

UP TO SPEED: MEDIA COVERAGE

SUNDAY 07 JULY

 QATAR AIRWAYS
FORMULA 1
QATAR AIRWAYS
BRITISH
GRAND PRIX
2024

SILVERSTONE

05 - 07 JULY 2024



  FIA Formula 1 World Championship™

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MOLLY HUDSON



Motor Racing Reporter

George Russell remembers, when growing up, that British drivers were always better in the rain, given their unfortunate experience of the conditions. In a rain-affected qualifying session, when both Red Bulls ran wide and into the gravel, the British drivers excelled; Russell leading his compatriots Lewis Hamilton and Lando Norris.

It is the first time three British drivers have been at the front of the grid at their home grand prix since 1962, when Jim Clark was on pole from John Surtees and Innes Ireland.

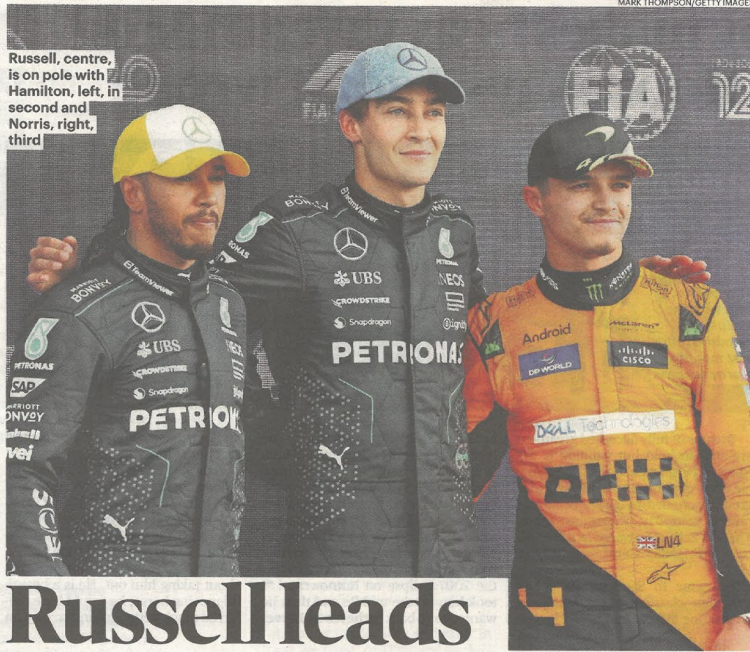
All three of the present British crop will feel they have a genuine chance at victory today, with just 0.171sec separating the two Mercedes, while Norris abandoned his final lap due to a mistake at turn 14. "I can bring the fight to George and Lewis," he promised.

Max Verstappen eventually qualified fourth, after running wide through the Copse gravel trap in a wet Q1 and causing "significant damage" to the floor of his Red Bull, which was due to be replaced overnight.

"I know that the top three, all of them want to win at home, and hopefully I can make it a bit more difficult," Verstappen said. "The team did a great job trying to recover some of the bits... but it basically ruined our qualifying. To be P4 is probably a positive surprise."

That error came moments after Sergio Pérez, Verstappen's under-fire team-mate, had made the same mistake, having moved on to slick tyres, but he could not keep his car moving and ended up beached in the gravel causing a red flag to the session. He will start the race in 19th.

The Times understands that Liam Lawson, Red Bull's reserve driver, will drive the RB20 in a promotional testing event at Silverstone next week. He will be limited to 200km of running, but with Pérez struggling to perform, could convince senior staff that he can



Russell, centre, is on pole with Hamilton, left, in second and Norris, right, third

Russell leads British 1-2-3 at Silverstone

provide a solution to their second driver issue.

By Q2, dry lines were emerging, and in the final part of qualifying, it was almost entirely dry, with the Mercedes surprisingly the quickest. It was expected that Norris and Verstappen would be the fastest cars and may yet

have another battle like the one which tested their friendship during the Austrian Grand Prix last weekend.

Russell was understandably delighted with his third career pole position – his first at Silverstone – having also benefited from the collision between Norris and Verstappen

at the Red Bull Ring in Austria to take victory.

"This is definitely one of the best feelings I've ever had on a Saturday afternoon, the car was just insane," Russell said.

"In Q3 it really just came alive. One of the best feelings I've ever had driving this circuit and crossing the line, seeing my name P1. Seeing us both on the front row, we couldn't have even dreamt of that after the first three-or four races."

Progress has been rapid for Mercedes since their upgrades and having started the season off the pace, they are now genuine competitors for race victories. "Three Brits in the top three is incredible. It is incredibly satisfying," Hamilton said. "I was cautious

Grid for British Grand Prix

Driver	Team	Time
1 George Russell (GB)	Mercedes	1:25.819
2 Lewis Hamilton (GB)	Mercedes	1:25.990
3 Lando Norris (GB)	McLaren	1:26.030
4 Max Verstappen (Neth)	Red Bull	1:26.203
5 Oscar Piastri (Aus)	McLaren	1:26.237
6 Nico Hülkenberg (Ger)	Haas	1:26.338
7 Carlos Sainz Jr (Sp)	Ferrari	1:26.509
8 Lance Stroll (Can)	Aston Martin	1:26.585
9 Alexander Albon (Thai)	Williams	1:26.640
10 Fernando Alonso (Sp)	Aston Martin	1:26.917
11 Charles Leclerc (Monaco)	Ferrari	1:27.097
12 Logan Sargeant (US)	Williams	1:27.175
13 Yuki Tsunoda (Japan)	RB	1:27.269
14 Zhou Guanyu (China)	Sauber	1:27.867
15 Daniel Ricciardo (AUS)	RB	1:27.949
16 Valtteri Bottas (Fin)	Sauber	1:32.431
17 Kevin Magnussen (Den)	Haas	1:32.905
18 Esteban Ocon (Fr)	Alpine	1:34.557
19 Sergio Pérez (Mex)	Red Bull	1:38.348
20 Pierre Gasly (Fr)	Alpine	1:39.804

*penalty for exceeding allotted power unit components

Championship standings

Driver	Pts
1 Max Verstappen (Neth)	237
2 Lando Norris (GB)	156
3 Charles Leclerc (Mon)	150
4 Carlos Sainz Jr (Sp)	135
5 Sergio Pérez (Mex)	118
6 Oscar Piastri (Aus)	112

Constructor	Pts
1 Red Bull	355
2 Ferrari	291
3 McLaren	266
4 Mercedes	196
5 Aston Martin	158

with my set-up, to try and have a nice balance in the race."

Ferrari have struggled all weekend, trying to find the optimum set-up and analyse why their upgrades have not been particularly effective of late. Charles Leclerc was eliminated in the second part of qualifying and will start in 11th, while Carlos Sainz qualified seventh.

Logan Sargeant, who is at risk of losing his Williams seat mid-season if his results do not improve, managed a timely return to qualify 12th.

More rain is expected today, and that could turn the race into something of a lottery. On Wednesday, Hamilton said he would be doing a rain dance, and it appears his prayers have been answered.

Norris dreaming of top step at home grand prix

Molly Hudson

How do you imagine something you have worked your entire career for, something so special you are not even sure what it will feel like? That is a thought that has occupied the mind of Lando Norris in the lead up to this British Grand Prix.

For years the hopes of a home victory have been largely in the capable hands of Lewis Hamilton. This year could be the first of a new era, and having experienced a taste of success in Miami, his maiden win, Norris is well in contention for a second today. "Once I had experienced Miami you feel on top of the world for a short while," Norris said, almost wistfully. "That, at Silverstone, it's hard to imagine... the feeling, it is so cool, so special, it's hard to actually picture it. You don't get that feeling doing anything else."

Last year, driving past Luffield Norris could not help but look up at the crowd, cheering for him, before quickly turning his attention back to the track. On the

podium, in second spot, he heard the thousands chanting his name.

It is easy to block out the noise in Formula 1, sitting inside your car with the roar of the engine and the visor down. Norris makes sure he soaks in every second.

"I stay in the hotel at the track and it's easy just to walk over the bridge but I am happy to drive round because I get that feeling of everyone," he said. "Seeing people in my shirts, my hats, the [fluorescent] yellow. That just excites me in the morning, these guys are here to support me and cheer me on. That's why I drive round the road back to the paddock when I could literally walk."

That level of adulation is one thing Norris is still adapting to. His platform has exponentially grown in recent months. On Instagram he has 8.7 million followers.

"I find it a weird concept, of me just being a normal person who drives a car quickly and people cheer me on for that," he said. "I grew up in the middle of nowhere, Glastonbury. I wasn't around a city or a town. I was a

loner so I was happy to go and play on my sim[ulator] all day. I chose that route."

He has a small circle of close friends, many of whom he grew up with. They protect him from the temptations within Formula 1.

"That's what I have my friends for, and the people around me. I'm very happy when they tell me I'm being an absolute knob! [They tell me], all the time! They give me a sense of normality, the tranquillity of life. It's quite a lonely life. I'm not complaining. In F1 you don't know who to trust, it's a different lifestyle."

"I have a good group protecting me from the bad side of the [F1] world."

Increasingly, when contemplating whether to go out for dinner or a nightclub or to have a night in, Norris chooses the option that requires the least upheaval.

"It's annoying that everyone has

these perceptions which are not correct and starts assuming things and creating things. Then I think, 'Is it even worth going out now?' I just want to stay at home because I don't want to deal with all these things."

On track, the adjustment from celebrating wildly for a podium to being a race winner and genuine title contender is also taking some getting used to. His collision with Max Verstappen last week highlighted just how much is at stake.

"I was tenth a few years ago, when we had a podium it felt like a win but now you know what a real win feels like, you're like, 'meh' [to] third and second," he said. "When you experience these highs, what once were highs become closer to being a low. I don't think it's great, that's a dangerous way to live. If you only live off these highs it makes everything else feel boring relatively, dull relative to what this greatness is."

This weekend he will try to chase that feeling again. It appears only a matter of time before he experiences his Silverstone high.

ON TV TODAY

British Grand Prix
3pm race start, Sky Sports F1

RELATIVE VALUES

Oliver and David Bearman

The new Formula 1 star and his father on beating Lewis Hamilton — aged 18

Oliver

Dad and I collected one-eighth-scale toy cars when I was a child — every make, from Aston Martin to McLaren. I pushed them around on the floor with my mum, Terri, and made engine noises. Dad was an amateur racing driver himself, competing in British club sports car championships, so it was probably inevitable that petrol would run through my veins too.

“Lively” would be a fair description of me as a child. My brother, Thomas, is four years younger than me and a brilliant kart racer himself. As a toddler I tried to make him do everything I did, even though he could barely walk. My sister, Amalie, is 12 and more into horsepower as a showjumper.

Motoring magazines were always scattered around our house in Chelmsford. I also liked to go online and use the car manufacturers’ configurator tools, pretending I could buy my own Ferrari or Porsche. I spent hours choosing the colour, engine and interior trim. By the age of four I could tell Dad every make and model on the road. It sounds nerdy but I loved cars.

I think I was five when Mum first took me to a go-kart track. Dad was racing elsewhere that weekend and I had to start on the little oval circuit for beginners. I remember I was going a bit too fast, so the instructor kept yelling at me to slow down.

