



FIA FORMULA 1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP



2026 JAPANESE GRAND PRIX

27 - 29 March 2026

From	The FIA Formula One Race Director	Document	5
To	All Teams, All Officials	Date	26 March 2026
		Time	15:37

Title Race Director's Competition Notes
Description Race Director's Competition Notes
Enclosed 2026 Japan Competition Notes.pdf

Rui Marques

The FIA Formula One Race Director



2026 JAPANESE GRAND PRIX

27 – 29 March 2026

From The FIA Formula 1 Race Director

To All Officials, All Teams

Date

26 March 2026

COMPETITION NOTES

General Instructions

1. Laps during Qualifying Session and Reconnaissance Lap(s).

For the safe and orderly conduct of the Competition, other than in exceptional circumstances accepted as such by the Stewards, any driver that exceeds the maximum time from the Second Safety Car Line to the First Safety Car Line on ANY lap during and after the Qualifying Session, including in-laps and out-laps or during reconnaissance laps when the pit exit is opened for the Race, may be deemed to be going unnecessarily slowly.

Teams and Drivers will be informed of the maximum time after the second Practice Session.

For the avoidance of doubt, this does not supersede Articles B1.8.5 and B4.1.1 of the FIA Formula 1 Regulations, which apply to the entire Circuit, furthermore this includes the pit lane as well. Incidents will normally be investigated after the Qualifying Session or the Race.

2. Parc Fermé

2.1 The Parc Fermé cameras must be always uncovered and operational during the Competition.

2.2 Team Personnel permitted access to the Parc Fermé area for the sole purpose of fitting cooling fans and undertaking any work required by those officials charged with supervision of parc fermé, may enter Parc Fermé using the route shown below:



3. Lapping during the Race

The International Sporting Code (ISC) requires drivers who are caught by another car to allow the faster driver past at the first available opportunity.

The F1 marshalling system will be set to give a pre-warning when the faster car is within 3.0s of the car about to be lapped, this should be used by the team of the slower car to warn their driver he is soon going to be lapped and that allowing the faster car through should be considered a priority. When the faster car is within 1.2s of the car about to be lapped blue light panels will be shown to the slower car (in addition to blue light panels, blue cockpit lights and a message on the timing monitors) and the driver must allow the following driver to overtake at the first available opportunity.

4. Article B5.13.6 of the FIA F1 Regulations

In order to avoid the likelihood of accidents before the safety car returns to the pits, from the point at which the orange lights on the safety car are extinguished drivers must proceed at a pace which involves no erratic acceleration or braking nor any other manoeuvre which is likely to endanger other drivers or impede the restart.



5. ERS Safety Check after Covers Off

In accordance with the provisions set out in Appendix B2, Section 12.1 of the FIA F1 Regulations, as work required by the Technical Delegate; Each morning, immediately after covers are removed when the cars are under parc fermé conditions (Articles B3.4.1, B3.4.2 and B3.4.3), all Teams must connect the umbilical to their cars and start a telemetry data logging for the sole purpose of checking the car ERS safety status.

6. Pit Lane Safety

Article B1.6.2c of the Sporting Regulations states: “Team personnel are only allowed in the Pit Lane immediately before they are required to work on a Car and must withdraw as soon as the work is complete.”

For the safe and orderly conduct of the competition, in the context of the race only, the requirements of Article B1.6.2c are considered to apply until such time as all cars able to do so have completed the Race and have entered the designated Parc Ferme area. Following the end-of-session signal, described in Article B2.5.3, and when the Race Director considers it safe to do so, the message “ALL PASS HOLDERS MAY ACCESS THE PIT LANE” will be sent to all competitors using the official messaging system; this being the signal to all competitors that the requirements of Article B1.6.2c are no longer applicable, and thus holders of passes not valid for access to the Pit Lane (i.e. passes other than those marked “Pit Lane” or “Pit Lane All Times”) may enter the pit lane.

