THE OFFICIALS NEWSLETTER

LAS VEGAS





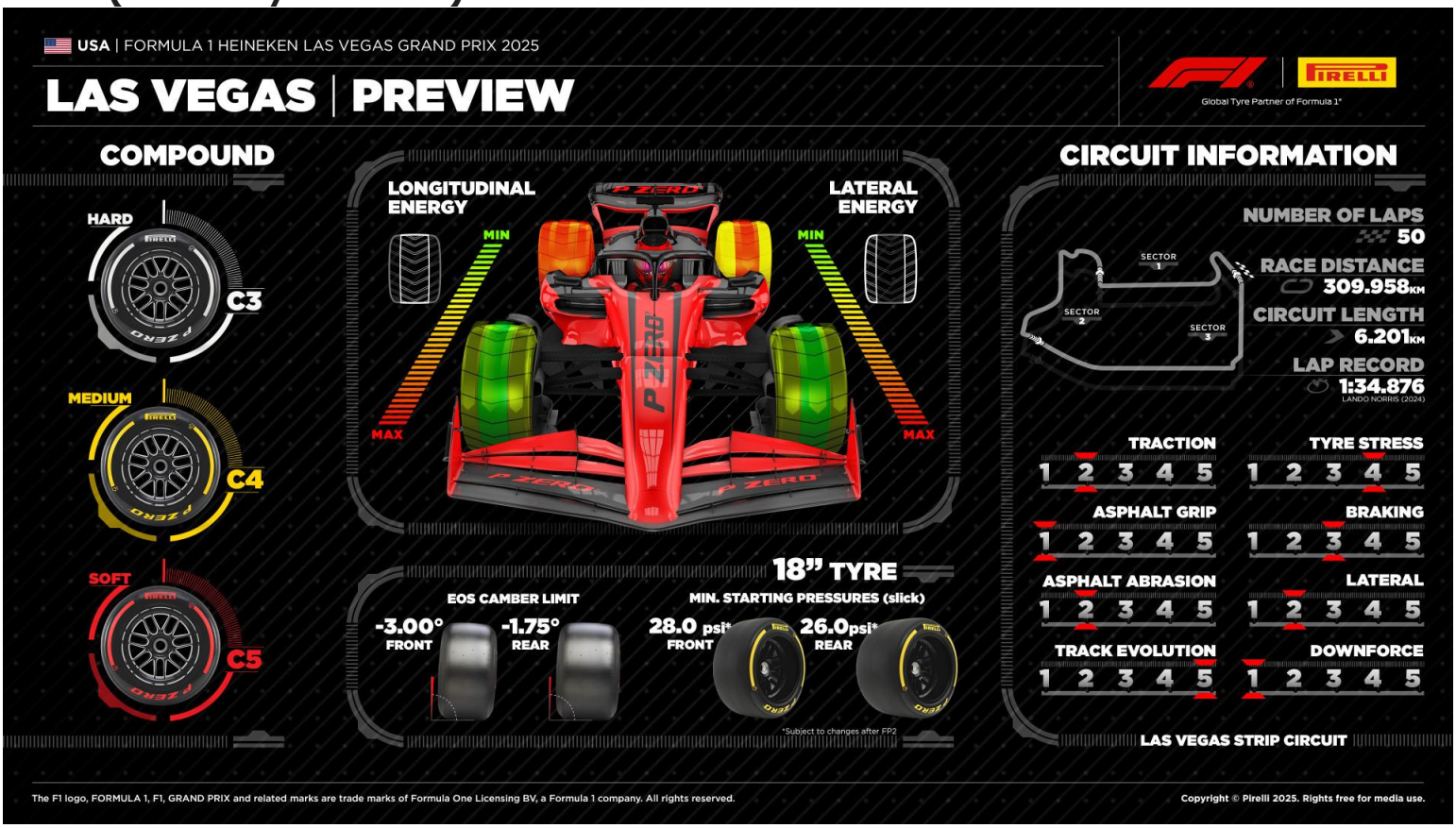








TIRES (courtesy of Pirelli)

