



VETTEL CLAIMS POLE WITH PIRELLI AFTER ACTION-PACKED SPA QUALIFYING

Spa-Francorchamps, August 27th, 2011 – World Championship leader Sebastian Vettel has taken pole position by half a second at Spa-Francorchamps, carrying on from where he left off after claiming pole at the last grand prix in Hungary before the summer break.

It was the Red Bull Racing driver's ninth pole position of the year as well as his very first pole at Spa, using the Pirelli P Zero Yellow soft tyres.

As usual in Belgium, the action during qualifying centred around the tyre choice and weather conditions, which remained uncertain throughout Q1 with scattered clouds and a damp surface. The skies darkened as the initial 20-minute session ended, with rain falling in the closing minutes and an ambient temperature of 16 degrees centigrade.

The rain persisted but did not increase in intensity throughout Q2, which was interrupted by a red flag. As was the case throughout Q1, the drivers used the P Zero Blue intermediate tyres during the whole of Q2.

During the final 10-minute battle for pole, all remaining drivers headed out on the P Zero Yellow soft tyre despite plenty of standing water that was still on the track. The surface dried rapidly throughout the closing minutes, with Vettel claiming pole position in the final seconds after a duel with McLaren's Lewis Hamilton – who will line up second on the grid tomorrow ahead of Red Bull Racing's Mark Webber.

Toro Rosso driver Jaime Alguersuari claimed his best-ever qualifying position in sixth, beating his previous benchmark of seventh in China this year. Bruno Senna, driving his debut grand prix for Lotus Renault, will line up seventh tomorrow.

During the final practice session this morning, which was characterised by very wet weather from start to finish, many drivers limited their running in order to save their allocation of four sets of P Zero Blue intermediate tyres and three sets of P Zero Orange wet tyres for qualifying and the race. The P Zero Orange wet tyre was predominantly used during the morning session, which is capable of clearing around 60 litres of water per second at full speed.

Pirelli's motorsport director Paul Hembery commented: "This was a tense and unpredictable qualifying session, which was dominated by strategy as the teams tried to read the conditions, which were changing all the time. The intermediate tyres showed their versatility despite the changing weather in Q1 and Q2, while in Q3 the P Zero Yellow soft tyre demonstrated its speed and grip on a damp surface. Spa is one of the truly great circuits but a huge challenge for both the drivers and the tyres. With the way that qualifying has worked out we're set for some fantastic battles all the way down the grid tomorrow."

In contrast to the weather in Belgium so far, tomorrow's race is expected to be dry from start to finish.

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