

Hamilton ends pole drought

Lewis Hamilton takes shock pole position for Hungarian Formula 1 Grand Prix after stunning lap

● **First pole of the season for Mercedes driver**

● **Verstappen second, with Norris third and PIASTRI fourth**

AFP | Budapest

Lewis Hamilton claimed his first pole position since 2021 after edging Max Verstappen in qualifying yesterday for the Hungarian Grand Prix.

The seven-time world champion ended a barren run stretching back 33 races by claiming a record-increasing 104th pole of his career and his record ninth at the Hungaroring circuit.

His success with a last-gasp lap was greeted with cheers by the crowd and ended defending double world champion Verstappen's run of five straight poles for Red Bull.

"I didn't expect this, for us to be fighting for pole position here this weekend," said a hoarse and emotional Hamilton, who had described his car as being "at its worst" on Friday.

"But hats off to the team.



Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton drives during the third practice session

They've done a fantastic job" added Hamilton, back on the front of the grid for the first time since the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix in 2021.

The Briton outpaced Verstappen by just 0.003 seconds in a thrilling conclusion to their contest.

Verstappen, whose Red Bull car ran with an updates package, was disappointed.

"We've not been on it so far this weekend," he said, but with a 99-point lead ahead of teammate Perez in the title race, he could afford a rare off day.

Lando Norris was third ahead of his McLaren team-mate Oscar Piastri, Alfa Romeo's Zhou Guanyu and Ferrari's Charles Leclerc with Valtteri Bottas taking seventh for Alfa Romeo.

Two-time champion Fernando Alonso was eighth for Aston Martin ahead of Red Bull's Sergio Perez, back in the top-ten shootout for the first time in six outings, and Nico Hulkenberg of Haas.

The session began in warm sunshine with an air temperature of 27 degrees Celsius with the teams busy calculating their

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options for tyre strategy on a circuit known for high attrition rates.

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Hamilton's team-mate George

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LEWIS HAMILTON

Russell, pole-man last year, failed to make it out of the first qualifying session, blaming heavy traffic for his elimination.

His comments on team radio were muted out by broadcasters.

Russell, disappointed by his early exit and 18th place on Sunday's grid, blamed poor preparation and timing for his lap.

He said: "We got punished... We were fast and the car felt great, but we were out of synch for the whole session.

"I'm really disappointed. We didn't need to take so many risks - you get what you deserve if you don't do things right."

Out with Russell went Williams' Logan Sargeant, who was 20th, Haas's Kevin Magnussen, Yuki Tsunoda of Alpha Tauri and Williams' Alex Albon.

Tense finale

Daniel Ricciardo, back in F1

as replacement for the luckless Nyck de Vries at Alpha Tauri, showed his potential by squeezing into Q2 in 15th place, out-qualifying his established team-mate at the first attempt.

The 'mediums' second qualifying segment began with Perez quickly on top only to be overhauled by Verstappen whose lap was promptly deleted for exceeding track limits at Turn Five.

This gave McLaren their chance to shine and Norris and Piastri rose to first and second while Zhou Guanyu, fastest in Q1, rose to sixth, showing just how open the competition had become.

With Verstappen 15th, Red Bull sent him out alone for another run which resulted in a cautious lap for P2 with two minutes remaining.

In a furious final flurry, Sainz, who started second for Ferrari last year, was knocked out in 12th along with Alpine's Esteban Ocon, Ricciardo, Aston Martin's Lance Stroll and Pierre Galsly in the second Alpine.

Perez began the final session but he was quickly topped by Norris and then Alonso, who went second, before Verstappen and Hamilton took over in P1 and P2 on their first hot runs ahead of a tense finale.

US and Japan make fast World Cup starts but England labour to victory

AFP | Brisbane

England squeezed past Haiti 1-0 as they began their Women's World Cup title bid in unconvincing fashion yesterday, but holders the United States and former champions Japan were far more comfortable.

European champions England have been touted as the prime challengers to a United States team chasing an unprecedented third World Cup crown in a row.

But they will have to do far better than the display they put on in front of nearly 45,000 spectators in Brisbane, where a Haiti side making their World Cup debut could have snatched a point at the end.

