

RENE BINDER (Lotus) SCORES FIRST POLE OF 2017 IN AUSTIN, TX

(14/09/2017) The World Series Formula V8 3.5 made a further step towards excellence today at Circuit Of The Americas, where teams and drivers of the RPM-MKTG promoted championship hit the track in the eighth round of the season, the second held overseas for 2017. It's the first time for a major single-seater developmental championship in Austin as the series continues to run alongside the FIA WEC in the next chapter of a so far successful tie-up

The 5.5-kilometer state-of-the-art venue welcomed the drivers with high temperatures and its challenging layout in a quick-starting weekend. Because the FIA WEC is racing on Saturday, all the activity was anticipated by one day. The opening day at Circuit Of The Americas featured two 50-minute Collective Test sessions necessary for the drivers to adapt to a technical circuit and Qualifying 1, which set the starting grid for tomorrow's Race 1.

Delivering a brilliant team effort, in the end it was Lotus to secure the pole with a front row lockout consisting of Rene Binder and Pietro Fittipaldi. The Austrian, who is at his first pole of 2017, carried a 0.168s margin to the end beating his Brazilian team-mate, who was unable to improve his record of 10 poles this season but still took home a promising result.

At the end of the first series of qualifying runs, Egor Orudzhev (SMP Racing by AVF) had the lead from Binder, Fittipaldi, Alex Palou and Matevos Isaakyan (SMP Racing by AVF). As the chequered flag fell, Orudzhev had to settle for third but will also need to serve a 2-position grid penalty from Mexico promoting Palou, the best rookie of the weekend so far, to P3 for Teo Martin Motorsport. Isaakyan will move up to P4 while Konstantin Tereschenko (Teo Martin Motorsport) will take-off from P6.

In Collective Test 1, the SMP Racing by AVF pairing of Orudzhev and Isaakyan led the way by taking first and second place respectively, separated by just 34 thousandths of a second while Palou brought home third place in front of Fittipaldi. The lap of 1:50.455 set by Orudzhev remained the fastest practice mark overall. Collective Test 02 featured hard battling among the drivers especially in the closing minutes. In the end, it was Austrian racer Rene Binder (Lotus) to prevail, taking the lead at a last gasp with a lap time of 1'50"501. He edged Orudzhev (SMP Racing by AVF) while Palou was third overall.

Rene Binder (Lotus)

"Finally I made it! The pole position! And the first one in Texas! It's the first of the Season so far and woohw, that was a mega lap, but it was a very tough day! I'm really happy for my sponsors and my team, they really deserved, so let's bring it on for tomorrow!"

Pietro Fittipaldi (Lotus)

"I'm really happy for the team! Same as Mexico, I didn't know the track. Mexico was a little bit easier because there aren't many fast corners, here the first and second sector had a lot! Took a while to get used to it, everytime in practice we had to maximize the time we rent and we gave it all in qualifying, I'm really happy for Rene. Tomorrow we'll be pushing for the pole!"

Alex Palou (Teo Martin Motorsport)

A new track and a real challenge, every time I jump in this car I feel better! I still have to find some tenths, and in this discipline, it's quite a lot, so let's work this night to improve for tomorrow!"