

F1 – Webber Matches Pole Record in Abu Dhabi



Red Bull driver Mark Webber today equalled the record number of pole positions achieved by an Australian driver by securing his second of the season and thirteenth of his career. Webber drove an incredible lap to take first place on the grid ahead of his team mate Sebastian Vettel for the second time in 3 races and joins Sir Jack Brabham at the top of the list of Australian pole-sitters. On a day where the pace of the Red Bulls looked under threat to the challenge of Mercedes, Webber managed to put in a near-perfect lap while Vettel recovered from a small mistake on turn 1 to take second on the grid. Nico Rosberg had to make do with third behind the Red Bull lockout, but his team mate Lewis Hamilton spun on his second timed lap after a technical problem with his car, meaning he couldn't improve on his 4th place.

There were surprises in qualifying when Force India driver Adrian Sutil was knocked out at Q1, having to settle for 18th on the grid, while Fernando Alonso failed to reach Q3 for the first time this season. The Ferrari has fallen off the pace in the second half of the season, although Alonso's team mate Felipe Massa fared a little better, qualifying three positions ahead of Alonso in 8th.

Elsewhere in the top ten, Kimi Raikkonen qualified in 5th despite threats not to drive because of a pay dispute. His team mate Romain Grosjean could only manage 7th, with the Sauber of Nico Hulkenberg splitting the two Lotuses. Daniel Ricciardo, who will be partnering Vettel next season at Red Bull, managed to squeeze into 10th while Sergio Perez continued his promising run of form with 9th place.

Scot Paul di Resta comfortably outqualified his team mate and will start in 12th place behind Alonso. The Force India driver was three-tenths off Q3 and is showing a much-needed upturn in performance as his future in F1 hangs in the balance. With three races left in the season, di Resta is 12 points ahead of his team mate but faces a tough battle to hold on to 10th place in the Drivers' Championship, with Hulkenberg only a point behind in what is arguably a faster and much-improved car. Speaking after qualifying, di Resta said: "I am pretty satisfied with P12, which puts us in a reasonable position for tomorrow. I'm feeling good in the car, which has worked well all weekend. For tomorrow I'm optimistic that we can be up there with a good chance of picking up some points. The car is responding well and I also think we are more suited to the race than qualifying. There's a long race ahead of us, but we will work hard to put together a good strategy tonight and try to push our way forward in the race."

Full Qualifying Results

- 1 WEBBER 1:39.957
- 2 VETTEL (+0.118)
- 3 ROSBERG (+0.462)
- 4 HAMILTON (+0.544)
- 5 RAIKKONEN (+0.585)
- 6 HULKENBERG (+0.619)
- 7 GROSJEAN (+1.040)
- 8 MASSA (+1.058)
- 9 PEREZ (+1.111)
- 10 RICCIARDO (+1.154)
- 11 ALONSO (Q2)
- 12 DI RESTA (Q2)
- 13 BUTTON (Q2)
- 14 VERGNE (Q2)
- 15 MALDONADO (Q2)
- 16 BOTTAS (Q2)
- 17 GUTIERREZ (Q3)
- 18 SUTIL (Q3)
- 19 VAN DER GARDE (Q3)
- 20 BIANCHI (Q3)*

21 PIC (Q3)

22 CHILTON (Q3)

*Five-place grid penalty for a gearbox change, will start 22nd