

Birthday boy Sainz fastest in second Monza practice

Ferrari's Carlos Sainz shines on his 29th birthday, while Hamilton struggles in practice

● Sainz finished just 0.19sec ahead of Aston Martin driver Lance Stroll

● Red Bull's Max Verstappen finishes fifth

AFP | Monza

Carlos Sainz gave himself a nice birthday present yesterday by finishing fastest for Ferrari in the second practice session at the Formula One Italian Grand Prix.

Spaniard Sainz, who turned 29 yesterday, clocked the top time of one minute, 21.355 seconds at Monza in a session which was bookended by two red flags after incidents involving Sergio Perez and Lance Stroll.

Sainz finished just 0.19sec ahead of Aston Martin driver Lance Stroll to give the Scuderia hope of a good weekend on home turf after another troubled season which has left them miles behind dominant Red Bull. Sainz trails reigning cham-



Ferrari's Spanish driver Carlos Sainz Jr drives during the second practice session

and runaway leader Max Verstappen by a whopping 237 points in the drivers' championship and is yet to claim a podium finish this season.

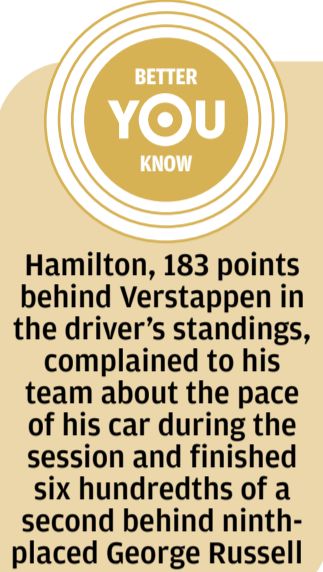
His teammate Charles Leclerc is a further three points back and could only manage sixth position, 0.361sec off the pace.

Red Bull have won every one of this year's 13 races with Verstappen claiming 11, including the last nine, and Perez winning the other two.

Verstappen, who is bidding for a record 10th straight GP win and was fastest in yesterday's first practice, finished 0.276sec back in fifth.

The Dutchman equalled Sebastian Vettel's record for consecutive wins with victory at his home Dutch GP last weekend.

Perez clocked a better time than Verstappen, 0.185sec behind Sainz in third, but will have to deal with the wrath of Red Bull's engineers after sliding off



the track at the final Parabolica corner and bumping into the barriers.

That mistake effectively ensured that Sainz would finish the session the fastest driver as it left the field with little time to challenge the Ferrari man.

Lewis Hamilton finished 1.428sec back in 17th, a day after Mercedes announced that the seven-time F1 champion had

signed a new deal until 2025 which will extend his career beyond his 40th birthday.

Hamilton, 38, said he had "unfinished business" with the sport and that he is convinced he can win more GPs and world championships with the Silver Arrows.

Hamilton relinquished his position as the number one driver in F1 in 2021 when he was controversially beaten to the drivers' title by Verstappen on the final day of the season.

Last season Hamilton failed to win or claim pole position at any GP for the first time in his career, while this year he is yet to add to his record 103 race victories.

Hamilton, 183 points behind Verstappen in the driver's standings, complained to his team about the pace of his car during the session and finished six hundredths of a second behind ninth-placed George Russell who will also stay with Mercedes until 2025.

Ten Hag says Hojlund, Reguilon could make Man Utd debuts at Arsenal

AFP | London

New recruits Rasmus Hojlund and Sergio Reguilon could make their Manchester United debuts at Arsenal this weekend, according to manager Erik ten Hag.

Denmark striker Hojlund arrived at Old Trafford from Atalanta for a reported fee of £64 million (\$82 million) in August, but the 20-year-old has yet to feature due to a back complaint.

Ten Hag, however, said Hojlund was fit to play at Arsenal on Sunday, when new goalkeeper Altay Bayindir and left-back Reguilon, on loan from Tottenham, will also be available for selection.

"Yes (Hojlund will be available)," Ten Hag said yesterday. "He had a good training week so tomorrow we have the final training. But he is doing well, responding well, so, yeah, he will be available for Sunday's



Rasmus Hojlund

Man City swoop for Nunes, sell Palmer to Chelsea on deadline day

AFP | London

Manchester City signed Wolves midfielder Matheus Nunes in a £53 million (\$63 million) deal after selling Cole Palmer to Chelsea, while Liverpool reportedly turned down a £150 million offer from Saudi Arabia for Mohamed Salah in the hectic final hours before yesterday's transfer deadline.

