

# Gloves off, Red run, vested interests: Singapore GP talking points

McLaren clinch constructors' title, but drivers' championship fight heats up

- Piastri, Norris clash in heated duel
- Verstappen closes gap in title race
- Piastri skips team celebrations after row

AFP | Singapore

McLaren clinched the Formula One constructors title, but their drivers' tempers frayed in the heat of a Singapore Grand Prix won by the Mercedes of George Russell.

Here are three talking points from Sunday's night race, one of the most physically brutal tests of man and machine on the motor racing calendar:

### Gloves off for Piastri, Norris

With the constructors' championship safely tucked away for a second successive season, the question now is: will McLaren let the gloves come off in a head-to-head fight for the drivers' title?

If the start of the Singapore GP was anything to go by, the battle between Oscar Piastri and Lando Norris over the last six races could be very spicy.

Norris forced his way past Piastri into third place, barging his teammate out of the way in a wheel-to-wheel flashpoint.

After his crash in Baku two weeks ago and a petulant "it's not fair" outburst on Sunday, Piastri's uber-cool persona from earlier the season is fading



McLaren's British driver Lando Norris drives during the Formula One Singapore Grand Prix

fast.

Norris has reduced the deficit on the Australian to 22 points as they head to Austin in two weeks -- but more importantly he seems to have taken the psychological high ground.

It leaves McLaren team principal Andrea Stella with work to do to calm a fuming Piastri, who was notably absent from the team's podium title celebrations.

"We will have good conversations," Stella told reporters. "We'll come back stronger and even more united."

"There's a lot at stake. That's

not only the championship points, but it's also the trust of our drivers."

### Verstappen turns up heat

Any slip-ups from the feuding McLaren pair at the top of the drivers' championship are likely to be pounced upon by a resurgent Max Verstappen.

The McLarens finished behind the Red Bull of the four-time world champion for the third successive race.

Verstappen won in Monza and Baku, while his second place in Singapore behind race-winner

Russell has cut his gap with Piastri to 63 points and with Norris to 41, with 174 points still up for grabs.

Should the McLarens clash again and, worse, fail to finish a race, the Red Bull in their mirrors will loom even larger.

"I think over the last few races we've definitely improved a lot," said Verstappen, who warned: "Hopefully next weekend we can do a little bit better."

### Jury out on vests

The race in sweaty Singapore was declared the first official

Formula One "Heat Hazard" under new rules to keep drivers cool in sauna-like cockpits that can reach 60C.

Cooling vests could be worn by drivers and cars had to be fitted with equipment to make them work.

Wearing the vests is currently optional, but governing body FIA is considering making it mandatory from next season -- something that hasn't gone down well with most drivers.

Verstappen was adamant he would not be donning the vest any time soon.



Despite sealing McLaren's 10th constructors' title, Oscar Piastri skipped the team's podium celebrations, fuming after teammate Norris muscled past him – a sign the gloves are truly off in the title fight

"I haven't used the vest and I'm not intending to use it, because I feel like this needs to be a driver's choice," he said.

Carlos Sainz of Williams, who is the chairman of the drivers' association, said: "I'm happy not to make it mandatory. I agree with the guys that don't want to use it."

"If they don't want to because they feel really uncomfortable then don't use it."

Seven-time former champion Lewis Hamilton said a mandate would be "silly".

"They keep saying it's a safety issue, but there's no driver that's ever died from overheating during the race," said the Ferrari driver.

"It's like, it's just getting silly. That should be our choice."

Russell wore the vest as he won the race, but had reservations. "It isn't the perfect solution yet," said the Englishman.

## Ryder Cup hero Hatton eyes repeat at Dubai Classic

Two UAE stops set stage for Bahrain Championship

- Hatton headlines Dubai's Rolex Series week
- McIlroy joins star-studded early season field
- Bahrain Championship follows Desert Classic

Hussain Almaskati  
TDT | Manama

The DP World Tour's Middle East swing is shaping up beautifully, with Tyrrell Hatton confirming he'll defend his Hero Dubai Desert Classic title from January 22-25. It will be the second of two big weeks in Dubai that lead straight into the Bahrain Championship.

The run begins at Dubai Creek Resort with the Dubai Invitational (January 15-18) before the action shifts across town to Emirates Golf Club, where the Hero Dubai Desert Classic will once again take centre stage as



HH Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum presents Tyrrell Hatton with the Dallah Trophy

the first Rolex Series event of the 2026 Race to Dubai.

Hatton, one of Europe's Ryder Cup heroes after helping secure victory at Bethpage Black alongside Rory McIlroy, will be making his 11th appearance at Emirates Golf Club. The Englishman produced a masterclass there earlier this year, shooting four rounds in the 60s to lift the famous Dallah trophy and claim his second Rolex Series crown.

"I'm delighted to be heading

back to Emirates Golf Club to defend my title," Hatton said. "It's a course that really suits my game, and the week at the Hero Dubai Desert Classic back in January was incredibly special. It's always good to go back somewhere you've won before, and I'm really excited to have another crack at it after what's been a fantastic year."

Hatton's victory in Dubai back in January sparked a superb season, highlighted by a tied-fourth finish at the U.S. Open, top-20s



It's Hatton's 11th career appearance in Dubai

at both The Masters and The Open, and another standout Ryder Cup showing.

He'll be joined again by Masters champion Rory McIlroy, whose glittering record in Dubai includes four Desert Classic titles. With both Ryder Cup stars in the field, fans are set for two blockbuster weeks in the UAE before the Tour heads to the Royal Golf Club in Bahrain for the Bahrain Championship from January 29 to February 1.

Now in its 37th edition, the Hero Dubai Desert Classic remains the region's oldest professional golf tournament, and this year it tees up a perfect stretch of Gulf golf, leading straight from Dubai to Bahrain.

## Rodri out of Spain squad after injury

AFP | Madrid

Spain confirmed yesterday Manchester City midfielder Rodri Hernandez will not be joining them for their upcoming World Cup qualifiers, after suffering a hamstring injury.

Rodri is "out of the squad because of injury" said the



Spanish national team in a statement, ahead of games against Georgia and Bulgaria on October 11 and October 14 respectively.

The 29-year-old was taken off in the 21st minute of City's Premier League win over Brentford on Sunday, confirming after the game he had felt discomfort in his hamstring.

Rodri Hernandez

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