

FORMULA 1 GRAN PREMIO DE MÉXICO™

October 27th, 2017.

NEW F1 CARS DESTROY LAP RECORDS AT AUTÓDROMO HERMANOS RODRIGUEZ

Mixed fortunes for Mexico's two drivers in opening practice

- Mercedes men make their mark again
- Alfonso stops the clock – the wrong way
- Top 6 in championship are top 6 in session

Mexico City, Mex. – All it took was 45 minutes of Formula 1 practice for the lap records at the Autódromo Hermanos Rodríguez to be shattered ahead of Sunday's Mexican Grand Prix.

Mercedes is the only team to have been on pole or won since F1 returned to Mexico in 2015, and once again it was Mercedes who stole the Friday headlines – although this time it was not world champion-elect Lewis Hamilton who came out on top.

With just half of the 90-minute session gone his teammate Valtteri Bottas went out on Pirelli's ultra-soft tyre compound and set a time of 1 minute 17.824 seconds – more than eight-tenths of a second faster than the previous best time, the 1:18.704 that earned pole position for Hamilton in 2016.

Bottas was also the hardest-working man in the 90 minutes, completing 42 laps as the teams evaluated Pirelli's three tyre choices for the weekend: soft, supersoft or ultrasoft, being seen in action in Mexico for the first time.

FORMULA 1 GRAN PREMIO DE MÉXICO™

It was a session where the teams went in two by two: Bottas and Hamilton were top, separated by just over half a second, then came the Red Bulls of Max Verstappen, only one-tenth behind Hamilton, and Daniel Ricciardo, while Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel and Kimi Räikkönen were fifth and sixth. That meant the top six drivers in the championship once again filled the top six places in a session.

Mexico also had two drivers of her own on track this morning, and seventh-fastest was the man the local fans all want to see – Sergio Pérez of Force India, the best in the field outside the big three teams, as he has been so often this year.

Checo's best time was a 1:19.240, and his performance was in stark contrast with temporary teammate Alfonso Celis. The team's 21-year-old reserve driver, enjoying another F1 opportunity just for the opening session, brought the track action to a halt for around seven minutes when he hit the barrier at the outside of Turn 16 hard as he exited the Foro Sol complex and knocked off the car's rear wing.

'It's pretty exciting to be in front of my home crowd,' said a rueful Celis. 'It's just a bit disappointing that we couldn't show the performance we had today. But it is what it is. We will wake up stronger and work harder.'

'I didn't change my approach. I know my capabilities and I know how close I can get. I think I have a lot of pace, and I just wanted to prove that today. But I lost the rear on the last corner. I think it happened to many cars, but to me, the car was quite pointy after the first runs with the adjustments we did. Unfortunately I couldn't catch it.'

Celis, who ended up 19th of the 20 drivers, was one of several drivers to use the 'halo' device which is being introduced to F1 in 2018. He was also one of four 'part-timers' in the session. Of the others, Italian Antonio Giovinazzi was best in 15th spot for Haas, with F2 champion Charles Leclerc of Monaco 16th for Sauber and Indonesian Sean Gelael 17th for Toro Rosso.

FORMULA 1 GRAN PREMIO DE MÉXICO™

New Zealander Brendon Hartley, who won the major sportscar race here six weeks ago for Porsche, was 18th in the second Toro Rosso in which he is having just his second Grand Prix start. Hartley briefly rolled to a halt, complaining that his engine had stopped, but was able to bring the car back to pit lane.

The only driver not to post a competitive time was McLaren's Stoffel Vandoorne. The team spotted 'anomalies' in the data coming from the car and decided to conduct a thorough investigation.

#MexicoGP #F1ESTA

For more information follow us at our social media:



Press Contacts:

NKrush
Liz Brooks
liz@nkrush.com

Mexican Grand Prix
Daniela Mirassou
dmirassou@cie.com.mx

About the FORMULA 1 GRAN PREMIO DE MÉXICO™:

The top category of motorsport has returned to Mexico, after twenty-three years of absence, a pioneer of major sporting events in our country. With a validity from 2015 to 2019, the renewed Autodromo Hermanos Rodríguez is the scene of the return of F1ESTA to the country, with a track of the highest world level.

In its first two editions (2015 and 2016), more than 375 thousand people witnessed the race, becoming the second with more spectators worldwide (after Great Britain).

FORMULA 1 GRAN PREMIO DE MÉXICO™

To date, FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX OF MEXICO™ has generated more than 22 thousand jobs and has achieved an economic spill of 1,119 MDD (24.841 billion pesos).

One more year, Mexico will be positioned worldwide during the contest, which will take place from October 27 to 29, after being decorated in its first two editions as the Best Event of the Year by FIA and FOM, the highest authorities of the Professional motor racing worldwide.

For more information on FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX OF MEXICO™ visit: <http://www.mexicogp.mx/>

