

Beat: Sports

2016 Japanese Grand Prix - Saturday

Suzuka

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USPA NEWS - SENSATIONAL SUZUKA SATURDAY FOR SILVER ARROWS - Nico Rosberg today took his 30th career pole position "" his 3rd in a row at the Suzuka Circuit and 8th of the 2016 season so far. Lewis Hamilton completed a 10th Silver Arrows front row lockout of the season in P2.

Nico Rosberg -

I've been feeling great all weekend, having felt incredibly comfortable in the car. It gave me the confidence to push even harder at the end of Q3 which meant I pulled out a great lap to recover pole from Lewis. Suzuka is a really difficult circuit because of the varying corners which means it's even more difficult to get the car set up just right.

It's great to start from P1, but as we've realised, it's not the most important thing this year as you also need to get the start and the race strategy spot on. Lewis will push hard and so will the Ferraris and the Red Bulls. It's clear that both these teams looked very strong on the high fuel. It will be an exciting race tomorrow, in front of Suzuka's amazing fans. I'm definitely looking forward to it!

Lewis Hamilton -

This weekend has not been that easy. I'd been veering one way with the setup of the car and then had to shuffle back going into qualifying and it felt like I was in no-mans-land as we approached Q1. With that in mind, I'm extremely happy that I was able to bring it back to that kind of gap. Of course, starting on pole is always a good thing but let's hope the work we've been doing on the starts pays off. It's also still hard to know at this stage what the weather is going to do but I'll do the best I can tomorrow.

Toto Wolff, Head of Mercedes-Benz Motorsport -

What an incredibly close qualifying, just 13 thousandths between our drivers after their final laps; it was a great showdown. Nico has looked strong all weekend but didn't put the lap together in the first run of Q3, so he had to put everything on the line to claim pole. As for Lewis, he has been a fraction behind Nico in most sessions, so it was a fantastic performance to make such a fight of it in Q3 and come so close to pole.

It was another session that shows what is so good about their rivalry: in Singapore, Nico was the one with the advantage; in Sepang, Lewis had the upper hand; and now it's so closely matched. They just keep pushing each other to new heights every week and pushing the limits of what the car can do. Looking ahead to tomorrow, we know it will be a close race.

The gaps are getting smaller at the end of the season, like we expected, and with Vettel's grid penalty, both Red Bulls will be very close on track "" as well as Kimi starting from P3. Their long runs were extremely competitive yesterday, so it will be a tough race and important to take our opportunities. The weather could also play its part, so we will need to prepare diligently and execute our race plan perfectly.

Paddy Lowe, Executive Director (Technical) -

It was a terrifically close competition for pole between Lewis and Nico. Just 0.013 splitting the two of them when it came down to the final run in Q3. Lewis had the initial advantage with the first run at the start of the final session but it was Nico who took pole position in the last few seconds. It was very tense because it was also very close with Red Bull and Ferrari, all six cars crossing within 0.400 seconds of each other. We're very happy to claim a 10th front row lockout of the season at this track, one of the most iconic of the entire Formula One season. We're looking forward to the race tomorrow, where the most difficult job still has to be done.

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