



## F1 Digest 2009 – Hungary Preview

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This is F1 Digest 2009 – Hungary Preview.

This weekend is our last race before the summer break, so we'd better make the most of it.

### Vital Statistics

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The Hungaroring hosts this Grand Prix, and the race will take place on the 26<sup>th</sup> July. The track is 4.4 kilometres which will mean 70 laps. The record is held by Michael Schumacher who put in a 1:19.071 in 2004. Last year's qualifying saw Lewis Hamilton record a 1:20.899, whilst the fastest lap of the race was Kimi Raikkonen with a 1:21.195. The long range weather forecasts indicate that it will be a sunny and hot weekend – that will make a change from the last couple of rainy races.

### 2008 in 30 Seconds

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Lewis Hamilton stuck his McLaren on pole, with his teammate beside him on the grid. Felipe Massa started third but hustled past both McLarens to take the lead for the majority of the race. The Ferrari kept the lead over Hamilton, which was extended when the Brit found himself with a puncture, and down to fifth. With just three laps to go, Massa's engine gave up, and he pulled to a stop on the main straight. This allowed Kovalainen through to take his maiden win. Glock was promoted up to second, whilst Raikkonen joined the pair on the podium in third.

### Team by Team

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Today we'll start with Williams, with a great insight into the technical aspect of the track from Nico. He says: "The Hungaroring is a completely different type of track to the Nürburgring. It's quite slow and twisty, and is a maximum downforce circuit which should suit our car. It will definitely be hotter over there than it was in Germany so we can look forward to a bit of an easier weekend when it comes to set-up as we'll be able to get the tyres up to temperature." Kazuki adds that it's also quite a slow track, almost like Monaco, and that overtaking is difficult.

McLaren have been buoyed by their improved running in Germany, and Hamilton adds to the theory that overtaking is hard: "It's a bit like a kart circuit - there are lots of twists and turns and the only place to relax is along the start/finish straight, which is quite short. It's also quite low-grip which makes overtaking particularly tricky. But I really enjoy the place – I won here in 2007 and was on pole last year." Kovalainen was last year's winner and is therefore looking forward to coming back, but thinks the race will be over before it's begun: "This race is likely to be won or lost in qualifying: you've got to be at the front and run an aggressive first stint if you are to succeed."

Over at Force India, they also had a very promising weekend at the Nurburgring. Sutil is happy to put that race behind him though, he says: "You have to push all the time and it's so close that you need to fight for the positions. That's one way of seeing the crash: if we hadn't pushed we would have lost our position straight away. But I am fine with it now, I've looked at the footage and learnt from it, so let's move on." Meanwhile, Fisichella is feeling very positive: "I feel pretty confident as we're just getting better and better. We can see our pace is much more competitive and we are really racing. I enjoy driving the car and I'm looking forward to this next race."

For Toyota, Trulli says he enjoys the Hungaroring because although it's a short lap, it's fun to drive and takes a lot of concentration. Glock has his goals set for the weekend already: "One of my targets this weekend will be to get a perfect lap in qualifying because that has been an issue in the last couple of races for various reasons. Lap times are really close this year so if you are a tenth or two off your maximum pace in qualifying you can drop a few positions and that makes life harder in the race. We'll be pushing as hard as possible and I am sure we will bounce back."



Renault picked up some points in Germany, so they're looking forward to the next race to try and repeat the feat. Alonso in particular, is upbeat about this weekend: "The memories of my win in 2003 are very special as it was also Renault's first victory since returning to Formula One and it gave the whole team a lot of motivation and self-belief. I always enjoy visiting Budapest as it's a beautiful city, the people are friendly and there is usually a relaxed atmosphere in the paddock as everybody is looking forward to their summer holidays." Meanwhile, Piquet is happy that this weekend, he will finally have an equal package as his teammate, saying: "I should have the same upgrades as Fernando in Hungary and I think I can be more competitive. As always I will be aiming to qualify in the top ten and hopefully score some points in the race."

Red Bull are looking at their progress so far, with Christian Horner providing a mid-season report. He gave us a great insight into how the team works regarding favouring one driver over another: "We will continue to support both drivers equally. There's only a point and a half between them, so obviously they are both in contention for the Drivers' Championship. There's a long way to go to catch up with Jenson Button. If and when we reach a point where there is a significant gap, or it becomes mathematically impossible for one of them to challenge for the Championship, then they are both team players and one of them will play a supporting role should it be required. Our intention is to see both of them catch the lead Brawn as quickly as possible."

Sister team Toro Rosso have a new driver line up with Sebastien Bourdais being replaced by Jaime Alguersuari. Although Bourdais suggests his eviction from the team is not exactly legal, Jaime is looking forward to his F1 debut: "I am aware that I'm facing a very tough challenge, because coming into Formula 1 is never easy, coming into Formula 1 in the middle of a season is even harder and doing so without any testing is really difficult. But already I feel that I am getting great support from the team, who have quite a reputation for looking after rookie drivers."

Over at Brawn GP, Jenson Button has good memories at the Hungaroring, after his great win there in 2006. He says: "Hungary is always one of my favourite races and even more so this year as it should finally be a return to some real summer temperatures!" The Brawn car has struggled in the cooler climates, so this may see a return to form for them. However, Barrichello mentions the flip side of this: "The Hungaroring is a pretty physical track which combined with the usual high temperatures make it a tough challenge for the drivers but that's what we enjoy."

With this track being similar to Monaco, Raikkonen is thinking about how they will fare, saying: "The F60 should adapt pretty well to the track, but we know that all the other teams have improved their cars considerably after the race at Monaco, so there will be fierce competition." And teammate Massa relives the bad memories of last year, saying: "I haven't got very good results at this race but that doesn't mean I don't race well there: if you remember last year I had the win in my pocket, but then my engine unfortunately let me down with just two laps to go."

Finally, at BMW, Kubica likes what is closest to his home race. He says: "Hungary is a very special Grand Prix for me. In 2006 I made my debut there, and there are always a lot of Polish fans as Budapest is quite close to Poland. Last year was amazing - it was like being in Poland." And finally, Nick leaves us on a depressing thought. We're expecting the tyres to work better this weekend but he says: "One drawback in terms of grip, especially at the start of the weekend, is always the dust that blows onto the track from the surrounding landscape."

That's it for this preview show. If you're watching Free Practice on Friday, why not visit [sidepodcast.com](http://sidepodcast.com) and join in the live commenting on the site? It's a great way to share information and enjoy the sessions. F1 Digest will be back at the end of the day with a recap of all the action.