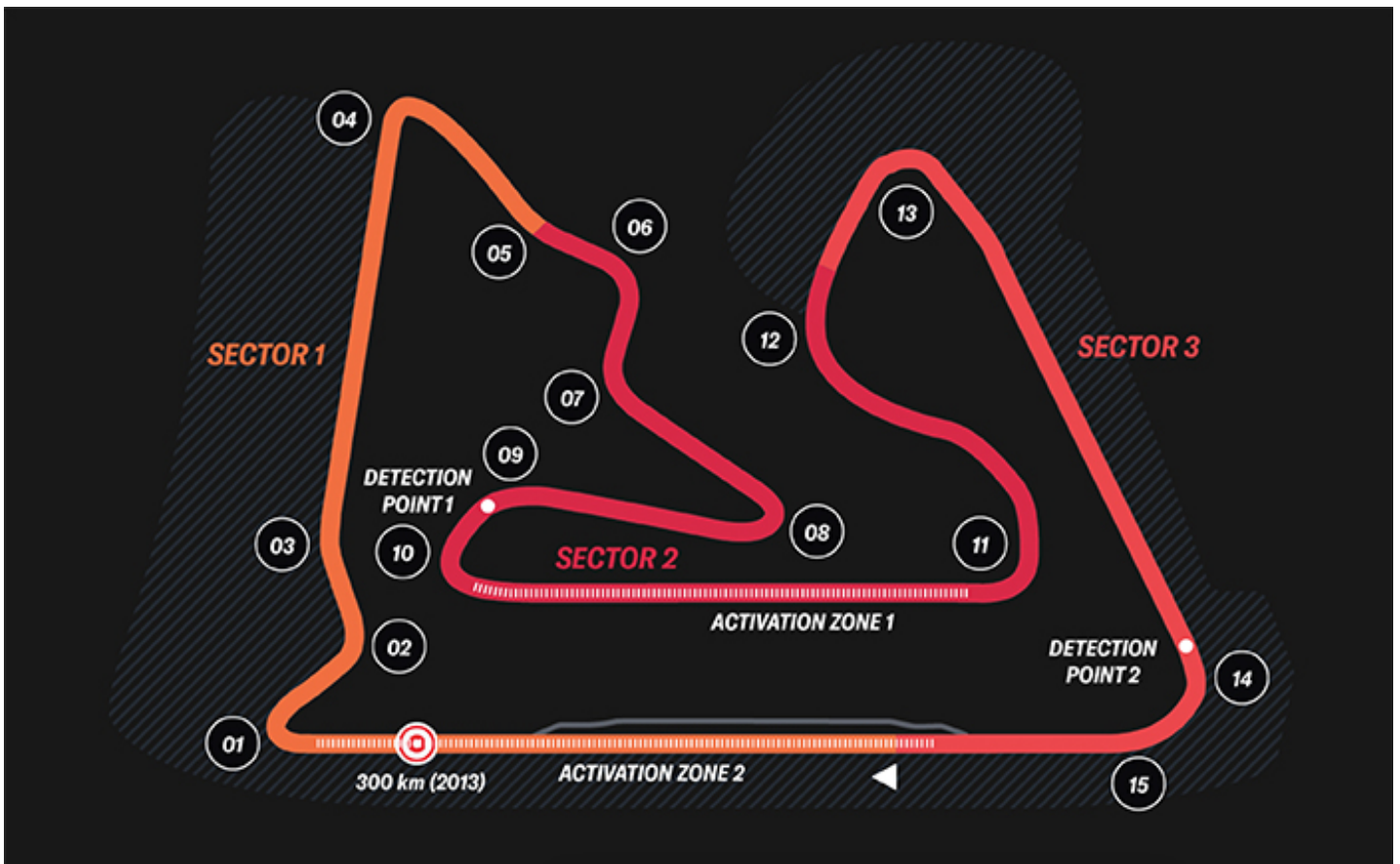




Bahrain Grand Prix

BAHRAIN INTERNATIONAL CIRCUIT - SAKHIR

PREVIEW



In the desert, eight months later

Sakhir, 25 November 2020 - Originally, the Bahrain Grand Prix at the Sakhir circuit should have been the second race of the season, taking place on 22 March, following on from the season curtain raiser in Australia. It seems an eternity ago that the Covid-19 pandemic led to Melbourne being cancelled and put a stop to all forms of motorsport up until July, when, having put the necessary safety measures in place, Formula 1 was one of the first global sports to resume and the engines were fired up for two Austrian races in a row at the Spielberg circuit. Since then, there have been 14 Grands Prix, with three sets of triple-headers. This weekend marks the start of the fourth and final trio of races to end this very unusual 71st Formula 1 season.

