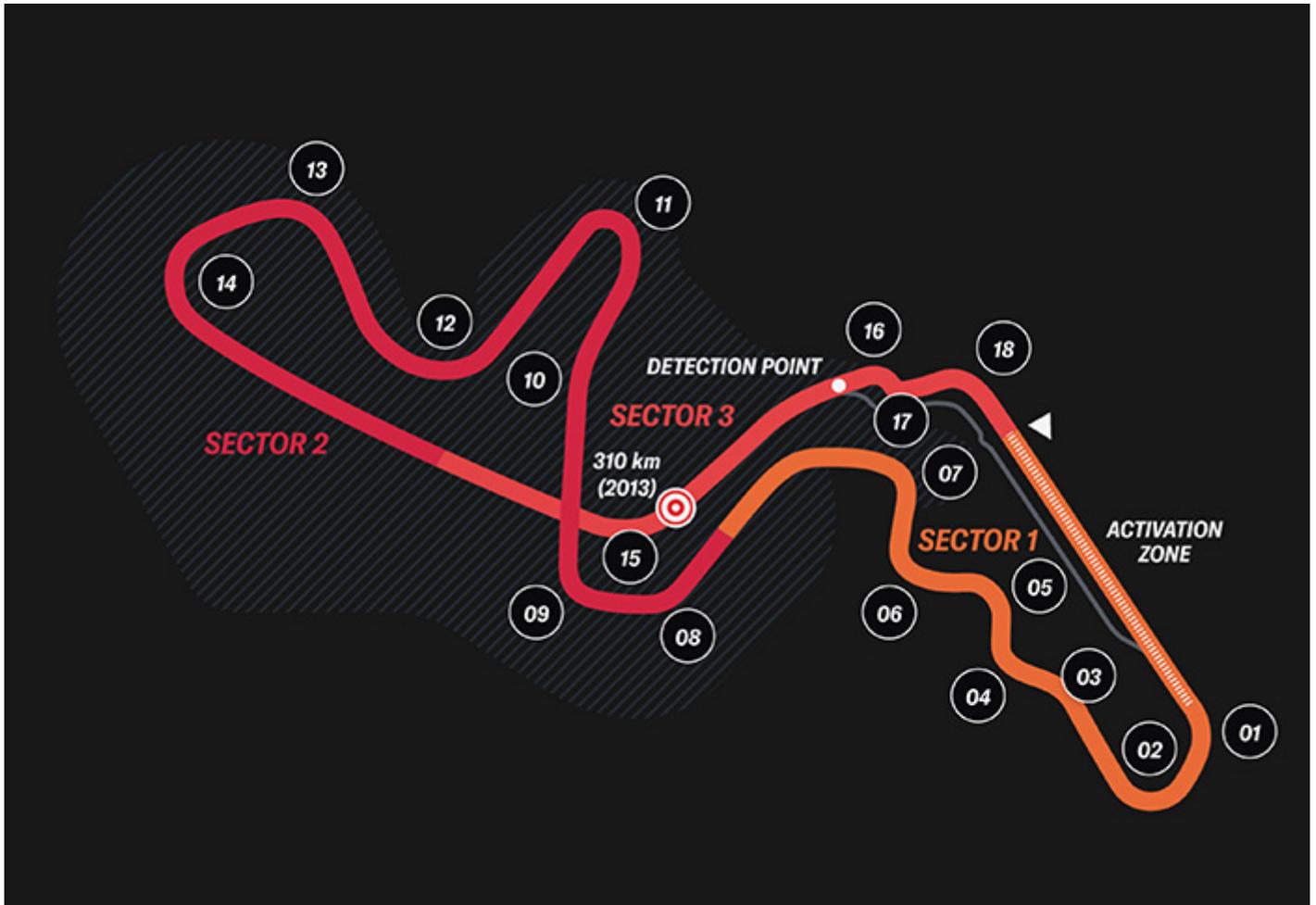




# JAPANESE GRAND PRIX

SUZUKA INTERNATIONAL RACING COURSE - SUZUKA



## SPRINGTIME IN SUZUKA

Suzuka, 3 April 2024 – It's time for the Japanese Grand Prix, one of the most popular events on the calendar for enthusiasts and F1 folk alike. Suzuka first featured on the World Championship trail almost four decades ago and along with two races at Fuji in the mid-70s and again in 2007 and 2008 and with two Pacific Grands Prix in the Nineties, the Land of the Rising Sun has played an important part in the history of the sport. Suzuka is special, not just because of the beautiful figure-of-eight track, but also because of the electrifying atmosphere around the circuit, the grandstands packed with local fans, both young and old who love to dress up in race suits, often wearing the most bizarre home-made caps made to look like the race cars, as they wander around the track and even in the paddock.

