# George Russell questions Monaco Grand Prix format after strategic stalemate and overtaking woes



George Russell’s candid reflection on his experience at the Monaco Grand Prix has reignited a long-standing debate about the race's format and the efficacy of Formula One's strategic regulations. Following an encounter with Alex Albon that resulted in a drive-through penalty, Russell openly questioned whether the prestigious race, known for its allure yet infamous for its challenging overtaking opportunities, might be better off without the traditional race altogether.

The FIA's decision to implement a mandatory two-stop rule this season was intended to enhance strategy and create excitement amid the notoriously narrow streets of Monaco. Despite these intentions, the actual impact has been less than thrilling, according to Russell. “The two-stop clearly did not work at all,” he stated, advocating instead for an alternative where Saturday's qualifying heat could be deemed as the main event, followed by another on Sunday. He mused that the existing format might be redundant, given that many spectators appear more interested in the social scene than the racing itself. "I think that’s what you guys enjoy watching the most… 99 per cent of the other people in Monaco are here sipping champagne on a yacht, so they don’t really care," he added.

This dissatisfaction echoes sentiments expressed by other drivers as well. Carlos Sainz, for instance, highlighted that the two-stop system led to manipulated race strategies among teams, significantly slowing down the pace of racing. During this year's event, Sainz, along with Albon, strategically slowed their cars to assist teammates, a tactic that ultimately compromised the integrity of competition and the racing experience itself. Sainz called for regulatory changes to prevent further exploitation of the rules, as he and his teammates lost precious time adhering to the strategy that was supposed to enhance the race.

Russell's audacious chicane-cutting move—fuelled by his frustration at being unable to overtake—has been disclosed as a symptom of a deeper malaise in the sport, where overtaking has become increasingly difficult. His boldness did not pay off in terms of points, finishing 11th, but he expressed no remorse, reflecting on the thrill of merely driving the iconic circuit. “I want to enjoy driving this track full gas. It’s one of the best circuits in the world. And that’s what I did,” he noted enthusiastically.

The race winner, Lando Norris, may have celebrated his first victory in Monaco, yet the overall finishing order remained static as the top four drivers crossed the line in their starting positions. Max Verstappen, who took fourth place, remarked that the mandated pit stops did little to alter race dynamics, calling for a revision of strategies for future events. “Maybe next year four stops,” he quipped, indicating that a fundamental change may be necessary in the sport's approach to racing in Monaco.