I also remember watching Dad race. I loved the smell of engines and oil — those GT racing cars smell different from Formula 1 cars. I did watch him have a big crash at Brands Hatch once. It was a scary moment but he walked away fine and later told me that it definitely wasn’t his fault!

My dad is a great role model and has supported my racing from the start. We don’t come from a wealthy background like some F1 drivers — he had to work hard to build his insurance company from nothing. I started karting competitively in 2013, although we didn’t always have the funds to buy the best go-karts or go testing as much as other drivers. But I worked my way up through the junior karting ranks, then Formula 4 and 3 single-seaters, before my first drive in Formula 2 last year.

Mum is very pro education, which I fully understand, so she wasn’t happy when I left King Edward VI Grammar School in Chelmsford at 16 to join the Ferrari Driver Academy in Modena. We sat down when I finished my GCSEs and decided I should concentrate on my racing, but it was still hard leaving home. I missed my family and friends at first. Mum and Dad come and see me race as often as possible, but they also have my brother and sister to think about.

In March I flew to Jeddah to compete in an F2 race, on the same weekend as the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix.

I knew Ferrari’s F1 driver Carlos Sainz was feeling unwell, but it was still a shock when he was rushed to hospital with appendicitis. I was only 18 and to get the call-up for my first F1 drive was mind-blowing.

Suddenly I was competing against all my heroes — Lewis Hamilton, Fernando Alonso and Max Verstappen. I just thought, go out and do your best, so when I crossed the line in seventh place, it was fantastic. I couldn’t believe what had just happened.

Then I felt a bit dejected because I knew it would be a while before I got the same chance again. By the time this article comes out I hope to have made my Silverstone debut, driving in the first practice for the Haas team ahead of [today’s] main race. It’d be a dream come true.

Dad has been with me from the beginning. It’s his drive and focus, with Mum’s support and love, that has got me this far.

David

Terri and I were living in a terraced house at Heath Park, near Romford, when Ollie was born. It was our first home — a two-up, two-down that was in need of total renovation. I was 26, working flat out to set up my insurance business and we could barely afford the mortgage.

Mum is very pro education and wasn’t happy when I left school at 16 to join the Ferrari academy



Main: Oliver, 19, and David, 45, in Barcelona during the Spanish Grand Prix last month. Right: at Brands Hatch, 2011

SUNDAY 07 JULY – IN PRINT

THE SUNDAY TIMES *magazine*

PORTRAIT BY ANNA HUIX



Terri is Catholic and her parents were horrified when she became pregnant before we were married. She was about six days overdue with Ollie — for once, he refused to make a quick start.

Ollie was always a live wire, full of energy and passionate about cars. That probably came from me because racing was my hobby. When he started kart racing, it was obvious he loved it. He started winning trophies and I soon realised that I enjoyed watching him more than competing myself.

By the time Ollie was eight or nine, it probably cost about £10,000 a season for him to race. Karting is a contact sport and things get broken. It can be very rough with 36 young lads on a track together, but we look at motorsport like running a business. You have to stand up for yourself and be firm but fair with people.

When Ollie was ten I bought a motorhome. It almost crippled me financially but it meant the whole family could go away to race events at the weekend. There were no holidays that year but we could see that he was already better than the older boys. He certainly wasn't bullied on the racetrack. I saw raw skill.

To get to where he is you have to be 100 per cent dedicated, driving up to Cumbria one weekend, Lincolnshire the next and battling against people with

STRANGE HABITS

Ollie on David
We travel a lot together but he speed-walks everywhere. Even on family holidays you can't slow him down

David on Ollie
He carries a sixpence in his wallet from his late great-grandmother Eileen

more funding. Even in the middle of winter he never complained about getting up at 5am to go racing.

Ollie first competed in European karting when he was 13 and the following year won the world and European titles. By then my insurance business was doing well because we had to cover a budget of about £70,000 a year. All our spare funds went on racing.

Terri wasn't pleased when Ollie left school to join the Ferrari academy but it was the chance of a lifetime. He just deals with things — I'm sure there were lonely moments, but we'd see him as often as possible.

I was with Ollie when he heard he would race in Saudi. Bearing in mind the longest race he had done before that was 45 minutes in Formula 2, the step up to F1 was huge. Somehow he drove for two hours, didn't put a wheel wrong and beat Lewis and Lando Norris.

I was choked up when I saw him afterwards — incredibly proud. Ollie took it all in his stride. He's a humble kid from a hard-working background and that won't ever change. The F1 drivers are chauffeured from a luxury hotel but F2 teams stay at a budget Ibis and walk in with the fans unrecognised. By the time we left after Ollie's grand prix drive, the crowd definitely knew who he was ■

Interviews by Jeremy Taylor



How they line up

1	George Russell (GB) Mercedes	1:25.819
2	Lewis Hamilton (GB) Mercedes	1:25.890
3	Lando Norris (GB) McLaren	1:26.030
4	Max Verstappen (Netherlands) Red Bull	1:26.203
5	Oscar Piastri (Australia) McLaren	1:26.237
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19	Sergio Perez (Mexico) Red Bull	1:38.348
20	Pierre Gasly (France) Alpine	1:39.804

had something to do with a damaged floor after he ran wide at Copse in Q1, skidding across the gravel trap.

But the feeling grows that Red Bull's development curve has plateaued and Verstappen is having to push harder than ever to keep his nose in front. The pressure is starting to tell.

At Imola, Montreal and again in Barcelona the Dutchman won races despite not having the quickest car. In Austria last weekend, he took Norris out when the Briton tried to pass him for the lead. It is going to be fascinating to see what he does from fourth on the grid today. Once again, Red Bull do not have the luxury of being able to split their strategies, with Sergio Perez starting 19th.

The Mexican has endured a miserable time since signing a contract extension in May. And he had another shocker here, beaching his car in the gravel trap on the outside of Copse. "I'm stuck," he told his team, forlornly. At this rate, he may be out of a drive by the summer. The sight of Red Bull's team principal Christian Horner shaking his head on the pitwall, clearly exasperated, did not bode well for him.

In fairness, the conditions were tricky. Heavy rain before the session meant everyone started out on intermediate tyres. But with the track rapidly drying, and the wind picking up, it was easy to make mistakes. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc failed to make it to the top 10 shootout. The Scuderia's progress has stalled in recent races. Will Hamilton be regretting his decision to jump ship to Maranello next year?

For now, he is in the right place; in a competitive car, chasing his ninth British Grand Prix win and his first in F1 since Saudi Arabia 2021.

What a race we have in prospect. Three Brits duking it out at the front of their home race. What price a clean sweep of the podium? Clark, Hill and Stewart could not manage to do so in South Africa in 1968. Tragically, Clark lost his life a few months later in a crash in a Formula 2 race at the Hockenheimring.

But three British drivers did finish in the top three spots in the penultimate round of that year's championship at Watkins Glen, Stewart winning from Hill with John Surtees third. It remains the last time it happened. Could it happen once again today? A sellout crowd at Silverstone will be willing them on.

Russell leads way as British trio claim top spots on grid

Hamilton and Norris qualify quickest behind compatriot 'Insane' Mercedes car offers fans hope of home triumph

By Tom Cary
SENIOR SPORTS CORRESPONDENT
at Silverstone

It has been 56 years since three British drivers last qualified in the top three spots for a Formula One grand prix. In what were truly the glory years for British motor racing, Jim Clark claimed pole for the 1968 South African Prix at Kyalami, just ahead of compatriots Graham Hill and Jackie Stewart. Those were the days when British drivers were battling it out for wins and championships every year.

Could we be about to enter another golden era? At a cold, wet Silverstone yesterday, George Russell edged out his Mercedes team-mate Lewis Hamilton and McLaren's Lando Norris as they claimed the top three spots for today's British Grand Prix, sending the 140,000 fans in attendance absolutely wild. With a fourth British driver, Ferrari academy product Ollie Bearman, joining the grid next

year, these are exciting times for British grand prix fans.

Hamilton, of course, is already a seven-time world champion. But he has never had so many of his compatriots in and around him. There is a very real prospect Hamilton, Russell and Norris could be duking it out for race wins for at least the next 18 months.

Mercedes' recent improvement has been stunning. This was the team's first one-two since Brazil 2022, when Russell took his maiden grand prix win. They may not have

Leap forward: George Russell after taking Silverstone pole for Mercedes

to wait so long for the next one. Mercedes had the fastest car in Montreal, too, and the signs are they could now be muscling into that top bracket alongside Red Bull and McLaren.

"The car was insane," admitted Russell after snatching top spot from his team-mate with his final lap in Q3 by one tenth of a second. "It's one of the best feelings I've ever had driving this circuit."

Sixties success Remembering when Britons ruled the roost

The 1960s was a hugely successful decade for British drivers in F1, with Jim Clark, Jackie Stewart, Graham Hill and John Surtees all winning world titles - Clark in 1963 and 1965, Hill in 1962 and 1968, Surtees in 1964, and Stewart in 1969. Inevitably, they

dominated the top positions at a number of races. Until yesterday, the last time three British drivers took the top three spots in qualifying occurred in 1968, Clark beating Lotus team-mate Hill to pole at the season-opening South African Grand Prix, ahead of Matra's

Stewart. They were unable to hang on to those positions by the finish, Stewart having to retire on lap 43 with engine trouble. Sadly, that race is more famous for being Clark's last win in F1. The Scot was killed in a crash in F2 a few months later. The last time

three British drivers took the top three spots in an F1 race came later that same year at the 1968 US Grand Prix at Watkins Glen. It was won by Stewart, with that year's world champion Hill second and Surtees rounding out the top three. Tom Cary

Hamilton looked rather miffed to have been pipped for pole. He now trails Russell 10-2 in qualifying outings this season, a source of considerable pain one suspects. But he was gracious enough to congratulate his team-mate and thank his team. "Three Brits in the top three is incredible," he said. "Congrats to George. We definitely didn't expect to be front row so this is huge for the team. I feel really confident in the car tomorrow."

At 39, Hamilton is considerably older than Russell and Norris. But he does have one thing they do not: a win at the British Grand Prix. In fact, he has eight of them, including that famous one in the wet in 2008 when he lapped most of the field. With further rain forecast for today, he will be licking his lips. "When it's wet, that is probably when I am the happiest," he admitted.

Norris had no complaints with P3. He ran wide at Turn 14 in his final run, but was already a tenth down by that point and did not think he would have been able to take pole.

The bigger surprise was Verstappen, who was only able to take fourth on the grid, four tenths off the pace set by Russell. It may have

BRITAINIA

rules the grid

Russell, Hamilton and Norris are top three

THEY came like Spitfires through the gloom at the old airfield, three British drivers warming the crowd that huddled in hope and rose in joy. To George Russell pole, Lewis Hamilton second on the grid, Lando Norris third.

It was cacophonous and galoshes weather, a typical English scene ahead of qualifying for today's Silverstone spectacle in front of an anticipated crowd of 160,000.

And local familiarity with the inclement weather—14C, a chill wind blowing—may have lent a hand as the track dried, was sprinkled again, and dried once more.

Russell, who kept his nerve despite admitting to feeling the biggest pressure he has known in qualifying, finished 0.171sec ahead of his fellow Mercedes man Hamilton.

That in itself sets up the 52-lap contest interestingly because the seven-time world champion does not relish an unaccustomed role as Robin to anyone's Batman.

