

21 September 2021

2021 Russian Grand Prixview**Pierre Gasly**

"What happened in Monza was regrettable, as I believe we could have done something good there, especially when you look at how the race went. The weekend ended very badly for the team, for me and for Yuki after our performance had been very good leading up to the race and I had a super Qualifying. A real shame, but there has been a positive trend after the summer break as our performance level was very good at all three races since then. It bodes well for the rest of the season, as I believe we can be competitive at all the remaining races. In a way, it was good that we took the engine penalty in Italy and so hopefully we can get to the end of the season without having more.

Since Italy, I enjoyed having a bit of a break because the triple-header was very intense, with no time to do anything in between the races and you can't train as hard as you would do normally. A small break is particularly good for everyone in the team, before starting up again and apart from the usual work in the simulator, I was able to spend a bit of time in France with my family.

Sochi next, where last year I got to Q3 and finished in the top 10. I quite like the track, even if the layout features a lot of corners that are very similar to one another. The last sector is quite technical, the long straights mean you get some nice fights and overtaking moves. The fact the circuit is in the Olympic Park gives it a special "sports" atmosphere and Sochi itself has evolved over the years. I remember the first time I went with Formula 2 there wasn't much going on, but now there are plenty of restaurants and places to go."

Yuki Tsunoda

"Just before Monza, it was confirmed that I will stay with Scuderia AlphaTauri next year. I am obviously happy and thankful to the team and to Honda.

Monza was a real shame as car performance was there already from FP1 and then especially for my team-mate in Qualifying. I found the Sprint format quite tough, having to go straight into Qualifying with just one free practice session. But I think I showed good progress.

I spent most of the time after Monza in Italy, with a bit of time in the factory, apart from a couple of days in the simulator in the UK and now I'm ready for the next race in Russia. At Sochi, most of the corners are 90 degrees and very similar to each other, so you need to have a good technique for driving 90-degree corners! Plus, you need a car that has good traction out of the corner exit to have enough speed down the straights that follow them. It feels like a normal track, but it's really more of a city-street circuit and so track evolution is massive over the weekend and the wing effect is quite huge.

I am confident that I can do well there and continue to make progress over a race weekend. I have raced at Sochi in Formula 3 and last year in Formula 2 and I have good memories of that. I took pole position and finished second in the Feature Race. I will continue with my step-by-step approach, gradually learning everything about the track and how the car is working. Actually, I'm not worried about the car, as since the start of the year it has shown good performance, especially in the last six or seven races when we produced consistently good performances. I will be focussing more on improving my driving and I'm looking forward to experiencing Sochi for the first time in a Formula 1 car."

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