



Bahrain Grand Prix

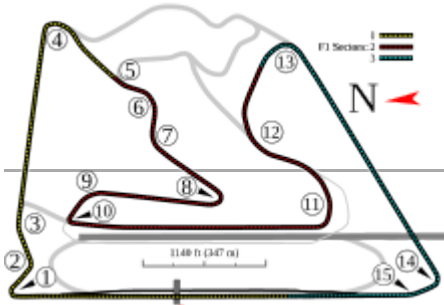
The **Bahrain Grand Prix** (Arabic: جائزة البحرين الكبرى), officially known as the **Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix** for sponsorship reasons, is a Formula One motor racing event in Bahrain.^[1] The first race took place at the Bahrain International Circuit on 4 April 2004. It made history as the first Formula One Grand Prix to be held in the Middle East, and was given the award for the "Best Organised Grand Prix" by the FIA.^[2] The race has in the past been the second, third, or fourth race of the Formula One calendar. However, in the 2006 season, Bahrain swapped places with the traditional season opener, the Australian Grand Prix, which was pushed back to avoid a clash with the Commonwealth Games. Bahrain staged the opening race of the 2010 season and the cars drove the full 6.299 km (3.914 mi) "Endurance Circuit" to celebrate F1's 'diamond jubilee'. In 2021, the Bahrain Grand Prix was the season opener again because the 2021 Australian Grand Prix was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2011 edition, due to be held on 13 March, was cancelled on 21 February due to the 2011 Bahraini protests^[3] after drivers including Damon Hill and Mark Webber had protested.^[4] Human rights activists called for a cancellation of the 2012 race due to reports of human rights abuses committed by the Bahraini authorities.^[5] Team personnel also voiced concerns about safety,^[6] but the race, nonetheless, was held as planned on 22 April 2012.



In 2014, to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the first staging of the Bahrain Grand Prix, the race was held as a night event under floodlights.^[7] In so

Bahrain Grand Prix

Bahrain International Circuit
(2004–2010, 2012–present)




Race information

Number of times held	20
First held	<u>2004</u>
Most wins (drivers)	 <u>Lewis Hamilton</u> (5)
Most wins (constructors)	 <u>Ferrari</u> (7)
Circuit length	5.412 km (3.363 miles)
Race length	308.238 km (191.530 miles)
Laps	57

Last race (2024)


Pole position

 Max Verstappen • Red Bull Racing-Honda
RBPT • 1:29.179

Podium

-  M. Verstappen • Red Bull Racing-Honda
RBPT • 1:31:44.742
-  S. Pérez • Red Bull Racing-Honda RBPT • +22.457
-  C. Sainz Jr. • Ferrari • +25.110

Fastest lap

 Max Verstappen • Red Bull Racing-Honda
RBPT • 1:32.608

doing it became the second Formula One night race after the Singapore Grand Prix in 2008. Bahrain's inaugural night event was won by Lewis Hamilton. Subsequent races have also been night races.

History

The construction of the Bahrain International Circuit in Sakhir began in 2002. Bahrain had fought off fierce competition from elsewhere in the region to stage a F1 race, with Egypt, Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates all hoping for the prestige of hosting a Formula One Grand Prix.

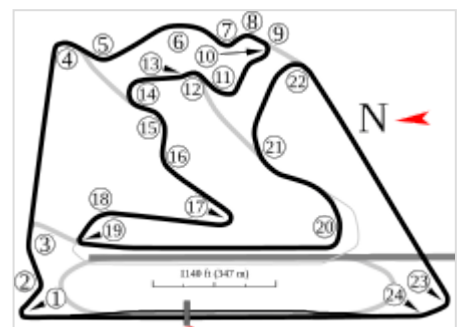
The race has been held in every Formula One season since 2004, with the exception of 2011, due to the 2011 Bahraini uprising. The first Bahrain Grand Prix was won by Michael Schumacher, driving for Ferrari. The following two editions, in 2005 and 2006, were won by Fernando Alonso, racing for Renault, and Felipe Massa won the 2007 and 2008 editions of the race for Ferrari. Jenson Button won the 2009 Bahrain Grand Prix driving for Brawn GP, and Fernando Alonso won his third Bahrain Grand Prix in 2010 driving for Ferrari. Following the cancellation of the 2011 Bahrain Grand Prix, Sebastian Vettel and Red Bull won the 2012 and 2013 Grands Prix, followed by Lewis Hamilton and Mercedes winning in 2014 and 2015. Hamilton's teammate Nico Rosberg won in 2016, and Sebastian Vettel won another two editions of the race for Ferrari in 2017 and 2018. Lewis Hamilton then proceeded to win the following three Grands Prix, in 2019, 2020, and 2021, setting the record for the most Bahrain Grand Prix wins, with five. The 2022 round was won by Charles Leclerc, giving the Scuderia Ferrari their record seventh Bahrain Grand Prix victory. The most recent edition, held in 2024, was won by Max Verstappen of Red Bull Racing, with the previous year's event their first Bahrain Grand Prix victory in over ten years.^{[8][9]}



