Mexico City Grand Prix

AUTÓDROMO HERMANOS RODRÍGUEZ

Maranello, 25 October 2023 – The Formula 1 World Championship now moves south from Texas to tackle the second part of the triple header in the Americas, the Mexico City Grand Prix at the circuit named after the Rodriguez brothers, Pedro and Ricardo, the local heroes who both raced for Scuderia Ferrari in the Sixties. The Scuderia arrives in Mexico off the back of a podium finish for Carlos Sainz, which allowed the team to close the gap slightly on Mercedes in the Constructors' championship. The track has a long Formula 1 history, with 22 Grands Prix held here so far and it poses a unique challenge for teams and drivers.

Altitude. The peculiar characteristic of this track is the rarefied air, which is due to the fact it sits at 2,240 metres above sea-level, meaning that the cars run maximum downforce levels more usually seen at slow, twisty tracks like Monaco. However, the low air density produces less drag and that means the cars hit very high top speeds down the straights. It explains why this track witnessed the highest top speed –

372.5 km/h – ever recorded by a Formula 1 car. The second sector from turn 4 to 11 is toughest on tyres, being the twistiest with plenty of medium speed corners. The first sector is all about the power unit as it features two long straights, one of them on the start-finish straight. The third sector includes the atmospheric stadium section with four slow corners, as the drivers pass through the former baseball diamond surrounded by very high grandstands, packed with one of the noisiest crowds of the year. Two more tight right handers and the cars are back to the start of the next lap. There are three DRS zones.

Cooling. Cooling the car components is another challenge, also because of the altitude and it has to be taken into consideration for both the engine and the brakes. Last but not least, the forecast is for rather changeable weather in Mexico City this week, with varying temperatures and a chance of rain almost every day.

Video: Charles speaks about the special atmosphere in Mexico City

We left Austin with a different result to the finishing order past the flag, which promoted Carlos to a place on the podium, actually well deserved given how he managed his race. It has also allowed us to claw back some points in our pursuit of second place in the Constructors' classification.
However, in Mexico I want to see a more focussed team, as we cannot afford to get things wrong in how we assess the race evolution, as was the case in Austin. The altitude in Mexico makes for a unique race, as it influences various aspects of the car's behaviour from pure performance to tyre management.

With this event running to the traditional weekend timetable, we will be able to carry out all the necessary evaluation work over the three free practice sessions and I believe we will come up with targeted strategies that will allow us to do our best in what, on paper, can be quite a complicated race. All of us, Carlos and Charles included, must be able to grab any opportunities that come our way.

Frédéric Vasseur
Team Principal

Ferrari Stats

GP contested 1070
Seasons in F1 74
Debut Monaco 1950 (A. Ascari 2nd; R. Sommer 4th; L. Villoresi ret.)
Wins 243 (22.71%)
Pole positions 247 (23.08%)
Fastest race laps 259 (24.20%)
Total podiums 804 (25.05%)

Ferrari Stats Grand Prix held in Mexico

GP contested 21
Debut Mexico GP 1963 (J. Surtees ret.; L. Bandini ret.)
Wins 2 (9.52%)
Pole positions 3 (14.28%)
Fastest race laps 5 (23.81%)
Total podiums 11 (17.46%)

Three questions to...

CARLO SANTI, RACE PERFORMANCE MANAGER

1. The Mexico City race takes place at high altitude and therefore the air is rarefied. How does this affect the car and its performance?

It mainly affects the choice of downforce level. Even though the car is run with maximum load, this actually delivers a level of downforce comparable to that used in Monza, in other words equivalent to a low downforce set-up in “normal” atmospheric pressure. The low atmospheric pressure also has a significant effect on the overall cooling of the car, as the rarefied air means its cooling efficiency is much lower than normal and so the cars run with the highest cooling configuration of the season.

2. What are the challenges of the Mexico City track?

The grip level is the lowest we encounter all season because of the aforementioned low level of downforce as well as the fact the track is used very little during the year. This is challenging for the drivers, because while trying to go as fast as possible, they have to drive very precisely, to avoid locking up the brakes or spinning the wheels when looking for traction, or sliding in the corners, which overheats the tyres and leads to a further loss of grip. As for the set-up, one aims to make the car easy to drive, going for options that favour predictable behaviour and instil confidence, even if this might be at the cost of pure performance. Therefore, to help Carlos and Charles, it's probable they will be given, at least initially, a more forgiving car when it comes to balance.

3. And what about you? How did you join the Scuderia and what is the best thing about working here?

I always dreamed of working for Ferrari since I was a child, even if I took a rather tortuous route to get here. After getting my degree, I joined the FIAT Research Centre in Turin where I worked on vehicle dynamics for road cars. After five years, I finally got a job in motorsport, with a German company that was looking for a performance engineer on a prototype it was building to compete in WEC (World Endurance Championship) and ALMS (American Le Mans Series.) After four years in Germany, when the programme ended, I got an offer from Ferrari to work on the driving simulator which was then being developed in the vehicle dynamics department. The best thing about it? The fact that, for better or worse, Ferrari is expected to win. It's a mantra, but it's also a very strong incentive to try and improve every day.

Profile
Carlo Santi
Nationality: Italian
Born: 15/2/74
In: Verona (Veneto)

Mexico City Grand Prix: facts & figures

2. The billions of butterflies that migrate every year from Canada to Mexico and then back again. Usually, these beautiful multicoloured insects spend the months **from November to March** on the great high plains of Central America.

4.5. The volume in millions of cubic metres of the Cholula pyramid, the biggest in the world, far larger than those in Egypt. Mexico has far more pyramids than the North African country, with around 30 spread across the country, including the imposing ones at **La Venta** and **Kukulkan**, as well as the well preserved sites of **Teotihuacan, Monte Alban, Tepozteco** and **Calakmul** in the Yukatan region.

5+1. The Grands Prix this season named after a city rather than a country, in the order in which

they appear on the calendar: **Miami** (United States), **Mexico City** (Mexico), **Sao Paulo** (Brazil), **Las Vegas** (United States) and **Abu Dhabi** (United Arab Emirates). **Singapore** is unusual in being a city state, therefore the name refers to both a city and a country.

8. Mexico City's place in the rankings of the world's highest capital cities. At 2,240 metres above sea level, the Central American metropolis **sits behind Bolivia's capital, La Paz**, highest of all at 3,640 metres, then **Quito** (Ecuador, 2,850), **Bogota** (Colombia, 2,625), **Addis Ababa** (Ethiopia, 2,355), **Thimphu** (Bhutan, 2,334), **Asmara** (Eritrea, 2,325) and **Sana'a** (Yemen, 2,250). Mexico City was actually seventh on the list up until around 30 years ago, but it is gradually subsiding and has dropped 12 metres, thus putting it behind the Yemeni capital.

59. The number of varieties of corn found in Mexico and very colourful they are too. Apart from the most common shade of **yellow,** others are **bright red,** while one can also find varieties in **blue, green** and even **white.** However, they have all evolved from the same wild species, called **teosinte.** No other country in the world can claim to be more tied to corn, socially, economically and culturally, with it having been a staple of Mexican cooking for thousands of years.

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