

15th March 2023**2023 SAUDI ARABIAN GRAND PRIXVIEW****Nyck de Vries**

"It felt great to finally really start our season and campaign together in Bahrain. It's been a long lead up to that moment and ultimately, we are racers, we want to go out there and compete. I'm very happy that we have the first one out of the way and that we're basically getting into the race rhythm.

Some parts of my first full F1 weekend were a little bit busier than I'd been used to, but in all honesty, it was all well-organised and managed. In the end, in any professional racing series, they operate fairly similarly. Obviously, Formula 1 is a much bigger platform, but regarding the weekend itself, there were no major surprises. Of course, there is a little bit more media work and other activities but ultimately, what happens on track is still the most important.

I think there is no hiding that we're not exactly where we want to be in terms of performance. There is still a lot of work to be done. We feel like we need to close the gap even more in low-speed corners and Bahrain has a lot of those so we hope that Saudi will suit our package a little bit better. Ultimately, the midfield is so extremely close and fighting for points is going to be a tough battle because you have at least four top teams in front which are already taking eight positions. It's going to be a challenge, but we've just got to make sure we don't leave anything unturned so that we can capitalise on potential opportunities.

Tyre degradation was an important factor in the first race, but I think Bahrain is a strong outlier when it comes to degradation. The tarmac is probably the oldest of the calendar, so I'm very confident that in Saudi it will be a different story, but we will have to wait and see whether that works in our favour. I think we were positively surprised by our race performance in Bahrain. We were clearly in the mix but again, that's only one weekend. I think we need to do more races to get a bigger picture before we can draw conclusions. Doing a day's testing for Pirelli at Sakhir after the Grand Prix was useful. All the mileage is very welcome, especially at this time of the year. Therefore, it was definitely valuable for us to get it done.

As for Saudi, I attended the race last year, but I've never driven the Jeddah track, even though I've driven it quite a lot on the simulator, most recently last week. It seems very cool: quick and tricky. I'm honestly very much looking forward to the challenge, learning a new track and being back out racing."

Yuki Tsunoda

"From the weekend in Bahrain, it's clear that our performance is quite far away from where we wanted to be in the first race, especially as we are aiming to be at the front of the midfield. We still need to find a lot more performance from our car. We did make a step forward from Friday to Saturday, which meant I was able to get into Q2 which was good. In the end, we were not consistent enough with our pace to make it to Q3. Last year, we were fighting Williams for P9, P10 in the Constructors'. It means we have to focus on developing our car and for myself, I have to try and extract as much performance from the car as possible and I'd say I managed to do that in Bahrain on Sunday.

I know where we are struggling but for this weekend in Saudi, I am more hopeful that we can be better than in Bahrain. I will be pushing myself to give the team as much useful feedback as possible and then we will see how it goes. I think the high-speed nature of the track in Saudi will suit our package better, so let's wait and see.

Spending more time in the car, driving at the Pirelli test for a day immediately after Bahrain was definitely very useful. It is a bigger benefit to do it during the early part of the season than the end of year test. From a driver's point of view, it's better to have a lot of mileage at the beginning of the season as it gives you a chance to understand more about your car and its set-ups. I did a lot of mileage and went pretty much flat out all day!

Last year, my Saudi weekend did not go well at all, as various technical issues meant I was unable to drive on Saturday and then could not even start the race on Sunday. I find it an enjoyable track to drive. It's really unique, Sector 1 especially with the high-speed esses, which are very specific to the Saudi track and not found anywhere else on the calendar. Last year was unfortunate and I found it very frustrating as I had really enjoyed qualifying here in 2021 when I was eighth fastest. Our reliability with this year's car has been good so far. During testing and the first race, we had no major issues, so I'm confident that this year I will drive every session from Friday to Sunday, and I am looking forward to it."

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