A Georgia Stanway penalty in the first half put Sarina Wiegman's side ahead, but despite having more of the ball and more shots, England had goalkeeper Mary Earps to thank for preserving their narrow lead.

She made a superb save with



Vietnam's goalkeeper Thi Kim Thanh Tran in action against the Americans

her left leg as the time ticked down after Roseline Eloissaint found herself all alone with only Earps to beat.

England, who have been embroiled in a dispute with the FA over bonuses in the lead-up to the tournament, are aiming to add the World Cup to the European crown they won at

Wembley last year.

China and Denmark, the other teams in the group, were to meet in the final match of a bumper day of four games yesterday.

In contrast to England's laboured performance, the United States and Japan were rampant against other supposed minnows.

The United States cruised to a 3-0 win over Vietnam -- it should have been many more -- before Japan crushed Zambia 5-0.

Sophia Smith was the star of the show for the US team at Eden Park in Auckland, scoring twice and setting up captain Lindsey Horan for the third in front of just over 41,000 fans.

The only sour note for Vlatko Andonovski's side, which featured six World Cup debutants at kick-off, was that they were not more ruthless in front of the goal.

They had 27 attempts to none for Vietnam and Alex Morgan missed a penalty.

"At the end, I just felt we needed to be a little bit better with the final shot," said the coach.

"We created opportunities, we had a penalty kick, obviously enough to score a few more goals, but there are lots of positives from game one going into game two."

Root removes Labuschagne as rain frustrates England's Ashes push

AFP | Manchester

Joe Root dismissed Australian century-maker Marnus Labuschagne but rain returned to Old Trafford to frustrate England's hopes of forcing a series-levelling win in the fourth Test yesterday.

Only 30 overs had been bowled during the fourth day when the wet weather swept back in during the revised tea break.

Play was officially abandoned for the day at 1727 GMT.

Australia are 214-5 in their second innings, still 61 runs behind England, who scored 592



Marnus Labuschagne plays a shot

in their first innings.

Labuschagne was the only

Australia batsman to lose his wicket yesterday, but not before

he had kept England at bay with an innings of 111 -- his first Test century on English soil.

England, currently 2-1 down in the five-match series, must win at Old Trafford if they are to maintain their hopes of regaining the Ashes.

Worryingly for the home side, the weather forecast for Sunday's final day in Manchester is terrible.

Pat Cummins' tourists thwarted England's bowlers, with Labuschagne and all-rounder Mitchell Marsh (31 not out) putting on 103 for the fifth wicket.

Vingegaard virtually assures back-to-back Tour triumphs



UAE Team Emirates' Slovenian rider Tadej Pogacar (R) cycles to the finish line ahead of Jumbo-Visma's Danish rider Jonas Vingegaard

AFP | Paris

Jonas Vingegaard survived the mountains in yesterday's penultimate stage of the Tour de France to virtually clinch his second successive title.

Two-time champion Tadej Pogacar won the 20th and penultimate stage but Denmark's Vingegaard leads the Slovenian by 7min 29sec ahead of Sunday's ceremonial ride to the finish line on the Champs Elysees in Paris.

"I would have liked to win the stage, but the most important thing for me was to keep the yellow jersey and that was the case," said Vingegaard.

"I knew that I had no chance in the sprint against Pogacar. I tried a surprise attack, it didn't really work!"

Adam Yates is in third place and his twin brother Simon is fourth, while Spain's Carlos Rodriguez rounds out the top five.

Pogacar raised his arms and celebrated at the line despite not having been able to shake off Vingegaard, which he re-

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JONAS VINGEGAARD

peatedly tried to do on the last hill.

"I finally felt myself again today after a bad week," said the 2020 and 2021 champion.

"I felt good from start to finish, after several very difficult days on the bike."

There were six mountains to negotiate yesterday with the last two being category one climbs.

Pogacar had promised an explosive finale, but he was tracked every kilometre of the way by his Danish rival.

Vingegaard and Pogacar have thrilled fans with their struggle for supremacy on the 21-day race which started in Bilbao in the rolling hills of the Basque Country.