

LEWIS HAMILTON BREAKS HIS OWN ALL-TIME MELBOURNE LAP RECORD ON ULTRASOFT AND WINS INAUGURAL PIRELLI POLE POSITION AWARD

RED BULL OPTS FOR ALTERNATIVE STARTING STRATEGY ON SUPERSOFT: BOTH ONE AND TWO STOPS ARE POSSIBLE IF DRY

WET TRACK IN FP3 AND DRY WEATHER FOR QUALIFYING, INTERRUPTED BY A RED FLAG. MORE UNCERTAIN WEATHER EXPECTED TOMORROW

Melbourne, March 24, 2018 – A mixed day of conditions is likely to be replicated tomorrow, adding further unpredictability to a grand prix where the all-time track record was broken in qualifying, courtesy of polesitter Lewis Hamilton for Mercedes. Hamilton also became the inaugural winner of the Pirelli Pole Position Award, which will be given to the polesitter at each race this year.

Hamilton broke his own record from last year using the ultrasoft tyres, which was the only compound used by every team in qualifying, apart from Red Bull. Both Red Bull drivers chose to use the supersoft in Q2 and will be the only team in the top 10 to start on this compound tomorrow. The final Q3 session was interrupted by an accident and resumed for a 10-minute sprint for pole after a brief red flag delay.

The wet FP3 session also showcased the wet and intermediate tyres, but by the time qualifying arrived ambient temperatures had risen to 25 degrees centigrade, with 29 degrees on track.

MARIO ISOLA - HEAD OF CAR RACING

“Rain earlier on in the day washed the track clean of rubber and also allowed the teams to look at crossover points from full wet to slick. More rain is expected overnight, adding another interesting variable to the first race of the season. Each of the compounds we brought to Melbourne have been used so far, meaning that teams have a wide range of data, but not necessarily targeted towards a specific scenario. So, there will inevitably be some element of strategy improvisation tomorrow, depending on the race circumstances. We’ve already seen some alternative thinking on tactics from Red Bull, which has chosen to start the race on the supersoft: it’s going to be interesting to see how this will play out.”

HOW THE TYRES BEHAVED TODAY

				
PURPLE ULTRASOFT	RED SUPERSOFT	YELLOW SOFT	GREEN INTERMEDIATE	BLUE WET
Used by every team from start to finish of qualifying, apart from Red Bull.	Red Bull used them in Q2 and so will start the race with this compound.	Not run in quali but a useful option for race strategy tomorrow.	Seen for the majority of FP3 as the track dried quite rapidly.	Used at the start of FP3

FREE PRACTICE 3 – TOP 3 TIMES

DRIVER	TIME	COMPOUND
Vettel	1m26.067s	ULTRASOFT NEW
Raikkonen	1m28.499s	ULTRASOFT NEW
Ericsson	1m28.890s	ULTRASOFT NEW

QUALIFYING TOP 10

DRIVER	TIME	COMPOUND
Hamilton	1m21.164s	ULTRASOFT NEW
Raikkonen	1m21.828s	ULTRASOFT NEW
Vettel	1m21.838s	ULTRASOFT NEW
Verstappen	1m21.879s	ULTRASOFT NEW
Ricciardo	1m22.152s	ULTRASOFT NEW
Magnussen	1m23.187s	ULTRASOFT NEW
Grosjean	1m23.339s	ULTRASOFT NEW
Hulkenberg	1m23.532s	ULTRASOFT NEW
Sainz	1m23.577s	ULTRASOFT NEW
Bottas	-	ULTRASOFT NEW

MOST LAPS BY COMPOUND SO FAR

COMPOUND	DRIVER	LAPS
SOFT	Leclerc	27
SUPERSOFT	Ericsson	25
ULTRASOFT	Bottas	22
INTERMEDIATE	Ricciardo, Vandoorne	14
WET	Hartley, Sirotkin	3

BEST TIME BY COMPOUND SO FAR

COMPOUND	DRIVER	TIME
SOFT	Verstappen	1m24.401s
SUPERSOFT	Verstappen	1m22.416s
ULTRASOFT	Hamilton	1m21.164s
INTERMEDIATE	Verstappen	1m31.680s
WET	Sirotkin	1m45.482s

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