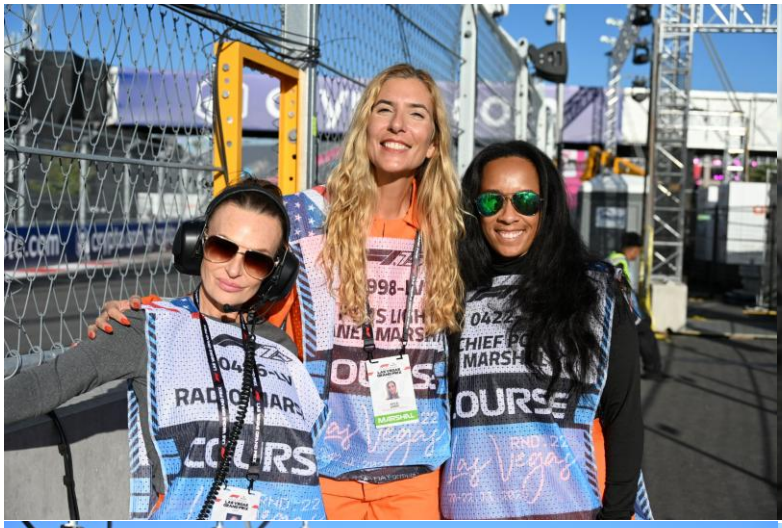


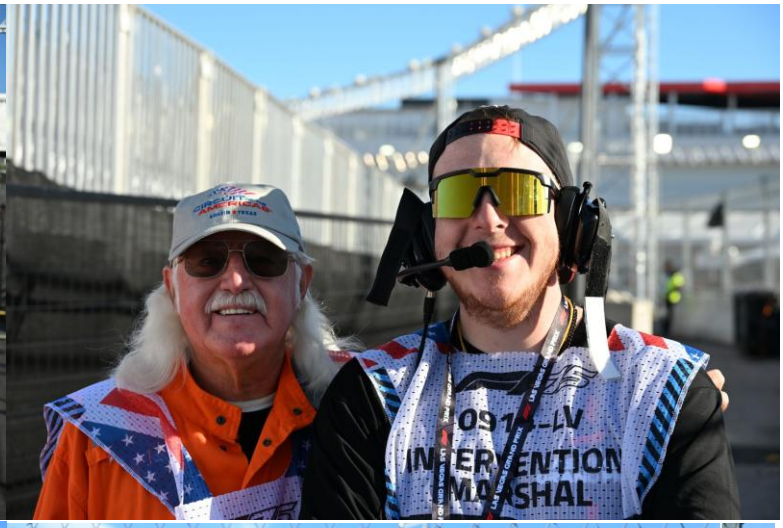
The Las Vegas Grand Prix is the last of three rounds of this year's world championship to be held in the United States, before the season comes to a close with the final two races in the Middle East. The timetable sees the action get underway a day earlier than standard, the sessions taking place at night under floodlights.

Therefore, the first two free practice sessions are on Thursday, with the final one followed by qualifying on Friday, while the Grand Prix itself is held on Saturday night. All sessions will start two hours earlier than they did last year. The Nevadan event has already delivered exciting races with plenty of overtaking, thanks to the track layout which includes a run down the famous Strip.

The compounds

For the third consecutive year, the compounds chosen for the Las Vegas street circuit are the C3, C4 and C5. One of the main challenges will be tire temperature management, especially during qualifying. The fact the sessions are running earlier this year will help the drivers, as conditions won't be quite as cold, thus helping tire warm-up. However, the preparation lap prior to the flying lap will still be crucial to get the tires up into the right temperature window. Furthermore, this year's tires have improved mechanical properties, which should see a reduction in degradation, which was particularly noticeable on the medium compound last year.

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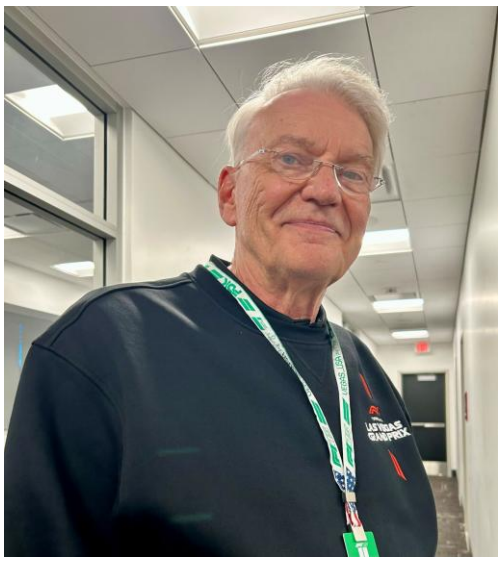



P ZERO
CASINO
MODO

TIRES (continued)

The decision not to go for a softer trio was down to the risk of graining, prevalent since the first edition of this race, which could excessively compromise the efficiency of the softest compound in the current range.

In 2024

All but four drivers chose to start on the Medium. Fernando Alonso went for the Soft, while Sergio Perez, Valtteri Bottas and, starting from pit lane Franco Colapinto, preferred the Hard. With almost the entire field having saved two sets of the harder compounds, the two-stop was the preferred strategy, drivers pushing tires to the limit rather than having to manage them carefully. Degradation was minimal, as was wear, while graining appeared mainly on the Mediums used in the first stint.

