

Australia Kicks Off 2008 F1 Season

This year's opening F1 race in Australia was chock full of action and surprises - a superb start the F1 season, with the highlight of the year, Monaco, due for May 25.

Hundred fahrenheit heat with no traction control did not slow the determined drivers. Three safety cars and 58 laps later, Lewis Hamilton emerged the winner.

Formula One race fans who gathered at Albert Park track in Melbourne, Australia for the season opening Australian Grand Prix were in for a wild ride. They were not disappointed with Lewis Hamilton's performance during the race. Describing the race as 'a breeze', Hamilton deems his first race of the season a career best. In a post-race interview he said, 'It's probably the best race I've had so far in terms of managing tyres, controlling my pace and confidence, and being comfortable in the car.'

He goes on to say it wasn't a perfect win and he still sees some areas that could use improvement. He stated proudly, 'It was a super race and I dominated it from the beginning. I was able to drive at a steady pace without feeling any pressure. The three safety car periods meant there was never a time to relax, and the whole situation was a bit like Canada last year when I claimed my first victory.'

Last year, Hamilton's team was found guilty of possession of confidential technical information. They were under investigation until McLaren's December admission that the information was distributed further into the company than they had previously claimed. The team was removed from last year's championship and fined \$100 million. In recent months, Ron Dennis had been contemplating stepping down as team principal. Just before heading to Melbourne for the Australian Grand Prix, he decided against it. A decision he undoubtedly celebrated as the champagne cork popped.

With the Monaco F1 just six weeks away the team will be hoping for a win this year, and victory at the [Monaco F1](#) is seen as the best victory in the year for the winning F1 team and driver, such is the appeal of Monaco.

When asked about Ron Dennis, Hamilton replied, 'I'm glad he's happy - it's an emotional feeling to win the first Grand Prix of a season, especially with all the winter testing and all the build-up. When you come out on top, it's a real relief and a great satisfaction.'

'We constantly had to change our strategy and the strategists were on the ball throughout. The car was fantastic to drive and we must keep on pushing because Ferrari are a great team and will do a good job.'

Not everyone had such a great go, unfortunately. Finishing fifth out of seven, Fernando Alonso ran a good race and nearly took fourth place. While trying to rip off a visor strip, he accidentally hit the speed limiter button.

Raikkonen's race ended on lap 53 with only five laps to go. Later he was ranked eighth after Barrichello was found guilty of ignoring a red light as he left the pits during a safety car period. Barrichello was removed from final standings.

Of his first race of the season, Raikkonen said, 'This is obviously not the best start.' He went on to say, 'But this is the beginning of a long season and we are capable of recovering from far worse.'

About the Author

F1 always looks forward to the Monaco Grand Prix, run around the streets of Monte Carlo, and travel guide [yourmonaco.com](#) has direct contact information for [hotels in Monte Carlo](#) and importantly for the teams and spectators alike a forecast for the [Monte Carlo France weather](#)

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