS**

AGE: 23  
DEBUT: Aus 2019  
STARTS: 99  
BEST QUAL: 1st (x1)  
PODIUMS: 10  
BEST RESULT: 2nd (x4)  
AVG 2023 RESULT: 9  
BEST QATAR GP: 9TH 2021



**TEAM PRINCIPAL ZAC BROWN**

The good times keep on rolling for Lando Norris as another second place saw him surge past George Russell in the standings. Although Piastri can beat him in qualifying, Norris appears to have the measure over a race distance and bolted clear in the middle phase of the race. Was easily the leading McLaren at Qatar in 2021.

**8TH**  
115  
POINTS

**MERCEDES**

**GEORGE RUSSELL**

AGE: 25  
DEBUT: Aus 2019  
STARTS: 98  
BEST QUAL: 1st (x2)  
PODIUMS: 10  
BEST RESULT: 1st (x1)  
AVG 2023 FINISH: 7.15  
BEST QATAR GP: 17th 2021



**TEAM PRINCIPAL TOTO WOLFF**

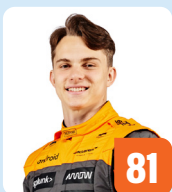
Fell second best to Hamilton in an all Mercedes Japanese duel at the Spoon Curve and had to settle for seventh. In the end the younger Brit claimed it was "just part of racing". Only trip to Qatar was in the Williams days and finished two laps down.

**9TH**  
57  
POINTS

**MCLAREN**

**OSCAR PIASTR**

AGE: 21  
DEBUT: Bah 2023  
STARTS: 16  
BEST QUAL: 2nd (x1)  
PODIUMS: 1  
BEST RESULT: 3rd (x1)  
AVG 2023 FINISH: 10.77  
BEST QATAR GP: N/A



**TEAM PRINCIPAL ZAC BROWN**

Oscar Piastri is on a high having just scored a maiden Formula 1 career podium. Piastri was brilliant in his first weekend driving the upgraded MCL60, qualifying second only to Verstappen and driving a solid race to third. The Aussie now has a 10-point buffer over Stroll and has all the confidence in the world before heading to Suzuka.

**10TH**  
47  
POINTS

**ASTON MARTIN**

**LANCE STROLL**

AGE: 24  
DEBUT: Aus 2017  
STARTS: 137  
BEST QUAL: 1st (x1)  
PODIUMS: 3  
BEST RESULT: 3rd (x3)  
AVG 2023 FINISH: 8.82  
BEST QATAR GP: 6th 2021



**TEAM PRINCIPAL MIKE KRACK**

Lance Stroll has now gone four races in a row without points as he heads to Qatar. Stroll recovered from his Singapore crash for Suzuka but struggled qualifying 17th before recording a DNF after feeling his rear wing "was falling off". Hoping for a similar performance to his last trip to Qatar where he rose from 12th to sixth.

**11TH**46  
POINTS

ALPINE

PIERRE GASLY

AGE: 27  
DEBUT: Mal 2017  
STARTS: 124  
BEST QUAL: 2nd (x1)  
PODIUMS: 4  
BEST RESULT: 1st (x1)  
AVG 2023 FINISH: 10.36  
BEST QATAR GP: 11th 2021

TEAM PRINCIPAL BRUNO FAMIN

Pierre Gasly was a frustrated figure after the Japanese GP, saying he did not "fully understand" Alpine's request to swap positions late in Suzuka. This relegated him to 10th in the race and 11th in the championship. Gasly just missed out on points at Lusail in 2021 for AlphaTauri.

**12TH**38  
POINTS

ALPINE

ESTEBAN OCON

AGE: 27  
DEBUT: Bel 2016  
STARTS: 127  
BEST QUAL: 3rd (x2)  
PODIUMS: 3  
BEST RESULT: 1st (x1)  
AVG 2023 FINISH: 9.7  
BEST QATAR GP: 5th 2021

TEAM PRINCIPAL BRUNO FAMIN

Esteban Ocon was the beneficiary of team orders to get ninth ahead of Gasly in Suzuka. It was an impressive result considering points were unlikely after a first-lap puncture. Would love to replicate his result from Qatar 2021 when he climbed from ninth to fifth during his career-best season.

**13TH**21  
POINTS

WILLIAMS

ALEX ALBON

AGE: 27  
DEBUT: Aus 2019  
STARTS: 75  
BEST QUAL: 4th (x5)  
PODIUMS: 3  
BEST RESULT: 3rd (x2)  
AVG 2023 FINISH: 11.36  
BEST QATAR GP: N/A

TEAM PRINCIPAL JAMES VOWLES

Unlike many other established drivers, Alex Albon has never raced at Lusail. The Qatar Grand Prix arrived during his year off in DTM. Was a victim of the first-lap wheel to wheel clashes in Suzuka where his Williams got airborne. Still will have his sights set on points.

