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Guerrieri and Olympiacos net first Superleague pole in Monza

03/10/2009 - Esteban Guerrieri scored his and Olympiacos' first ever Superleague Formula by Sonangol pole position at Monza today after pacing Seville's Sebastien Bourdais in the knockout final.

Guerrieri, who had earlier beaten Roma and FC Basel, was never tested in the final after Bourdais made a mistake at the first corner on his crucial qualifying lap and had to take to the escape road, leaving the goal wide open for the Argentine to score.

Bourdais starts second with FC Basel's Max Wissel and home favourites AC Milan and Giorgio Pantano fourth, ahead of AS Roma, FC Porto, Galatasaray and league-leaders Liverpool.

In the first of the group stages, Wissel repeated yesterday's trick from practice by posting the fastest lap of the day with only seconds to spare. His 1m36.444s effort proved a whopping 0.557 seconds faster than FC Porto's Tristan Gommendy who likewise saved his best for last.

With drivers lying second, third, fifth and sixth in the standings drawn in Group A, it was perhaps a surprise to see series debutant Julien Jousse make it through. The AS Roma driver actually led the session into the final three minutes with a time of 1m37.066s which ultimately proved good enough for third. Likewise Ho Pin Tung, who put his extensive Monza experience to good use to end up fourth, pipping high profile casualties Tottenham's Craig Dolby, who completed just one meaningful lap, and 2009's top qualifier, Antonio Pizzonia.

Olympique Lyonnais, Sporting Lisbon and PSV rounded out the group.

Group B meanwhile proved a much closer affair with the top five drivers all breaking into the 1m26s bracket. It was Bourdais however who picked up where he had left off in Portugal to top the session with a time of 1m36.533s, pacing fellow Estoril winner Guerrieri and Pantano. Championship leader Adrian Valles squeaked through in fourth to deny Anderlecht's Yelmer Buurman.

Anderlecht, FC Midtjylland, Atletico Madrid and Flamengo, who were forced to pull off-track without recording a time thanks to an alternator failure, completed the group.

The result saw two of the championship heavyweights square up against each other in the opening quarter-final knockout with Liverpool taking on FC Basel. And it was Wissel who gave himself every chance of making up crucial points tomorrow by dumping championship leader Valles down to eighth on the race 1 grid thanks to a lap 0.306 seconds faster.

Bourdais continued to impress after dispatching Ho Pin Tung by over a second before Pantano went wheel-to-wheel with Gommendy, the home favourite ultimately out pointing the Frenchman. Olympiacos meanwhile completed the semi-finals after dismissing another of the home contenders, AS Roma, thanks to a 1m36.818s lap and the fastest time of the phase.

With the four teams decided, it was Olympiacos who drew FC Basel. Guerrieri was the first to set a time, the Argentine emerging slightly slower from the first sector before reclaiming the time in the second. With only the long back straight and fast right-hander of Parabolica to go, the slightest mistake by either man would make the difference. And it was Wissel who blinked first, crossing the line 0.156 seconds shy of Olympiacos to line up third.

The second of the semis proved much more decisive with Bourdais edging out Pantano by over three tenths.

That left the championship's form drivers to battle it out for pole position. Again Seville would lead from the front with Olympiacos this time chasing. But the fans were denied a dramatic showdown even before the first corner when Bourdais over attacked and out-braked himself into the tight chicane, ruining his lap, leaving Guerrieri to complete formalities.

Driver quotes:

Esteban Guerrieri: "I think my group was quite hard because there were a lot of quick cars. So I tried to do a good lap while saving my tyres. The semi-final with Max was really tight until the last corner where there was only a few hundredths difference. Sebastien had a lock-up in the first chicane which didn't put him in contention for a quick lap. I couldn't hear my engineer properly telling me that Sebastien had a problem but I understood something like 'slow down a little bit' so I completed my lap without pushing 100%."

Sebastien Bourdais: "It was a mistake obviously. I've been struggling pretty much all weekend with brake balance and it happened in the first segment of qualifying. I went straight on twice before at the first chicane so I was pretty happy to make it through to the quarter-finals. Unfortunately for the final I knew I had to push really, really hard because with Esteban it was going to be really close. I just had a big lock-up and that was it really. We'll try again tomorrow and see what happens."

Max Wissel: "Thank you to my team, the car was really good and in the shootout with Esteban it was definitely my fault to not reach the final. So, sorry to the team. I'm happy with P3 and for tomorrow I think we have a good chance to finish on the podium. We know we have a really good pace. Normally we are stronger with the old tyres than with the new ones so I'm hoping for the best tomorrow."

