



VETTEL EQUALS NIGEL MANSELL'S RECORD WITH PIRELLI P ZERO YELLOW

Abu Dhabi, November 12th, 2011 – Another record has fallen to newly-crowned champion Sebastian Vettel. The German driver equalled Nigel Mansell's record of 14 pole positions in one season (from 1992) by going fastest in qualifying at the Yas Marina circuit, with a time of 1m38.481s. This was comfortably quicker than the time he set to take pole last year – 1m39.394s – before going on to win the championship.

With the P Zero White medium tyres and P Zero Yellow soft tyres nominated for the race, the top runners used the medium tyre to get through the first qualifying session, in order to take advantage of the extra pace – around 1.2 seconds per lap – of the soft tyre in the remaining sessions.

Before qualifying, McLaren completed their domination of the free practice sessions when Lewis Hamilton went fastest with a time of 1m38.976s on the P Zero Yellow soft in free practice three. This time was set in much warmer conditions than for qualifying and the race, which both have a start time of 17:00 and are characterised by falling temperatures and light levels.

All of the drivers used the P Zero Yellow soft tyres from the second qualifying session onwards, which was briefly interrupted to clear up some debris from a broken bollard.

During the all-important third session, Nico Rosberg was the only driver to go out on the P Zero White medium tyre. He did one out lap with the medium and will start from seventh place tomorrow, having set his fastest lap on the soft tyre. Force India driver Paul Di Resta did not set a time and so will have a free choice of tyres at the start of the race. Vettel's final lap on the P Zero Yellow tyre was enough to clinch his 14th pole of the year and the 29th of his career, equalling the total number of pole positions set by the great Juan Manuel Fangio. A win tomorrow would keep the German on course to equal Michael Schumacher's record of the most number of wins in one season as well.

Pirelli's motorsport director Paul Hembery commented: "Today was probably the tightest battle for pole position that we have seen all year. We saw from free practice yesterday that we were set for a very close fight between Red Bull Racing and McLaren and this turned out to be the case, with both teams making the most of the soft tyres in particular. In fact, Lewis Hamilton's time in qualifying two would have been good enough for pole position had he set it in the final session, which is a good omen for the race tomorrow. From what we have seen so far, tyre degradation is not a big issue here in Abu Dhabi, which should allow the drivers just to go as fast as they can and concentrate on their battles with each other. What's interesting is that our lap times here are 2.2 seconds quicker on average than they were during our first Abu Dhabi test last November, which just underlines the phenomenal pace of development in Formula One."

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