The track

The race is run over 50 laps of the Las Vegas circuit, which has 17 corners and is unique because of the speeds attained and its technical layout. At 6.201 kilometers, it is the second longest on the calendar after Spa and one of the fastest in terms of average lap speed. In 2024, Alex Albon in his Williams hit the highest top speed of the season (368 km/h) on the straight between turns 12 and 14. At the latter corner, drivers experience very strong deceleration when braking and it is one of the best overtaking opportunities.

Almost 80% of the lap is spent at full throttle, the cars passing famous landmarks such as the Venetian and Caesars Palace, which hosted the first two Las Vegas GPs. For those races in 1981 and 1982, the track was laid out in a parking lot, whereas today it runs through the main streets of the city so that street furniture and oil residue from normal traffic reduces grip levels. Therefore, track evolution over the course of the weekend is expected to be particularly high.

Possible strategies

With a bit of luck, you might win at the Casino tables in Las Vegas, but in Formula 1 luck alone is not enough. Getting the strategy right involves data, simulation work and in-depth analysis. Only then can you find the winning play.

Before each Grand Prix, Pirelli provides the teams with race strategy scenarios that are in theory the quickest, based on the particular tire compounds available that weekend. This is defined by extensive calculations taking into account numerous tire-related factors.

This approach requires a different methodology to that used by the teams, even if the objectives are similar. All the data is processed by proprietary software designed to identify the optimal strategies for one car on track, with the aim of completing the race in the shortest time possible.

The first information to be analyzed concerns the performance difference between the compounds, as identified in pre-event analysis carried out by the modelling and simulation group. Then, added to this is historical data relating to tire

degradation from previous years at the same track, along with data from the same compounds already used at earlier races during the current season.

A key parameter in the calculations is performance life, which is the maximum number of laps a tire can cover before its performance drops to a level where it is preferable to replace it.

TIRES (continued)

These elements, along with other factors, make it possible to estimate lap times for each compound and, by also taking into account variations in fuel loads, to identify the ideal windows for tire changes.

A key factor, which the teams consider of great importance when deciding on a one or two-stop strategy, is the time taken for the car to come down the pit lane, carry out the tire change and rejoin the track, which varies from circuit to circuit. Analyses are updated throughout the race weekend, to include data from track sessions and what the Pirelli engineers have learned from the product.

The teams, having more data relating to their own cars, often use what's known as the Monte Carlo method. This also takes into account random variables such as traffic, the likelihood of the Safety Car being deployed and how straightforward it is to overtake at each track, especially in the DRS zones.

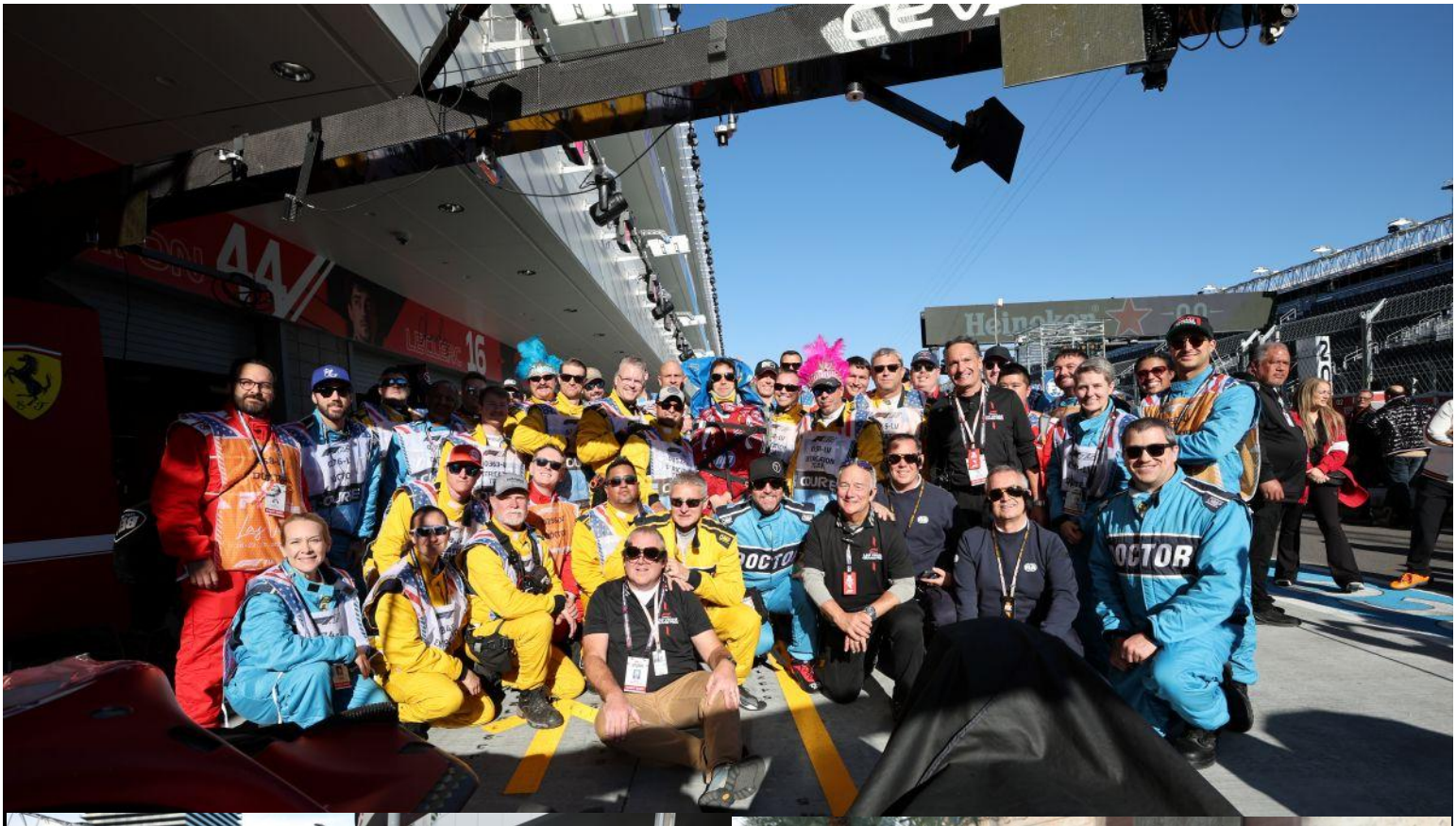
This will be the third edition of the Las Vegas Grand Prix to take place on the Strip and the fifth time in total that a round of the Formula 1 world championship has been held in the gambling capital. In 1981 and 1982 a race was run in the Caesars Palace parking lot. The inaugural race at the Las Vegas Strip Circuit, held in 2023, was won by Max Verstappen, while George Russell won last year, starting from pole position.