And all the more so at his home track, where he has triumphed a record eight times.

He has not been off the podium here since 2014, a mighty record for the 39-year-old crowd-surfing hero.

Norris could also have a say in the outcome, with his McLaren expected to be a live threat.

And best of all for the Brits, reigning and three-time world champion Max Verstappen

By Jonathan McEvoy
AT SILVERSTONE

qualified fourth, his floor damaged in an off-track excursion.

'This is definitely one of the best feelings I've ever had on a Saturday afternoon,' eulogised Russell. 'The car was just insane. Crossing the line and seeing my name P1 was brilliant.'

'These conditions really got us into a perfect window.'

'There are no guarantees for tomorrow, but we really feel like we're riding this wave. It was just so rails... I was so confident.'

What a turnaround by Mercedes, who struggled to find north through the technical meanderings of the last few years. No fix worked.

But for four weekends now, solid progress—and then this vault to their first front-row lockout achieved via qualifying (rather than through the sprint

shake-up) since Saudi Arabia in 2021, the last race Hamilton won, 944 days ago.

As for Norris, he was a little crestfallen, his words a touch croaky after being eclipsed at the last moment.

The McLaren driver had looked pole man-elect throughout the session, but he couldn't better his previous time in his final run.

He ran wide at Stowe, though by then he was already a tenth down. Russell's mark, just set, stood.

The King's Lynn-born, Monaco-based Russell punched the air hard and whooped his delight from the cockpit.

Back in the garage, Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff shook hands amiably with his close associates. Relief for him, an Austrian understanding what was turning into a very British occasion.

This is the first time since January 1, 1968 in Kyalami, South Africa, that a British trio have qualified one-two-three—Jim Clark, Graham Hill and Jackie Stewart. Not a bad

line-up. For the record, Clark won and Hill finished second, with the Austrian interloper Jochen Rindt third. It has happened at the British Grand Prix before, too.

The last time came at Aintree six years earlier—Clark, John Surtees and Innes Ireland dominating the grid in a race won by Clark before he went back to his Borders farm to herd his sheep.

Yesterday a leading journalist from France's *L'Equipe* newspaper, Frederic Ferret, did his bit for entente cordiale by asking why the Brits are so good at Formula One.

'Roast dinners,' ventured Hamilton. Russell went off menu, citing not only an understanding of the weather but saying: 'Grassroots in the UK are the most advanced in motor sport and some of the best drivers push each other along the journey.'

'The history of great champions has also inspired a new generation to follow in their footsteps.'

As for Verstappen, he only just survived Q1 after catching a patch of rain coming into Copse and slithering through a Brighton beach of pebbles, to jeers.

His mechanics were on their hands and knees in the garage trying to repair the damage. Holes in the floor, holes in his hopes.

You never write off a talent like Verstappen, but with three of our boys up front surely one of them can find the net.



BRIT SPECIAL: Russell is flanked by Hamilton (left) and Norris

FIVE GREATEST

2008 A MASTERCLASS from Lewis Hamilton in the wet. As if transporting himself on webbed feet, he ran out victorious by 68 seconds. It was his first win at Silverstone and still his best anywhere all these years on. Starting fourth in persistent rain, he rose to second at the first corner and took the lead on lap five. His title rival Felipe Massa, in contrast, spun five times and finished 13th, two laps behind the Englishman. Hamilton deservedly went on to claim his first title in a McLaren.

1994 A YEAR of controversy and it started at Silverstone. Michael Schumacher twice illegally passed pole-sitter Damon Hill on the parade lap and then twice more after the start was aborted. He was handed a stop-go penalty to be served by lap 21, but did not abide by it. A black flag, disqualifying

British Grand Prix

GRID POSITION		DRIVERS' TITLE RACE	
1	George Russell 1min 25.819sec	1	Max Verstappen (Red Bull) 237pts
2	Lewis Hamilton 1:25.990	2	Lando Norris (McLaren) 156pts
3	Lando Norris 1:26.030	3	Charles Leclerc (Ferrari) 150pts
4	Max Verstappen 1:26.203	4	Carlos Sainz (Ferrari) 135pts
5	Oscar Piastri 1:26.237	5	Sergio Perez (Red Bull) 118pts
6	Nico Hulkenberg 1:26.338	6	Oscar Piastri (McLaren) 112pts

TODAY 3pm: Race live (Sky Sports F1 and Channel 4).

INTERVIEW

By Jonathan McEvoy

LANDO NORRIS'S status as the boy band-style darling of Silverstone is clear all over the track's vast sodden swathes. 'Go Lando!' banners festoon the grandstands and groups of the Netflix era hang out by the turnstiles for a glimpse of the McLaren man.

Though Lewis Hamilton remains an enduring crowd favourite, the Somerset-born racer would be an overwhelmingly popular winner of today's British Grand Prix. So pressure and attention walk hand in hand

Yet behind the glitzy exterior,

and financial security for life at the age of 24, Norris would rather stay at home than come face to face with off-track fame. He cites an innate shyness.

'Privacy is one of the biggest things, not being able to go unnoticed, to do things where people aren't watching,' says Norris, who is second in the championship, 81 points off Max Verstappen. 'When I go out to dinner or a club, I am still happy doing things normal people do, but when I wake up in the

morning I see videos of whatever. People assume that because someone has come to ask for a picture, I am with another girl.'

Much has changed in the life of this self-confessed one-time hermit. With a salary north of £20million, he now lives in Monaco, whereas his rookie self stayed in a flat near McLaren's Woking factory. And when he cut his nose earlier in the season during a night out in Amsterdam, pictures of his bandaged face lit social media. His boss and mentor

Zak Brown had a quiet word in his ear, not to proscribe his freedom but to remind him that he is always in the public eye.

Claiming his maiden win in Miami at the beginning of May added another dimension to his renown. As have his sterling performances in a McLaren good enough to compete on a par with Red Bull's Verstappen. The pair crashed last week in Austria vying for the lead. Again, his celebrity rose a notch.

'It's annoying everyone has

these perceptions which are not correct and start assuming or creating things,' says Norris of his private life. 'Then I wonder if it is even worth going out now. I just want to stay at home.'

'I stay in more and more, which I don't want to do because I want to go out with my friends and have fun.'

'I don't want this to come over in a bad way as if I am complaining about my lot. But I don't want needless stress. Everything that I do already is

I want to win here more than anywhere, says Lando



■ The last British 1-2-3 on the grid came on January 1, 1968 at Kyalami, South Africa, with Jim Clark on pole followed by Graham Hill and Jackie Stewart.

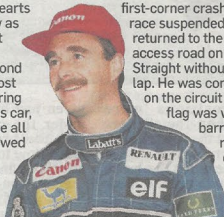
■ The last time Brits finished 1-2-3 in a grand prix was on October 6, 1968 at Watkins Glen, United States when Stewart won from Hill and John Surtees.

BRITISH GRAND PRIX

by Jonathan McEvoy

him, was waved. He claimed not to have seen it and, after Benetton made excuses to the officials, the black flag was withdrawn. Hill won and Schumacher was banned for two races.

1987 DID anyone ever capture hearts at Silverstone as totally as Nigel Mansell? The Brit (right) claimed the crowd was worth a second a lap and this race almost proved him right. Suffering terrible vibrations on his car, he was forced to change all four wheels, which allowed Williams team-mate Nelson Piquet to storm away. Mansell returned to the fray 28



seconds behind the Brazilian with 30 laps remaining. In an identical car, he dummied Piquet at Stowe to claim a famous victory.

1976 A NEAR riot at Brands Hatch. Home favourite James Hunt was involved in a first-corner crash that saw the race suspended. Hunt returned to the pits via an access road on the Cooper Straight without completing a lap. He was consequently not on the circuit when the red flag was waved and was barred from the restart. The crowd chanted his name and, fearing rising fire, the

officials relented. The reinstated Hunt won the race, only to be stripped of the victory two months later. Niki Lauda was eventually awarded the win.

1969 AN EPIC tussle between two great friends, Jackie Stewart and Jochen Rindt. The Austrian led from pole as the pair of them left the rest behind. For 63 of the 84 laps they raced cheek by jowl. Stewart then saw that the rear wing end plate of Rindt's Lotus was loose and in danger of slashing his tyre, with the potential to send him careering off at great speed. Stewart gestured to his friend to pit. Rindt returned to the fray, but ran out of fuel and fell to fourth. Stewart, by now clutchless, won by a lap.

stressful enough. I still have to perform and do my job every day. As soon as I have one bad day, I get criticised to hell — as soon as I make one mistake, do this wrong, say this wrong, I have to be perfect. It's not just what you say, what you're doing, but what you're seen to be doing. For all he bemoans parts of his life, one wonders whether his stardom suggests he might get carried away, that his head might outgrow his crash helmet. 'That's what I have my friends for and the people around me. I'm very happy when they tell me I'm being an absolute knob,' he reveals.

Do they say that often? 'Yeah, all the time! No, I can't say that! They give me a sense of normality, the tranquility of life. It has been quite a lonely existence. That's because I grew up in the middle of nowhere, Glastonbury. I wasn't around a

city or a town. I was a loner. I was happy to go and play on my sim all day. I chose that route. 'You don't stay in a team for more than a year as you grow up, so you never have time to build much of a connection with anyone. In F1 you don't know who to trust. It's a very different

‘I find it odd that people support me, a normal person’

lifestyle. You sacrifice a lot of things to be in this position, which I wouldn't change.' He can forget any sense of calm this weekend as he hopes to build on briefly holding the lead

at Silverstone a year ago. His routine is well and truly set. He stays at the new circuit hotel on the Hamilton Straight. He could walk over the bridge to the paddock, but instead drives the long route round to soak up the atmosphere around the track. Orange hats, orange shirts, and, yesterday, orange raincoats, are for him, not for Holland's world champion, Verstappen. Norris says he never dreams, and so the prospect of winning his home grand prix has never run through his sleeping head. But it ambushes his consciousness right now. 'I want to do it here more than any other place,' he admits. 'I want to make sure it goes perfectly well. And I do appreciate the support I get. 'I simply find it odd that I just drive a car quickly and people support me, a normal person.' So spoke a half-bashful hero.

FORMULA ONE - BRITISH GRAND PRIX SILVERSTONE

RUSSELL TOPS

Mercedes man pips old pals



PACE ACES: Hamilton, Russell and Norris (from left to right) pose after big day



FLYING HIGH: Hamilton salutes his Mercedes team-mate (right)



A-LISTERS: Seb Coe and actor Brad Pitt (right) at Silverstone



Daniel MOXON

REPORTING FROM SILVERSTONE

GEORGE RUSSELL'S "race to win" attitude showed how desperate he is to deliver a home victory for the Silverstone fans today.

On a drying track, he snatched pole from Lewis Hamilton who will start on the front row for the first time this year at his home race.

And Lando Norris made sure the top three grid slots were filled by Brits to send the Silverstone crowd wild.

All of them got the better of Max Verstappen who picked up floor damage early in the session and had to settle for fourth.

"This is one of the best feelings I've ever had," beamed Russell.