The Bahrain International Circuit in 2010

The 2010 edition of the race saw a different circuit configuration used for the Grand Prix. The "Endurance Circuit" layout was used instead of the "Grand Prix Circuit" layout, extending the lap length to 6.299 km (3.914 mi).^[10] The track was planned to revert back to its original layout for the 2011 edition,^[11] and did so for the 2012 edition.^[12]

In February 2022, it was reported that the event's contract had been extended to last until the 2036 Formula One season.^[13]



Endurance circuit, used in 2010

Characteristics

One notable characteristic of the course is its large run-off areas, which have been criticised for not punishing drivers who stray off the track. However, they tend to prevent sand getting onto the track. The circuit is regarded as one of the safest in the world.^[14]

Although alcoholic beverages are legal in Bahrain, the drivers do not spray the traditional champagne on the podium, instead spraying a non-alcoholic rosewater drink known as Waard.^[14]

Controversy

2011 cancellation

On 21 February 2011, it was announced that the 2011 Bahrain Grand Prix scheduled for 13 March was cancelled due to the 2011 Bahraini protests.^{[3][15]} On 3 June, FIA decided to reschedule the race for 30 October. World champion racer Damon Hill called on Formula One not to reschedule saying that if the race went ahead "we will forever have the blight of association with repressive methods to achieve order".^[16] Bernie Ecclestone told the BBC in an interview: "Hopefully there'll be peace and quiet and we can return in the future, but of course it's not on. The schedule cannot be rescheduled without the agreement of the participants – they're the facts."^[17] A week after its decision to reschedule the race, Formula One announced the cancellation of the race for 2011.^[4]



A demonstrator protesting against the race

2012 controversy

Human rights activists called for a cancellation of the 2012 Bahrain Grand Prix, which took place on 22 April, because of reports of ongoing use of excessive force by authorities and torture in detention.^{[5][18][19]} That includes the killing of activist Salah Abbas Habib during a demonstration on the eve of the Grand Prix,^[20] as well as the earlier fatal shooting of photojournalist Ahmed Ismael Hassan al-Samadi, who was covering a protest against the Bahrain Grand Prix.^[21]



A graffiti in Bahrain village

On 9 April 2012, *The Guardian* reported that according to an unnamed leading member of one of the teams who said his views were representative, "the Formula One teams want the sport's governing body to cancel – or at least postpone – the Bahrain Grand Prix ..., because of increasing safety concerns amid ongoing protests in the kingdom ... I feel very uncomfortable about going to Bahrain. If I'm brutally frank, the only way they can pull this race off without incident is to have a complete military lockdown there. And I think that would be unacceptable, both for F1 and for Bahrain. But I don't see any other way they can do it".^[6]

In that context, Anonymous launched on 21 April 2012 the operation opBahrain, threatening the Formula 1 representatives of a cyberattack in case they go on with the Grand Prix. Hours later, Anonymous hackers took down the f1-racers.net website after launching a distributed denial-of-service attack.^[22] Despite these protests, the Grand Prix was held as planned.

Continuing controversy

Since the global media attention over the large scale demonstrations in 2011 and 2012, there have been continued reports from human rights groups about abuses and jailings in Bahrain relating to F1 protests. Among them are photographer Ahmed Humaidan, who was one of about 30 people jailed for roles in the 2012 protest,^[23] and activist Najah Ahmed Yousif, who is in prison, and has been physically and sexually abused, for criticising the Bahrain F1 on social media.^{[24][25]} Rights organisations continue to criticise the Formula One Group and Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) for refusing to follow their own Statement of Commitment to Respect for Human Rights, saying that by not leveraging their position of power to take action against such political crackdown, the F1 organisers are complicit to the dissidents' suffering.^[26] In 2018, F1 "admitted concern" for Yousif, after continued public and media pressure; however, there has been no known follow up since.^[27]

A collection of human rights groups, led by the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD), have claimed that the Bahrain Grand Prix has become a focal point of popular protests and serious human rights abuses committed by Bahraini security forces against protesters. The NGOs accuse F1 of performing invaluable PR for Bahrain's government and that it risked further normalizing of the human rights violations in the country.^[28] In letters to Lewis Hamilton, three Bahraini political prisoners praised his commitment towards human rights issues, and requested him as an F1 world champion to bring their plight in notice of a wider audience.^[29] The Grand Prix has been cited as an example of sportswashing.^[30]

2020 postponement

Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, event organisers announced that no spectators would be permitted to attend the race that had been due to take place on 22 March.^[31] However, a fortnight before the race was due to take place, the race was indefinitely postponed.^[32] The race was rescheduled to 29 November, and it was one of two events held around the Bahrain International Circuit across two weekends, with the second race taking place on the outer layout and being named the Sakhir Grand Prix.

