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27th October 2023

2023 MEXICO CITY GRAND PRIX - FRIDAY

Isack Hadjar (AT04-04, Car 41)
First Practice Session – Best lap: 1:21.941, pos. 17th, 25 laps
"It's the best day of my life! My first ever time in an F1 car was incredible, so I'm happy. There was so much going on with the procedures and traffic that it was overwhelming at first. It was tough, but I got into a rhythm quite quickly, and my confidence grew. During my first runs, I was struggling to get a lap without traffic, but in the last run, the race pace was quite good and consistent, and I could manage the soft compound for a few laps. It was a really good experience, and now I can't wait to be back in the car."

Daniel Ricciardo (AT04-02, Car 3)
First Practice Session – Best lap: 1:20.568, pos. 8th, 30 laps
Second Practice Session – Best lap: 1:19.002, pos. 6th, 31 laps
"Since the race in Austin, I've been hungry to keep going and get back in the car. After last week's race, we discovered some things that made me want to prove that we have pace. Today was a very good day. I enjoy this place, and the car was solid. From the get-go, I was certainly comfortable, and because it isn't a Sprint weekend, we have more time to try some things. We continued to chip away and made good progress with our setup, and we look like we're in a good place, so I'm confident we can carry this performance into tomorrow. The field is close, and you never know what other teams are doing exactly, but I know what I felt in the car today was good, and I believe it's a top 10 car tomorrow."

Yuki Tsunoda (AT04-04, Car 22)
Second Practice Session – Best lap: 1:19.290, pos. 12th, 34 laps
"I'm happy because we completed most of our run plan today. As we replaced some elements on the car, we'll be starting Sunday's race from the back of the grid, which is why today was mainly focused on our long-run performance. The car behaved slightly unusual in terms of balance, and I struggled with a couple of things that I didn't expect, so our focus tonight will be understanding why. There are some areas we can improve on for tomorrow, but as a group, we collected a lot of data, so we'll put it all together as a team."

Jonathan Eddolls (Chief Race Engineer)
"We had Isack driving Yuki's car in FP1 today, and he did a very good job with the team. With a similar downforce level to Monza and a green track to start, it's definitely not a straightforward circuit for a rookie driver in a free practice session, but Isack did all we asked of him. He gathered some useful aero data and set competitive lap times.

"The focus for Daniel in FP1 was on setup work based on our findings from his return to the car in Austin. We explored some interesting directions which also translated over to FP2, and I think we found some performance. Tyres and understanding how best to optimise them on this low-grip surface with the track nature were a topic in FP1, but our general limitation was with the front end. Yuki returned for FP2, and having sat out for FP1, he played catch-up as he took some time to get a good feeling of the car. However, by the time of his soft compound short run, he was there. Daniel was a bit more comfortable with the car, having completed 30 more laps than Yuki, and was able to show that the car has potential here. Yuki will start from the back of the grid on Sunday because we needed to take a fresh Power Unit, but given the pace shown today, we believe Daniel can challenge for a spot in Q3 tomorrow, and we remain optimistic for the rest of the weekend."

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