



Japanese Grand Prix

SUZUKA CIRCUIT



Race

CHARLES LECLERC

Pos	Time	Gap	Laps	FL	Lap
4	1.31'42"419	43"998	53	1'36"362	40
	---	Tyres at start	---	Medium	---
1st stop	---	Lap 17	---	Medium	---
2nd stop	---	Lap 34	---	Hard	---

CARLOS SAINZ

Pos	Time	Gap	Laps	FL	Lap
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6	1.31'48"642	50"221	53	1'36"187	40
	---	Tyres at start	---	Medium	---
1st stop	---	Lap 18	---	Medium	---
2nd stop	---	Lap 38	---	Hard	---

Weather: sunny, dry. Temperatures: air 27°, track 44-35°.

Plenty of points in the bag

Suzuka, 24 September 2023 – Scuderia Ferrari leaves Japan with 20 points, courtesy of a fourth place for Charles Leclerc and a sixth for Carlos Sainz, thereby closing the gap to Mercedes in the fight for second place in the Constructors’ classification. Today, on a track that was always going to be a stern test for the SF-23, the team managed to get everything out of its package with a tidy, error-free race.

Race. At the start, Charles maintained fourth place and Carlos had a brilliant getaway to get ahead of Sergio Perez for fifth. The two Ferrari stayed in line astern even after the first pit stop, which came on lap 17 for Charles and next time round for Carlos. In the second stint, the fight was joined with Mercedes. On lap 34 Leclerc made his second stop to switch to Hard tyres, followed in by Lewis Hamilton, while George Russell stayed out, adopting a one-stop strategy. Carlos was due to stop next time round, but the team worked out that Hamilton would have emerged ahead of the number 55 Ferrari so the Spaniard’s stint was lengthened so that he would have fresher Hards in the closing stages, when his rival’s tyres would suffer a performance drop. Charles passed Russell easily to retake fourth place, while Carlos made up the ten seconds that separated him from Hamilton, catching him just as Lewis came up behind his team-mate. The two Mercedes swapped places and two laps later Sainz also passed Russell to set off in pursuit of Hamilton. However, in the final three laps Carlos could not get past and had to settle for sixth place.

A break before Qatar. The Championship resumes in a fortnight's time with the second Qatar Grand Prix taking place at the Losail track on 8 October.



“

It was a good race and, even though I am not completely happy with a P4, we brought home the best possible result today as McLaren were strong and we just didn't have the pace to fight them harder. I had a fun battle with George (Russell), who did a great job in managing his tyres, especially the rears, which made it challenging to pass him. I took the opportunity to pass him in turn 1 when I saw a gap and it worked out well.

We improved our understanding of this car and what we've learned will be useful in the future. It will be interesting to see how our competitors progress in the upcoming races.

Charles Leclerc #16



“

I think today we had better pace than the result suggests. We had a very good start and we were quick straight away. During the first two stints I managed my tyres well and had good pace, but we got undercut by Lewis (Hamilton) after the second stop and that compromised my race. I tried to extend my stint to have better tyres at the end and gave everything to close the gap quickly. Unfortunately, the race was a couple of laps too short for me today and we had to settle for sixth.

As always, we will analyse the whole weekend when we are back home to see if we could have done something differently, but on the positive side I think the pace was there today. We will regroup and recharge our batteries before heading off to Qatar.

Carlos Sainz #55

“

First of all, congratulations to Red Bull for winning the Constructors' title. They have done a great job this season. As for our race, I think we did the most we could have done today, making up another four points on Mercedes.

At a track we knew would be difficult for our car, we always had our situation under control: Charles did well to manage his tyres, while after Carlos was undercut by Lewis (Hamilton), we decided to extend his stint on the Mediums, hoping to get the benefit towards the end. It's very close between ourselves, Mercedes and McLaren and the order can change depending on the track, as we saw in Singapore.

Obviously, we can't be happy with a fourth and a sixth place but, having gained some ground on our closest rivals, we will stay focussed and prepare to give our very best at the upcoming races.

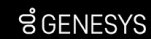
Frédéric Vasseur

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