

THE OFFICIALS NEWSLETTER

















HOSPITALITY



Helping to facilitate all the care and feeding tasks for the 580 volunteer Marshals are the 33 members of the Hospitality Crew, run by Chief Katherine Altmeyer and Motorsports COTA Operations Alyssa Clark and Lauren Oliver. They work out of a humongous tent up in Lot M, surrounded by satellite tents, sheds, portables and the like. They start at 4 a.m. with the marshals arriving within the hour.

You'd think the crew would all be local, but nae. This is the third year for one gal from Cape Town, South Africa, and there's another two marshals from Mexico.

After the hot breakfast and morning meetings, it takes nine school busses to deliver the marshals to their various assignments.



The Hospitality Crew works with a catering company for the food. They put together the hot breakfast and Hospitality facilitates. The box lunch, consisting of sandwich, chips, fruit and cookie, is put together, crated and loaded onto various vehicles for delivery to all the corners, pits and paddocks. Vegetarian requests made on MSR are honored. Different vehicles go to assigned locations via specified routes, due to car pass and people pass requirements for the various areas. Foot traffic can be a problem on any of the routes and roads, especially as the weekend progresses.



If they're lucky, their TV monitor will work and be re-installed, so they can watch track activity during their down time. The marshals may also have mid-morning and afternoon down time sufficient to visit nearby Fan Zones and viewing areas.

After their hot dinner meal, the Marshals load up on the school busses or trundle off to their assigned camp grounds. The crew's day ends around 8 p.m.







TIRE UPDATE (courtesy of Pirelli)



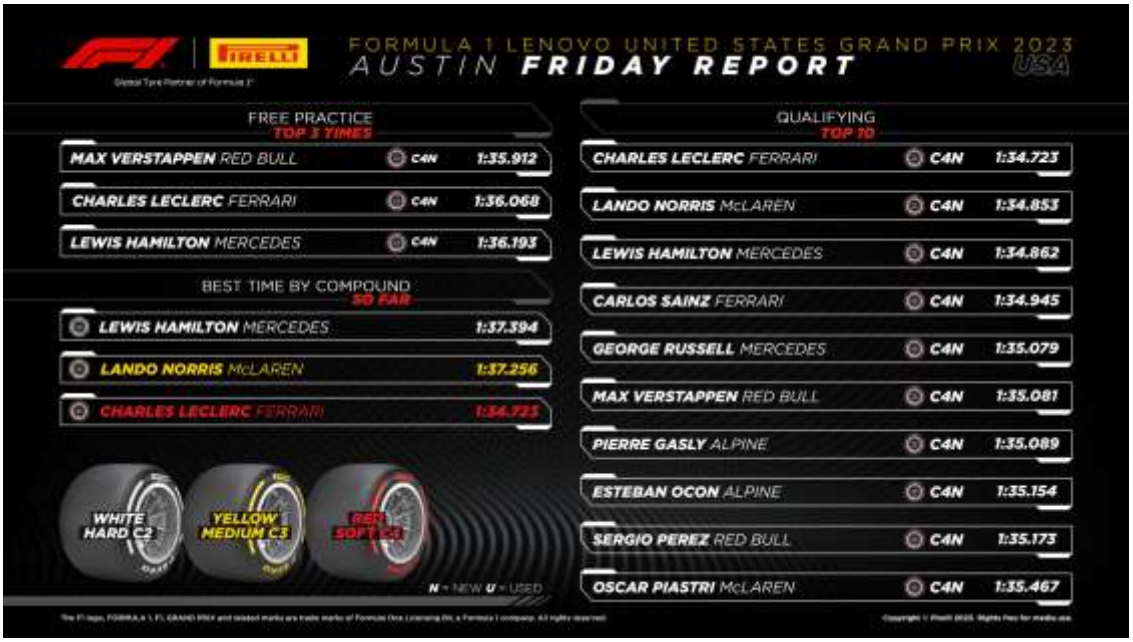
Another Sprint weekend, the fourth of the season and the second in a row after Lusail. It means that, on a track that is particularly demanding for the tires, the teams only had an hour of free practice to set up the cars for the rest of the weekend and to evaluate tire behavior over a long run. The track proved to be in good condition right from the first session, with times tumbling down gradually as the cars put in the laps and, despite very high temperatures, with the track reaching 45 degrees C, times were a second quicker than in the same session last year.

Simone Berra - Chief Engineer: "The Sprint weekends always pose an additional challenge for everyone, because there is less time to evaluate car and tire performance before the teams have to tackle qualifying. That is also true for us, because, objectively, we have far less data with which to predict tire behavior over the rest of the weekend. However, today we still managed to gather sufficient information relating to all three compounds, especially the Medium and Hard, with which the teams did pretty representative long runs, both with a full fuel load in race trim as well as with a medium fuel level. Both compounds seemed to work well in terms of performance and consistency. As was easily predictable, the Soft seems to be only viable for a short stint, so its use in the races would only be possible in certain situations, for example a Safety Car period towards the end.

"One important aspect is that none of the three compounds showed any signs of graining despite the very high temperatures, with the track comfortably exceeding the 40 degrees C mark. Tomorrow we can expect a particularly busy Saturday with the Shootout kicking things off, followed by the Sprint over a distance of 19 laps. A fortnight ago in Qatar, the choice of which compound to use for the Sprint was pretty well balanced, with twelve drivers starting on the Medium and eight on the Soft, the latter taking a risk on the Saturday to try and gain an advantage in the following day's race and this is a scenario that could be played out again tomorrow afternoon."