**Historic track.** If the 18 corners that make up Suzuka circuit could talk, they would tell the tale of some of the most memorable moments in the history of the sport. So many world championships have been decided here, many of them in favour of Scuderia Ferrari. In 2000 came the "Red Dawn" as the tifosi called it, when Michael Schumacher won the race to clinch his first title in red, repeating the feat in Japan in 2003. There were also moments of disappointment for the Prancing Horse, in 1990 when Alain Prost was beaten to the crown by Ayrton Senna and in 1998, when Schumacher was bested by Mika Häkkinen.

**Never dull.** Suzuka Circuit's figure-of-eight layout made it the most recognisable track, along with Monza, according to a survey of 6 to 12 year old kids in 2022. At first glance it can seem quite straightforward, but it incorporates just about every type of challenge, a real test for car and driver, which is why it is regarded as one of the most awe-inspiring tracks in the world. With 18 corners and just the one DRS zone found on the main straight, drivers have to maintain total concentration for the entire lap, especially when it comes to setting a great qualifying time. Average speed over a lap is of the order of 230 km/h and there is very little room for error, especially in the first sector. It's one of the most demanding bits of track on the whole calendar, because going off-line for a split second through the iconic sequence of esses can not only cost time, but can also lead to going off track into the barriers, which are generally quite close here. The hairpin at Turn 11 often sees drivers pull an overtaking move, diving down the inside of the car ahead. If that doesn't work, or if there's a counter move in the next uphill right hander, then it's case of slipstreaming the other car on the long downhill run to the legendary 130R before trying to pass at the final chicane before the start-finish line.

**Weather and strategy.** Heavy rain is no stranger at Suzuka and the weather has often decided the outcome of the race. In 2022, it was very wet and the race went on for ever, lasting over three hours and finishing at dusk. The move from autumn to early spring, could see an increased risk of rain - in fact the current forecast is for a dry media day on Thursday, followed by rain on all three days of track action. However, the track surface here usually provides excellent grip. Overtaking at Suzuka is not only difficult, it can also be quite risky, which is why, in recent years, most drivers have opted to start on the Soft tyre to make the most of its extra grip through the first few corners. That is why this is usually a two-stop race, especially as tyre degradation is quite high and trying to change tyres just the once does not always pay off, generally leading to a driver dropping down the

order.

**Schedule.** Japanese Grand Prix track action start on Friday 5 April with first free practice at 11.30 local (4.30 CEST) followed by practice 2 at 15.00 (8.00 CEST). Saturday's times are the same, with final free practice at 11.30 local (4.30 CEST) followed by qualifying at 15.00 (8.00 CEST). The Grand Prix gets underway on Sunday at 14.00 local (7.00 CEST) and runs over 53 laps for a distance of 307.471 kilometres.



*We head for Japan buoyed by our one-two finish in Australia. That winning feeling only serves to make us work even harder to try and experience it again as soon as possible. The Suzuka track provides a particularly stern test for cars and drivers, which is why it is so popular with them. We believe we have a competitive package, but we know we need to do a perfect job to beat our rivals. As always in Japan, and this year in particular as it's the first time we race at Suzuka in early Spring, the weather could play its part, but we have prepared for this possibility back in the factory and we are determined to be front runners.*

