

ITALIAN GRAND PRIX, PREVIEW

[Tuesday, September 1st – Autodromo Nazionale Monza, Parco di Monza, Italy]

The ‘Temple of Speed’ beckons for BWT Alpine Formula One Team as Formula One heads to Monza, Italy.

The Autodromo Nazionale Monza takes drivers on a high-speed tour around the stunning Parco di Monza and has been considered a favourite of many in the Formula One paddock over the decades. The famed, fast and flowing circuit which has hosted the most Grands Prix in history - this year being the 96th occasion when including pre-Formula One Championship races - is one of a handful that featured on the original calendar. The challenging Curva Grande and Curva di Lesmos were part of the original track that first opened in 1922 and still feature to this day.

The long straights and heavy braking zones, notably the Rettifilo and della Roggia chicanes, will prove an interesting challenge in this generation of cars. The track has a long history of slipstream races with the 1965 event holding the record for the most lead changes [41] and the 1971 race for the most different leaders [8] as well as the closest finish [0.010 secs]. With four Straight Mode zones, the track is geared for a return to this form of racing and teams will be working hard across the three practice sessions to fine tune their deployment strategies.

Both Pierre Gasly and Franco Colapinto have positive memories of the Italian Grand Prix with Monza the scene of Pierre's debut Formula One victory in 2020, and two years ago, the site of Franco's debut in the sport. The duo, now both running the upgrade package introduced in Zandvoort, are aiming to achieve further positive results as the final European double-header begins.

Pierre will sit out Free Practice 1 on Friday as he makes way for Reserve Driver Paul Aron who is making his second Practice outing for the team this season, having previously taken over Franco's car in Budapest. It's the beginning of a busy weekend for Paul who, after his latest session in contemporary machinery, will head back to Enstone for an evening on the simulator as he contributes to fine-tuning the team's car set-up with the benefit of having a feel for the real thing.

PIERRE GASLY: "I always love Italian Grand Prix week for a number of reasons. Firstly, Milan is where I live so I get to spend the week at home, which is always a bit of a luxury given how often we travel. So, in some way, it is a bit of a 'home' race for me! Secondly, I love the track. It's one of the most famous in Formula One and known for its out-and-out speed, big braking zones and some amazing corner combinations. And, finally, of course, it is where I won my first Formula One race back in 2020. A memory which will for sure last a lifetime and something I reflect on regularly. We go to Monza feeling positive after scoring some points in Zandvoort. The upgrade package worked well and I know we probably left a bit on the table last time out which we want to put right this weekend. I'm excited for it and I am feeling hungry to add more points in our championship fight."

FRANCO COLAPINTO: "It's been quite a busy couple of weeks for me since we were back racing in Zandvoort after the summer shutdown. I'm delighted that, in the gap ahead of Monza, the team have confirmed that I'll be staying next year, alongside Pierre. I want to reiterate my thanks to Flavio and Steve for the trust and it feels amazing to stay with this team for another season. We've made a lot of important progress this year, both with the car and with my driving, so I'm very pleased that has been recognised and I'll continue to do my best for this team. But, for now, our full focus is on Monza and our championship position. I made my F1 debut at this track and it is always a pleasure to race here in front of the Italian fans. This weekend will be my first with our new upgrade package, which Pierre used last time out, and I'm looking forward to running it from Friday and racing with it this weekend. The step looked to be promising and we will be working hard to get up to speed with the changes as quickly as possible. Monza will be a very interesting race with this generation of cars, the long straights combined with very strong braking zones could produce a lot of action so we will make sure we set ourselves up as best we can for a positive result in the final European double-header."

PAUL ARON: "I am looking forward to driving again in Free Practice 1 with the team this weekend, I am grateful to the team for giving me the opportunity to get back behind the wheel so soon. I was very pleased with my session in Budapest, and I hope to build on it this time around, particularly helping the team compare our latest upgrade package which I have driven in the simulator. It's going to be a busy weekend for me as I'll be on the simulator at Enstone on Friday night to further help the team fine tune the set-up before returning to the track on Saturday. I'll give it my all to hopefully assist the team in having a successful weekend."

STEVE NIELSEN: "We head to Monza off the back of a positive return to racing - post summer shutdown - last time out in Zandvoort. We were actually a little disappointed in the end to only come away with two points as, on reflection, and, given the circumstances of Sunday's race, more was probably possible. The upgrade we brought to Pierre's car was good and worked as expected and we are pleased to bring that to Franco's car this weekend in Monza. This should give us the platform to have both cars up there and competing for points, but we know we have more work to do to extract the most from our package. Monza is one of the great Formula One circuits and usually provides some excellent racing. We'll begin the weekend with Paul Aron in Pierre's car for his latest Free Practice 1 outing. There's plenty of work for him to do to hopefully set us on our way for a positive weekend."

ABOUT BWT ALPINE FORMULA ONE TEAM:

BWT Alpine Formula One Team competes in the FIA Formula One World Championship with Grand Prix winner Pierre Gasly and rising star Franco Colapinto. The two drivers, under the leadership of Executive Advisor Flavio Briatore and Managing Director Steve Nielsen and piloting the revolutionary Alpine A526, are driving forward the team's charge during a highly competitive Formula One season. The team operates out of its Enstone factory in Oxfordshire, United Kingdom, where it has been based since 1992, in its previous guises as Benetton Formula, Renault F1 Team and Lotus F1 Team. Enstone has a winning legacy with seven Formula One World Championships including the Drivers' World Championship [1994, 1995, 2005 and 2006] with Michael Schumacher and Fernando Alonso, and the Constructors' World Championship [1995, 2005 and 2006]. The team's 2026 car, the A526, is designed and built on-site with the 1000-strong workforce working hard towards the new opportunities presented in the 24-race season.

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