

FITTIPALDI DAZZLES IN CLOUDY SILVERSTONE TAKING HIS FIRST EVER WORLD SERIES POLE IN A LOTUS CAR

- › **All-Lotus front row with Fittipaldi and Binder for tomorrow's race**
- › **Mexican Rookie Diego Menchaca takes third place for home Fortec Motorsports**

(14/04/2017) The Lotus team posted a great overall performance at Silverstone in the opening qualifying session for the 2017 World Series Formula V8 3.5. The Season Opener in the heart of motor racing shares the paddock with the FIA WEC creating a unique atmosphere with speed, endurance and adrenaline. The Czech-based squad was brought to top by Pietro Fittipaldi in 1:41.660. The Brazilian, who scored P1 in the second practice session this morning, led Austrian René Binder, his teammate, by 0.2 seconds.

The qualifying session was declared wet and all drivers went on-track with rain tires straight away. The yellow flags also came into play when Giuseppe Cipriani (Il Barone Rampante) went off at turn 14. The Italian managed to make his way back to the pits so the session could continue.

Leading after the first 10 minutes was rookie Konstantin Tereschenko (Teo Martin Motorsport), while Egor Orudzhev (SMP Racing by AVF) led at midpoint from his rookie teammate and from Italian debutant Damiano Fioravanti (Il Barone Rampante).

In the end a single team dominated the second row too with SMP Racing by AVF. Orudzhev topped fellow Russian Matevos Isaakyan for less than 2 tenths of a second. Two Southern Americans driving for Fortec Motorsports will share the third row. After pacing the field yesterday, Force India Formula 1 reserve driver Alfonso Celis Jr edged fellow Mexican and best rookie of the day Diego Menchaca.

Pending authorization from the Canadian ASN, Nelson Mason (Teo Martin Motorsport) didn't take part in the session while Yu Kanamaru (RP Motorsport), still debilitated by flu, was back in the game ending up 10th.

Pietro Fittipaldi (Lotus)

"It was a good day as we were already fastest in Collective Test 2, but it was in completely dry conditions. Going to qualify looked like it was the same but 2 minutes before the start it was raining quite hard. Then some parts of the track like sector 2 was dry, but some others were wet like sector 3. With the first set of tyres we were something like 6 seconds far from the pace compared to 0"6 from this morning in almost dry conditions but slippery. I put everything together in the really last lap, we were able to do that and we'll keep pushing for tomorrow".

René Binder (Lotus)

"It was a tricky qualifying in the beginning with the rain coming before the start. I immediately wanted to push as I wasn't sure if the rain was stopping or increasing. I spun in the second sector but I've been lucky, I just hit some grass and I restarted. Then I was a bit more careful as I had rain tyres, but the first run was not perfect. In the second run the track improved but it was still tricky with the wind and not 100% efficient, but it was enough for front row".

Egor Orudzhev (SMP Racing by AVF)

"Session was tricky, we went immediately out on the wet tires to see how the track was and be ready in case it would have started proper rain. We putted a good lap. Rain stopped straight away. When slicks began to work we switched to them, even if we spend many laps to see where the limit was. In the final run everything went as planned, I could have been in pole but I lost the car in the last corner and that's why we're P3, but still satisfied".

Diego Menchaca (Fortec Motorsports)

"I'm not really happy at all, being the top rookie really doesn't mean a lot to me as I'm here to fight for the championship. I've been very cautious and I didn't really risk on the second sector but there was a lot of time to come there, so just sorry to team as we'd the potential to be in the front row".