"The car was just insane - it just really came alive. Crossing the line and seeing my name P1, and then

QUALIFYING RESULTS

Driver	Team	Time
1 G Russell	Mercedes	1:25.819
2 L Hamilton	Mercedes	+0.171s
3 L Norris	McLaren	+0.211
4 M Verstappen	Red Bull	+0.384
5 O Piastri	McLaren	+0.418
<small>6 N Hulkenberg (Haas) +0.519, 7 C Sainz (Ferrari) +0.690, 8 L Stroll (Aston Martin) +0.766, 9 A Albon (Williams) +0.821, 10 F Alonso (Aston Martin) +0.998, 11 C Leclerc (Ferrari), 12 A Sargeant (Williams), 13 Y Tsunoda (RB), 14 Z Guanyu (Sauber), 15 D Ricciardo (RB), 16 V Bottas (Sauber), 17 K Magnussen (Haas), 18 E Ocon (Alpine), 19 S Perez (Red Bull), 20 P Gasly (Alpine, grid penalty).</small>		

seeing we were both on the front row, we couldn't have dreamt of that after the first three or four races."

Russell won for the second time in his F1 career last Sunday in Austria - and is now dreaming of back-to-back wins.

But he knows he may need more rain to hold off those behind, adding: "We've got a good fight on our hands and the weather is going to play a huge part in that."

"It's been raining and drying over the last couple of days. We're riding this wave right now but it doesn't mean anything because tomorrow is when the points are scored. But we're obviously in a great position to fight for victory."

The summer rain has made it difficult for teams to gauge how quick their race pace is expected to be on this track.

But Hamilton's prowess in the

HOME BOYS GEARED UP FOR BIG RACE

BRIT 1-2-3

to snatch pole position



F1ST CLASS: Russell punches the air after taking pole position

wet is legendary and the seven-time F1 champion would be happy to see more rain today.

And he raised hopes of a strong performance as he admitted he set up his Mercedes with the main event in mind.

He said: "I was cautious, thinking about having a nice balance in the race, rather than just for one lap. I do think the car will be good for tomorrow.

When it's wet, those are the conditions I'm comfortable in."

A year ago, second on the grid had Norris so delighted that he was close to tears.

Such results were still a novelty then but McLaren have been in the fight for pole positions and race wins for several races now this year.

And he cut a rather frustrated figure as he reacted to losing out

to his fellow Brits. But he wants to set the record straight today, saying: "I can bring the fight to George, and to Lewis."

Red Bull star Verstappen suffered floor damage which proved costly.

The Dutchman said: "We didn't expect it to rain in Q1.

"I skated through the gravel to not hit the wall, but that destroyed the floor."



It's a Pitt stop for star Brad

By **Jaymi McCann**

INSIDE TRACK: Brad waves as he arrives in bucket hat and trendy get-up. Below, fan captures a selfie

BRAD PITT sped into Silverstone for filming on his next blockbuster this weekend. The 60-year-old is starring in a movie called *F1*, due to hit cinemas in June 2025, and it has been filmed during the racing season around the world in 2023 and 2024. Pitt was seen at the Northants circuit yesterday wearing a hat and large sunglasses, then later wearing the racing suit of the fictional "APX GP" team as he posed for a selfie with a fan. Brad is playing a veteran driver and the script has been approved by seven-time F1 champion Lewis Hamilton. He said last year: "We want everyone to love it and really feel that we encapsulate what the essence of this sport is all about."





GRAND PRIX

3pm, C4 & sky sports

Russell

BRITS ROAST RIVALS



BRIT SPECIAL... Russell (centre), Hamilton (left) and Norris



GEORGE RUSSELL served up a historic Brit 1-2-3 on the grid for today's grand prix at Silverstone.

And his Mercedes pal Lewis Hamilton claimed it was all down to roast dinners.

Russell will start on pole today with Hamilton second and Lando Norris third - in the first home-grown top three on the grid at a British GP since 1952.

That one saw Jim Clark on pole with John Surtees second and Innes Ireland third at Aintree.

Yesterday, in true British fashion, it had been peeing it down all afternoon but stopped just in time to see Russell seal pole ahead of team-mate Hamilton.

Asked why British drivers were thriving in Formula One, Hamilton joked "roast dinners".

He added: "Three Brits in the top three is incredible.

"George did such a great job. We didn't expect to be on the front row this weekend. This is huge for our team."

But McLaren driver Norris, 24, was not on board the roast dinner gravy train, replying: "It can't be. I don't eat roast dinner - maybe that's why I'm not on pole!"

Norris pointed towards the wet conditions more as a reason for

By **ISABELLE BARKER**



the Silverstone success. He added: "We grew up in these conditions. We always enjoy them."

"Growing up in England is so competitive - so it's the weather and the competitiveness."

Dutchman Max Verstappen had to settle for fourth after damaging his car running through the Copse gravel in the wet first session.

Stevenage-born Hamilton, 39, has been soaking up the home comforts - his English bulldog Roscoe wandering the paddock with him and the rainy conditions suiting him perfectly.

Hamilton produced a wet-weather masterclass to toast his first-ever Silverstone win in 2008.

He has won the British Grand Prix a staggering eight times but this will be the last time driving in a Mercedes ahead of his shock move to Ferrari next season.

He said: "All those experiences help. When it's wet, that's the condition I was perhaps most comfortable in."

"These two have also driven very well in wet."

Russell, 26, beat Hamilton to pole

position by 0.171 of a second to continue Mercedes' recent revival.

He became the first British driver to take pole in Silverstone since Hamilton did it in 2020.

And he is now vying for a second consecutive win for the first time in his career after victory in Austria last week.

He said: "This is one of the best feelings I've ever felt."

"Crossing this circuit seeing my name in P1. Both of us on the front row, I couldn't have dreamt of that from the first three races. It feels so good."

Norris was second to Russell after the first laps in the final session, 0.211sec off the pace after failing to complete his second lap.

It was a positive sign for McLaren considering they had to work round the clock to fix Norris' car in time following his crash with Verstappen in Austria.

He said: "I'm excited, it's going to be a good race. I'm quick and can bring the fight to Lewis and George."

It was a miserable day for Red Bull who saw Sergio Perez eliminated in Q1 after becoming beached on the gravel.

Verstappen's car suffered a lot of issues, with the floor completely damaged and full of holes after he too ran into the gravel.

The defending champ, who leads the overall standings, said: "The floor had holes so we patched it up. Bits were missing and hanging."

"You want to get rid of that or try to put a few bits together and that is what we did. They cut bits off hanging loose. We optimised it."

"I want a good fight with the Brits. It wasn't our day but Q1 was unlucky."

"We can have a good battle. The top three all want to win at home but I am hoping a Dutchman can make it a bit difficult for them."



HARD DRIVE... Russell whizzes round in the rain



FORMULA 1 BRITISH

Union Jack

GEORGE LEADS HOME CHARGE AS



FAST MAN STANDING... George Russell laps up the applause after securing pole position at Silverstone



FRONT OF THE GRID

1 George Russell	3 Lando Norris	5 Oscar Piastri	7 Carlos Sainz
2 Lewis Hamilton	4 Max Verstappen	6 Nico Hulkenberg	8 Lance Stroll



SEX APPEAL... Norris

I'M IN LA-LA LAND

LANDO NORRIS has gone from self-confessed "loner" to a sex symbol.

But the McLaren driver, who grew up in Glastonbury, is still adjusting to the glamour of F1. The 24-year-old will sometimes not even leave the house over fears he will be linked with a female fan.

And he is more grateful than ever for his small circle of friends that keep him in check. For a long time, his boyband looks has made him a fans' favourite on the grid. He has certainly blossomed from the fresh-faced 19-year-old who made his F1 debut in 2019.

Norris, who won his first

By ISABELLE BARKER

Grand Prix at Miami earlier this season, said: "I don't think it is even worth going out now. I just want to stay at home."

"Privacy is one of the biggest things, not being able to go unnoticed."

"When I go out to dinner or a club, I am still happy doing things that normal people do."

"But when I wake up and I see videos and people assume because a girl has come to ask for a picture, everyone thinks I am with another girl."

"It's annoying that everyone has these incorrect perceptions." The Brit has not confirmed his relationship status but has

been linked with model and actress Margarida Corceiro, 21, following her split from Portugal footballer Joao Felix.

Despite his fame rocketing, Norris keeps his old friends.

He added: "I'm happy when they tell me I'm being a kn*b."

"It's a lonely life because I grew up in the middle of nowhere. I wasn't around a city or a town. I was a loner so I was happy to play on my Sims all day. I chose that route."

"In F1, you don't know who to trust, it's a very different lifestyle."

"There are people trying to be your friend but I have a good group of friends I grew up with protecting me from the bad and more evil side of the world."



Rad Brad Pitt stop

By **LEN READ**

HOLLYWOOD star Brad Pitt stops off to enjoy the spectacle of the British Grand Prix qualifying.

The US actor, 60, wore shades and a bucket hat in the rain at Silverstone yesterday, where he has been filming an F1 movie.

British driver George Russell, 26, who arrived in an England footie shirt with his Spanish girlfriend Carmen Montero Mundt, took pole in his Mercedes for today's race.

Pole . . . George with Carmen



By DANIEL MOXON AT SILVERSTONE

"RACE to win." The three words from George Russell which showed how desperate he is to deliver a home victory for the Silverstone fans today.

On a drying track, he snatched pole position from Mercedes team-mate Lewis Hamilton, who will start on the front row for the first time this year at his home grand prix.

And McLaren's Lando Norris made sure the top-three grid slots were filled by Britons to send the crowd wild.

All of them got the better of Max Verstappen, who suffered floor damage to his Red Bull early in the session and had to settle for fourth.

"This is one of the best feelings I've ever had," said Russell. "The car was just insane - it just really came alive."

"Crossing the line and seeing my name P1 [first] and then seeing we were both on the front row, we couldn't have even dreamt of that after the first three or four races."

Russell won for the second time in his F1 career last Sunday in Austria and is now dreaming of back-to-back victories.

But he knows he may need more rain to hold off those behind, and said: "We've got a good fight on our hands and the weather is going to play a huge part in that."

"It's been raining and drying over the last couple of days."

"We're riding this wave right now but it doesn't mean anything because Sunday is when the points are scored."

If Russell (below) can convert pole into a win he will become the 11th British driver to triumph at Silverstone following Peter Collins (1958), Jim Clark (1963, 1965, 1967), Jackie Stewart (1969, 1971), James Hunt (1977), John Watson (1981), Nigel Mansell (1987, 1991-1992), Damon Hill (1994), Johnny Herbert (1995), David Coulthard (1999-2000) and Hamilton (2008, 2014-2017, 2019-2021).

The rain has made it difficult for teams to gauge how quick their race pace is expected to be on this track, but Hamilton's prowess in the wet is legendary and the seven-time champion would be happy to see more wet weather



THAT'S A BRIT SPECIAL

Russell takes 'insane' home pole in GB 1-2-3 with Hamilton & Norris

today. He raised hopes of a strong run as he admitted that he had set up his car with the race in mind.

Hamilton said: "I was cautious with my set-up, thinking about having a nice balance in the race, rather than just for one lap."

"I do think the car will be good for tomorrow. When it's wet, those

are the conditions that I'm most comfortable in."

Second on the grid last year had Norris close to tears but McLaren have been in the fight for poles and wins for several races now and he cut a frustrated figure after losing to his fellow Brits. He wants to set the record straight today and said: "I can bring the fight to George and I can bring the fight to Lewis."

