**MERCEDES DRIVER LEWIS HAMILTON WILL START
FROM POLE ON ULTRASOFT AFTER SETTING A NEW TRACK RECORD**

**RED BULL'S MAX VERSTAPPEN WILL BE THE ONLY DRIVER IN THE TOP SIX
TO START ON HYPERSOFT**

**ONE PIT STOP THE MOST LIKELY RACE STRATEGY ON A CIRCUIT
WHERE IT'S HARD TO OVERTAKE**

Yas Marina, November 24, 2018 – Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton qualified on pole position using the P Zero Pink hypersoft tyres on their final qualifying appearance, with a time that was a second and a half faster than last year's pole: a new track record.
Qualifying was close from start to finish, with the Q2 session dominated by tyre tactics. Eight drivers went out on the ultrasoft tyres, around a second slower than the hypersoft. However, only five of them set their fastest times on the ultrasoft – including Hamilton – and they will be the top five on the grid, ahead of Red Bull's Max Verstappen.
The most likely strategy tomorrow is one pit stop, but this also depends on the degradation rate of the hypersoft, for those starting on this compound. With Yas Marina being a difficult track to overtake on, race strategy could make a decisive difference.
Track temperatures fell progressively during the evening qualifying session, as is usual at Abu Dhabi, with the fastest times coming right at the end.

MARIO ISOLA - HEAD OF CAR RACING
"The Q2 session was particularly relevant, with a lot of drivers starting their runs on the ultrasoft, but not all of them managing to set their fastest times with this compound. As a result, we'll have an interesting situation at the race start tomorrow with the Mercedes of Hamilton leading a top five on ultrasoft, ahead of the rest of the top 10 on hypersoft. It will be interesting to see how their strategies diverge. One-stop should be fastest, but it will also depend on the degradation rate of the hypersoft on heavy fuel at the start of the race. Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel was the only driver to use two sets of ultrasoft in Q2, which could indicate a strategy that keeps a new hypersoft for the second stint. The drivers will have to manage falling track temperatures throughout the race, which will have an effect on how they can manage the tyres. Generally speaking, they will be able to push harder on them in the later stages."

HOW THE TYRES BEHAVED TODAY

RED **SUPERSOFT**

Not seen in qualifying
but expect to see it
as part of a one-stopper.

PURPLE **ULTRASOFT**

 Many drivers tried to set
their fastest times on this
in Q2, not all succeeded.

PINK **HYPERSOFT**

Around one second faster
than the ultrasoft, used to
set a new track record.

FREE PRACTICE 3 – TOP 3 TIMES

DRIVER	TIME	COMPOUND
Hamilton	1m37.176s	HYPERSOFT NEW
Raikkonen	1m37.464s	HYPERSOFT NEW
Vettel	1m37.587s	HYPERSOFT NEW

QUALIFYING TOP 10

DRIVER	TIME	COMPOUND
Hamilton	1m34.794s	HYPERSOFT NEW
Bottas	1m34.956s	HYPERSOFT NEW
Vettel	1m35.125s	HYPERSOFT NEW
Raikkonen	1m35.365s	HYPERSOFT NEW
Ricciardo	1m35.401s	HYPERSOFT NEW
Verstappen	1m35.589s	HYPERSOFT NEW
Grosjean	1m36.192s	HYPERSOFT NEW
Leclerc	1m36.237s	HYPERSOFT NEW
Ocon	1m36.540s	HYPERSOFT NEW
Hulkenberg	1m36.542s	HYPERSOFT NEW

MOST LAPS BY COMPOUND SO FAR

COMPOUND	DRIVER	LAPS
SUPERSOFT	Raikkonen	27
ULTRASOFT	Bottas	26
HYPERSOFT	Verstappen	18

BEST TIME BY COMPOUND SO FAR

COMPOUND	DRIVER	TIME
SUPERSOFT	Hamilton	1m39.083s
ULTRASOFT	Hamilton	1m35.693s
HYPERSOFT	Hamilton	1m34.794s

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