**14TH**9  
POINTS

HAAS

NICO HULKENBERG

AGE: 35  
DEBUT: Bah 2010  
STARTS: 197  
BEST QUAL: 1st (x1)  
PODIUMS: 0  
BEST RESULT: 4th (x3)  
AVG 2023 FINISH: 14.17  
BEST QATAR GP: N/A

TEAM PRINCIPAL GUENTHER STEINER

Another seasoned campaigner who will be making his first start in Qatar is Nico Hulkenberg. Stayed out of trouble but struggled for pace in the Haas at Japan, being knocked out in Q1 and finishing a lap down in 14th but left with a smile after a big first-lap charge having avoided the "messy part".

**15TH**6  
POINTS

ALFA ROMEO SAUBER

VALTTERI BOTTAS

AGE: 33  
DEBUT: Aus 2013  
STARTS: 216  
BEST QUAL: 1 (x20)  
PODIUMS: 67  
BEST RESULT: 1st (x10)  
AVG 2023 FINISH: 13.31  
BEST QATAR GP: DNF 2021

TEAM PRINCIPAL ALESSANDRO ALUNNI BRAVI

Valtteri Bottas missed out on reaching the chequered flag in Japan after being hit by a locked-up Logan Sargeant. It was a blow for Bottas on a weekend where neither Alfa Romeo could escape Q1. The Finn also retired in Qatar 2021 due a puncture.

**16TH**4  
POINTS

ALFA ROMEO SAUBER

ZHOU GUANYU

AGE: 23  
DEBUT: Bah 2022  
STARTS: 38  
BEST QUAL: 9th (x2)  
PODIUMS: 0  
BEST RESULT: 8th (x1)  
AVG 2023 FINISH: 13.45  
BEST QATAR GP: N/A

TEAM PRINCIPAL ALESSANDRO ALUNNI BRAVI

Zhou Guanyu was one of the biggest movers in the Japanese Grand Prix, rising from the last row to 13th. Despite climbing six spots, Zhou said more could have been possible because he was "compromised" by the debris from the opening lap.

**17TH**3  
POINTS

ALPHATAURI

YUKI TSUNODA

AGE: 23  
DEBUT: Bah 2021  
STARTS: 57  
BEST QUAL: 7th (x2)  
PODIUMS: 0  
BEST RESULT: 4th (x1)  
AVG 2023 FINISH: 12.53  
BEST QATAR GP: 13th 2021

TEAM PRINCIPAL FRANZ TOST

Despite being able to finally complete the opening lap, Yuki Tsunoda would have been disappointed with his Japanese GP performance. In front of his adoring home fans Tsunoda finished 12th, notably behind teammate Lawson after a wheel-to-wheel battle. Having beaten the Kiwi to a 2024 seat, he will want to remind the doubters why.

**18TH**3  
POINTS

HAAS

KEVIN MAGNUSSEN

AGE: 30  
DEBUT: Aus 2014  
STARTS: 156  
BEST QUAL: 1st (x1)  
PODIUMS: 1  
BEST RESULT: 2nd (x1)  
AVG 2023 FINISH: 15.07  
BEST QATAR GP: N/A

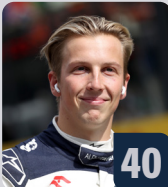
TEAM PRINCIPAL GUENTHER STEINER

Just like his teammate Kevin Magnussen has never raced in the Qatar Grand Prix. Aiming to bounce back from Japan where a collision dramatically disrupted his weekend. The Dane was spun by Perez, who made a "pretty desperate move that ended our race" according to Magnussen. Still made the finish to be 15th but last on track.

**19TH**2  
POINTS

ALPHATAURI

LIAM LAWSON

AGE: 21  
DEBUT: Dutch 2023  
STARTS: 4  
BEST QUAL: 10th (x1)  
PODIUMS: 0  
BEST RESULT: 9th (x1)  
AVG 2023 FINISH: 11  
BEST QATAR GP: N/A

TEAM PRINCIPAL FRANZ TOST

With Ricciardo aiming to return in Austin, this could be Liam Lawson's last chance to impress in Formula 1 this year. Made another statement in Japan by beating teammate Tsunoda in a thrilling first lap dual and stayed ahead to achieve the "maximum" of 11th. Will have no shortage of motivation after missing out on a 2024 seat.

**20TH**0  
POINTS

WILLIAMS

LOGAN SARGEANT

AGE: 22  
DEBUT: Bah 2023  
STARTS: 16  
BEST QUAL: 14th (x1)  
PODIUMS: 0  
BEST RESULT: 11th (x1)  
AVG 2023 FINISH: 16.09  
BEST QATAR GP: N/A

TEAM PRINCIPAL JAMES VOWLES

The pressure is starting to mount on Logan Sargeant as questions swirl around his future. Sargeant was keen to "just move on" from a weekend to forget in Suzuka. It took a turn for the worse in qualifying when he had a high-speed shunt at the final turn, while he was forced to retire from the Grand Prix after colliding with Bottas.