Red Bull almost saw both drivers

suffer a Q1 exit. Sergio Perez was only 19th fastest after spinning on slick tyres while it was still wet at Copse, and beached his car.

Verstappen avoided getting stuck when he went off at the same corner but floor damage proved costly.

The Dutchman said: "I skated through the gravel to not hit the wall, but that unfortunately destroyed the floor. I was happy to get into Q3."

BULLISH ABOUT McLAREN TEAM TITLE

rivals have two drivers who are performing, particularly McLaren. And chief executive Brown (below) declared yesterday that he believes his team can leapfrog Red Bull by the end of the season if Perez continues to underperform.

Brown said: "It's going to be dependent upon Perez at the end of the day, because you've just got to assume Max is going to be first, second or third at every race of the year - probably more firsts than thirds."

"Sergio underperforming is what's opening the window for us. If we have the same points gain we've had for the last six races for the balance of

the year, we'd get the job done. So we're fully aware of it. We know we can do it, but what's driving our motivation is trying to get better every session and every week - the outcome will take care of itself."



McLaren have closed the performance gap significantly on Red Bull.

The defending champions started the season in dominant form once again, but, since the beginning of May in particular, have faced stiff competition from Lando Norris, with Oscar Piastri picking up points too. Ferrari and Mercedes have also tasted victory this year. Brown

admitted his surprise at how quickly the teams have converged this season - and predicted an exciting rest of the year as the F1 campaign reaches its halfway point this weekend at the British Grand Prix.

He added: "We all went to Bahrain and thought, 'Right, that's that championship.'"

"I think it's going to be epic. Mercedes seem to be very on the pace now, Ferrari there or thereabouts - not too many races ago Charles Leclerc won."

"You've got four different teams that are all going to win races in the second half of the year, so it's pretty awesome. It's just unfortunate that the season didn't start now."

FORMULA ONE



THE RULE OF THREE
 Russell (right and above centre) leads the way from Hamilton and Norris



QUALIFYING RESULT

- 1 G Russell (Gbr)1:25.819
- 2 L Hamilton (Gbr)1:25.990
- 3 L Norris (Gbr)1:26.030
- 4 M Verstappen (Ned)1:26.203
- 5 O Piastri (Aus)1:26.237
- 6 N Hulkenberg (Ger)1:26.338
- 7 C Sainz Jr. (Spa)1:26.509
- 8 L Stroll (Can)1:26.585
- 9 A Albon (Tha)1:26.640
- 10 F Alonso (Spa)1:26.917
- 11 C Leclerc (Mon)1:27.097
- 12 L Sargeant (USA)1:27.175
- 13 Y Tsunoda (Jpn)1:27.269
- 14 G Zhou (Chn)1:27.867
- 15 D Ricciardo (Aus)1:27.949

DRIVERS' STANDINGS

- 1 Verstappen (Red Bull) 237pts
- 2 Norris (McLaren)156
- 3 Leclerc (Ferrari)150
- 4 Sainz Jr (Ferrari)135
- 5 Perez (Red Bull)118
- 6 Piastri (McLaren)112
- 7 Russell (Mercedes)111
- 8 Hamilton (Mercedes)85
- 9 Alonso (Aston Martin)41
- 10 Tsunoda (RB)19

CONSTRUCTORS

- 1 Red Bull (7 Wins).....355pts
- 2 Ferrari (2).....291
- 3 McLaren (1).....266
- 4 Mercedes (1).....196
- 5 Aston Martin (0).....58
- 6 RB (0).....30
- 7 Haas (0).....19
- 8 Alpine (0).....9
- 9 Williams (0).....2
- 10 Sauber (0).....0



CONSTRUCTORS' RACE
 Norris is giving McLaren ideas about title push

ZAK FEELING

BY DANIEL MOXON at Silverstone
 MCLAREN boss Zak Brown has revealed that they are eyeing a constructors' title charge THIS YEAR as Sergio Perez continues to struggle for Red Bull.
 The Mexican signed a new Red Bull contract only last month after a decent start, but since then his form has fallen off again and he has scored just 15 points across the past five race weekends.
 Team-mate Max Verstappen continues to perform and has won seven of the 11 races so far this year.
 While the Dutch racer has a strong grip on the drivers' championship, the gap in the teams' standings is closing every week. Most of Red Bulls'

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SUNDAY 07.07.2024 SUNDAY MIRROR 3

Pitt stop at Silverstone

BY JANINE YAQOOB
TV and Showbiz Editor

ACTOR Brad Pitt is stopped in his tracks at Silverstone, ahead of today's Grand Prix.

In a Burberry bucket hat, the 60-year-old signed autographs during the final day of practice at the Northamptonshire track, where he is filming Formula One movie F1,

due out next year. Brad plays veteran driver Sonny Hayes, who returns to the grid after a long absence. Seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton is co-producer.

On Friday, grime artist Stormzy put on an action-packed show for race fans. But as he arrived with girlfriend Maya Jama, he was clearly already the weekend's big winner.

WRITE-OFF Star Brad brandishes a pen as he signs autograph for fan



BUCKET LIST
A fan leans in



The Observer

‘I still find it weird, I’m just a normal guy who drives fast and people cheer’

McLaren’s coming man, Lando Norris, is keen to repay his fans with a spectacle to savour today, he tells *Giles Richards*

One of Lando Norris’s endearing qualities is his willingness to open up, to be, well, himself, an increasingly rare trait in Formula One. It is this candour, as the huge numbers of fans at the British Grand Prix supporting him will attest, that makes him one of the sport’s most popular drivers.

Norris cuts a relaxed figure as he speaks in the McLaren motorhome, the 24-year-old thoughtful and typically honest as he considers how close friends have come to play a crucial role for a kid who grew up in something of a bubble. “It’s quite a lonely life,” he says.

“I’m not complaining. It’s a lonely life because I grew up in the middle of nowhere. I was a loner, so I was happy to go and play on my simulator all day. I chose that

route. Then all the years of growing up, you don’t stay in a team for more than a year so you never have time to build much of a connection with anyone. I know in F1 you don’t know who to trust, it’s a very different lifestyle.”

However, those friends are clearly vital in ensuring he remains grounded amid the F1 circus. “That’s what I think I have my friends for and the people around me. I’m very happy when they tell me I’m being an absolute knob,” he says with a smile. “They give me a sense of normality.”

Norris is riding the crest of a wave, exhibiting the form of his career in the best car he has had the chance to drive. Now McLaren have given him the tools to do the job, he is delivering on the promise he has always shown. The clear rival to Max Verstappen for the drivers’ title, he

goes into today’s British GP, once Lewis Hamilton’s fieldom, for the first time as the favourite to deliver a win for the home crowd.

Norris is an interesting character on many levels. On the track, his driving is hard to ignore. He is controlled and measured when he needs to be, demonstrating an appreciation of the bigger picture of maximising what is available rather than sacrificing places in the heat of the moment. He also has a delicate touch on his tyres and knows how to eke out the best from them, an art that is vital in modern F1.

Crucially, when given free rein, he has an exciting, full-blooded style, unafraid to make moves when he has the bit between his teeth, as he demonstrated at Imola, Barcelona and Austria. Since his debut win in Miami earlier this year, he has been clear that where once a podium was a high, now only a place on the top step will do.

Norris is honest when holding his hands up to errors on track, an unusual trait where absolute conviction is all but dogma. He is generous with his time for fans and appreciative of them too, perhaps because deep down there is still a

‘I have my friends and the people around me to give me a sense of normality’
Lando Norris

Russell is pride of Silverstone as home drivers lock out podium

Giles Richards
Silverstone

Having battled through a morning huddled under ponchos braving sheets of rain, the doughty home fans at the British Grand Prix were treated to a qualifying session that warmed the cockles long into the evening after George Russell, Lewis Hamilton and Lando Norris delivered an all-British top three for today’s race at Silverstone.

Not only was this a remarkable reason to cheer for the fans, an embarrassment of riches from the homegrown drivers, but it was delivered with high drama and verve. A gripping session over an hour that perfectly encapsulated the British summer, veering from heavy, gunmetal grey clouds and the rain to bright sunshine and a dry track by the close.

Such success has been a long time coming. The last time three British drivers were at the front of their home grand prix was in 1962, when Jim Clark, John Surtees and Innes Ireland locked it out at Aintree. Moreover it has set up a gripping contest for today, with the world champion, Max Verstappen, looming like Banquo’s ghost, in fourth on the grid.

As the cheers of the crowd did their best to echo against the wind bruiser its way across the old airfield, all three



drivers emerged from their cars in understandably buoyant mood. Even Norris, who expected more from his McLaren, which has been rapid this weekend, was not downhearted having made a minor error on his final lap that proved costly.

Hamilton, who is no stranger to

success at Silverstone where he has eight wins, was in irrepressibly good humour, finally having a car beneath him that was competitive.

When asked why there were so many successful British drivers, they were in fine form. “Roast dinners,” was Hamilton’s response. “It can’t

be, I don’t like roast dinners,” shot back Norris as the pair laughed it up. “Maybe that’s why I am not on pole ...”

The conditions had played a part on a wet track that dried out and Norris noted that this too was a contributory factor in forging the talent of the home nations.

● George Russell gives the fans plenty to cheer about and will start alongside Lewis Hamilton

BRUN LENNON/FORMULA 1/GETTY IMAGES



little disbelief that he is the subject of such affection. "I do appreciate it as much as I can because I still find it odd that I just drive a car and people support me," he says. "I find it a weird concept, of me just being a normal person who drives a car quickly and people cheer me on for that ... I appreciate it, I don't know how I can show it in many ways."

He is also a young man growing up in public with all that entails. He enjoys going out to dinner or clubs

Lando Norris likes to get a sense of what the fans are feeling before he starts a day's racing

BY ILMAN/GETTY IMAGES

but pictures or videos get taken and assumptions are then made. So increasingly Norris ends up not actually going out because he faces enough scrutiny already for what he does on track, with social media having become vituperative.

"You don't want to deal with things which cause stress and pressure," he says. "Everything I do already is stressful enough. I still have to go out and perform and do my job every day. As soon as I have one bad day in the job, I get criticised to hell."

Which is about as vehement as Norris gets outside a car on the baggage of going racing. That is something he will put out of his mind when the visor comes down today, but on the way there, well, he will, of course, enjoy the special moments that matter.

"I stay in the hotel at the track and it's easy just to walk over the bridge [to the paddock] but I am happy to drive round," he says. "Because I get that feeling of everyone, seeing people in my shirts, my hats, that just excites me in the morning, these guys are here to support me and cheer me on – that puts me in the mood."