Giorgio Pantano: "After what we did yesterday there was a good chance to have pole today. We need to check everything now because the car was not like it was on Friday. We are not far away. If we don't go out at the first corner then it will be a good competition."



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Tomorrow's first race starts at 11.15 local time.

Qualification Final Classification

Qualifying Group A

POS NO	RACING TEAM	DRIVER	TIME	GAP
1	10 FC Basel SF Racing Team	M. Wissel	1:36.444	
2	16 FC Porto SF Racing Team	T. Gommendy	1:37.001	0.557
3	22 AS Roma SF Racing Team	J. Jousse	1:37.066	0.622
4	4 Galatasaray SF Racing Team	H.P. Tung	1:37.392	0.948
5	19 Tottenham Hotspur SF Racing Team	C. Dolby	1:37.441	0.997
6	14 Corinthians SF Racing Team	A. Pizzonia	1:37.528	1.084
7	69 Olympique Lyonnais SF Racing Team	N. Panciatici	1:37.642	1.198
8	2 Sporting Club de Portugal SF Racing Team	P. Petiz	1:38.068	1.624
9	5 PSV Eindhoven SF Racing Team	C. van Dam	1:38.257	1.813

Qualifying Group B

POS NO	RACING TEAM	DRIVER	TIME	GAP
1	18 Sevilla FC SF Racing Team	S. Bourdais	1:36.533	
2	9 Olympiacos SF Racing Team	E. Guerrieri	1:36.674	0.141
3	3 AC Milan SF Racing Team	G. Pantano	1:36.837	0.304
4	21 Liverpool FC SF Racing Team	A. Vallés	1:36.889	0.356
5	8 RSC Anderlecht SF Racing Team	Y. Buurman	1:36.931	0.398
6	17 Rangers FCSF Racing Team	J. Martin	1:37.091	0.558
7	24 FC Midtjylland SF Racing Team	K. Andersen	1:37.254	0.721
8	15 Atlético de Madrid SF Racing Team	M. de Villota	1:38.672	2.139
9	7 Flamengo SF Racing Team	J. Kennard	-	-

Quarter-finals

POS NO	RACING TEAM	DRIVER	TIME	GAP
Group 1				
4	10 FC Basel SF Racing Team	M. Wissel	1:37.135	0.080
5	21 Liverpool FC SF Racing Team	A. Vallés	1:37.441	0.623
Group 2				
2	18 Sevilla FC SF Racing Team	S. Bourdais	1:37.043	0.225
8	4 Galatasaray FC Racing Team	H. P. Tung	1:38.276	1.458
Group 3				
3	3 AC Milan SF Racing Team	G. Pantano	1:37.055	0.237
7	16 FC Porto SF Racing Team	T. Gommendy	1:38.183	1.365
Group 4				
1	9 Olympiacos SF Racing Team	E. Guerrieri	1:36.818	
6	22 AS Roma SF Racing Team	J. Jousse	1:37.537	0.719

Semi-finals

POS NO	RACING TEAM	DRIVER	TIME	GAP
Group 1				
2	9 Olympiacos SF Racing Team	E. Guerrieri	1:36.786	0.041
3	10 FC Basel SF Racing Team	M. Wissel	1:36.942	0.197
Group 2				
1	18 Sevilla FC SF Racing Team	S. Bourdais	1:36.745	
4	3 AC Milan SF Racing Team	G. Pantano	1:37.111	0.366

Pole Position Shoot Out

POS NO	RACING TEAM	DRIVER	TIME	GAP
1	9 Olympiacos SF Racing Team	E. Guerrieri	1:37.649	
2	18 Sevilla FC SF Racing Team	S. Bourdais	-	-

Race 1 Grid

Row 9	18-Flamengo	17- PSV Eindhoven
Row 8	16- Atlético de Madrid	15- Sporting Clube de Portugal
Row 7	14-FC Midtjylland	13-Olympique Lyonnais
Row 6	12- Rangers FC	11-Corinthians
Row 5	10-RSC Anderlecht	9- Tottenham Hotspur
Row 4	8- Liverpool FC	7- Galatasaray
Row 3	6- FC Porto	5- AS Roma
Row 2	4- Basel FC	3- AC Milan
Row 1	2- Sevilla Fc	1- Olympiacos

Pole Position

FURTHER INFORMATION :

Additional briefing information, video and images are available at:

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