



HAMILTON SETS THE PACE IN HUNGARY

Budapest, 29 July 2011 – McLaren driver Lewis Hamilton set the pace on the opening day of on-track action at the tight and twisty Hungaroring, where the cars run with maximum downforce to help generate the most grip.

The Englishman went fastest during both free practice sessions, using the Pirelli P Zero Yellow soft tyre in the morning and the P Zero Red supersoft tyre in the afternoon. His fastest time of the day was set on the P Zero Red tyre: 1m21.018s, two-tenths of a second quicker than the Ferrari of Fernando Alonso and a similar cushion over his own fastest time in the morning.

The 4.381-kilometre circuit became steadily quicker over the course of the day as the track rubbered in, while temperatures also climbed to 22 degrees centigrade ambient after a cloudy start to the day.

The teams used the two sessions to assess the main differences between the soft and the supersoft tyre with different fuel loads. The supersoft turned out to be just under a second quicker than the soft tyre under equal circumstances, underlining the fact that the two compounds are quite evenly matched on this tight and twisty circuit. In order to have a valid comparison in similar conditions, some of the frontrunners swapped between the soft and supersoft tyres towards the end of the second session. They were particularly looking at the degradation of the rear tyres, which are put under heavy load due to the traction needed out of the numerous slow corners that characterise the Hungaroring.

The information that the teams gained will help them to formulate their qualifying strategies tomorrow, with drivers considering whether or not it will be best to start the race on the softer or the harder tyre, depending on when they plan to make their pit stops and how hot the weather will be. The forecast tomorrow is for dry weather, with temperatures becoming hotter over the weekend.

Pirelli's Motorsport Director Paul Hembery commented: "It's been an interesting day of free practice, where as we expected, we've seen that there is about eight-tenths of a second of difference between the soft and the supersoft tyre: a combination that we also used in Monaco and Canada. Nonetheless, the supersoft clearly does have a small advantage, which will mean that those aiming for pole position are going to use it. Depending on the track and weather conditions, I think we'll see about 15 laps out of the supersoft tyres during the race and around 25 laps from the soft tyres: we saw them being used for 24 laps today. There are a wide variety of cars looking very competitive, which is going to make the order in qualifying hard to predict. But after analysing our tyre data tonight, we should have a better idea of where everybody is at."

PIRELLI FACT OF THE DAY

The Hungaroring is the slowest permanent circuit of the Formula One season. While the top speed reached is 305kph, the average speed is only 194kph, while the average speed through the corners is 132kph. The longest straight is 908m, and there is a comparatively short time loss penalty in the pit lane of 19 seconds.

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