



Australian Grand Prix.

27th – 29th March 2009
1st of 17 World Championship races

Preview.

Munich/Hinwil, 20th March 2009. It's all change in Formula One as the new season gets underway amid great intrigue and excitement. A raft of rule changes mean the cars will be sporting a totally different look and be fitted with slick tyres. The F1 engines now have to last twice as long as before and those who want (or are able) to will put their faith in a Kinetic Energy Recovery System. The pre-season testing – which the new rules stipulate will be the last of the year – threw up more questions than it answered. Favourites were riddled with worries, despair turned to encouragement for others whose survival in the sport had been in doubt. Preparations may have gone smoothly for the BMW Sauber F1 Team, but putting a finger on its progress remains a tricky business. The crystal-ball gazing will come to an end, however, on Saturday 28th March 2009. At 17.00 hrs local time (07:00 hrs in Central Europe) qualifying will finally get underway for the Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne.

Robert Kubica:

"I'm really looking forward to the Australian Grand Prix. I'm happy that the race season will finally get started and all the speculation of the pre-season testing will stop. It will be very interesting to see how competitive the teams really are.

"I like street circuits in general, so Albert Park is one of my favourite race tracks. You have to be very precise. That applies to the whole circuit; you need to stay on the clean line. But this year precision will be especially important for the first corner after the start, when we will have our very first fight for position with the bigger 2009 front wings. I'm pretty sure it will be an interesting race. In addition, Melbourne is a very nice city and the people create a truly special atmosphere for all of us in Formula One."

Nick Heidfeld:

"I'm looking forward immensely to the start of the season in Australia. This time around I'm particularly keen to see how the teams and drivers stack up against each other. It's time for the speculation to stop; from now on it's only facts that matter. A whole number of things have changed since last year and that means there are a lot of unanswered questions: What effect will the KERS and adjustable front wings have in the races? What will happen at the start when we are side-by-side with the larger front wings for the first time? Will overtaking really be easier, as our experiences in testing have led us to believe?"

"Last year winter testing did not go as well as it might have done for us, and we surprised everybody with our strong performance in Australia. This winter all of our testing went pretty well, and I hope this impression is confirmed in Melbourne. We had to contend with some difficult weather conditions in testing, and I'm also curious to see what happens in Albert Park in this respect, as it can get very autumnal in my favourite travel destination in March."

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Mario Theissen, BMW Motorsport Director:

"The start of a Formula One season with perhaps the most sweeping rule changes we've ever seen is now in sight. We are pleased that Australia is again the first GP of the year in 2009. There is always a very special atmosphere in Melbourne. The Australians certainly love their sport and they've been well and truly bitten by the Formula One bug.

"Last year Nick took second for us in the first race of the season, and we're hoping that we get off to a good start in Albert Park once again this year. We are heading in the right direction with the BMW Sauber F1.09; both the drivers and the engineers came back with positive feedback during testing. Plus, Nick and Robert carried out full race simulations without suffering any technical problems.

"As far as KERS is concerned, our system will be race-ready in Melbourne. We sent the cars out regularly with KERS during testing and the results were very good. Now it's just a matter of weighing up the pros and cons. On the positive side, the drivers would have an extra 82 hp at their disposal for 6.6 seconds per lap. However, the system adds weight to the car and this has an impact on the car's weight distribution and tyre wear. We will make a decision on a driver-by-driver, circuit-by-circuit basis."

Willy Rampf, Head of Engineering:

"There's always a lot of anticipation ahead of the first race of the season, but this time it's even more exciting than usual. Winter testing gave us some initial indications of where we stand in relation to our rivals, but there are still a lot of question marks. The reason for the uncertainty is the radical changes made to the technical regulations. Totally new aerodynamics with significantly lower downforce compared to last year, the introduction of KERS, the return of slicks and the double mileage requirement for the engines mean we're starting from a totally different basis. Using the potential of the tyres to optimum effect will be particularly important.

"Melbourne is a stop-start kind of circuit, which places heavy loads on the brakes and, at the same time, demands good traction. Grip levels are very low, especially at the start of the weekend, but you cannot let that deflect you from getting the car set-up right."

