

28th April 2023

2023 AZERBAIJAN GRAND PRIX - FRIDAY

Yuki Tsunoda (AT04-01, Car 22)

First Practice Session – Best lap: 1:44.137, pos. 14th, 18 laps

Qualifying - Best lap: (Q1) 1:42.234, (Q2) 1:41.569, (Q3) 1:41.581, pos. 8th

“First of all, the entire team did a great job. Our weakness has been straight-line speed and everyone in Bicester has worked hard to bring upgrades to make us more competitive, so I'm pleased with the result and excited about the future. It's a shame how qualifying ended for Nyck as he was looking strong during FP1, but I am glad he's ok. Looking at my qualifying, I'm happy I have been able to maximise the car's performance and relieved with my first P8 of the year. It's a step in the right direction and points can be possible over this weekend, so we'll continue working to find even more performance so we can bring home some points during the sprint race tomorrow and the race on Sunday.”

Nyck de Vries (AT04-03, Car 21)

First Practice Session – Best lap: 1:43.414, pos. 6th, 24 laps

Qualifying - Best lap: (Q1) 1:48.357, pos. 20th

“Today was very disappointing. Our package has been looking really strong during FP1 and we were hoping to capitalise on that in qualifying. We began the session with a little setback that had to be investigated, so it wasn't the smoothest start. I haven't been able to talk to the team yet so before jumping to any conclusions, I want to look at and analyse the data, to see what really happened. Looking ahead to a new start tomorrow, we're hoping to fight with P7 and P8. Historically, Baku can become quite messy, especially at the start, so we will see what happens. The updates we brought here look promising, so I'll get together with everyone tonight to find what can be improved on for the rest of the weekend.”

Jonathan Eddolls (Chief Race Engineer)

“The Sprint weekend format has made for an exciting Friday of running. This track is notorious for being action-packed and today lived up to expectations. Even though we brought several new aero components, our expected competitiveness based on the last events was that we were not Q3 material. As a result, we put a lot of effort into Quali preparation in FP1 to give us the best chance for starting as high up as possible on Sunday where more points are available. Both drivers ran two sets of Soft and Medium tyres in FP1. Yuki touched the wall on his first set and damaged the rim causing a puncture, so he had to abort that run. Luckily for him, there was a Red Flag at the same time, so he didn't lose much track time, but it still put him on the back foot for the rest of the session. Nyck was building up throughout the session and set a very clean lap, demonstrating the car is more competitive here and that we had the potential for a good qualifying. Unfortunately, while queuing to leave the pits on his first run, Nyck's car had a little issue which forced us to push him back into the garage to solve it and this lost him a lap, put him on the back foot and left him with cold tyres. On his lap he locked up into Turn 3 and went into the wall, ending his Quali. We had to remain quite fluid with the plans for Yuki with the numerous red flags and difficulties getting tyres ready, but the team - with Yuki's valuable feedback - did a great job to manage the situation and make it to Q3. The downside of our FP1 qualifying preparation meant we had no new tyres remaining for Q3, but Yuki set a fantastic lap on the used tyre to finish P8 for the race on Sunday. We now switch focus to the shootout tomorrow, which is new for this event, and gives us another chance to show the competitiveness of the car here.”

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