F1 ACADEMY

For the first time ever, the young women competing in the F1 Academy were able to race each other on the same track and in the same conditions as their Formula 1 colleagues. COTA is actually hosting the seventh and final round of the inaugural season of the women's series, for which Pirelli is the sole tire supplier. Marta Garcia (Prema Racing) took pole position in the first qualifying session, while that honor fell to Jessica Edgar (Rodin Carlin) in the second one. The first two races of the season finale take place tomorrow, Saturday, the first over 12 laps (maximum 30 minutes + 1 lap) and the second over 8 laps (maximum 20 minutes +1 lap).



LYNNE'S WANDERINGS



Friday was the first official on-track day. The three support series were on track, as well as Formula 1 which had a one-hour practice, and afternoon qualifying session. In the morning the support races were not supported by any visual or digital information feeds so it was difficult to know who did what or when. A revised schedule was available early mid-morning, having corrected times for each Friday event.

I have to applaud the efforts of the 580 volunteer marshals this weekend in this heat. Hats off to all of you. You stand at your posts, many in heavy overalls, many with helmets, and many not able to move around much during sessions. You board the 4:40 a.m. bus from your Worker hotel daily to the track in the dark, have breakfast while it's still dark, work at your stations all day, with your only downtime being when the. cars aren't on track. You get a box lunch and water during the day delivered to your post. You have dinner at the Marshals tent, and either board the busses in the dark back to your hotels around 8:30 p.m. or walk to your nearby RV park or campground. The campground can accommodate 150, and with all the RV's, more than 300 Marshals are camping.



After the morning support series were ending, the Pit Lane started to come alive. The teams all had a car out front of their garages, either posing while getting last minute spit and polish, or Pit Stop Practice. And the inevitable Pit Walks and VIPS filled up, making it difficult to get good unobstructed photos. New grandstands were added this year, so there's every possibility that last year's record-breaking 440,000 weekend attendance will be surpassed. Wait and see.

The first TV monitor/big screen coverage came with F1 practice, which started at 12:30 p.m. It was 90F. The air quality started to deteriorate and an Air Quality Alert was issued, through Saturday 7 pm. Max Verstappen/Red Bull started and finished the session on top. Also leading at one point were Lewis Hamilton/Mercedes and Alex Albon/Williams. All 20 drivers were on course, and there was almost no drama. There were some bobbles, and some complained about bumps. The Session ended with Verstappen, Hamilton and Charles Leclerc/Ferrari as the top three. America's Logan Sargeant/Williams ended up 11th, and Daniel Ricciardo/AlphaTauri was 14th.

For the afternoon support series, the sun was full on in the Pit Lane area, with the only shade being slight on the F1 Timing Stands. It was brutal. I was in the Pit Lane for the Masters Historic Series, which had three Red Flags and three Green Flag starts. After the last Red Flag the session was ended. Thirty of the 31 cars went out, but not all took the checkered flag. I got to see the Pit Marshals in action putting a Masters car from the crane hook onto the flat bed. It all went fairly smoothly and quickly.



There was another car in which I was interested - No.29 Green & Gold 1966 Brabham BT-18. This was an F2 car, running treaded tires - the only car in the field with such tires, which it is required to run in this series to be authentic. The driver is Kyle Collins, a 23-year old, recent Maritime Academy graduate, probably the youngest driver in the field, in a series which caters to older and more mature drivers.

I know now it's an official F1 weekend as I've seen Sir Jackie Stewart in his traditional green plaid trousers, leading a tour group.

Drivers aren't the only ones wearing helmets these days. Out on the corners, the Intervention Marshals are required to wear them whenever cars are on course. This has been in effect for some time.

Starting last year, the Pit Lane Marshals and Scrutineers are required to wear helmets for all F1 sessions. For all other series, the helmet is optional in this severe heat, but otherwise must be replaced by the official neon lime green hat, which has great visibility.

Something else I noticed in Pit Lane - the overhead camera which traveled with regularity and speed up and down the Pit Lane on high wires. Also on high wires, behind the grandstands facing the Pit straight was a Zip Line setup, which seemed to be going non-stop all afternoon.



I had a nice chat with Guenther Steiner, Team Principal of Haas.

I asked him about the teams' choice/input for the female F1 Academy driver next year, when each F1 team is aligned with a driver, who will wear the F1 team's livery and car graphics. Guenther said he's having a meeting this weekend with Susie Wolff, F1 Academy Managing Director. The way it's set up, the teams don't get to choose just any female driver. They select from a pool of drivers offered by the Academy, vetted, who have met certain qualifications set by the Academy. Guenther does not know who is in the pool.

Gunther did mention, before I had a chance to ask, that there's interest in having an American driver with Haas, but he doesn't know if any Americans are in the pool. Stay tuned.

For those Marshals who are SCCA members and know of Eric Prill as SCCA's VP of Road Racing, Former F Production Champion, and winner of the Mark Donohue Award, you'll be seeing him in a different role this weekend. He's here at the USGP F1 COTA as an observer, a role he admits is something new for him. He's used to administering and being in charge of events. Eric will spend a lot of time in Race Control, and meeting with FIA folks

In the afternoon for F1 qualifying, Charles Leclerc/Ferrari has pole, with Lando Norris/McLaren second and Lewis Hamilton/Mercedes third. Max Verstappen/Red Bull had his fastest lap deleted due to track limits. The trio set the grid for Sunday's race. Saturday's Shootout is a separate session.

There was a Mikey sighting in the afternoon. Michael Andretti made a beeline for the McLaren Hospitality and upon exiting had a group of folks, including Gil deFerran with him. No further word on any progress towards Andretti's quest for a F1 team.



Leaving the track Friday night while the sun was setting, there was a huge long queue going for miles waiting to get into the track for the Friday night concert by The Killers. Saturday's concert is Queen & Adam Lambert





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