

China's Zhou extends F1 contract with Alfa Romeo to 2024



Zhou Guanyu
AFP | Singapore

Zhou Guanyu, China's only Formula One driver, said yesterday that he has extended his contract with Alfa Romeo to the end of the 2024 season.

He will now get the chance to race on home soil for the first time in Formula One, with the Chinese Grand Prix in Shanghai returning in April next year for the first time since the Covid pandemic.

"Next year I have my home race, I've been waiting for it for two years already," the 24-year-old Zhou told reporters ahead of Sunday's Singapore Grand Prix.

"I think it will be forever a memorable weekend for me in Formula One because I grew up, obviously, watching the race back home in China.

"It's going to be amazing just to catch up with the fans and the people in the home crowd."

Zhou heads into his third season on the grid where he will again partner Valtteri Bottas in the Swiss-based team, which is expected to revert to its Sauber name for the 2024 campaign.

Verstappen, Perez wary of 'really painful' Singapore GP

Max Verstappen concedes record-breaking win streak at risk as Red Bull faces stiff competition

● Verstappen says he feels no extra pressure after winning a record 10th grand prix in a row

AFP | Singapore

Runaway Formula One championship leader Max Verstappen conceded yesterday that his win streak was under threat at this weekend's Singapore Grand Prix where his car is "not as competitive".

The Red Bulls have been unstoppable in 2023, winning all 14 races, with flying Dutchman Verstappen taking the chequered flag 12 times.

He said he would spare no effort to extend his record of consecutive wins to 11, but conceded the nature of Singapore's high downforce layout would enable Ferrari, Mercedes and Aston Martin to get closer.

"We are not as competitive here as other tracks, street circuits are a bit tougher for our car," said Verstappen, who could wrap up a third world title in a row as early as the Japanese Grand Prix next week.

"It will be very tight. The key (at Singapore) is adapting as every single session can be dif-



Red Bull's Max Verstappen (CL) and Sergio Perez (CR) walk prior to the Italian Formula One Grand Prix (file photo)

"We are not as competitive here as other tracks, street circuits are a bit tougher for our car. It will be very tight. The key (at Singapore) is adapting as every single session can be different," he added, as he guns for a maiden victory on the Marina Bay track.

MAX VERSTAPPEN

Verstappen's Red Bull team-

mate Sergio Perez won in wild conditions a year ago, when the race start was delayed by more than an hour because of a huge tropical storm that soaked the track.

The Mexican will make his 250th grand prix start on Sunday, becoming just the 11th driver in history to hit that milestone, and knows that qualifying will be crucial on a track where overtaking is near impossible.

"This one, we know if Saturday goes well, it can go really well," Perez told reporters. "There is nothing in the middle in Singapore -- it's either a strong result or really painful."

Ferrari and Mercedes are

YOU KNOW WHAT

Verstappen's Red Bull teammate Sergio Perez won in wild conditions a year ago, when the race start was delayed by more than an hour because of a huge tropical storm that soaked the track

know what will happen. Low downforce we seem to be strong, high downforce we seem to struggle more.

"But there are quite a lot of inconsistencies between the teams on high downforce tracks. And it's a city track so the driver can make a difference."

The Singapore lap times will be quicker this year because of construction work near the city-centre circuit which has meant the removal of four 90-degree corners towards the end of the lap.

The total number of corners has dropped from 22 to 19 and seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton thinks it could help the Mercedes cause.

"I'm just trying to prepare as best I can and see how that new section works. It should bring us closer together, less corners for Red Bull to get ahead," he joked.

Verstappen says he feels no extra pressure after winning a record 10th grand prix in a row in Monza.

"No, I never really looked at the number eight, nine, 10. I just always want to do the best I can," he said.

"Naturally every single weekend it's basically the same amount of pressure you put on yourself to try and get the best result out of it. So, nothing really changes."

scouting a chance to end Red Bull's season-long dominance.

Carlos Sainz was third behind Verstappen and Perez at Monza a fortnight ago.

'We seem to struggle'

"I feel more at one with the car since the beginning of the season, it's just been putting the weekend together," said the Spaniard.

"As to who we are racing against this weekend, I have no idea -- could be Aston Martin, could be Mercedes, could be McLaren. Red Bull will be one step ahead."

