

2021 BRAZILIAN GRAND PRIX – FRIDAY 12/11/2021

Pierre Gasly (AT02-05, Car 10)**First Practice Session - Best lap: 1:09.880, pos. 5th, 32 laps****Qualifying - Best lap: (Q1) 1:09.347, (Q2) 1:08.903, (Q3) 1:08.777, pos. 5th***

"Today I'm really, really happy. FP1 was quite difficult for me and I struggled a little bit in Quali too, but every time I went out I managed to find a little bit more, playing with everything inside of the car and making small improvements each time we ran. I managed to put it all together when it counted and I think it was a really incredible lap in Q3 today, so I'm really pleased with that. It's really amazing for us to be Qualifying right behind Mercedes and Red Bull, it's a critical moment in the Championship and the team did a fantastic job today. Of course, it's only Friday so we've got two more days, it's going to be pretty intense, but we've put ourselves in the best place possible."

Yuki Tsunoda (AT02-06, Car 22)**First Practice Session - Best lap: 1:10.374, pos. 11th, 33 laps****Qualifying - Best lap: (Q1) 1:09.350, (Q2) 1:09.483, pos. 13th**

"This is another new track for me, so practice was really important this morning and I think I managed to get up to speed quite quickly, which was good. The car feels good round this track, so it's a shame I couldn't make it through to Q3 today. I think Sprint Qualifying tomorrow is going to be a bit tricky starting from this position, but I'll try to make my way forward so I can start Sunday's race in a stronger place."

Jonathan Eddolls (Chief Race Engineer)

"Sprint Qualifying weekends are typically more intense on a Friday than the normal race format, so we had a lot of preparation work to cover in FP1. The focus was on the short-run performance and how to optimise the balance around the lap, which is often difficult to achieve here as you have understeer starting the lap, then oversteer at the end. We didn't have the smoothest free practice session as our runs on the new soft tyre at the end of the session suffered with traffic. So, heading into Quali we knew we had some work to do, but believed we had some performance left in our pocket. Q1 was perfect for both drivers and they easily progressed through on a single new set of tyres. Yuki then struggled more with the car in Q2 and could not match his Q1 time. We need to go away and understand why that was, but it was still a very respectable lap from him. Through Q2 and Q3 Pierre was flying, showing he had huge confidence in the car whilst continuing to improve every lap, eventually extracting the absolute maximum possible from the car, with only Mercedes and Red Bull Racing faster than us. So far it has been a great effort by the team, but unfortunately there are no points for today so the focus tomorrow in FP2 will be on long runs in preparation for Sprint Qualifying."

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