The 2200 GMT deadline was expected to bring a last flurry of signings as Premier League teams fine-tune their squads for the season ahead.

English top-flight clubs have already



Matheus Nunes

set a new record for spending on new players during this window, with the total set to surpass £2 billion according to financial experts Deloitte.

Treble winners City led the way with a swoop for Portugal international Nunes to bolster their squad after the departure of Ilkay Gundogan and a long-term hamstring injury suffered by Kevin De Bruyne.

The 25-year-old agreed a five-year contract with City and admitted he can't wait to work with boss Pep Guardiola.

"I'm so happy to be joining Manchester City, the champions of Europe and a club I've admired for a long time," he said.

"The opportunity to work under Pep Guardiola, one of the greatest managers ever, and alongside some of

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MATHEUS NUNES

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Moving in the opposite direction was City midfielder Tommy Doyle, who joined Wolves on a season-long loan.

City also cashed in on Palmer for an initial £40 million that takes Chelsea's spending on new players in just over a year under

the club's American ownership beyond £1 billion.

Palmer agreed a seven-year contract with Chelsea, who could pay City an extra £2.5 million in add-on clauses.

The 21-year-old scored in both the Community Shield and UEFA Super Cup last month as Riyadh Mahrez's exit looked to have opened the door to more first-team opportunities at City.

But Palmer, who helped England win the Under-21 European Championship this year, said he had been convinced by Chelsea's plan to invest heavily in young players.

"I'm excited to get started and it feels great to sign," Palmer said.

"I've joined Chelsea because the project here sounds good and because of the platform I will have to try to showcase my talents. It is a young and hungry squad and, hopefully, we can do

Latvia stun Spain as Basketball World Cup second round begins

AFP | Manila

Latvia stunned defending champions Spain as the Basketball World Cup second round got under way yesterday, while the United States, Lithuania, Germany and Slovenia booked their places in the quarter-finals.

Italy, Brazil and Puerto Rico shook things up with upset wins over previously unbeaten Serbia, Canada and the Dominican Republic.



Spain's Alex Abrines (C) is blocked by Latvia's Andrejs Grazulis (R) and Davis Bertans

Tournament debutants Latvia pulled off an almighty shock when they beat Tokyo Olympic

silver-medallists France in the group stage.

They added world and European champions Spain to their giant-killing conquests after scrapping to a 74-69 win in Jakarta. Latvia head coach Luca Banchi said his team arrived at the tournament in the Philippines, Indonesia and Japan desperate to "prove that we belong at this level".

"Being an underdog in such a tough group, and suffering so many injuries before arriving

and during the competition, for sure put us in a position where we don't have anything to lose," he said.

"We arrive here with real desire to prove our style, good or bad. Without any credit, it makes an extra strength."

Latvia looked to be heading for defeat when Spain took a 58-47 lead into the fourth quarter but they outscored the previously unbeaten defending champions 27-11 in the final period.

BRAVE CF to become most global organization with campaign highlighting the organisation's international impact



TDI | Manama

BRAVE Combat Federation has become synonymous with upgrading the MMA landscape, redefining what is possible in sport, and breaking records. Almost seven years after the promotion's inception, BRAVE CF will once again become the most-traveled MMA organization when Nantes, France, becomes the 29th nation to host the brand for BRAVE CF 74 - in association with leading French organization Hexagone MMA.

In its short lifespan thus far, BRAVE Combat Federation has been to almost every corner of the globe, including Bahrain, Brazil, the UAE, India, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Jordan, Indonesia, Northern Ireland, Morocco, Colombia, Pakistan, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines, England, Ro-

mania, Kyrgyzstan, Slovenia, Sweden, Russia, Belarus, Italy, Poland, Serbia, South Korea, Uzbekistan, and Germany.

2022 was a standout year for BRAVE Combat Federation, marking three new nations with the launching of BRAVE CF 58 (Incheon, South Korea), BRAVE CF 59 (Bukhara, Uzbekistan), and BRAVE CF 61 (Bonn, Germany). With BRAVE France around the corner, BRAVE CF started releasing a series of clips - from events across the globe - as a tribute to the brand's global success, achieved over the years.

Videos from Jordan, Indonesia, Northern Ireland, Morocco, and Colombia have since gone viral as BRAVE Combat Federation fans sharing their heartfelt memories, reliving those epic moments either in the comfort of their homes or in the sold-out arenas.