Today's grid

British Grand Prix
Silverstone (3pm) Sky Sports F1

1G Russell (GB) Mercedes	125.819
2L Hamilton (GB) Mercedes	125.990
3L Norris (GB) McLaren	126.030
4M Verstappen (Neth) Red Bull	126.203
5O Piastri (Aus) McLaren	126.237
6N Hulkenberg (Ger) Haas	126.338
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8L Stroll (Can) Aston Martin	126.585
9A Albon (Tha) Williams	126.640
10F Alonso (Sp) Aston Martin	126.917
11C Leclerc (Mon) Ferrari	127.097
12L Sargeant (US) Williams	127.175
13 Y Tsunoda (Jpn) RB	127.269
14 Zhou G (Chn) Kick Sauber	127.867
15 D Ricciardo (Aus) RB	127.949
16 V Bottas (Fin) Kick Sauber	132.421
17 K Magnussen (Den) Haas	132.905
18 E Ocon (Fr) Alpine	134.557
19 S Perez (Mex) Red Bull	138.348
20 P Gasly (Fr) Alpine	139.854

*Gasly received a 50-place grid penalty for exceeding his engine allowance

Drivers' standings

1M Verstappen (Red Bull) 7 wins 237pts
2L Norris (McLaren) 1win 156pts
3C Leclerc (Ferrari) 1win 150pts

championship, was undone by an uncharacteristic error. Caught out by a return of the rain in Q1, he went wide over the gravel damaging his floor and losing performance.

Yet the race remains wide open, a potential battle royale on one of the best circuits in the world for wheel to wheel racing. Russell acknowledged that the McLaren is likely to be quicker on race pace while Verstappen with a replacement floor will be threateningly fast too. However, Mercedes open with track advantage and a car that is enjoying its best performance of the season, indeed since they last won the title in 2021.

"The car just came alive. Without a doubt one of the best feelings I have ever had driving this circuit," Russell said. Which after the egregious form of the Mercedes in recent years is rare praise indeed.

The decisive moments were enthralling as the pole balanced on a knife-edge, impossible to call. On the opening hot laps Russell led the way from Hamilton and Norris with 1min 26.024sec time, there was only a tenth between them and Norris was just six-thousandths off.

With the track rubbering in, the final laps were key as the crowd came to their feet for the denouement as Verstappen had a slide at the loop, and lost time. Then Hamilton flew in the final sector, taking provisional pole, only to be passed by Russell with an exceptional final lap of 1min 25.819sec, over a tenth clear of his teammate to secure a first pole at his home race.

It is, significantly, Mercedes' second pole this season in short order after Russell took the top spot in Canada, and after his victory at the last round in Austria. With the pace on display here they will feel like another win might be within their grasp but with rain expected again, nothing is a given and a capacity crowd of 160,000 have every reason to expect a thriller.

‘There’s not a driver I haven’t fallen out with,’ says Mr Motorsport

Prodrive’s David Richards has been there, won that, battled egos and ruffled Ferrari’s feathers, he tells Giles Richards

From building a team in a Silverstone lock-up to a remarkable success in Formula One, world championships in rallying and sportscars, few have a tale to tell to match that of David Richards and Prodrive. What better time than today’s British Grand Prix as the company marks four decades of a journey for a man and team where racing is in the blood.

Richards formed Prodrive in 1984 with a complement of 14 people. It is now a racing and engineering group of more than 700 with Richards still at the helm. He will also be at Silverstone in his long-standing role as chair of Motorsport UK, British motorsport’s governing body.

Richards’ team enjoyed enormous success, running the BAR F1 team between 2002 and 2004, managing Jacques Villeneuve and then bringing Jenson Button on board to great effect. Then came three World Rally Championship (WRC) drivers’ and three manufacturers’ titles with Subaru. This included one, in 1995, for Colin McRae, who became the first British driver to take the WRC, an event that made the front pages. He followed that with Aston Martin world championships and class wins at Le Mans in sportscars and most recently in the Dakar rally.

It has been some ride, as Richards observes after 40 years in the business. "I don't think there is a single driver that I have worked with that I haven't fallen out with at some point during our relationship," he admits. "But years later they have always come back and been good friends."

This was, of course, no little feat given the egos and singularly demanding nature of all pedallers. "You can imagine, Colin McRae crashing the cars and I didn't have the budget for repairs," he says. "Then Jenson Button taking us to court twice to try and get out of his contract, and Jacques Villeneuve behaving like a petulant child because [Villeneuve's manager] Craig Pollock was winding him up, the fights between Carlos Sainz and Colin ... having to manage those relationships."

"I look back and they certainly make

you grow up and teach you lessons in life. It's about the same as bringing up a teenage boy."

Richards started the company shortly after winning the WRC as co-driver with Ari Vatanen in 1981, with a view to building his own rally team. There was no grand plan to conquer the world but he did in many ways change it. "We were young, it didn't matter that we were working 24 hours, all weekends, all-nighters, that was just the norm in those days," he recalls. "We could all sit round the table at lunchtime and have our sandwiches, next door to Eddie Jordan."

Running their own cars, it was quickly clear they could not compete with the big boys logistically. "Those teams would turn up and have 150 people, trucks and lorries. We had 30 people, a couple of estate cars and a couple of small vans," he remembers.

So they had to think differently and chose to use a helicopter to shift equipment between stages. Others took notice too and Subaru chose Prodrive to make its tilt at the WRC.

They were not only successful but turned the previously obscure Japanese brand into a household name. "In those days no one had heard of Subaru," says Richards. "The managing director of Subaru in the UK told me a few years later: 'When you lot came along I was selling pick-up trucks to pig farmers and now I am selling performance cars to petrolheads.'"

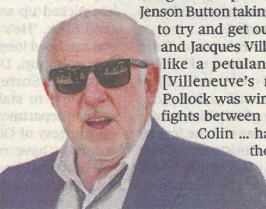
Richards went on to serve as team principal at Benetton for a year in F1, before struggling BAR called on him and Prodrive to run the team. He inherited a flailing outfit, despite their ample backing. Richards wrought changes and brought in Button. By 2004 the turnaround was unprecedented and they finished second in the championship.

It was a masterpiece of making the most of limited resources and BAR would ultimately turn into the championship-conquering Mercedes of today. "I still see people we worked with there," says Richards. "Some are at Mercedes, some at other teams. James Wowlles, who is now heading up Williams, was there. It was a pretty formative period for the young engineers."

Prodrive has been an unusual success story, a healthy reminder at Silverstone that British motorsport governance could not be in better hands than those of a man who knows and loves the sport inside out.

"Back then we were ambitious, starting with nothing and had great plans. We were prepared to work and we had some good fortune along the way," adds Richards. "But I always like to think and believe that the best is still to come."

David Richards says running an F1 team is like bringing up a teenage boy



‘The car just came alive. Without a doubt one of the best feelings I have had driving this circuit’

George Russell

"We always enjoy these conditions having grown up here," he said. "England's the most competitive area to grow up in, so weather and competitiveness."

Certainly they were the class of the field, while Verstappen, who leads Norris by 81 points in the world



FORMULA 1 BRITISH GRAND PRIX
QUALIFYING SILVERSTONE

THREE LIONS

Home rule as trio dominate grid

"RACE to win." The three words from George Russell which showed how desperate he is to deliver a home victory for the Silverstone fans today.

by DANIEL MOXON

On a drying track, he snatched pole position from Lewis Hamilton who will start on the front row for the first time this year at his home race.

And Lando Norris made sure the top three grid slots were filled by Brits to send the Silverstone crowd wild.

Among the spectators was Hollywood star Brad Pitt (right) who saw all three Brits get the better of Max Verstappen, who picked up floor damage early in the session and had to settle for fourth.

"This is one of the best feelings I've ever had," said Russell.

"The car was just insane - it just really came alive.

"Crossing the line and seeing my name P1, and then seeing we were both on the front row - we couldn't

have even dreamt of that after the first three or four races."

Russell won for the second time in his F1 career last Sunday in Austria and is now dreaming of back-to-back wins.

But he knows he may need more rain to hold off those behind, and added: "We've got a good fight on our hands and the weather is going to play a huge part in that.

"It's been raining and drying over the last couple of days. We're riding this wave right now but it doesn't mean anything because tomorrow is when the points are scored.

"But we're obviously in a great position to fight for victory."

The summer rain has made it difficult for teams to gauge how quick their race pace is expected to be on this track.

But Hamilton's prowess in

the wet is legendary and the seven-time F1 champion would be happy to see more rain clouds today.

And he raised hopes of a strong performance as he admitted he set up his Mercedes with the main event in mind.

He said: "I was cautious with my set-up, thinking about having a nice balance in the race, rather than just for one lap. I do think the car will be good for tomorrow.

"When it's wet, those are the conditions I'm most comfortable in."

A year ago, being second on the grid had Norris so delighted that he was close to tears.

Such results were still a novelty then but

McLaren have been in the fight for pole positions and race

wins for several races now this year - and he cut a rather frustrated figure as he reacted to losing out to his fellow Brits.

But he wants to set the record straight today and said: "I can bring the fight to George, and I can bring the fight to Lewis."

Red Bull almost saw both drivers suffer the indignity of a Q1 exit. Sergio Perez was only 19th fastest because he span after putting on slick tyres while it was still wet at Copse corner and beached his car in the gravel.

Verstappen avoided getting stuck when he went off at the same corner but picked up floor damage.

The Dutchman said: "We didn't expect it to rain in Q1. I skated through the gravel to not hit the wall, but that destroyed the floor."



NEED FOR SPEED: Russell (middle), Lewis (left) and Norris were the fastest in qualifying

QUALIFYING RESULTS

- 1 G Russell (Gbr) Mercedes GP 1min 25.819secs,
- 2 L Hamilton (Gbr) Mercedes GP 1:25.990,
- 3 L Norris (Gbr) McLaren 1:26.030, 4 M Verstappen (Ned) Red Bull 1:26.203, 5 O Piastri (Aus) McLaren 1:26.237, 6 N Hulkenberg (Ger) Haas F1 1:26.338, 7 C Sainz Jr. (Spa) Ferrari 1:26.509, 8 L Stroll (Can) Aston Martin 1:26.585, 9 A Albon (Tha) Williams 1:26.640, 10 F Alonso (Spa) Aston Martin 1:26.917.



Brollies on their jollies

FUN-loving Brits refused to allow the rain to get them down yesterday.

F1 fans packed the circuit to see an action-packed qualifying session for the British Grand Prix at Silverstone, Northants.

Sunseekers in Bournemouth, left, flocked to the beach after the rains eased, while boat race fans flocked to the Henley Royal Regatta, right, in Oxfordshire.

Pictures: GETTY/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK/ALAMY/PA

SUNDAY PEOPLE

By DANIEL MOXON
AT SILVERSTONE

"RACE to win." The three words from George Russell which showed how desperate he is to deliver a home victory for the Silverstone fans today.

On a drying track, he snatched pole position from Mercedes team-mate Lewis Hamilton, who will start on the front row for the first time this year at his home grand prix.

And McLaren's Lando Norris made sure the top-three grid slots were filled by Britons to send the crowd wild.

All of them got the better of Max Verstappen, who suffered floor damage to his Red Bull early in the session and had to settle for fourth.

"This is one of the best feelings I've ever had," said Russell. "The car was just insane - it just really came alive."

"Crossing the line and seeing my name P1 [first] and then seeing we were both on the front row, we couldn't have even dreamt of that after the first three or four races."

Russell won for the second time in his F1 career last Sunday in Austria and is now dreaming of back-to-back victories.

But he knows he may need more rain to hold off those behind, and said: "We've got a good fight on our hands and the weather is going to play a huge part in that."

"It's been raining and drying over the last couple of days."

"We're riding this wave right now but it doesn't mean anything because Sunday is when the points are scored."