The circuit. The Sakhir track is 5.412 kilometres long and Sunday's race requires drivers to

complete 57 laps. Well known for its long straights and very heavy braking zones, the two most difficult points are at turns 1 and 14. There are two DRS zones where the rear wing can be opened: on the start-finish straight and the other between turns 10 and 11. The race starts at 17.10 local (15.10 CET) while qualifying takes place on Saturday at 17 (15 CET). It is run as a night race, but a powerful floodlight system means it is as bright as day throughout, although the temperature drops as night draws in.

Six wins. Scuderia Ferrari has won six times in Bahrain: the first victory was in the inaugural event in 2004 courtesy of Michael Schumacher, while in 2007 and 2008, Felipe Massa took the wins. The only time the “endurance” layout of the track was used was in 2010, when Fernando Alonso won on his debut with Ferrari, joining an exclusive club of first time winners, Juan Manuel Fangio, Giancarlo Baghetti, Mario Andretti, Nigel Mansell and Kimi Räikkönen. In 2017 and 2018, Ferrari won with Sebastian Vettel and last year saw Charles Leclerc signal his future intentions when, having started from pole and led most of the race, he had to settle for third and his first ever Formula 1 podium, because of a reliability problem.

Sebastian Vettel #5



“The Sakhir circuit has always been very demanding for the drivers and the cars. From inside the car, the ambient temperature is a feature, because in this desert location, at some parts of the day the heat can be very high.

The characteristics of the track put a premium on traction and also provide a stern test for the brakes, which come under a lot of stress over the course of a lap. It’s what we drivers call a stop-go track because you are continually having to brake heavily and then accelerate hard. We never raced in Bahrain this late in the year, but it won’t change very much in terms of the temperatures.

We’ve seen that the car has improved over the past few races and I’m keen to see how competitive we can be at this track.”

Charles Leclerc #16



“The Bahrain Grand Prix is quite unusual in that, because of various factors, the situation changes continuously over the course of the weekend. In the first sessions, the track is very dirty from all the sand that blows across its desert location. Bit by bit as the track cleans up, its abrasive nature gives the tyres a hard time.

The light and temperature also change all the time, starting at dusk on a very hot track and the sun low in the sky, but as the race goes on,

the track temperature drops and you have to adapt your driving style. I've got good memories of last year, even if it didn't end as well as it could have done. I hope we can continue the trend of the last few races in which we have been more and more competitive."

Q&A with Laurent Mekies Sporting Director

Never before, in the history of Formula 1, has the season ended with three races on consecutive weekends. With the championships decided, there is still a close battle for third place in the Constructors' classification with four teams within 24 points of one another. Scuderia Ferrari picked up 27 in Turkey, thus closing the gap to third place, although the team is still sixth. We asked **Sporting Director Laurent Mekies** what is the mood in the team as it prepares for this final stint in the Middle East.

"It will be an unusual end to a very unusual season which was a very tough one for us. Our aim is to carry on making up ground in terms of our performance when compared to those teams we are fighting with this year and that has been on-going for the last five races now".

From an organisational point of view, what problems does a triple-header throw up, especially one outside Europe?

"Our first priority is the health of the team, which is an area where you must never lower your guard. We have to ensure that everyone is in good shape given the strain of having already had 14 races in four months. I feel that the support of those working back in Maranello will be vital in helping those at the track. Every little detail that can help improve our performance will be important so as to finish this season on a high and to fine tune our working methods, making them more efficient for next year."

How physically and mentally demanding has this season been for those working at the track?

"There's no denying it's been really tough. The situation created by the pandemic and the fact our performance was poor at the start of the season made life difficult. But everything we have been through has made us stronger, we have not lost our bearings, we never gave up and we always wanted to fight back and improve. I would praise the men and women in the race team for their resilience and the spirit they showed in such difficult times, as well as their families who played a vital role. I would also like to thank the fans who have always been there with us, mainly in spirit as, in most cases they were not allowed to attend the races."

In terms of physical training and diet have you taken any special measures?

"Yes, we have a tailor-made plan for those who travel to races in terms of their medical, nutritional and physical wellbeing. Although the restrictions caused by the pandemic have made life complicated, we have not reduced our efforts in this year, quite the opposite. The health and

wellbeing of our people is vital, especially in light of the increased physical and mental stress we have faced this season. And specifically, we have arranged a fitness programme for these last three races.”

