



# Japanese Grand Prix

SUZUKA CIRCUIT



## QUALIFYING

**CHARLES LECLERC**

**CARLOS SAINZ**

**P4**

**1'29"542**

**P6**

**1'29"850**

*Weather: sunny, dry. Temperatures: air 26°, track 39-34°*

## Leclerc eight hundredths off the front row

Suzuka, 23 September 2023 – When the lights go out for the start of the Japanese Grand Prix tomorrow at 13 local time (6 CEST), Scuderia Ferrari will start from the second row with Charles Leclerc in fourth place and the third with Carlos Sainz, sixth. It is the third consecutive time that the Monegasque has missed out on the front row by a margin of thousandths: 84 to Oscar Piastri in second and 49 off third

placed Lando Norris. On his only run in Q3, it was a few tenths lost in the middle sector that prevented Carlos from being right behind his team-mate, so that Sergio Perez splits the Ferrari duo.

**Costly red flag.** The red flag triggered by Logan Sargeant at the beginning of Q1 worked against the Ferrari pair. The American hit the barriers at the final corner when Charles and Carlos were coming to the end of the second sector on what should have been the one lap needed to make the cut to Q2. It meant they had to go again with another set of new Soft tyres. Therefore, they only had one new set of these tyres for the next two phases, so they could only do a single run in Q3, whereas the other drivers had two sets available. In Q3, Charles posted a time of 1'29"542 on his only run, while Carlos stopped the clocks in 1'29"850.

**A long and complicated race.** Tomorrow's race is going to be tough, given that the hot conditions suggest more than one pit stop will be needed. Limiting tyre degradation will be vital, ready to deal with any scenario and making the most of starting ahead of the team's closest opponents in the battle for second in the Constructors' championship.



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*I'm happy with my lap, because it was the maximum we could have done today. We lost the most in sector 1, so we will look into that and try to understand what we can work on to improve. With the warm temperatures here this year, the risk of overheating is higher than usual, which means that tyre management and strategy will be key tomorrow.*

*Red Bull have been very fast all weekend and McLaren seem to have a similar race pace as we do, so it will be important to get the start right.*

**Charles Leclerc #16**



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*It was a difficult qualifying today. We knew before coming here that this track would expose our weakness a bit more and, with its high speed characteristics and long corners, we knew it was never going to be easy. I've tried many different things and set-ups since yesterday, with the aim of putting the car in a better place, but it clearly didn't work. I didn't do a good lap in Q3 either, so we'll start P6 tomorrow.*

*We'll fight to get some good points tomorrow and we'll be ready to grab any opportunities.*

**Carlos Sainz #55**

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*Today's result is not too bad, but our session started on the back foot in Q1 as we wasted a set of Softs because of the red flag triggered by Sargeant. It meant both our drivers had just one new set of tyres each for Q3 and so they had to give it their best shot on just one run and Charles managed to get within eight hundredths of the front row.*

*It's been clear from the start of the weekend that, apart from Red Bull, McLaren also has excellent pace, but ours was not bad on Friday and in qualifying, with lower temperatures than in the morning free practice, we were in better shape, even if it's generally much hotter than usual this year in Suzuka.*

*We are starting ahead of our closest rivals in the fight for second place in the Constructors' championship and we must make the most of our grid positions. So we will be looking for a clean start in order to run a strategy that allows us to look after our tyres. We continue to bring updates to our car, as we want to fight all the way to the very end.*

**Frédéric Vasseur**

Team Principal

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