Hungarian Grand Prix

HUNGARORING

QUALIFYING

CHARLES LECLERC		CARLOS SAINZ	
P6	1’16"992	**P11**	1'17"703

Weather: sunny, dry. Temperatures: air 26°, track 41°

Decisive thousandths in a disappointing Saturday

Budapest, 22 July 2023 – Qualifying was fought out to the nearest thousandth of a second from start to finish. The new format, which mandated the use of Hard tyres for Q1, Medium for Q2 and Soft for Q3, made the session even more unpredictable, with several regular “top ten” drivers not making it to the final phase, Carlos Sainz among them. Charles Leclerc will start from sixth on the grid, while his team-mate

lines up in eleventh place.

Nail biting. Q1 saw cars run almost constantly, given that the track was improving throughout, meaning that no driver could risk staying in the pits after a first run and everyone ran an extra set of new Hard tyres. Charles and Carlos got through to Q2 and set off for two timed laps on the Mediums. Once again, track evolution was significant and all drivers improved on their second run. Carlos failed to make the cut by mere thousandths, his time of 1’17”703 good enough for 11th place, just two thousandths of a second off tenth placed Fernando Alonso, while Sainz’s gap to third placed Max Verstappen was just 156 thousandths. In the final phase, on Soft tyres all the drivers went for two runs: Leclerc’s best time on his second run was a 1’16”992, good enough for sixth place on the grid.

Tyre management the key. It looks like being a very open race tomorrow and, as usual in Hungary, good tyre management will be crucial. Charles and Carlos both have the potential to make up places. The race runs over 70 laps, starting at 15 local time.

Although I am happy with my lap, we just weren’t fast enough. Our car is quite sensitive to wind and that also affected the outcome.
It’s difficult to say who our main competitors will be tomorrow, because, as we have seen this season, the pecking order is changing all the time. We know what our weak spots are and will work hard to improve them.
Tyre management is key on this track, if we manage that well we can have a good race.

Charles Leclerc #16

I’m not happy to miss out on Q3 for the first time this year by only two thousands. I haven’t been comfortable with the Medium compound all weekend and I paid the price today, in the tightest qualifying of the season so far.
It won’t be easy tomorrow with the traffic and the high degradation, but we’ll try everything to overtake and gain positions to bring home some good points.

Carlos Sainz #55

Our performance today has nothing to do with the new format, which is the same for everybody. We struggled to get a clear picture of our situation before the session, but what let us down is that we did not do a good job in terms of tyre management. In the end, with Charles we missed out on being one row further up the grid by less than a tenth. We were matching Lewis for all the session, but we could not do it at the end.

As for the race, it's hard to say how it will unfold, because teams were doing their long runs yesterday on different compounds. Track conditions tomorrow will be completely different to Friday which means we all go into the race a bit blind, since we had limited runs with high fuel this morning. Tomorrow, the opening lap will be crucial as it is quite difficult to overtake, as we saw in today's Formula 3 and Formula 2 races, when there were big DRS trains. It will be an interesting challenge and we will have a lot of work to do tonight.

Frédéric Vasseur
Team Principal

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