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Max Verstappen Confirms Red Bull Stay for 2026

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Formula 1 world champion Max Verstappen has officially confirmed that he will remain with Red Bull Racing for the 2026 season. His statement puts an end to ongoing speculation about a potential move to rival teams, particularly Mercedes.

Speaking ahead of the Hungarian Grand Prix, the four-time world champion addressed the persistent rumors about his future. “It is time to basically stop all the rumours. I am staying at Red Bull next year,” Verstappen said in a media interview. He emphasized that discussions

are already underway with the team regarding plans for the upcoming season, reaffirming his long-term commitment.

Verstappen is currently under contract with Red Bull until the end of 2028. While there have been reports of a performance-related exit clause in his contract, no official details have been disclosed. His public confirmation offers much-needed stability for the team as Formula 1 prepares for sweeping regulatory changes in 2026, including new engine specifications and car design rules.

The announcement also comes during a period of significant leadership change within Red Bull Racing. On July 9, 2025, long-time team principal Christian Horner was dismissed after 20 years with the organization. He was immediately replaced by Laurent Mekies, who had previously held senior roles at Ferrari and AlphaTauri. Verstappen has stated that Horner's departure would not impact his future with the team.

Although some media outlets had linked Verstappen to a potential switch to Mercedes, the driver was quick to dismiss those rumors. He pointed out that personal interactions, such as being seen near Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff, should not be misinterpreted as professional negotiations.

So far in the 2025 season, Verstappen has been instrumental in Red Bull's success, scoring the majority of the team's championship points. While exact figures may vary by race, it is widely acknowledged that the Dutch driver has consistently outperformed competitors, including his teammate. Yuki Tsunoda, currently racing for Red Bull's sister team, has struggled to make a mark in recent races.

With Verstappen's future confirmed, Mercedes is expected to focus on extending contracts for George Russell and rookie Kimi Antonelli. While Verstappen and Russell are among the few non-McLaren drivers to have won races this season, Antonelli has shown potential despite recent challenges.

Verstappen's confirmation brings clarity not only to Red Bull's 2026 lineup but also to the broader F1 driver market as teams begin planning for the next era of competition.