If Russell (below) can convert pole into a win he will become the 11th British driver to triumph at Silverstone following Peter Collins (1958), Jim Clark (1963, 1965, 1967), Jackie Stewart (1969, 1971), James Hunt (1977), John Watson (1981), Nigel Mansell (1987, 1991-1992), Damon Hill (1994), Johnny Herbert (1995), David Coulthard (1999-2000) and Hamilton (2008, 2014-2017, 2019-2021).

The rain has made it difficult for teams to gauge how quick their race pace is expected to be on this track, but Hamilton's prowess in the wet is legendary and the seven-time champion would be happy to see more wet weather



today. He raised hopes of a strong run as he admitted that he had set up his car with the race in mind.

Hamilton said: "I was cautious with my set-up, thinking about having a nice balance in the race, rather than just for one lap."

"I do think the car will be good for tomorrow. When it's wet, those

are the conditions that I'm most comfortable in."

Second on the grid last year had Norris close to tears but McLaren have been in the fight for poles and wins for several races now and he cut a frustrated figure after losing to his fellow Brits. He wants to set the record straight today and said: "I can bring the fight to George and I can bring the fight to Lewis."

Red Bull almost saw both drivers

suffer a Q1 exit. Sergio Perez was only 19th fastest after spinning on slick tyres while it was still wet at Copse, and beached his car.

Verstappen avoided getting stuck when he went off at the same corner but floor damage proved costly.

The Dutchman said: "I skated through the gravel to not hit the wall, but that unfortunately destroyed the floor. I was happy to get into Q3."

THAT'S A BRIT SPECIAL

Russell takes 'insane' home pole in GB 1-2-3 with Hamilton & Norris

BULLISH ABOUT McLAREN TEAM TITLE

rivals have two drivers who are performing, particularly McLaren. And chief executive Brown (below) declared yesterday that he believes his team can leapfrog Red Bull by the end of the season if Perez continues to underperform.

Brown said: "It's going to be dependent upon Perez at the end of the day, because you've just got to assume Max is going to be first, second or third at every race of the year - probably more firsts than thirds."

"Sergio underperforming is what's opening the window for us. If we have the same points gain we've had for the last six races for the balance of

the year, we'd get the job done. So we're fully aware of it. We know we can do it, but what's driving our motivation is trying to get better every session and every week - the outcome will take care of itself."



McLaren have closed the performance gap significantly on Red Bull.

The defending champions started the season in dominant form once again, but, since the beginning of May in particular, have faced stiff competition from Lando Norris, with Oscar Piastri picking up points too. Ferrari and Mercedes have also tasted victory this year. Brown

admitted his surprise at how quickly the teams have converged this season - and predicted an exciting rest of the year as the F1 campaign reaches its halfway point this weekend at the British Grand Prix.

He added: "We all went to Bahrain and thought, 'Right, that's that championship'. "I think it's going to be epic. Mercedes seem to be very on the pace now, Ferrari there or thereabouts - not too many races ago Charles Leclerc won."

"You've got four different teams that are all going to win races in the second half of the year, so it's pretty awesome. It's just unfortunate that the season didn't start now."

SUNDAY PEOPLE

FORMULA ONE

THE RULE OF THREE
Russell (right and above centre) leads the way from Hamilton and Norris

QUALIFYING RESULT

- 1 G Russell (Gbr) 1:25.819
- 2 L Hamilton (Gbr) 1:25.990
- 3 L Norris (Gbr) 1:26.030
- 4 M Verstappen (Ned) 1:26.203
- 5 O Piastri (Aus) 1:26.237
- 6 N Hulkenberg (Ger) 1:26.336
- 7 C Sainz Jr (Spa) 1:26.509
- 8 L Stroll (Can) 1:26.585
- 9 A Albon (Tha) 1:26.640
- 10 F Alonso (Spa) 1:26.917
- 11 C Leclerc (Mon) 1:27.097
- 12 L Sargeant (USA) 1:27.175
- 13 Y Tsunoda (Jpn) 1:27.269
- 14 G Zhou (Chn) 1:27.867
- 15 D Ricciardo (Aus) 1:27.949

DRIVERS' STANDINGS

- 1 Verstappen (Red Bull) 237pts
- 2 Norris (McLaren) 156
- 3 Leclerc (Ferrari) 150
- 4 Sainz Jr (Ferrari) 135
- 5 Perez (Red Bull) 118
- 6 Piastri (McLaren) 112
- 7 Russell (Mercedes) 111
- 8 Hamilton (Mercedes) 85
- 9 Alonso (Aston Martin) 41
- 10 Tsunoda (RB) 19

CONSTRUCTORS

- 1 Red Bull (7 Wins) 355pts
- 2 Ferrari (2) 291
- 3 McLaren (4) 268
- 4 Mercedes (1) 196
- 5 Aston Martin (0) 58
- 6 RB (0) 30
- 7 Haas (0) 19
- 8 Alpine (0) 9
- 9 Williams (0) 2
- 10 Sauber (0) 0

CONSTRUCTORS' RACE
Norris is giving McLaren ideas about title push

ZAK FEELING

BY DANIEL MOXON at Silverstone
MCLAREN boss Zak Brown has revealed that they are eyeing a constructors' title charge THIS YEAR as Sergio Perez continues to struggle for Red Bull.

The Mexican signed a new Red Bull contract only last month after a decent start, but since then his form has fallen off again and he has scored just 15 points across the past five race weekends.

Team-mate Max Verstappen continues to perform and has won seven of the 11 races so far this year.

While the Dutch racer has a strong grip on the drivers' championship, the gap in the teams' standings is closing every week. Most of Red Bull's

SUNDAY PEOPLE

NEWS & FEATURES 3

Pitt stop at Silverstone

BY JANINE YAQOUB
TV and Showbiz Editor

ACTOR Brad Pitt is stopped in his tracks at Silverstone, ahead of today's Grand Prix.

In a Burberry bucket hat, the 60-year-old signed autographs during the final day of practice at the Northamptonshire track, where he is filming Formula One movie F1,

due out next year. Brad plays veteran driver Sonny Hayes, who returns to the grid after a long absence. Seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton is co-producer.

On Friday, grime artist Stormzy put on an action-packed show for race fans. But as he arrived with girlfriend Maya Jama, he was clearly already the weekend's big winner.

WRITE-OFF Star Brad brandishes a pen as he signs autograph for fan



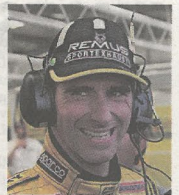
BUCKET LIST
A fan leans in



FORMULA ONE BRITISH GRAND PRIX

Alex's out to prove Williams isn't over the Hill

Albon aims to recreate glory days of Mansell and Hill at Silverstone



CRUCIAL WIN Damon Hill 5 CLASSICS AT SILVERSTONE

1987: Nigel Mansell was found himself the best part of half-a-minute behind team-mate and fierce rival Nelson Piquet with 30 laps to go after pitting for a new set of tyres.

Spurred on by his home crowd, Mansell smashed the lap record nine times before passing Piquet after an exquisite move at Stowe with only two laps left.

1994: Michael Schumacher illegally overtook pole-sitter Damon Hill on the parade lap and was punished with a stop-and-go penalty - which he ignored.

He was hit with a black flag, which should have resulted in his instant disqualification, but Schumacher kept driving.

Hill, though, went on to claim a crucial victory. 1998: Schumacher was again at the centre of controversy when he won while in the pit-lane.

The German illegally passed Alexander Wurz under a yellow flag, but hapless stewards never announced his stop-and-go penalty with two laps left.

That saw him enter the pits to serve his penalty at the end of the final lap - and after he crossed the finish line. The bizarre result stood.

2008: In torrential rain, Lewis Hamilton blitzed the field to finish almost 70 seconds clear and lapped the entire pack up to third.

2021: Hamilton copped a 10-second penalty for sending Max Verstappen into the wall in a collision.

The Brit fought back through the field, passing Ferrari's Charles Leclerc in the final laps to take a remarkable, if not controversial, victory.

SILVER LININGS Albon has a British Grand Prix victory in his sights like Mansell in 1987, below



THREE decades on from the brilliance of Nigel Mansell and Damon Hill, Alex Albon is confident he can lead Williams to glory at Silverstone again.

Sir Frank's team was once the industry standard, particularly in the trophy-laden 1990s.

And the English track was their favourite playground, with six wins in seven years between 1991 and 1997.

Mansell dominated the 1992 championship and won the British Grand Prix after taking pole by almost a full two seconds.

Two years later a young Hill, still reeling from the death of team-mate Ayrton Senna 10 weeks earlier, did what his father Graham never managed and won his home Grand Prix.

Jacques Villeneuve won twice for Williams but his 1997 victory is the team's most recent at Silverstone, the venue for the team's first win in 1979 with the late Clay Regazzoni in the cockpit.

Albon has starred for the team since he returned to the F1 grid in 2022 but has been nowhere near the podium with Williams a shadow of their former selves.

But the 28-year-old is certain that boss James Vowles, who joined from Mercedes early last year, has the right plan to wake up F1's sleeping giants: He said: "We're in communication

BY DANIEL MOXON

on a daily basis. He sees the journey and knows it's not going to be long. "When he says something isn't great, he has a reason and he has a fix, which is the most important.

"I'm excited - I'm in the meetings and I hear all the updates as to what's going on. I'm committed and I'm excited because I do believe in the journey."

Albon was linked with Red Bull and Ferrari at the start of the season but signed a contract extension with Williams.

He said: "Of course there was a temptation, Williams understood that too. It was a very open discussion we had.

"Part of me was like, Am I willing to wait that long to get the fruits of the work that has been done? And it came down to yes."

Albon is British-born but races under the Thai flag, having chosen to represent his mother's homeland.

However, he sees Silverstone as his home race, adding: "My family live 25 minutes from here. I learned how to race here, I got my racing licence at Silverstone when I was eight. So it's still very much a home race."

"I hear all the updates and I'm excited because I do believe in the journey"

ALEX ALBON BELIEVES WILLIAMS ARE ON THE UP

Zak goes on Red Bull attack

ZAK BROWN has torn into Red Bull and accused the Formula 1 champions of "encouraging" Max Verstappen's dirty driving. The McLaren CEO launched his sensational attack after Verstappen caused contact with Lando Norris and ended both drivers' chances of

winning the Austrian GP last Sunday.

Norris has forgiven his rival, but his boss Brown was still seething as he faced reporters yesterday.

He fumed: "I'm also disappointed in such a great team like Red Bull. The leadership almost encourages it, because

you listen on the radio to what was said.

"On the pit wall, we have a responsibility to tell our drivers what's going on in the race, and so I think we need to have respect for regulations.

"We've seen a lack of respect. I don't think that's how we need to go racing."



RED BULL CRITIC Brown

Lando is quick of the mark

LANDO NORRIS bounced back from his collision with Max Verstappen last time out to complete a practice double for the British Grand Prix.

The British driver headed Oscar Piastri in a McLaren one-two at a murky Silverstone, with Red Bull's Sergio Perez

third. Lewis Hamilton finished sixth, one place ahead of Verstappen, with George Russell, who took advantage of last week's clash to claim just his second career win, 10th.

Norris, who finished an impressive 0.331 seconds clear of Piastri, said: "It was a good start to the

weekend. We are in a good place but we have more to find."

Hamilton was 0.653sec off the pace and said: "The track is fine, I'm just slow."

Verstappen, who has won seven of the 11 rounds so far, ended the day nearly seven tenths behind Norris.

