

12 April 2021

2021 Emilia-Romagna Grand Prixview**Pierre Gasly #10**

“Apart from the collision with Daniel, the Bahrain weekend went well, with a lot of positives to take from it. In all the free practice sessions we were front runners and a top five in Qualifying was one of our best ever results. Overall, in terms of performance and speed, it is very encouraging for the rest of the season, starting with Imola this weekend. From what we saw in Bahrain, it seems we have a package that will allow us to fight for the big points and there is no reason for that not to be the case for the coming races.”

“One example of the team’s confidence was the decision to tackle Q2 at Sakhir on the Medium tyre as apart from us, there was only the two Mercedes and Max Verstappen who did it. It was a risk, but it proves our belief in our car and our performance level. Now I hope we will be able to do that again at other circuits.”

“With all the restrictions still in place and the need to be very careful, I have not done much since the last round. I spent a couple of days in the simulator and over the Easter weekend, while obeying all the rules, I spent a bit of time with my family.”

“Now we head to Imola, which is one of my favourite circuits. I love it. It is technical with a lot of fast corners which allows you to get into a rhythm and you are always busy as it is quite twisty. Last year at this track I got my best ever Qualifying with the team, on the second row. Unfortunately, that race ended early with a problem while I was lying fifth, but it was a very good weekend up until then, so now I’m keen to get back there and make up for last year’s disappointment.”

“The team has worked hard since the first race, as there are still areas where we can improve, even if we are clearly on the pace at the moment. But this early in the season, we can expect everyone to make progress as they get to understand their cars better and how to optimise them. So, we have to work hard to keep moving forward. Honestly, I can’t wait to go racing again as this three-week break has seemed quite long. From now on, the races come one after the other and I’m keen to see what results we can get.”

Yuki Tsunoda #22

“I very much enjoyed my first experience of a Formula 1 race weekend in Bahrain and now I’m looking forward to the second one in Imola. There was not so much that surprised me about Bahrain, except the large amount of media work I had to do. I was not expecting that! Of course, the race and Qualifying was new, but nothing was too surprising.”

“In our Qualifying in Bahrain, I have no regrets about our strategy, because being committed to trying to get through to Q3 on the Medium tyre was a good experience and for the team it was a new challenge to try and use that tyre. I learned a lot from that, even if I had expected I could have been higher up the grid with the potential to be top five or top six.”

“I was always focussed and didn’t feel tense or under pressure or feel I didn’t have enough time. It probably helped that we had our pre-season test at the same track. I think when we come to tracks that are new to me, like Portimao and Monaco, that will be tougher than Bahrain.”

“It won’t be a problem in Imola, as I have driven there a lot and so I can work in a similar way to what I did in Bahrain. I will use the experience from the first race and I already have confidence in the car in Imola. The circuit has a lot of medium speed corners, as well as a few quick ones. I like the fast chicanes like turns one and two, which is something I don’t think I’ve ever experienced before. It really is a special feature of Imola. The track also goes up and down quite a lot and I really like it. I think this is why so many drivers enjoy driving there, because it is different to other tracks. I also enjoy the Acque Minerali section at turns 11 and 12 where the track goes downhill and right-right. In fact, I like all the corners, but those especially.”

“I will start the weekend gradually building up my pace. That will be the key, because you don’t want to make a mistake in FP1 which will make you lose your confidence. Because we have driven there before the season, as a team we can just focus on car set-up and try and maximise that advantage and hopefully we can have a good result. It’s important as it is a home race for the team and even for me, it feels like home.”

“It was interesting that after Bahrain, I think I got a bigger reaction from European fans than from those in Japan. It’s a cultural thing: Japanese fans want to see what I do in a few rounds before getting a proper impression. I was surprised at that reaction in Europe. I didn’t expect it, because for me, Bahrain was not a perfect weekend and I was hoping to finish higher. I am happy about the fans’ support, but I don’t feel pressure because of it, I take it as something positive and this weekend I will just get on and do my job.”

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