

## **ALFONSO CELIS Jr. (FORTEC MOTORSPORTS) OPENS THE WEEK-END IN SILVERSTONE**

- › **The Sahara Force India test driver beats Pietro Fittipaldi (Team Lotus) by only 0.032 a few Km from the F1 team headquarters**
- › **Canadian Nelson Mason (Teo Martín Motorsport) was the best rookie**

(13/04/2017) The first session of a new era was completed this morning by the World Series Formula V8 3.5 at Silverstone with Alfonso Celis Jr (Fortec Motorsports) going on top. In a unique atmosphere, sharing the paddock with the FIA World Endurance Championship, the RPM Racing-promoted series made its 2017 debut.

In a paddock full of enthusiasm and professionalism, and in front of some of the world's best manufacturers like Porsche, Toyota, Aston Martin, Ferrari and Ford, the World Series Formula V8 3.5 cars completed the first official session of the year and to prevail it was Celis, Force India's reserve driver, on a track close to the team's headquarters.

The Mexican also brought on top an home team, Fortec Motorsports, in 1:41.302. He was followed 0.032s adrift by Pietro Fittipladi (Lotus). It's been an all South American battle on top although third place went to one of the most promising rookies of 2016, Matevos Isaakyan (SMP Racing by AVF). He led René Binder (Lotus) by 0.017s and fellow Russian Egor Orudzhev (SMP Racing by AVF).

With cloudy skies and temperatures around 10 degrees Celsius - although an improvement is expected throughout the weekend - the rookies also put up an heated display. Nelson Mason (Teo Martin Motorsport) was the best new driver in sixth topping Diego Menchaca (Fortec Motorsports), Konstantin Tereschenko (Teo Martin Motorsport) and Damiano Fioravanti (Il Barone Rampante).

Exceptionally on-track on Thursday to leave room for the Endurance program including Sunday's 6-hour WEC race and Saturday's 4-hour ELMS run, the World Series Formula V8 3.5 will be back on-track for Collective Test 2 (10:40-11:30) on Friday. Qualifying 1 will go underway later the same day (15:05-15:35).

### **Alfonso Celis Jr. (Fortec Motorsports)**

"We have a good feeling for the week-end after the Collective Test 1. It was a good session, I enjoyed myself, we'll look for some more speed during the week-end and we hope we'll keep going this way. It was a good session, no yellow flags or interruptions. I hope we can keep the point starting from tomorrow for Qualifying 1".

### **Pietro Fittipaldi (Lotus)**

"The first official practice session in Silverstone went pretty well for us. I was second quickest, I'd like to be first but in the end it's just practice and times are really close. We've been able to tune the car a bit for qualifying tomorrow. The track was really green and slippery at the beginning and we didn't find more grip during the session, just had to adapt to the different conditions".

### **Matevos Isaakyan (SMP Racing by AVF)**

"It has been a good starting point. The track was pretty green and hopefully it will improve during the four days. It was a productive session as well as my first one with this car at Silverstone. Third place is good but we still have a lot to improve and we'll work hard to accomplish the job for qualifying"