

Las Vegas GP qualifying: Antonelli fastest, but Verstappen starts on pole after penalty

Description

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Las Vegas GP qualifying ended with Kimi Antonelli fastest on the road and Max Verstappen on pole on the grid. Antonelliâ??s 1:33.893 was undone by a five-place penalty for power unit changes, so the Red Bull driver starts first for the race at 8pm local time on Saturday 21 November, which is noon on Sunday 22 November in Singapore.

Las Vegas GP qualifying: Antonelli quickest, Verstappen inherits pole

Antonelli beat everyone on the Strip, but his lap only decided the order on paper. The five-place drop sends the Mercedes driver from first to sixth, and the front of the grid shuffles up behind him.

Verstappenâ??s 1:34.151 was 0.258s off Antonelli, which is enough to put him on pole. George Russell was third fastest in 1:34.224, 0.331s back, and Lando Norris was fourth in 1:34.244. Isack Hadjar took fifth in 1:34.592.

Verstappen called it his best session of the weekend. Antonelli was less sure about his own run, saying he struggled to get the tyres into the right window and did not have the feeling with the car that he wanted.



Source: Formula 1 official website (formula1.com)

Starting grid: Verstappen, Russell and Norris lead the way

With Antonelli moved back, Verstappen starts on pole with Russell alongside on the front row. Norris is third and Hadjar fourth. Arvid Lindblad starts fifth, a career-best grid slot for the youngster, ahead of Antonelli in sixth.

Russell has now started on the front row for the third race in a row. He said that is still a strong position to be in, and he also described the slipstream effect around the circuit as something he could not quite get his head around.

The tow was the talking point of the afternoon. Antonelli credited the slipstream on his final lap for his pole time, and Mercedes boss Toto Wolff said he had no idea how the lap times had come together. On a track with such long straights, running close behind another car was worth a huge amount.

Norris warns of McLaren straight-line deficit

McLaren qualified well but were open about where they are losing time. Norris said the team is losing too much on the straights, particularly in the final sector, and he had already warned before the weekend that Sunday could be a tough day.

Oscar Piastri was seventh fastest in 1:34.899, but a 10-place penalty for a fifth internal combustion engine drops him to 17th. He still believes overtaking will be possible even without the straight-line speed.

Ferrari struggle and the Q1 and Q2 casualties

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It was a bruising session for Ferrari. Charles Leclerc was eliminated in Q2 in 11th and Lewis Hamilton in 12th, and Leclerc said he did not think the team would be able to fight much in the race. Hamilton said that without those issues, they should have been in Q3.

Rafael Camara missed out on Q2 by less than a tenth of a second after a spin at Turn 1. Sergio Perez, Fernando Alonso, Lance Stroll, Valtteri Bottas and Ollie Bearman also went out in Q1. Bearman starts last because of his own grid penalty, so his result on the road matters little.

Carlos Sainz also carries a 10-place penalty for power unit changes. Lindblad was involved in an unsafe pit release before Q2, and the stewards were set to look at it after the session, though the F1 report did not give an outcome at the time of writing.



Source: Formula 1 official website (formula1.com)

What to watch in Singapore time on Sunday

For fans in Singapore, the race starts at noon, so it is a lunchtime watch. Verstappen leads away from pole with Russell and Norris behind him, and the grid penalties give Antonelli and Piastri plenty of work to do on a circuit where the slipstream can pull cars forward quickly.

Verstappen won here last year, and he starts from pole this time despite struggling earlier in practice. Whether the tow helps the chasing pack or the leader will decide the opening laps.

Pierre Gasly, Liam Lawson and Franco Colapinto, who qualified eighth, ninth and tenth, each moved up a place thanks to the penalties and all said the straight-line pace of their cars looked competitive. Gasly was positive about the overall package for the race.

All times and the full grid are on the official Formula 1 website. For the story of how the weekend began, see our earlier Las Vegas Grand Prix preview.

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