2020 controversy

According to the rescheduled F1 calendar, Bahrain was announced as hosting two races back to back November 2020. However, the event received backlash not only from human rights organizations, but also from F1's newly crowned, seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton. Hamilton issued a warning to F1 and called on the sport to face its responsibilities and confront / deal with the human rights issues in the countries it visits. A consortium of human rights organizations led by the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD) wrote to Formula One CEO, Chase Carey that the race in Bahrain became a focal point of protests in the country and human rights abuses carried out by Bahraini security against demonstrators. The government of Bahrain, on the other hand, denied allegations of sportswashing.^[33]

Legal complaint over Bahrain contract

On 27 October 2022, the F1 was hit with a legal complaint that it turned a blind eye to human rights violations when it announced in February that the Bahrain GP will stay on the calendar until 2036. The claim said F1 breached Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development guidelines. The

complaint, made through the British government’s UK National Contact Point (NCP), was served by the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (Bird) and two alleged torture survivors from Bahrain, Najah Yusuf and Hajer Mansoor.^[34]

Winners

Repeat winners (drivers)

Drivers **in bold** are competing in the Formula One championship in the current season.

Wins	Driver	Years won
5	 Lewis Hamilton	2014 , 2015 , 2019 , 2020 , 2021
4	 Sebastian Vettel	2012 , 2013 , 2017 , 2018
3	 Fernando Alonso	2005 , 2006 , 2010
2	 Felipe Massa	2007 , 2008
	 Max Verstappen	2023 , 2024
Source: ^[9]		

Repeat winners (constructors)

Teams **in bold** are competing in the Formula One championship in the current season.



Wins	Constructor	Years won
7	 Ferrari	2004 , 2007 , 2008 , 2010 , 2017 , 2018 , 2022
6	 Mercedes	2014 , 2015 , 2016 , 2019 , 2020 , 2021
4	 Red Bull	2012 , 2013 , 2023 , 2024
2	 Renault	2005 , 2006
Source: ^[9]		

Repeat winners (engine manufacturers)

Manufacturers **in bold** are competing in the Formula One championship in the current season.

Wins	Manufacturer	Years won
7	 Ferrari	2004 , 2007 , 2008 , 2010 , 2017 , 2018 , 2022
	 Mercedes	2009 , 2014 , 2015 , 2016 , 2019 , 2020 , 2021
4	 Renault	2005 , 2006 , 2012 , 2013
2	 Honda RBPT	2023 , 2024
Source: ^[9]		

By year

Year	Driver	Constructor	Configuration	Report
2004	 Michael Schumacher	Ferrari	Grand Prix Circuit	Report
2005	 Fernando Alonso	Renault		Report
2006	 Fernando Alonso	Renault		Report
2007	 Felipe Massa	Ferrari		Report
2008	 Felipe Massa	Ferrari		Report
2009	 Jenson Button	Brawn-Mercedes		Report
2010	 Fernando Alonso	Ferrari	Endurance Circuit	Report
2011	<i>Cancelled due to 2011 Bahraini uprising</i>			Report
2012	 Sebastian Vettel	Red Bull-Renault	Grand Prix Circuit	Report
2013	 Sebastian Vettel	Red Bull-Renault		Report
2014	 Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes		Report
2015	 Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes		Report
2016	 Nico Rosberg	Mercedes		Report
2017	 Sebastian Vettel	Ferrari		Report
2018	 Sebastian Vettel	Ferrari		Report
2019	 Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes		Report
2020	 Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes		Report
2021	 Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes		Report
2022	 Charles Leclerc	Ferrari		Report
2023	 Max Verstappen	Red Bull-Honda RBPT		Report
2024	 Max Verstappen	Red Bull-Honda RBPT		Report
Sources: ^[9] ^[8]				

See also

- Tourism in Bahrain

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External links

- [Official website \(https://www.bahraingp.com\)](https://www.bahraingp.com)
 - [Bahrain statistics \(http://www.4mula1.ro/history/track/Bahrain\)](http://www.4mula1.ro/history/track/Bahrain)
 - [Trackpedia guide to the Bahrain Circuit \(http://www.trackpedia.com/wiki/Sakhir\)](http://www.trackpedia.com/wiki/Sakhir)
 - [Bahrain Grand Prix of the FIA Formula One \(http://www.formula1online.net/Article/288/Bahrain-Grand-Prix-Live-Streaming/\)](http://www.formula1online.net/Article/288/Bahrain-Grand-Prix-Live-Streaming/)
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