However, the race team’s season doesn’t end with the Abu Dhabi GP on 13 December, as two days later, the same Yas Marina circuit hosts the young driver test. What are Ferrari’s aims for this final piece of track action?

“I have to start by congratulating the Ferrari Driver Academy students who have all done very well this season. Three of them, Mick Schumacher, Callum Ilott and Robert Shwartzman, will be on track with other teams, while Antonio Fuoco, who works for us in the simulator, will drive our car to get an important idea of the correlation between data from the track and the simulator. We believe Mick, Callum and Robert have what it takes to do well in Formula 1 and our programme is designed to give them the best possible chance to do so. The test will be another important step in their education and we are very keen to see them perform on track, before working with them back in Maranello over the winter.”



Ferrari stats

GP contested 1005

Seasons in F1 71

Debut Monaco 1950 (Alberto Ascari 2nd; Raymond Sommer 4th; Luigi Villoresi DNF)

Wins 238 (23.68%)

Pole positions 228 (22.69%)

Fastest laps 254 (25.27%)

Podiums 773 (76.91%)

FERRARI STATS @BAHRAIN GP

GP entered 15

Debut 2004 (Michael Schumacher 1st; Rubens Barrichello 2nd)

Wins 6 (40%)

Pole positions 5 (33,33%)

Fastest laps 5 (33,33%)

Total podiums 14 (93,33%)

Bahrain GP Facts & Figures

0. The number of Bahraini drivers to have raced in Formula 1. All in all, there are **five Asian countries that can boast at least one driver starting a Grand Prix**: Japan with 17, India and Thailand with two, Indonesia and Malaysia with one.

3. The number of circuits that have hosted races on two consecutive weekends this year. The 2020 season got underway in **Spielberg**, Austria with two races in a row, the only difference being their names: the Austrian Grand Prix and the Styrian Grand Prix. After the trip to Hungary, the series moved on to **Silverstone** for two weekends and the British and 70th Anniversary of Formula 1 races, once again on the very same track layout. However, **Sakhir** will host two races on different layouts starting with the usual 5.412 km one this weekend and then, the following weekend on the 3.543 km very fast Outer Layout.

4. The furthest back on the grid from which anyone has won the Bahrain GP. Even though overtaking is not unheard of at Sakhir, the race has never been won by anyone starting from further back than fourth. The pole man has won six times, while it's been won from second on four occasions, three from third and two in fact from fourth, those being Fernando Alonso in 2006 and Jenson Button in 2009.

252. The number of days between the original Bahrain GP scheduled date and the actual one. The country was one of the first to offer Formula 1 the option of hosting more than one race.

495. The number of floodlights around the Sakhir circuit. It is a very powerful system that turns night into day, providing perfect visibility throughout the night race. The drivers prefer the night race format as the cooler conditions mean it is less tiring and the lower track temperatures lead to faster lap times.

This week in our history

25/11. In 2004, Scuderia Ferrari was testing at two tracks at the same time: Montmelò and Vairano, the latter famous for its straight used for aero testing. **Luca Badoer** and **Marc Gené** drove at the Barcelona-Catalunya track while **Andrea Bertolini** was on his second day of aero work at Vairano. A different world, with no testing restrictions.

26/11. Charles Leclerc won the 2016 GP3 Series with one race in hand. The Monegasque Ferrari Driver Academy student took the title despite retiring in the first race of the weekend at the Yas Marina circuit. **That year he won three races** with five more podium places.

27/11. In 1995 at the age of almost 61, Giancarlo Baghetti died in Milan, the city of his birth. The Italian is the only driver to have won on his Formula 1 debut, with victory in the 1961 French Grand Prix at the wheel of a Ferrari **156 F1**. He was given an entry thanks to the FISA (Federazione Italiana Scuderie Automobilistiche), after winning the two non-championship races at Syracuse and Naples. For the rest of his career, Baghetti never really got the results he deserved. Once he hung up his helmet, he became a motoring journalist.

28/11. Charles Leclerc ended his brilliant 2017 Formula 2 season with a win. Having secured the title at Jerez, the Monegasque added more points to his tally in Abu Dhabi, winning Race-2 at the end of an impressive climb up the order to clinch his seventh victory of the year. In total **he took seven wins from 22 starts** with a further three podium finishes.

29/11. In 2009, Felipe Massa was back in the cockpit after a long absence, following the serious accident he suffered in the Hungarian Grand Prix on 25 July. The Ferrari driver was one of the stars of the karting International Challenge of Champions in Florianapolis, Brazil. Felipe won the second leg and overall, he finished second behind his former team-mate Michael Schumacher.



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