

26<sup>th</sup> April 2023**2023 AZERBAIJAN GRAND PRIXVIEW****Nyck de Vries**

"Initially post-Melbourne I returned quickly to the UK to spend a day in the simulator, to do some correlation work and also look ahead to some of the races coming after this break. I had a short trip to the Netherlands for a couple of commitments after which I was invited to the Milan-Napoli game. It was a really cool experience as the Champions League is a very big deal. It's always cool to witness sports in real life, as I think sometimes TV doesn't do it justice, and this was a really unique experience. When you're in a stadium with 80,000 people watching the 22 players on the pitch, the atmosphere and emotion gives you goosebumps. It was the same at the start of the year, when we were in New York for the livery launch and got to see the NBA game between the Brooklyn Nets and the Chicago Bulls. I just love the real sport action.

After that I attended the Monaco Tennis Open, which should have been a bit quieter, although I went with Stef (*Red Bull Athlete Stefanos Tsitsipas, ranked 3 in world tennis*) which made it a bit more challenging to be quiet! I follow tennis very closely as a lot of the top players live in Monaco and go to the same gym I use, and some live in the same building as me. My trainer was with me in Monaco where we did a lot of work, and it was also nice to spend some time at home. Now I'm ready to get going again with five races coming up in six weeks, so it will be an intense time.

Baku will be my very first Sprint weekend and that will be particularly challenging with just one hour of free practice before qualifying, but I've been to the track before, with three second place finishes in Formula 2. We're all excited to go racing again after this long break. The track is quite unique in the sense that, usually on street tracks, overtaking is very challenging, but the extremely long straight produces opportunities, which is why the races at Baku have often been quite eventful, so hopefully things will go our way and we'll have something to cheer about come the end of it.

I feel we are making progress, but the midfield is still very tight, and it is very challenging to fight for points because in a "normal" race the top ten is solidly occupied. We need to make sure we are ready to capitalise on any mistakes made by those who would normally be top ten. While I see signs of progress, Baku demands a lot of straight-line speed and so far, our straight-line speed has not been that competitive. Let's wait and see how it works out."

**Yuki Tsunoda**

"Since Australia, I've spent most of my time at home in Italy, with occasional trips to Milan, focusing on my training, so I'm feeling fit and fresh, and ready to go racing again. Last week I was back in the simulator.

In the past, I performed quite well in Baku, qualifying eighth the last two years, and finishing seventh in 2021, although last year I had that DRS failure when I was running in sixth place and ended up down in P13. I have good memories from there and I like the track. The past two years our car suited that circuit and we had a good understanding of the track, so I hope that will again be the case this year and we can aim for points this weekend. We've got some updates coming, particularly for the rear wing to suit the low downforce configuration for this track. So far this year, we have struggled a bit in terms of top speed, and you definitely need straight line speed for Baku. This should help and hopefully the pure set-up of the car should suit the Azerbaijan circuit. I will approach the weekend in my usual optimistic way and I'm looking forward to being back in the car after such a long break.

This will be our first Sprint weekend of the year, and with the changed format I'm feeling more excited about it than usual. The changes mean that the work we have done in the simulator becomes even more important to make up for less practice time on track. It will be vital to have a good car right from FP1. Certainly, our last simulator session was very useful, starting with looking back at Australia to get a better understanding about the car and then looking at these next couple of races in Baku and Miami, as we will be going straight to Florida from Azerbaijan."

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