**Fred Vasseur**  
Team Principal

## FERRARI STATS

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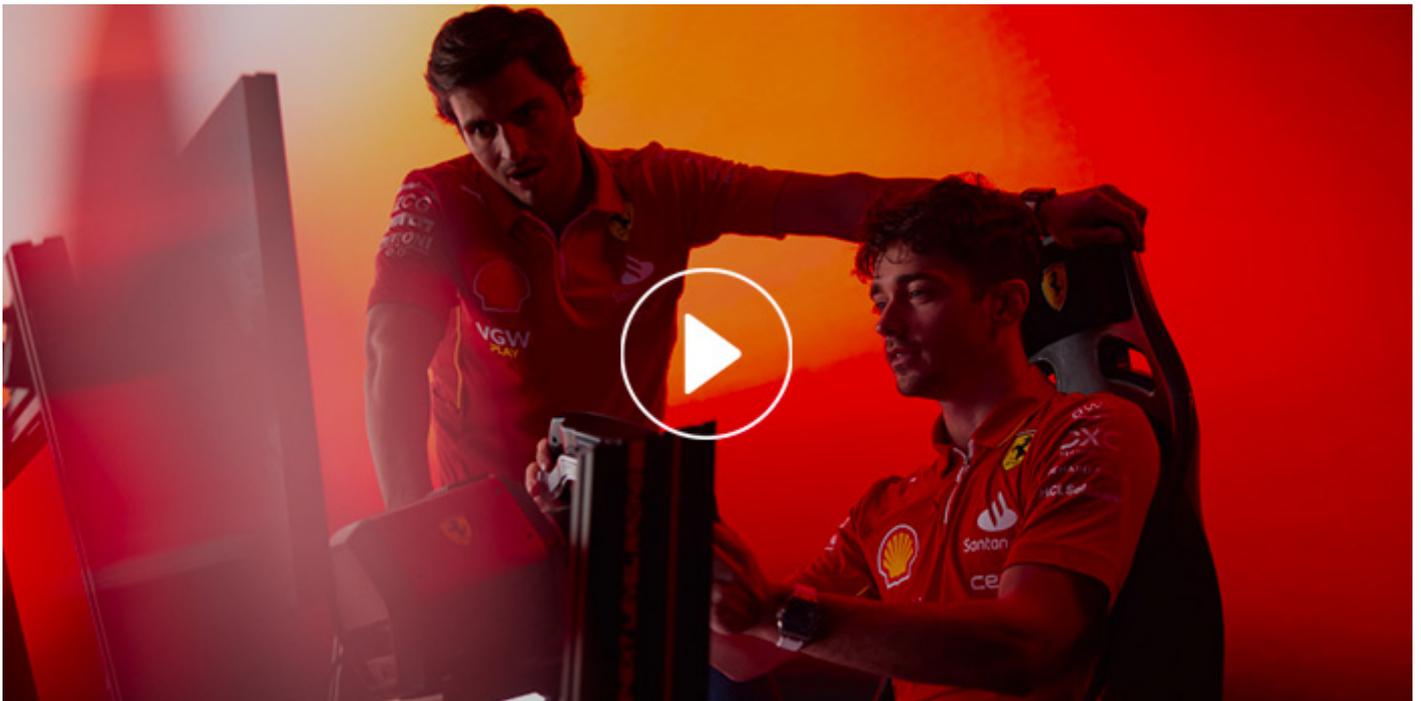
|   |               |   |
|---|---------------|---|
|  | GP contested  | 1077  |
|  | Seasons in F1 | 75  |
|  | Debut         | Monaco 1950 (A. Ascari 2 <sup>nd</sup> ; R. Sommer 4 <sup>th</sup> ; L. Villoresi ret.) |
|  | Wins          | 244 (22.65%)  |

|   |                       |              |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|
|   | <b>Pole positions</b> | 248 (23.03%) |
|  | <b>Fastest laps</b>   | 261 (24.23%) |
|  | <b>Podiums</b>        | 811 (25.10%) |

## FERRARI STATS JAPANESE GRAND PRIX

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|   |                       |  |
|---|-----------------------|--|
|  | <b>GP contested</b>   | 37   |
|  | <b>Debut</b>          | Debut 1976 (C. Regazzoni 5th; N. Lauda ret.) |
|  | <b>Wins</b>           | 7 (18.92%)                                   |
|  | <b>Pole positions</b> | 10 (27.03%)                                  |
|  | <b>Fastest laps</b>   | 7 (18.92%)                                   |
|  | <b>Podiums</b>        | 24 (21.62%)                                  |



## THREE QUESTIONS TO...

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CALLUM FRITH, TYRE PERFORMANCE ENGINEER



## **1. Suzuka is generally a demanding track, including for the tyres. What are the main challenges the track throws up in this area?**

Suzuka is a track with many high speed turns which means that tyre energies are some of the highest of the season. For this reason Pirelli bring the hardest compounds available in their range (C1, C2, C3) which are required only for the most demanding tracks. Furthermore, the unusual figure-of-eight layout means that all four tyres are stressed to a high degree and car set-up and weather can have a strong influence on the final limitation. Add very abrasive tarmac into this mix and you end up with races with high tyre degradation, often needing multiple pit-stops. Finally, the unpredictable weather makes Suzuka a stern test for tyres on all fronts!

