

29th July 2023

2023 BELGIAN GRAND PRIX - SATURDAY

Daniel Ricciardo (AT04-03, Car 3)**Sprint Shootout – Best lap: (SQ1) 2:00.177, (SQ2) 1:57.687, pos. 11th****Sprint Race – pos. 10th**

“The conditions during Sprint qualifying were fairly similar to yesterday. After yesterday, I felt there was more I could improve on in the corners, and after today I got a little more out of them and feel I’ve made another step forward. It’s my first Sprint qualifying with these shorter sessions, so I think it’s about timing and knowing when to go. In the end, we were the first on track, maybe that hurt us a little with the time, and everyone else was able to improve. It’s not like we expected to have a solid SQ3 car, so maybe our qualifying result isn’t too far off our true pace anyway. All in all, I feel progress has been made, so I’m happy with that.

“At the beginning of the Sprint race, we were able to hold the pace and I thought it was good, but as the track dried and it came to the last three laps, I could feel the tyres struggling and the car getting slower. I knew I was P9, and I could still see the Ferrari and Lando (Norris) in the McLaren ahead. They pulled away in the second sector, but I was hanging on in the straights and keeping them in sight. I saw Perez go off, but in the end, I was losing the car quite a lot, and I was overtaken by Russell and Ocon before the chequered flag. After the race, everyone’s tyres looked pretty beat up, but we have to understand why we dropped off more than others. It would’ve been nice to score a point, but I’m glad to see the chequered flag because I don’t know how much longer the tyres could’ve kept me on the track.”

Yuki Tsunoda (AT04-04, Car 22)**Sprint Shootout – Best lap: (SQ1) 2:00.568, pos. 16th****Sprint Race – pos. 18th**

“During Sprint qualifying this morning, I made some mistakes and couldn’t put a clean lap together. It’s super frustrating having qualified P16 because that position hurt us this afternoon, but it was my fault. It was better to prioritise the car in front, which was Daniel because he had a much bigger chance to score points than me, so I think the strategy was good. My whole race felt strange because the rear grip was really poor, but together with the team, we’ll investigate what happened there tonight, and I hope everything is ok. At the restart following the Safety Car, I had a massive rear lock and I couldn’t control anything, and almost crashed into another car, which would’ve been the worst-case scenario. By starting P16 in these conditions, my main focus was on bringing the car back in the same shape for tomorrow. Luckily, I was able to avoid any incident with any other car or barrier. I’m happy to start P11 tomorrow for the main race, which is the most important one. I miss the points, so I’m hoping we can finish in the top 10 tomorrow.”

Jody Egginton (Technical Director)

“The focus during today’s Sprint qualifying was on ensuring that tyres were optimised to the track conditions and in the right condition at the right time, to take advantage of track evolution. Daniel’s laps were clean, and he progressed nicely, just missing out on SQ3, whilst Yuki did not quite get his best lap together and could not escape SQ1, which is a shame as he had shown a good performance in qualifying yesterday. The weather played its part at the start of the Sprint Race, but following the pit stops, Daniel was running between P8 and P9. He was struggling with tyres towards the end and came home in P10. Yuki had a rear lock and spin at the restart, meaning he was left trailing the field, and given the race length, he wasn’t able to recover. It’s a tight field and we have been more competitive here this weekend, so we feel we have some opportunities in tomorrow’s race. We will go away, review the data and see what we can do to take another step for the race.”

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