

7th October 2022

2022 JAPANESE GRAND PRIX - FRIDAY

Pierre Gasly (AT03-04, Car 10)**First Practice Session – Best lap: 1:44.878, pos. 16th, 12 laps****Second Practice Session - Best lap: 1:47.109, pos. 19th, 13 laps**

“It’s been good today, even if we only did three push laps so not the busiest Friday, but I’m super excited for tomorrow. We did everything we planned to, we only had one set of Intermediate tyres for the full day, but we’ll be running in the dry tomorrow, and it looks like the race may be dry too, so it’ll be important to get as much out of the car as possible in FP3. I’m confident though that whatever the conditions over the next few days are, we can be competitive and I’m looking forward to getting back out on this great track.”

Yuki Tsunoda (AT03-03, Car 22)**First Practice Session – Best lap: 1:46.192, pos. 19th, 16 laps****Second Practice Session - Best lap: 1:45.257, pos. 14th, 27 laps**

“It’s been an amazing experience, an absolute dream come true. When I left the garage for the first lap in FP1 I was really emotional, especially when I entered Turn 2, as I’d been watching there last time I was here as a fan. I tried to not let this get to me when driving but as soon as I jumped out the car the adrenaline hit, and it was a great feeling. I haven’t driven here since Formula 4, and I’d say even my out lap today was a faster lap than I’ve ever done here before in Suzuka. The conditions haven’t been great, with the rain, so it’s been tricky to find the sweet spot with the car, as sometimes the track dried really quickly and other times the rain was much heavier. We’ve spent the day gathering as much data as possible and building up the pace lap-by-lap when possible with the weather, but we’ve still got some work to do. Tomorrow looks to be sunny, so it’ll be another new experience for me, which is harder heading into Quali with little running, but everyone is in this position with the new car, so we’ll see what we’re able to do.”

Jonathan Eddolls (Chief Race Engineer)

“We came into the weekend with the risk of rain for Friday being high, and in fact the whole day has been a washout. So, we didn’t get to complete the planned Pirelli test in FP2. Instead, we ran an Intermediate tyre, that did not come out of our race allocation, and a Wet tyre, but had to make these last across both sessions. The Wet tyre is robust so we could complete some good running on this when the conditions called for it. The Intermediate was faster, but was more prone to aquaplaning. We completed a few test items on the Inters, but the fronts quickly grained with the high energy input from the track. This meant we had a lot of understeer, therefore it is hard to learn much when the car has this balance. We did try some sustainable running to wear through the graining in preparation for Sunday, given there is a rain risk for the race. Tomorrow is looking dry, so it will be a busy FP3 programme trying to prepare for Quali and the race in the space of one hour, but at least we can carry one of today’s dry tyres over to help.”

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