The 2023 Monaco Grand Prix, while historically significant, ultimately highlighted the friction between compelling racing and strategic manipulation within Formula One. The ongoing discussions amongst teams and drivers surrounding the lack of overtaking and excitement underscore the need for reform in what is arguably one of the sport's most celebrated events. As calls for continuing dialogues around the format grow louder, it remains to be seen whether Monaco will evolve to better align the thrills of racing with its prestigious heritage or whether it will continue to become a battleground for strategy over spectacle.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/f1/george-russell-alex-albon-carlos-sainz-max-verstappen-fia-b2757611.html), [[2]](https://www.independent.co.uk/f1/george-russell-alex-albon-carlos-sainz-max-verstappen-fia-b2757611.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[3]](https://as.com/motor/formula_1/russell-se-salta-la-chicane-porque-estaba-hasta-los-n/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/f1/george-russell-alex-albon-carlos-sainz-max-verstappen-fia-b2757611.html), [[4]](https://f1boxbox.com/race/monaco-grand-prix-2023)
* Paragraph 4 – [[5]](https://www.motorsport.com/f1/news/ten-things-we-learned-at-the-2023-f1-monaco-grand-prix/10475320/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[7]](https://www.reuters.com/sports/formula1/verstappen-says-monaco-was-cool-race-less-so-2024-05-26/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[6]](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/sports/article/2024/05/26/formula-1-charles-leclerc-wins-first-home-monaco-grand-prix_6672737_9.html)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/f1/george-russell-alex-albon-carlos-sainz-max-verstappen-fia-b2757611.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.independent.co.uk/f1/george-russell-alex-albon-carlos-sainz-max-verstappen-fia-b2757611.html> - George Russell expressed frustration with the Monaco Grand Prix's mandatory two-stop rule, suggesting it may need to be scrapped. He recounted a moment where he decided to cut the chicane to overtake Alex Albon, leading to a drive-through penalty. Russell criticized the rule's ineffectiveness and proposed that qualifying sessions could be more exciting than the race itself. He also mentioned that 99% of Monaco's spectators are indifferent to the race's outcome, highlighting the need for change.
3. <https://as.com/motor/formula_1/russell-se-salta-la-chicane-porque-estaba-hasta-los-n/> - During the 2025 Monaco Grand Prix, Carlos Sainz criticized the mandatory two-stop rule, stating it led to manipulated races. Teams like Racing Bulls and Williams intentionally slowed their drivers to benefit teammates' multiple stops, hindering overtaking due to Monaco's circuit limitations. Sainz revealed that he, Albon, and Lawson lost about 40 seconds each due to internal strategic actions. George Russell, frustrated by being unable to overtake, cut a chicane, resulting in a penalty but symbolizing his dissatisfaction with these tactics. Sainz, as GPDA director, expressed concern over such manipulations and advocated for regulatory revisions to prevent future occurrences.
4. <https://f1boxbox.com/race/monaco-grand-prix-2023> - The 2023 Monaco Grand Prix featured varied pit stop strategies, with teams opting for one to five stops. Max Verstappen won the race on a one-stop strategy, while others like Sergio Pérez employed a five-stop strategy, gaining four positions on average. The race experienced minimal incidents, with only Kevin Magnussen and Lance Stroll retiring due to collisions. The analysis highlights the impact of pit stop strategies on race outcomes and the importance of tire management in Monaco's unique circuit conditions.
5. <https://www.motorsport.com/f1/news/ten-things-we-learned-at-the-2023-f1-monaco-grand-prix/10475320/> - The 2023 Monaco Grand Prix revealed several insights, including Aston Martin's strategic decisions under scrutiny. Fernando Alonso's choice to pit for medium tires as rain began to fall was questioned, as it led to a subsequent pit stop for intermediates. This decision impacted Alonso's race, allowing Max Verstappen to secure victory. The analysis emphasizes the critical nature of split-second decisions in Monaco's challenging conditions and the potential consequences of misjudgments.
6. <https://www.lemonde.fr/en/sports/article/2024/05/26/formula-1-charles-leclerc-wins-first-home-monaco-grand-prix_6672737_9.html> - Charles Leclerc secured his first Monaco Grand Prix victory on May 26, 2024, ending a series of frustrations at his home race. Starting from pole position, Leclerc maintained the lead throughout the race despite a red flag incident on the first lap caused by a three-car collision involving Sergio Perez's Red Bull and both Haas cars. McLaren's Oscar Piastri finished second, and Ferrari's Carlos Sainz took third place. The race was disrupted for 30 minutes to clear debris. Leclerc's win brought him closer to Verstappen in the championship standings, trailing by 31 points.
7. <https://www.reuters.com/sports/formula1/verstappen-says-monaco-was-cool-race-less-so-2024-05-26/> - Max Verstappen, Red Bull's triple world champion, described the Monaco Grand Prix as 'a bit boring' after starting and finishing in sixth place, marking the first time this season he finished outside the podium. Verstappen, who had won five of the previous seven races from pole position, saw his championship lead over Ferrari's Charles Leclerc decrease from 48 points to 31. The top 10 finishers followed their grid positions, with no overtaking and a red flag that allowed teams to change tires without further pitstops, making the race strategy straightforward and uneventful. Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton and McLaren's Lando Norris echoed Verstappen’s sentiments, criticizing the race's lack of excitement and slow pace.