

20th October 2023

2023 UNITED STATES GRAND PRIX – FRIDAY

Yuki Tsunoda (AT04-04, Car 22)**First Practice Session – Best lap: 1:37.104, pos. 13th, 25 laps****Qualifying - Best lap: (Q1) 1:35.913, (Q2) 1:35.697, pos. 11th**

“I’m happy with my performance, but I think that a minimal difference in my driving would’ve allowed me to get into Q3, so I feel frustrated. However, some teams in front of me have both their cars in the top 10, so I feel like we extracted the performance our car had today. P11 isn’t a bad position to start in on Sunday because it’s close to the points, so I’m looking forward to it. Our race pace this morning during FP1 didn’t look bad, so the potential is there for tomorrow and Sunday. It’s good to have Daniel back. It’s not easy to have one Free Practice session and immediately go into qualifying, because there’s not a lot of time to get up to speed, but he did a good job and has already given good feedback, and that’s why we were able to finish in P11.”

Daniel Ricciardo (AT04-02, Car 3)**First Practice Session – Best lap: 1:37.152, pos. 14th, 24 laps****Qualifying - Best lap: (Q1) 1:36.213, (Q2) 1:35.974, pos. 15th**

“It’s good to be back. There was nothing physically holding me back today, so it was about finding the feeling in the car and the setup. It’s hard to predict what we could’ve done with only one hour in the car this morning and then straight into qualifying, but the last lap was already feeling a little poor. It’s difficult to only have one session where you have to set the car up for what it is for qualifying. It was a shame because we were fighting a little bit from the start, but as the track started to ramp up, we plateaued a little bit. I feel I could’ve given more, but we have another chance tomorrow, and the wind direction might change, so that can play a role. We’ll try and see what we can discover tonight, to learn from it for tomorrow. I wish I wasn’t starting P15, but it’s nice to be back behind the wheel and result aside, it’s been an enjoyable day.”

Jonathan Eddolls (Chief Race Engineer)

“It’s been great to welcome Daniel back to the track and to drive our AT04 again from this weekend. He integrated himself and picked up exactly where he left off and was on the pace from the first lap. We split rear wing levels in FP1 across both cars, given there is a trade-off here between straight-line speed and downforce in the corners, and from this, we gathered good data. We also introduced some new aerodynamic parts, which is never straightforward during a Sprint weekend, but with the gaps between teams being so small, we need everything we can take. Both cars ran the medium and soft compound in FP1, and although neither driver achieved a perfectly clean lap on the soft tyre, we could see the updates were working, and we had the pace to compete in the midfield. Q1 was quite tight as we planned just two runs, with some other teams opting for three, but we did enough to make it through. It was yet another P11 for Yuki, this time 18 milliseconds from making it through, and without the dirty air from traffic in Sector 1 of his lap, he would’ve made Q3 comfortably. Daniel had the pace but suffered too much understeer on his final lap. This is very penalising for lap time here, and with the gaps between cars in the midfield being so tight, he ended up P15. We now shift focus to understanding how to re-optimize the car for the medium tyre for tomorrow’s Sprint Shootout.”

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