## **2. It's clear from the first three races that the SF-24 is better at managing its tyres than the SF-23. How has this been achieved?**

I think it's been a clear target for the team to improve performance during the races and therefore the issue has been tackled from several angles. From a car development point of view there has been more focus on providing a consistent platform for the drivers: this means we have a more predictable car which makes it easier for the drivers not to overstress the tyres in different race scenarios such as running in traffic, dealing with changing wind or losing the peak grip from the tyre later as the stint goes on. Trackside we have also been working closely with the drivers to construct a plan for each race, defining how and where we need to look after the tyres in order to reach the end of the race in the fastest possible time, based on the strategy and specific demands of each circuit. We can then follow this in real-time during the race and can feedback to the drivers if necessary over the radio.

## **3. Let's talk a bit about you: how did you come to be at Ferrari? Where does your passion for motorsport comes from?**

My passion for motorsport started at a young age, I was always following F1 on TV and going to race meetings at the local track, Donington Park. When I was in high school, I was lucky to have the opportunity to do work experience with the Williams F1 team which helped inspire me to believe that a career in engineering and in motorsport was a real possibility. I joined Ferrari via the Ferrari F1 engineering academy (the team's graduate scheme) straight after finishing university, after meeting the team at Formula Student. From

there I gradually built up experience inside the tyre group, following races from the remote garage and providing support for the tests before graduating to the race team where I find myself today.

#### Profile

Callum Frith

Nationality: British

Born 29/11/1992

City: Shropshire (UK)

Click on the link below for hi-res pics of Callum Frith <https://we.tl/t-PTU1WZ20EG>

## JAPANESE GRAND PRIX: FACTS & FIGURES

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**0.** The number of Japanese Formula 1 Grands Prix held in April. Of the **37** editions to date, 31 have been held in **October**, with **three** taking place in **September** and **three** in **November**. However, a round of the world championship has taken place in the Land of the Rising Sun in April, when the **1994 Pacific Grand Prix** was held at the remote and small **Aida** track, now known as Okayama. **Michael Schumacher** won in a Benetton.

**3.** The different configurations of the Suzuka Circuit. Apart from the 5.807 km layout used for the Grand Prix, there are also **the 3.466 km West Circuit** and **the 2.243 kilometre East Circuit**. These last two are normally used for national and GT races.

**6.** The different types of sushi, widely regarded as Japan's most famous food. Let's start with **sashimi**, where the fish is cut into long rectangular slices known as *hira-zukuri* and served raw, with wasabi, soy sauce and pickled ginger. Then there's **nigiri**, an oval of vinegared rice on which a piece of fish, or a whole small fish or seafood is placed. **Chirashi** means "scattered," a bowl of rice topped with raw fish and vegetables and even fruit. The famous **maki** is a sushi that is rolled in *nori* seaweed and then cut into small pieces, so that the rice roll has its

main ingredient at its heart. This is not necessarily fish: fruit and vegetable *maki* are not uncommon. *Uramaki* is quite similar to *maki*, except that the rice is placed on the outside of the nori instead of inside. Finally, there are *temaki* which are larger and cone shaped, filled again with rice and fish, accompanied by vegetables.

**226.** The varieties of cherry tree (*Sakura*) to be found in Japan, the vast majority of which bloom in April, turning swathes of the countryside into a fairytale sea of colour. The most common variety is the **Somei Yoshino** with its almost pure white flowers, with dashes of pink near the stem. They usually flower and wither in a week, before the leaves appear so that the trees briefly look completely white from top to bottom. It is named after the village of Somei, in Tokyo's Toshima ward. **Winter sakura, known as fuyuzakura,** start to bloom in Autumn and then sporadically through the winter. Other varieties include *yaezakura*, which has large thick blossom with deep pink petals, and *shidarezakura*, whose branches droop like those of a weeping willow, to produce beautiful cascades of pink blossom.

**197,000.** The population of Suzuka, the third largest city in the Mie Prefecture, in the Kansai region on the island of Honshu. The city is mainly industrial. The two larger cities in terms of population are **Yokkaichi**, the major business centre with a population of 306,000 and Tsu, the capital and home to local government bodies with 279,000 inhabitants.



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