Competitors are reminded that in accordance with the International Sporting Code, Article 9.15.1 “The Competitor shall be responsible for all acts or omissions on the part of any person taking part in, or providing a service in connection with, a Competition or a Championship on their behalf, including in particular their employees, direct or indirect, their Drivers, mechanics, consultants, service providers, or passengers, as well as any person to whom the Competitor has allowed access to the Reserved Areas.

7. Lap times in all LTCS and TTCS

Only lap times which have been completed on the track will be included for the purpose of any classification.

8. Starting Procedure

8.1 For the safe and orderly conduct of the Competition, once all F1 Cars starting from the grid have returned to the grid at the end of the formation lap or laps prior to the Race or a Standing Start Resumption, the starting grid light panels will be illuminated blue (flashing) for 5 seconds and the information panel on the start gantry will display the message “Pre-Start”, following which the light sequence defined in to Article B5.7.2 of the FIA F1 Regulations will commence.

8.2 Article B1.8.4 states “the light signals displayed on the trackside light panels have the same meaning as flag signals”. For the avoidance of doubt, the starting grid panels are not considered a track side light panel, i.e, the display of a yellow starting procedure panel is for information propose only, without any regulatory instruction.

9. Driver Adjustable Bodywork

Following any standing start or standing start resumption, Driver Adjustable Bodywork (straight mode) will be enabled after Turn 1.

10. Finishing the Race

For the purpose of finishing the Race, pursuant to Article B2.5.3 of the FIA Formula 1 Sporting Regulations, the “Line” referred to will be the Control Line on the track and not in the Pit Lane.

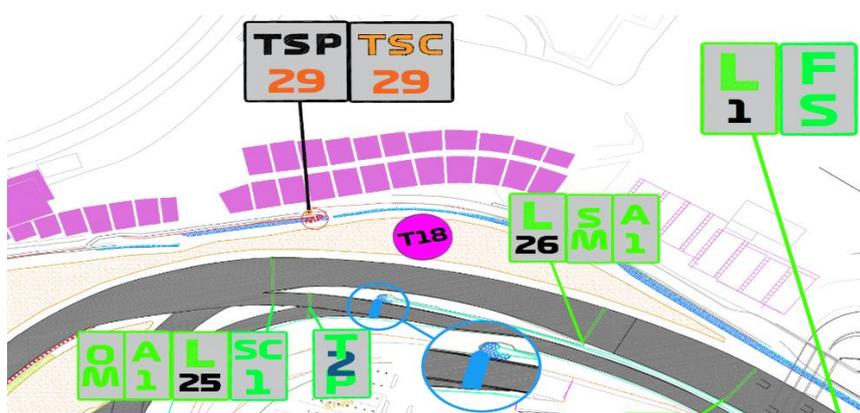
11. Double Waved Yellow Flag

For the safe and orderly conduct of the event, in addition to the provisions of the Article B1.8.4b, any driver passing through a double waved yellow flag marshalling sector during a Free Practice session will have that lap time deleted.

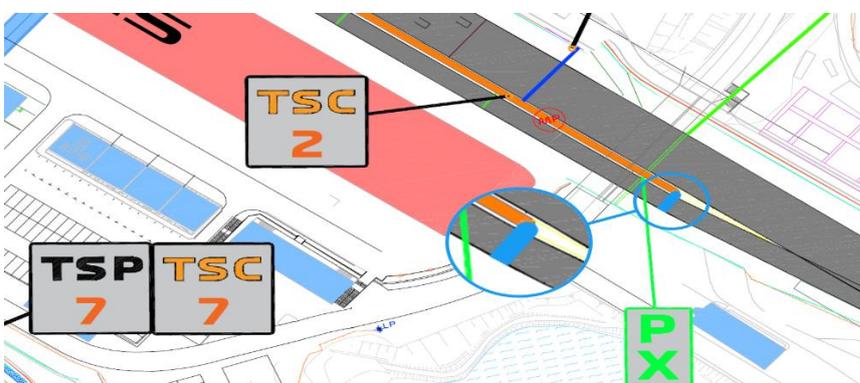
Competition Specific Instructions

12. Marshalling System

12.1 A car entering the Pit Lane will be subject to the marshalling state (i.e. yellow flag or double yellow flag) of the associated sector until it passes the blue line marked on the image below.



