

2021 BAHRAIN GRAND PRIX – FRIDAY 26/03/2021

Pierre Gasly (AT02-05, Car 10)**First Practice Session****Best lap: 1:32.195, pos. 7th, 23 laps****Second Practice Session****Best lap: 1:31.483, pos. 9th, 27 laps**

“I think it’s been a good start to the weekend – the car felt strong in both sessions and I’m happy with it. We didn’t quite put it together this evening, on our fast lap, but overall, I think there are a lot of positives to take-away from today and I’m excited now to see what we can do in qualifying tomorrow. The long run with high fuel, that we completed in preparation for the race, felt strong so I think there are some good signs but it’s obviously only the first day, so we don’t want to get ahead of ourselves. We’ll fine-tune everything tonight with the engineers and I think we’ll be in a good position for tomorrow. I hope that we can get into Q3 in qualifying – that’s our target – and if we manage that we should be in a position to fight for some good points come race day.”

Yuki Tsunoda (AT02-06, Car 22)**First Practice Session****Best lap: 1:33.329, pos. 14th, 21 laps****Second Practice Session****Best lap: 1:31.294, pos. 7th, 23 laps**

“It’s been a great day – I’ve experienced my first practice sessions in the car as a Formula 1 driver and it’s really exciting. I think my passion has really shone through today and I’m looking forward to showing my full potential behind the wheel tomorrow in qualifying. We’ve got great pace this weekend as a team and I’m keen to see how I perform tomorrow in my first F1 qualifying session. I’m still learning a lot in the car and it’s obviously only my first race weekend so I’m keen to not put too much pressure on myself but I’m looking forward to getting out on track for my first race and seeing what we can do.”

Jonathan Eddolls (Chief Race Engineer):

“I’m excited to be back on track racing again - we were obviously here testing a few weeks ago but it feels completely different being here in Bahrain for a race weekend. Due to each session only lasting an hour this season, we had a full runplan to get through. It’s difficult to learn a lot from FP1 here, due to the high track temperatures being drastically different to those that we’ll experience in qualifying and the race, so we focused on some aero understanding during that session. FP2 followed a normal plan – with a medium tyre run, followed by the softer compound. Both drivers put in good laps on the performance runs, which was extremely positive in more representative conditions this evening. The longer runs we completed will allow us to confirm that the data gathered during testing here is relevant for the race weekend. Unfortunately, we saw something we weren’t comfortable with in the data on Yuki’s car, so we called him in as a precaution, however this was just a few minutes before the end of the session so had no impact on our running. Overall, I think we had a really positive day today and I’m looking forward to qualifying tomorrow.”

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