Pitt revs up paddock at Silverstone

Brad Pitt brought star power to the Silverstone racing circuit ahead of qualifying for the British Grand Prix.

The Hollywood actor, 60, is filming scenes of him racing an adapted Formula Two car in between practice sessions this weekend for his upcoming Formula One blockbuster, titled F1.

Pitt signed items and took pictures with fans in the paddock yesterday as he arrived before the third practice session.

He wore a quilted cream jacket over a white T-shirt, with cream trousers and a tartan-patterned cream bucket hat.

The project, which is being co-produced by Sir Lewis Hamilton, will see Pitt play veteran driver Sonny Hayes, who is returning to the F1 grid after a long absence.

Pitt and his co-star, British actor Damson Idris – who plays team-mate Joshua Pierce – lined up with 20 competing drivers before last year's race at Silverstone. The two are due to be on the grid again before today's event.

George roars to pole as Merc lock out front row

By Philip Duncan
sport@sundaypost.com

George Russell delivered for his home crowd yesterday by landing a brilliant pole position for today's British Grand Prix.

The Englishman held his nerve in a wet-dry qualifying session at Silverstone to see off team-mate Lewis Hamilton by 0.171 seconds as Mercedes locked out the front row.

McLaren's Lando Norris completed a British one-two-three ahead of an anticipated 160,000 sell-out crowd for Sunday's race.

Championship leader Max Verstappen, who ran through the gravel in Q1, sustaining possible damage to the floor of his Red Bull, could manage only fourth.

The build-up to Formula One's third round in as many weeks has been dominated by Norris' late collision with Verstappen as they duelled for the lead in Austria six days ago.

Russell took advantage of the coming together to claim just his second career win and the 26-year-old was back on top at Silverstone to land pole for his home race.

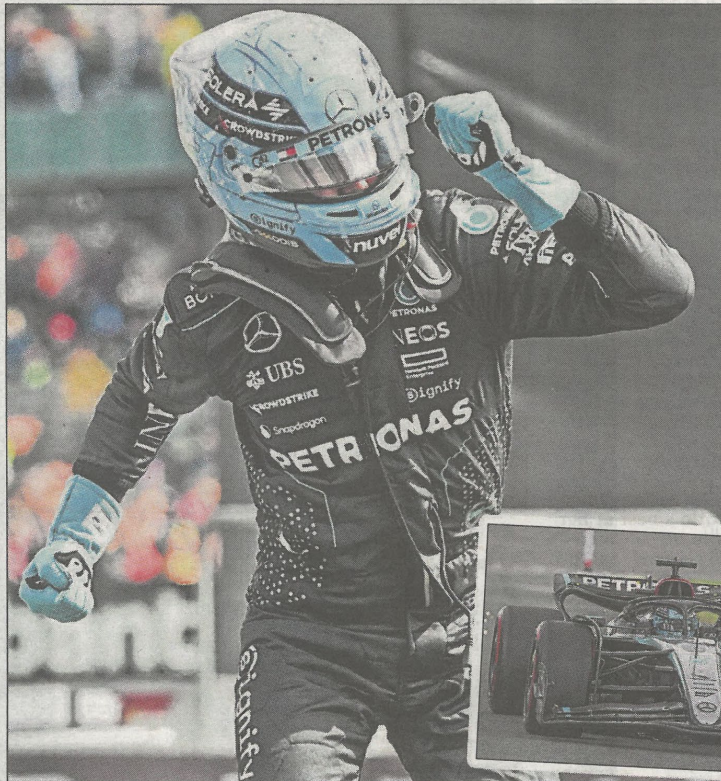
Russell held a six-thousandths advantage over Norris heading into the final runs only to see Hamilton charge to the top of the order.

But Russell denied the seven-time world champion his first pole since the Hungarian Grand Prix last year – 350 days ago – to put his machine on pole. Norris failed to improve his with last lap, finishing 0.211 sec back.

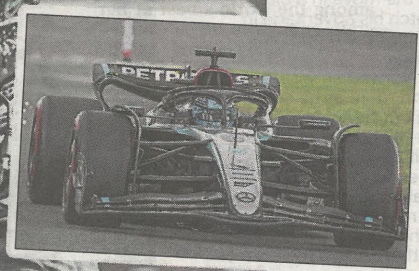
"What a feeling," said Russell. "At the start of this year we couldn't have even dreamt of being on pole."

"The car at the moment is feeling so good, it really came alive, and what a joy to ride around this circuit."

"The crowd give us so much energy, and I don't think Silverstone could've dreamt of three Brits in the top three."



George Russell celebrates following up his Austrian GP win by putting his Mercedes (inset above) on pole at Silverstone.



Hamilton said: "We definitely didn't expect to be on the front row this weekend but this is huge for us as a team. The car felt fantastic out there."

Norris, 81 points behind Verstappen in the championship, added: "It's meant to rain again tomorrow, so I'm excited. We're quick and I can bring the fight to George tomorrow."

Red Bull have dominated the sport for the past two and a half years but their supremacy appears as though it is finally coming to an end.

Verstappen only snuck through to Q2 after he ran through the gravel through Copse – the same corner where

Hamilton punted him out of the race in 2021.

The crowd cheered Verstappen's off-road excursion but the Dutchman was able to recover back to the track before hauling his Red Bull safely up the order.

However, he was a distant 0.384 sec behind Russell in the end. Oscar Piastri finished fifth for McLaren with Nico Hulkenberg a surprise sixth for Haas.

Despite signing a two-year extension to stay at Red Bull just over a month ago, Sergio Perez's future is in doubt once again following a poor run which has seen him score just 15 points in his last five

appearances. And Perez will start only 19th after he crashed out of Q1.

Perez had just switched from the intermediates to dry rubber when he ran wide at Copse before hitting the damp asphalt and spinning into the gravel.

"Can they move me forward?" said Perez over the radio. "All I need is to be pushed back. There is tarmac over there."

However, Perez's race engineer Hugh Bird informed the Mexican that help from the marshals would see him disqualified. Perez was out, leaving team principal Christian Horner shaking his head on the Red Bull pit wall.

SUNDAY 07 JULY: LINKS TO ONLINE COVERAGE

Headline	Media	Links
Pressure grows on Sergio Perez after disastrous GP qualifying	Autoweek	https://www.autoweek.com/racing/formula-1/a61522355/pressure-grows-on-sergio-perez-after-disastrous-f1-british-gp-qualifying/
'So much crowd energy' – Russell relishes three-way Brit- fight	BBC	https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/formula1/articles/c06kgy5p1dmo
How Antonelli performed under a new spotlight after F2 breakthrough	Autosport	https://www.autosport.com/f1/news/how-antonelli-performed-under-a-new-spotlight-after-f2-breakthrough/10632410/
F3 sprint podium-sitters share thoughts on postponed race	FormulaNerds	https://www.formulanerds.com/news/f3-sprint-podium-sitters-share-thoughts-on-postponed-race/
Russell claims pole as sensational British trio shine in qualifying	Independent.co.uk	https://www.independent.co.uk/f1/f1-russell-hamilton-norris-britishgp-silverstone-b2575291.html
Ferrari find no “extra performance” as they ditch recent F1 upgrade in a bid to solve woes	Crash.Net	https://www.crash.net/f1/news/1051947/1/ferrari-find-no-extra-performance-they-ditch-recent-f1-upgrade-bid-solve-woes
British GP preview: George Russell, Lewis Hamilton, Lando Norris in battle for home victory with Max Verstappen lurking	Sky Sports	https://www.skysports.com/f1/news/12433/13174014/british-gp-preview-george-russell-lewis-hamilton-lando-norris-in-battle-for-home-victory-with-max-verstappen-lurking
Russell on pole as Brits top Silverstone qualifying	ESPN	https://www.espn.co.uk/f1/report?id=600041144
F1 British GP starting grid after stewards' rulings	The Race	https://www.the-race.com/formula-1/f1-british-gp-starting-grid-2024/
Verstappen surprised by fourth after floor damage in qualifying	RACER	https://racer.com/2024/07/06/verstappen-surprised-by-fourth-after-floor-damage-in-qualifying/
'Massive difference' - Lewis Hamilton explains how upgraded W15 feels “better everywhere”	Crash.net	https://www.crash.net/f1/news/1051948/1/massive-difference-lewis-hamilton-explains-how-upgraded-w15-feels-better
McLaren v Red Bull uncovered: Does Christian Horner have a new arch-enemy in F1?	Planet F1	https://www.planetf1.com/news/mclaren-red-bull-rivalry-zak-brown-christian-horner

SUNDAY 07 JULY: LINKS TO ONLINE COVERAGE

Headline	Media	Links
PITT STOP Brad Pitt wear bucket hat & shades as he attends British Grand Prix qualifying while filming F1 movie	The Sun	https://www.thesun.co.uk/sport/29012060/brad-pitt-f1-british-grand-prix/
Norris alongside Verstappen with Mercedes in his sights	Reuters	https://www.reuters.com/sports/formula1/norris-alongside-verstappen-with-mercedes-his-sights-2024-07-06/
Perez “f***** up” touching slippery white line as spin leaves him 19th	Racefans.net	https://www.racefans.net/2024/07/06/perez-admits-he-f-up-touching-slippery-white-line-as-spin-leaves-him-19th/
Three Red Bull driver developments involving Sergio Perez, Daniel Ricciardo and Liam Lawson	PlanetF1	https://www.planetf1.com/news/f1-news-red-bull-driver-sergio-perez-daniel-ricciardo-liam-lawson
Hamilton outlines staggering extent of Mercedes progress	RacingNews365.com	https://racingnews365.com/hamilton-outlines-staggering-extent-of-mercedes-progress
Formula 1: Lando Norris reaction rooted deeper than Max Verstappen	Beyond the Flag	https://beyondtheflag.com/posts/formula-1-lando-norris-austria-reaction-rooted-deeper-max-verstappen-01j1n5ydch7k
F3: Home favourite Lindblad cruises to Silverstone sprint race victory	F1	https://www.formula1.com/en/latest/article/f3-home-favourite-lindblad-cruises-to-silverstone-sprint-race-victory.2DE114wCpKC6nwmqKSvYk1
George Russell hatches Silverstone plan as Lewis Hamilton warns Mercedes team-mate.	The Mirror	https://www.mirror.co.uk/sport/formula-1/russell-hamilton-silverstone-front-row-33184942
F1 Live: Max Verstappen stirs the pot as Red Bull confirm drastic change at British GP	The Daily Express	https://www.express.co.uk/sport/f1-autosport/1919903/F1-live-british-gp-verstappen-red-bull-mercedes
2024 British Grand Prix: historic British top three as Russell pips Hamilton and Norris in Silverstone qualifying	Silverstone	https://www.silverstone.co.uk/news/2024-british-grand-prix-historic-british-top-three-russell-pips-hamilton-and-norris
F1 2024 British Grand Prix starting grid with penalties applied	GPFans	https://www.gpfans.com/en/f1-news/1024799/f1-2024-british-grand-prix-silverstone-starting-grid-with-penalties-applied/
Russell on pole for F1 British Grand Prix as home trio top three spots	The Guardian	https://www.theguardian.com/sport/article/2024/jul/06/f1-british-grand-prix-pole-george-russell-lewis-hamilton-lando-norris