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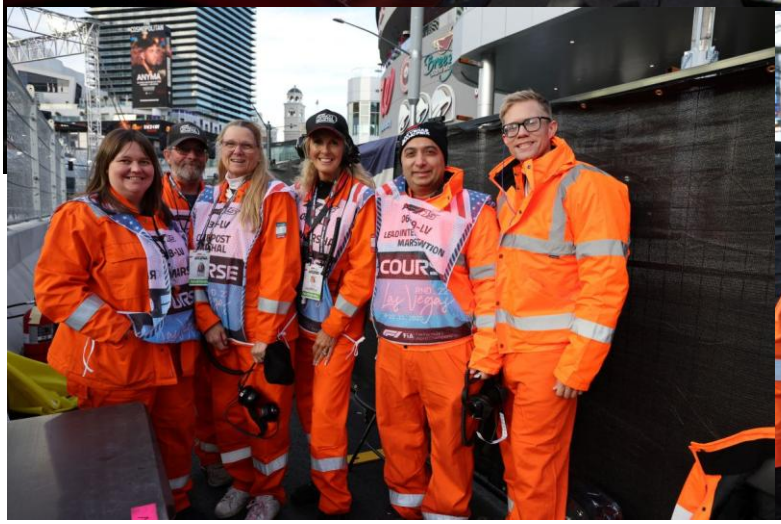


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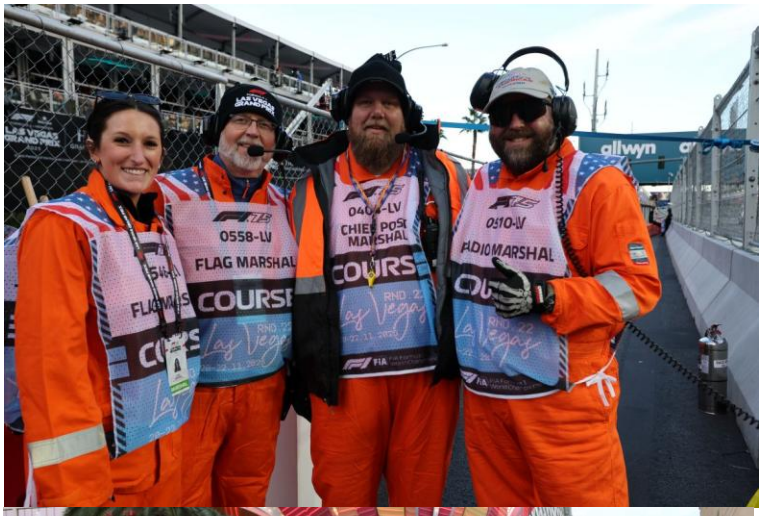
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CAUTION

