

# Hamilton hunts down Max to win in Hungary

## Ferrari's Vettel Ends Distant 3rd; Bottas Eighth

**Budapest:** Formula One leader Lewis Hamilton hunted down Max Verstappen to win the Hungarian Grand Prix for a record-extending seventh time on Sunday and surge 62 points clear in the championship standings.

Dutch 21-year-old Verstappen, who had started from pole position for the first time, was runner-up after being reeled in and overtaken four laps from the end with his tyres worn to the limit. "That was definitely a tall order but I'm grateful we did it," said Hamilton of a strategy that left him with a gap of almost 20 seconds to close in the final 22 laps. "Man, that feels so good, guys."

Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel finished third and more than a minute behind — an eternity in Formula One terms — as the top two waged their own private battle in the heat of the Hungarian Grand Prix. Hamilton, who also triumphed in Hungary last year and is heading inexorably towards a sixth title, now has 250 points, with teammate Valtteri Bottas on 188 and Verstappen closing in fast on 181.

The win in the last race before the August break was Hamilton's eighth in 12 rounds this season and the 81st of his career — 10 short of seven-time champion Michael Schumacher's all-time record.



Lewis Hamilton (centre) celebrates his victory as Max Verstappen (left) and Sebastian Vettel look on in Budapest on Sunday

**Early contact between Mercedes drivers:** Bottas, starting on the front row, finished a forlorn eighth after a fight back from last place following an early stop to change a front wing damaged as he and Hamilton made light contact on the opening lap. Hamilton, using fresher and faster medium tyres on a switched two-stop strategy after starting third, lapped all but the three cars behind him in a complete turnaround from his poor performance in Germany the previous weekend.

Verstappen, who made a late pitstop after being passed and then made sure of an extra point for the fastest lap, crossed the line 17.7 seconds behind Hamilton. "I think Lewis today was on fire as well," Verstappen told reporters.

Any threat from Bottas was snuffed out on the opening lap when first Hamilton muscled

through and then Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, who finished fourth, made contact as he passed the Finn.

McLaren enjoyed another strong afternoon with both drivers in the points, Spaniard Carlos Sainz fifth and British teenager Lando Norris ninth. Red Bull's Pierre Gasly, his future at the team increasingly questioned, had another lacklustre race and was lapped by Verstappen on the way to sixth place.

Kimi Raikkonen was seventh for Alfa Romeo and Thai racer Alexander Albon, who went wheel-to-wheel with teammate Daniil Kvyat, took the final point for Honda-powered Toro Rosso.

French driver Romain Grosjean, in a Haas, was the sole retirement. In the constructors' championship, Mercedes have 438 points with Ferrari on 288 and Red Bull 244. REUTERS