12.2 A car leaving the Pit Lane will be subject to the marshalling system state i.e. yellow flag or double yellow flag of the sector into which it is emerging after it passes the blue line marked on the image below.



13. Support Races team barrier placement and movements

Team barrier placement prior to and during all support category practice sessions and races: No more than (3) three meters from the garage.

Please ensure that your pit stop gantry arms are moved back towards the garage during all support category activities.

Support Crews and Trolleys will be released into Pit Lane no earlier than 20 minutes prior to the opening of Pit Exit for their respective sessions.

Support Category competition vehicles will be released from the marshalling area no earlier than 15

minutes prior to the opening of Pit Exit for their respective sessions.

14. **Practice starts**

- 14.1 During free practice sessions and any time the pit exit is open for the race, practice starts may only be carried out at pit exit on the RHS of the fast lane using one of the painted grid boxes.



- 14.2 Practice starts after the Free Practice sessions will be performed according to Article B4.2.2 of the FIA Formula 1 Regulations.
- 14.3 If a Free Practice session is resumed with less than 2 minutes remaining, for the purpose of facilitating practice starts on the grid as provided for in Article B4.2.2 of the FIA F1 Regulations, any car wishing to leave the pit lane must proceed down the pit lane without undue delay and exit the pit lane without leaving a significant gap to the car ahead.
- 14.4 For the avoidance of doubt, practice starts may not be carried out during the Qualifying Session.

15. **Article B1.6.3d of the FIA F1 Regulations**

(...) Any car(s) driven to the end of the Pit Lane prior to the start or re-start of a LTCS must form up in a line in the Fast Lane and leave in the order they got there (...)

It is noted that a car will be considered to be “in the fast lane” when a tyre has crossed the solid white line separating the fast lane from the inner lane, in this context crossing means that all of a tyre should be beyond the far side, with respect to the garages, of the line separating the fast lane from the inner lane.



For the avoidance of doubt, ISC Appendix L, Chapter IV, Article 5b) states that:

Once a car has left its garage or pit stop position it should blend into the fast lane as soon as it is safe to do so, and without unnecessarily impeding cars which are already in the fast lane.

Thus, after the start or re-start of the Free Practice session and/or Qualifying Session, if there is a suitable gap in a queue of cars in the fast lane, such that a driver can blend into the fast lane safely and without unnecessarily impeding cars already in the fast lane, they are free to do so.

Furthermore, it is noted that during the Free Practice session and Qualifying Session a car driving in the inner lane, parallel to the fast lane, will not be considered to have blended into the fast lane at the earliest opportunity.

Additionally, ISC Appendix L, Chapter IV, Article 5d) states that:

Cars in either the fast lane or working lane may not overtake other cars in the fast lane except in exceptional circumstances.

In this context a “stopped car” is one which has an obvious mechanical problem.

16. Lines at the Pit Entry and Pit Exit

- 16.1 In accordance with Chapter 4, Articles 4 and 6 of Appendix L to the ISC drivers must follow the procedures at pit entry and pit exit.
- 16.2 For safety reasons, the line that is at pit exit, includes the line painted on the track at pit exit and continuing after SC2 line.
- 16.3 If there is a yellow flag displayed on RHS in the pit entry road it will be a warning of an incident at the pit entry road. This flag is not intended for drivers staying on track.



- 16.4 Pertaining to Chapter 4, Article 4 of Appendix L to the ISC any driver passing to the right hand side of the bollard at pit entry will be considered as entering the pit lane.



- 16.5 During the reconnaissance laps prior to the Race drivers are allowed to cross the white line separating the pit exit road from the circuit.

17. Stopping the Qualifying Session

Pursuant to art. B4.3.1b, should any period of the Qualifying Session be interrupted with less than 90 seconds remaining, the relevant period of the Qualifying Session will not be resumed.

18. Post Qualifying Session drivers weighing

Any driver who has finished participating in the Qualifying Session after Q1 or Q2 must proceed through the pit lane directly to the FIA scales immediately after they have returned to their team's garage. The drivers may not drink anything or do anything which increases their weight before it is recorded by the FIA.