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Facts and figures:

Circuit/Date	Albert Park / 29 th March 2009
Start time (local/UTC)	17.00 hrs / 06.00 hrs (08.00 hrs in Central Europe / Summer Time)
Lap/Race distance	5.303 km/307.574 km (58 laps)
Corners	10 right-hand and 6 left-hand corners
Winner 2008	Lewis Hamilton, Vodafone McLaren Mercedes, 1 hr 34:50.616
Pole position 2008	Lewis Hamilton, Vodafone McLaren Mercedes, 1:26.714 minutes
Fastest lap 2008	Heikki Kovalainen, Vodafone McLaren Mercedes, 1:27.418 minutes
Data 2008:	Full-throttle percentage: 65% Top speed: 303 km/h Longest section at full throttle: 10 sec / 735 m Gear changes per lap: 60 Tyre wear: medium to low Brake wear: high Downforce level: high

Driver	Robert Kubica	Nick Heidfeld
Date of birth	07.12.1984	10.05.1977
Place of birth	Kraków/Poland	Mönchengladbach/Germany
Nationality	Polish	German
Residence	Monaco	Stäfa, Switzerland
Marital status	Single	Partner Patricia Pape, daughter Juni, son Joda
Height	1.84 m	1.67 m
Weight	72 kg	59 kg
F1 debut	2006, Budapest	2000, Melbourne
GP starts	40	152
Pole positions	1	1
Wins	1	-
Podium places	8	11
Fastest laps	-	2
Best placing	4 th (2008)	5 th (2007 and 2008)
Total points	120	200
Points 2008	-	-

BMW Sauber F1 Team	
Founded	01.01.2006
Locations	Munich (DE) and Hinwil (CH)
F1 debut	2006, Melbourne
GP starts	53
Pole positions	1
Wins	1
Podium places	15 (6 x 3 rd / 8 x 2 nd / 1 x 1 st)
Fastest laps	2
Championship placings	5 th (2006), 36 points 2 nd (2007), 101 points 3 rd (2008), 135 points



Drivers at events organised by the Australian Grand Prix Corporation:

Tuesday, 24th March:

From 16.10 hrs Christian Klien will spend around 30 minutes at a welcome event in Federation Square, Melbourne. A BMW Sauber F1 Team car will be on display and its engine will be fired up to entertain the fans with its sound.

Wednesday, 25th March:

From 17.50 to 18.20 hrs Robert Kubica and Nick Heidfeld will give interviews on a stage near the paddock in Albert Park.

Thursday, 26th March:

From 12.00 to 12.25 hrs the BMW Sauber F1 Team drivers will take part in an autograph-signing session in Albert Park.

History and background:

2009 will see Melbourne host its 14th Australian Grand Prix. The race was held in Adelaide from 1985 to 1995.

Melbourne has many faces and is extremely multicultural, its 21st-century profile shaped by immigrants and students from all over the world, as well as a fascinating architectural mix. The city also boasts lush green sports grounds and public parks. The Formula One circuit runs through Albert Park, in the St. Kilda district of Melbourne.

With a population of around 3.5 million, Melbourne is the capital of the State of Victoria, which was hit by devastating bush fires at the start of the year. The fires in the south of Australia claimed over 200 lives and many more were injured. Thousands of people were left homeless.

The city itself – Australia's second-largest after Sydney – was not affected. Melbourne lies at the eastern end of the continent's south coast, where the Yarra River empties into Port Phillip Bay. The city's origins can be traced back to 1835 and it acquired its current name in 1837. Gold was discovered in Victoria in the 1850s and Melbourne went on to thrive as a railway interchange, industrial hub and port city. It even served as the seat of the federal government for a time. The city has a history of hosting major sporting events and was the venue for the summer Olympic Games of 1956.

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Schedule for group interviews at the weekend:

Thursday:

13.30-13.40 – Robert Kubica – TV
13.40-14.00 – Robert Kubica – print media
13.30-13.50 – Nick Heidfeld – print media
13.50-14.00 – Nick Heidfeld – TV
14.00-14.10 – Christian Klien – TV
14.10-14.30 – Christian Klien – print media
15.30-15.35 – Mario Theissen – TV
15.35-16.00 – Mario Theissen – print media
18.00-18.30 – Willy Rampf – by prior arrangement only

Friday:

19.10-19.20 – Robert Kubica – TV
19.10-19.20 – Nick Heidfeld – TV

Saturday:

19.45-20.05 – Robert Kubica – print media
20.05-20.15 – Robert Kubica – TV
19.45-19.55 – Nick Heidfeld – TV
19.55-20.15 – Nick Heidfeld – print media
20.30-20.35 – Mario Theissen – TV
20.35-21.00 – Mario Theissen – print media

Sunday:

Approx. 30 minutes after the end of the race Heidfeld, Kubica, Theissen and Rampf will be on hand in the team's Hospitality area.

Involvement in the FIA press conference means the group interviews will be cancelled on the relevant day.

For further information please visit the media website www.press.bmw-motorsport.com (press releases, press kits, images, TV footage) and the official team website www.bmw-sauber-f1.com (car, season, Race Club, team updates).