

Verstappen on top as Red Bull dominate



The car of Max Verstappen of Netherlands and Red Bull Racing is removed from the circuit

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Baku

Max Verstappen delivered a practice double and a dramatic crash yesterday and then declared it as his and Red Bull's 'most positive' day of the year.

The 19-year-old Dutchman dominated the action in both sessions ahead of this weekend's Azerbaijan Grand Prix before he ended up hitting the wall in the final minutes of the afternoon's action.

"To be first with not an ideal lap! First of all, I went out of the garage with yellow flags and a Virtual Safety Car, so you cannot warm up the tyres as you want to, so still to be up there is very positive.

"To stay there will be really difficult, but at least we have better pace than normal, but I felt really good in the car."

Verstappen clocked a best lap in one minute and 43.362 seconds to outpace Valtteri Bottas of Mercedes by 0.100, but ended the session ignominiously by hitting the wall at Turn One.

On a day of heat and incident, including a red-flagged halt to the action in both sessions, Verstappen's Red Bull team-mate Daniel Ricciardo was third fastest in second practice ahead of Kimi Raikkonen and his Ferrari team-mate championship leading four-time champion Sebastian Vettel.

Canadian Lance Stroll, who scored his first F1 points for Williams at his home event

earlier in June, was sixth ahead of Sergio Perez, who crashed in the morning session, Daniil Kvyat of Toro Rosso, Esteban Ocon in the second Force India and, unexpectedly, three-time champion Lewis Hamilton in the second Mercedes.

Two-time champion Fernando Alonso's ill luck also continued in the afternoon when after driving impressively he was forced into early retirement with an engine failure in his McLaren Honda car.

Verstappen topped both sessions -- ahead of Ricciardo in the morning and Bottas in the afternoon, when the Australian was third.

"The car was working straightaway so the correlation is good and I think from the engine side we had a little bit of an update," added Verstappen.

He crashed in the final minutes at the first corner, damaging the right rear suspension.

"It was very weird, to be honest," he said. "I locked up and I was still trying to make the corner

-- and then I decided to play it safe and take the exit road." But then, suddenly, I lost the rear and then I had a four wheel power slide into the barriers." Hamilton conceded it had been a challenging day, but pointed to Bottas's speed for encouragement.



Red Bull's Dutch driver
Max Verstappen