Any driver who stops on the track during the Qualifying Session and is not required to visit the Medical Centre must proceed to the FIA scales to get their weight recorded before returning to his team.

Drivers who finish within the top 10 must proceed to the FIA scales immediately when out of their cars without contact with any other person.

19. Track Limits

The dotted white line across pit exit marks the track edge line.



20. ERS Hazard Status

If the ERS is in a Hazard Status, the relevant team will be required to send mechanics to the area in front of race control building, at pit entry, after the session. They will then be picked up by car to bring them to their car.

21. Leaving the garage before and during all Practice Sessions

- 21.1 Before the start of the Free Practice Session, Qualifying Session or prior to the pit exit opening for the reconnaissance laps, no cars may enter the pit lane to proceed to pit exit until 5 minutes before the start of the session.
- 21.2 If the Free Practice Session or Qualifying Session is stopped, cars may only enter the Fast Lane after the re-start time is confirmed via the official messaging system.

22. Fire extinguishers around the circuit

Indicated by white boards with a red fire extinguisher attached to the debris fences.

23. Places to remove cars from the track

Indicated by fluorescent orange panels/paintings on the barriers.

24. Removing cars from the grid

- 24.1 Cars may be removed from the grid through the gates adjacent to the start line and the grid position 5, 20 and 34.

25. Race Suspension or Starting Procedure Suspension

- 25.1 In case of Race suspension or Starting Procedure suspension, (except in case of Article B5.14.3 of the Sporting Regulations – stopping on the grid), cars will be stopped in the fast lane. The first car must stop in the vicinity of the pit exit lights. Safety Car resumption point: Safety Car will leave the pit lane 1 minute before the resumption and wait for the F1 cars after Turn 9 (as per the image below).

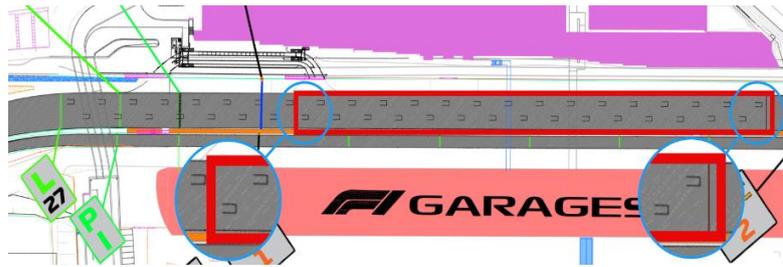


26. Grid Panel Placement

On the right-hand side of the grid.

27. **Grid Procedure**

Article B5.2.4 states that “Any F1 Car which does not complete a reconnaissance lap and reach the grid under its own power will not be permitted to start the TTCS from the grid.”. In the context of this article the grid shall be considered to be the section of track highlighted by the RED box in the image below, starting from the front of marked grid box #1 and finishing at the rear of marked grid box #30:



28. **Light panels:**

In case of an incident, the yellow and double yellow light panel will be mirrored on the panels below:

- Panel 10 will be mirrored on panel 9.
- Panel 14 will be mirrored on panel 13.
- Panel 17 will be mirrored on panel 16.
- Panel 27 will be mirrored on panel 26.

29. **Changes to the Circuit**

- New debris fence at Turn 13 on the right-hand side.
- Track resurfaced from Turn 7 to Turn 17.
- Additional light panels to be used.

30. **FP1 and FP2 Marshalling System Test**

At the start of both the FP1 and FP2 sessions, when the first car enters the Pit Lane fast lane to proceed on track a Virtual Safety Car (VSC) will be deployed and a double yellow flag will be set in marshalling sectors 2 and 3. After 3 cars have entered the track the Double Yellow Flag in marshalling sectors 2 and 3 will be cleared (the VSC shall remain). After a further 3 cars have entered the track the VSC will be cleared (the test will be complete). All drivers must respect the VSC Delta and/or Double Yellow Delta should they encounter it during this test.

Rui Marques
The FIA Formula 1 Race Director