

Beat: Sports

2017 Belgian Grand Prix - Saturday

Spa-Francorchamps

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USPA NEWS - Lewis to start the 200th race of his career from pole position

Lewis claimed his 68th career pole position "" equaling Michael Schumacher's all-time record

Valtteri will start tomorrow's Belgian Grand Prix from P3 on the grid

It is Lewis' seventh pole of the 2017 season and his Q3 time marks a new track record at Spa-Francorchamps

Today's result marks the ninth pole position for the Silver Arrows in 2017

Both drivers completed one run on the SuperSoft compound tyres in Q1, then two UltraSoft runs in Q2 and Q3

Lewis Hamilton -

I'm really happy and grateful. The past few weeks have been great and I've carried the positive energy from my holiday into this weekend. Until I crossed the line and got the pole I hadn't really realised that I had matched Michael's record. It's crazy to think that in 1996, when I was eleven years old, I came here to watch Michael - and now I've equalled his record. I'm honoured to be up there with him now and starting the second half of the season this strong is an amazing feeling. I have not really had any bad laps this weekend. But it's going to be tight tomorrow. Ferrari's race pace looked good yesterday, so I think it will be a lot closer tomorrow. The rundown to Turn 1 is short, but pole is still the best position to start from. I will try to make it work tomorrow.

Valtteri Bottas -

First of all, congratulations to Lewis for his 68 poles, that's a mega achievement. Unfortunately, I didn't have the pace to fight for the pole today. I'm not sure about the reasons; I'm slightly confused as to why I haven't been able to get closer. We will need to look for a few more answers in the data. The balance in the car felt good, but I was lacking grip, so I was particularly struggling in the high-speed corners of sector two. I felt a lot more comfortable in the car with high fuel, so that's good for tomorrow. Driving the 2017 car around Spa is mega "" it's so quick, I've never experienced anything like it. We are both starting in the top three, so as a team we will still try to achieve our target and that is a 1-2.

Toto Wolff -

That was a mighty lap from Lewis and one worthy of equalling Michael's pole position record. Lewis has been on top form all weekend and it was a very special moment for him to take pole position number 68. It puts him in the strongest position for tomorrow's race "" but it's only the first step. On Valtteri's side, it has been a trickier weekend for him. We made some changes to the car after FP3 and he made a step forward with every run in qualifying, finding more and more time. It was looking very close for the front row, then Sebastian got the tow from Kimi in the final sector that gave him the advantage. But overall, a good pair of starting positions and a good weekend so far, with our new specification engine performing well. But the hardest bit is still to come.

Andrew Shovlin -

We knew it would be a tough session with Ferrari very close to us in terms of ultimate performance. So it was a question of extracting every last bit of performance from the car in order to take pole position and we managed to do that. Congratulations first of all to Lewis, it's an incredible achievement to equal Michael's record. Lewis has been happy with the car all weekend, feeling very comfortable and progressively building up to that amazing lap in Q3. It hasn't been so straightforward for Valtteri, who was some way off in the cooler practice conditions this morning. But we made some changes to the car and he was finding time in himself throughout qualifying; even so, there is still a gap between the two cars, so we will go through the data to understand where that time is. Ferrari showed very

impressive pace on the ultra-soft tyre during Friday's long runs and we are expecting a close race. We have chosen a lighter wing level than them, which will help us both attacking and defending in the first and third sectors, but it will be a close battle "" as we can expect for the rest of the year "" and we will be fighting as hard as we can.

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