

1 June 2021

2021 Azerbaijan Grand Prixview**Pierre Gasly #10**

"We come to the Baku race after what was an excellent weekend for us in Monaco, when I was always in the top ten in all sessions, and then sixth in qualifying, my best of the season which I think was a very strong performance. Then I finished sixth, having Lewis behind me for the entire race. During the race, you don't really think about who is driving the car behind you, although of course I knew it was him. But I understood there was really no way for him to get by and it would all come down to the pit stop. I just had to focus, concentrate on my driving and the team also played its part with the strategy in keeping him behind. So I am satisfied, as it was important for the team to find our true performance level again and to have a clean weekend, which is complicated in Monaco as it's a tricky circuit. But we managed it and that delivered our best result of the year so far. It was also really cool to race with fans again at the track, especially as there were many French people there as it was Monaco, so I felt more support than usual. It was a real pleasure to interact a bit with fans, even if was not yet a full-size crowd.

Since then I have spent some time in the simulator in the UK and then I headed off to Baku via Dubai. It's a lot of travelling but it's all in a good cause because we are heading for a very busy part of the season. I'd say Baku is a really unusual track and it has something in common with Monaco, being a street circuit in the centre of a town, so it's not a normal sort of track. That means you have to set up the car a bit differently. You run with much lower downforce than in Monaco, and the corners are much slower in Baku, but it is similar in terms of grip and in some other characteristics, and we will be using the C5 softest tyres again. The lack of surface grip and the low downforce means it is not a straightforward challenge and it is difficult to find the best set up for the car with the long straight that means the tyres and brakes lose temperature a lot and there are other factors to take into account to get everything out of the car over one lap and also in the race.

I quite like the circuit, I finished second in GP2 a few years ago but in F1, although I was quite competitive, I have always had some bad luck, but I plan to change that this week. I hope we will be able to perform at a similar or even better level than in Monaco."

Yuki Tsunoda #22

"Baku will be another new experience for me and I should benefit from some lessons learned in Monaco, another street circuit. My plan building up to the race in Monaco was to maximise the number of laps I did in practice, but unfortunately in FP2 I hit the wall and for me that was the main downside of the last weekend. Even though I didn't feel that I had lost confidence because of the crash, in qualifying that last bit of confidence, for example in the fast corners, is very important so I learned an important lesson, especially for street tracks, not to go into the wall!

I really enjoyed my first time in Monaco, it was a fantastic experience and really fun up until that moment in FP2. In general, after five races now, I am feeling more familiar with the race weekend, there are less surprises and I feel more in control and I've got used to some of the things that surprised me earlier in the year like all the media work at races on a Thursday. It was using up a lot of my energy but now I am more comfortable with everything which is a positive thing.

The technical aspect is still quite challenging, especially as in the current situation I have been struggling a bit with the car set-up. I believe that is normal as I have only done five races, but the important thing is that I am learning a lot about the car. My mind set is fine, I'm in good shape and things are going in the right direction. There is still some pressure, but I am enjoying every minute of being a Formula 1 driver and there is always something new to deal with at every new track. In Monaco there was even the new experience of seeing fans and hearing them calling the names of the drivers, which felt really crazy.

This week is Baku, I have never raced there before but I have driven it on the simulator of course. Most of the corners seem to be 90 degree turns and almost all the corners are taken in similar speed range so it will be interesting. It's another street circuit, but it looks as though it might be a little bit easier to adapt to than Monaco. Hopefully I will be in a better situation there. Again, I will try and do as many laps as possible and my main aim will be to make sure I don't get too close to the walls in practice and Qualifying. I will take the Monaco experience and everything I learned there and apply it in Azerbaijan.

I am pleased with the definite progress made by the team with the car since the beginning of the season. It's true the results have not come together yet and I am on a steep learning curve. I spend as much time as possible talking with my engineers to learn more and I hope that will help me continue to make progress through the season."

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