

Beat: Sports

2017 Spanish Grand Prix ““ Saturday

Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya

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USPA NEWS - Lewis Hamilton storms to Spanish Grand Prix pole. Lewis Hamilton claimed his 64th career pole position ““ his third in four years at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya and third of the 2017 season. Lewis’ pole is the team’s fifth consecutive pole position in Barcelona.

Lewis Hamilton

That was a really intense qualifying. We had to pull out every millisecond we could to take pole. We made some changes ahead of qualifying and the car felt great, so I was very happy with it. The race pace is looking good and the team has done an incredible job this weekend, as always. I don’t know if the guys back at the factory get tired of hearing this, but they’ve done an incredible job. To make this step forward and bring a great package for this weekend to keep us in the fight with the Ferrari, I’m so grateful to them. We’ll work as hard as we can on Sunday so that effort doesn’t go to waste.

Valtteri Bottas

For most of the weekend we’ve had the edge on Ferrari but in Q3 they raised their game. For me starting the day with the engine change and moving back to the old engine, I was always going to be on the back foot. I really struggled through qualifying with the rear stability of the car, so it was difficult to find a good rhythm. It wasn’t one of my best qualifying sessions but I’m happy with the job that the team has done. You could see Lewis was very strong and quick today. It’s a shorter run down to Turn 1 than in Sochi, but we’ve seen in the past that you can make positions from the second row. I’ve done some good things from P3 before. Everything is still wide open. We’re happy with the race pace and upbeat for tomorrow.

Toto Wolff, Head of Mercedes-Benz Motorsport

Nobody had it easy out there this afternoon and it was nice to see such a close fight for pole in the final laps. Lewis did a great job: it was tricky to put the sectors together today, and I’m not sure any driver had a perfect lap, but he did two times good enough for pole position in Q3 and really deserved it. As for Valtteri, I think he was probably lacking some miles after the engine change this morning; he had the pace but small mistakes on each lap meant he couldn’t get on the front row.

Even so, first and third are good starting positions, from the clean side of the grid. The race will be long and tough with the tyres; there will be lots of opportunities to take, so we need to stay alert and make the right decisions all the way through. We saw from the lap times this afternoon that this new generation of cars is blindingly fast and that gave the fans a great Formula One show today.

James Allison, Technical Director

We were delighted to see Lewis claim pole after a great first lap in Q3 ““ we had hoped for more on the second run but, in the end, he landed a few hundredths shy of his previous time. But it got the job done and that’s what counts. For Valtteri, it was a highly creditable performance after his practice session this morning was disturbed by problems with the car. We did some good work on race set-up during Friday’s practice sessions and are now looking forward to starting from P1 and P3 on the grid. We know already it will be a very tight race but it’s one we have every chance of coming home from with a smile on our faces.

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