

# Verstappen wins Belgian GP despite five-place grid penalty

Max Verstappen makes light of Spa penalty to secure eighth straight win

● Sergio Perez finishes second with Charles Leclerc third

AFP | Spa-Francorchamps

Max Verstappen made light of a five-place grid penalty to reel off an eighth consecutive victory for his invincible Red Bull team at the Belgian Grand Prix yesterday.

The defending double world champion and runaway series leader came home 22.305 seconds ahead of team-mate Sergio Perez.

Verstappen extended his lead in the title race over Perez to 125 points.

Pole-sitter Charles Leclerc was third for Ferrari ahead of Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton who clocked the fastest lap.

It was Red Bull's record-extending 13th win in succession,



Red Bull Racing's Dutch driver Max Verstappen celebrates in the parc ferme

and their fifth one-two of the season.

"It's mind blowing!" said team boss Christian Horner.

"We need to keep this level going, but right now everyone deserves a well-deserved break" he added.

Formula One will 'shut down' for three weeks and return at the end of August with Verstappen's

home Dutch Grand Prix, where he will seek to equal former Red Bull driver Sebastian Vettel's 2013 record of nine straight wins.

Verstappen said his latest demonstration of dominance "was really enjoyable!"

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Perez, who led for much of the early part of the race, said: "It was a good race for the team. We had a great start, to get through Charles, and I was doing my own race -- but Max came through pretty fast on the second stint. There was nothing I could do."

Leclerc said: "It was pretty good for us in terms of pace, but looking at Red Bull we have a lot of work to do."

Two-time champion Fernando Alonso finished fifth for Aston Martin ahead of George Russell in the second Mercedes, McLaren's

Lando Norris, Esteban Ocon of Alpine and Lance Stroll in the second Aston Martin. Yuki Tsunoda was 10th for Alpha Tauri.

The race began under grey skies, but in dry conditions as Leclerc led from pole into La Source hairpin where, after a decent start, McLaren's Oscar Piastri was squeezed into the wall by Sainz and after limping slowly on the Australian rookie pulled up to retire at the exit of Fagnes chicane.

By then, Perez had blasted past Leclerc on Kemmel Straight, a show of power to take the lead.

Behind him, Verstappen was swiftly up to fourth from sixth, his starting slot after taking a five-place penalty for a new gearbox.

It was clear Red Bull had superior handling and pace and on lap nine Verstappen eased past Leclerc into Les Combes. It meant Perez had his team-mate in his mirrors before they had run 10 laps.

'Use your head'

After a flurry of pit stops Verstappen chose to attack on his new medium tyres and on lap 17 swept past Perez on Kemmel Straight and promptly clocked a fastest lap before rain began to fall.

"It is raining quite a lot," said Verstappen, who survived a big wobble at the bottom of Eau Rouge.

The anticipated 10-minute shower eased after only five, enabling Verstappen to pull clear by 5.3 seconds while Leclerc held a 3.5-second buffer on Hamilton.

By lap 30, Verstappen led by 27.5 seconds, gifting the Dutchman a comfortable second stop as the sun broke out.

He re-joined with an 8.5 seconds' advantage for his final stint en route to the flag only to be reprimanded by his race engineer Gianpiero Lambiase. "You used a lot of the tyre on the out lap, Max. Not sure that was sensible."

## Khalifa finishes in top 10 of Arab golf

● Bahrain claim sixth overall in teams' final rankings, with hosts Morocco emerging as champions

TDI | Manama

Bahrain's Duaij Khalifa secured a place in the top 10 on the final individual rankings in the 42nd Pan Arab Golf Championships, which took place at Casa Green Golf Club in Casablanca, Morocco.

Khalifa clinched seventh overall amongst 49 competitors after 54 holes of play.

He carded a three-over-par total of 219 to finish just eight



Bahrain national team players and officials at the tournament

shots behind winner and newly crowned champion Issa Abouelela of Egypt.

Three Moroccans were then tied-second, one shot from Abouelela, namely Hugo Mazen Trommter, El Mehdi Fakori

and Adam Bresnu.

Soufiane Dahmane, also of Morocco, was fifth three shots behind first place, while just ahead of Khalifa in sixth was Dean Naime of Egypt, two shots in front.

Khalifa was Bahrain's only finisher in the top 10. Team-mate Ahmed Al Zayed came tied-25th after carding a 20-over 236, while Khalifa Almaraisi was tied-30th with a 27-over 243 total. Ali Alycoob Abdulla was the fourth Bahraini in the fray, finishing tied-40th with a 36-over-par 252 score.

On the final teams' rankings, Bahrain finished sixth overall. Morocco were the champions, followed by Egypt and Tunisia.

The UAE and Qatar came fourth and fifth, respectively, ahead of Bahrain. The final teams' classification was rounded off from seventh through 13th, respectively, by Libya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Iraq.

## Bahrain youth bag Gulf basketball bronze



Bahrain's Husain Alsamaheji runs a pick-and-roll with teammate Daniel Moosa during their game yesterday against Kuwait

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Bahrain's youth national basketball team clinched the bronze medals yesterday in the Gulf Basketball Association (GBA) qualifiers for this year's FIBA Asia U16 Championship.

The nationals secured their podium spot after defeating Kuwait 75-56 in the game for third place.

The Bahrainis took a 22-15 lead at the end of the first quarter and held on to their advantage until the final buzzer. They enjoyed going ahead by as many as their 19-point winning margin at the end.

With the result, Bahrain came away with only their second triumph in the competition. They had previously won just one of their three games in the preliminary round before losing to hosts Saudi Arabia in the semi-finals.

Daniel Moosa finished with 16 points to lead the Bahrainis, who had five players in double figures. Hasan Jameela added 14 while Ali Altoq scored 13. Husain Alsamaheji chipped in with 12 while Mujtaba Rayan had 11 off the bench.

Talal Mohammad had 18 and Mohammad Al Shammari 14 for the Kuwaitis in defeat.

By finishing third, the Bahrainis, coached by Soufiane Mrabet, came up short in their bid to qualify for the FIBA Asia U16 Championship, which takes place in September in Doha.

Only GBA finalists Saudi and Qatar booked their berths.

Bahrain have played four times in the past in the continent's under-16 tournament, first in 2009 and then again in 2013, 2015 and 2022. The Bahrainis' best finish was eighth overall in the 2013 competition held in Tehran.

## Women's futsal squad set for Thailand tournament

● Bahrain to be one of six nations represented in event, with others being Australia, Japan, China, Indonesia and hosts Thailand

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Bahrain's women's national futsal team will be taking on some of the continent's top teams in a six-nation competition taking place this September in Thailand.

The NSDF Women's Futsal



Bahrain's women's futsal team

Championship 2023 is scheduled for 3 to 9 September at the Terminal 21 Shopping Centre in Nakhon Ratchasima Province.

Bahrain is one of five national teams set to compete. The others are Japan, China, Indonesia and hosts Thailand. Meanwhile, Capital Futsal Team from Australia are also in the fray.

The Bahrainis are one of the leading women's futsal squads in the region. Last year, they claimed third place overall in the West Asian Football Federation Women's Futsal Championship held in Saudi Arabia, where Iraq took the gold and Saudi claimed the silver medals.