His Ferrari teammate, Charles Leclerc, said: "It's difficult to

BRAVE CF's Kadimagomaev challenges newly-contracted Dizzy

TDT | Manama

BRAVE CF's latest signing Anthony "La Masse" Dizzy quickly got a taste of the pressure that comes with being a contracted BRAVE Combat Federation athlete this week when Husein Kadimagomaev called the Frenchman out just days after his debut fight.

Dizzy climbed into BRAVE Nation hearts when he took a short-notice fight at BRAVE CF 74 before producing an impressive show against four-time Combat Sambo World Champion Vladyslav Rudniev in the co-main event.

While "La Masse" lost the Lightweight fight via unani-



mous decision, his performance demanded the respect of millions of MMA enthusiasts, and BRAVE CF President Mohammed Shahid rewarded the Frenchman with a multi-fight contract.

BRAVE CF officially welcomed "La Masse" to BRAVE Nation by

posting a graphic of the courageous athlete that included President Shahid's thoughts: "This man grappled a four-time Combat Sambo World Champion. Despite coming in on such short notice, he gave it his all and produced a spectacular

show. He is BRAVE CF caliber, and I can't wait to watch him with a full camp."

The post had not even simmered yet before Kadimagomaev responded to President Shahid.

"President Shahid, I will be waiting for him with a full camp," said Switzerland's Kadimagomaev, who is on a three-fight win streak and hungry to make another big splash as he bears down on contender status. Both men can transit freely between the Featherweight and Lightweight divisions which makes this fight clearly an exciting prospect for both men as they get ready to get back into the BRAVE CF arena.

Wolff 'Wikipedia' comments slapped down by Verstappen

AFP | Singapore

World champion Max Verstappen snapped back at Toto Wolff yesterday, saying the Mercedes boss spent too much time talking about Red Bull and should concentrate on improving his own team.

Wolff had dismissed Verstappen's achievement in becoming the first driver to win 10 grands prix in a row at Monza two weeks ago, sniffing that it was "for Wikipedia and nobody reads that anyway".

"No, I'm not disappointed in that," Verstappen said about Wolff's comments ahead of this weekend's Singapore Grand Prix.

"I mean they had a pretty sh*t race, so probably he was still pissed off with their performance," added Verstappen, referring to the Italian Grand Prix where Mercedes pair George Russell and Lewis Hamilton finished fifth and sixth.

Mercedes are a distant second in the constructors' championship, 310 points behind Red Bull, and Verstappen thinks Wolff should recognise their achievements.

"I think you should be able to appreciate when a team is doing really well, which I think we've done in the past as it worked as a kind of inspiration," said Verstappen, who is close to wrapping up a third



Toto Wolff

YOU KNOW WHAT

I think it's just important that you focus on your own team, that's what we do, and what we did in the past as well when we were behind them and when they were dominating

MAX VERSTAPPEN

world title.

"We knew that we just had to work harder, try to be better, and try to get to that level.

"He almost sounds like he's an employee of our team sometimes, but luckily not," he added.

"I think it's just important that you focus on your own team, that's what we do, and what we did in the past as well when we were behind them and when they were dominating."

Kane will be 'an absolute success story', says Bayern boss Tuchel

AFP | Munich

Bayern Munich coach Thomas Tuchel said yesterday new striker Harry Kane was already on his way to becoming "an absolute success" story at the club.

Kane has scored three goals and created another in his three Bundesliga appearances for Bayern since his big-money move from Tottenham.

"With his personality and the way he plays, we have exactly the player we need," Tuchel told reporters ahead of Friday's clash with early league leaders Bayer Leverkusen.

"At this time we're trying to get him more involved in our



Bayern Munich's English forward #09 Harry Kane is exchanged by Bayern Munich's German head coach Thomas Tuchel

game. We know it'll be an absolute success story.

"We're more than happy with him."

Tuchel said while Kane, who scored one goal and assisted another in recent England games against Ukraine and Scotland,

would play against Leverkusen, captain Joshua Kimmich was a "question mark".

Kimmich picked up a muscle issue while on international duty and missed Germany's 2-1 friendly win over France -- their first victory since March.

Tuchel however said Jamal Musiala, who on Tuesday was named Bayern's player of the season for 2022-23, would return to the squad after overcoming a back complaint.

Goalkeeper Manuel Neuer also suffered a setback in his return from a broken leg, with Tuchel revealing the Germany captain was struggling with a calf issue.