

# Bottas pips Hamilton for 70th Anniversary pole

Mercedes lock out front row for today's race at Silverstone

● **Hülkenberg qualifies third for under-fire Racing Point**

AFP | Silverstone

Valtteri Bottas outpaced his Mercedes team-mate and world championship leader Lewis Hamilton by the finest of margins yesterday to claim a dramatic pole position for the 70th Anniversary Grand Prix.

The Finn clocked a fastest lap in one minute and 25.154 seconds to beat the six-time world champion by only 0.063 in the final seconds of an enthralling qualifying session.

It was the Mercedes team's 67th front row lockout.

"It feels good," said Bottas who was securing the 13th pole of his career 48 hours after signing a new contract to keep him at Mercedes next season.

He added: "We have improved the set-up and the car since last week. Mentally, when you start on pole, you can only aim to win the race – and the starting point is good! It is so nice to drive this amazing car."

Hamilton explained his unexpected 'slip' to second.

"I wasn't that great, but Valtteri did a great job and he deserves pole."

Nico Hulkenberg, standing in for coronavirus victim Sergio Perez with the Racing Point team, was third, securing his spot with an impressive performance only 10 days after receiving



Valtteri Bottas celebrates after qualifying in pole position while his teammate, Lewis Hamilton, gets out of his car

ing a late call-up while eating a pastry in a Cologne cafe.

"It's been a crazy last week," he said.

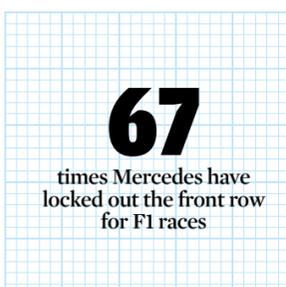
"Q2 was tricky and I made life hard for myself – and it is definitely going to hurt tomorrow, not having had the experience last week."

He failed to start last Sunday's British Grand Prix at the circuit after an engine problem.

Max Verstappen took fourth for Red Bull ahead of Daniel Ricciardo of Renault, Lance Stroll in the second Racing Point, Pierre Gasly of Alpha Tauri and down in eighth Charles Leclerc in the leading Ferrari.

## Political intrigue

Alex Albon was ninth in the second Red Bull and Lando Nor-



ris 10th for McLaren.

After two days of political intrigue surrounding the Racing Point copying scandal, it was a relief for many when Q1 began with an early lap from Kevin Magnussen's Haas to set the mark.

In windy and cooler conditions than those on Friday, the

air temperature was 27 degrees and the track was 44 as Hulkenberg, Hamilton and Verstappen took over on top before Mercedes found their rhythm.

Out went Daniil Kvyat who went off at Stowe in his Alpha Tauri, Magnussen, Williams rookie Nicholas Latifi and the two Alfa Romeos of Antonio Giovinazzi and Kimi Raikkonen.

"I think something on the floor broke," said Kvyat, having bumped along the kerbs at Chapel before re-joining.

Bottas then threw down a gauntlet at the start of Q2 with a lap in 1:25.785, more than four-tenths faster than Hamilton in second, while Ferrari were split with Leclerc fourth and the luckless Sebastian Vettel struggling to survive in 11th.

## Benoit St. Denis vs Mario Saeed and the importance of BRAVE CF's pioneering Super Lightweight division

TDI | Manama

Back in 2019, BRAVE Combat Federation took the lead in the industry of Mixed Martial Arts and became the first global promotion to accommodate its main divisions with a 10-pound gap between them, based on the new Unified Rules recommendations.

Thus, the Bahrain-based promotion pushed the Welterweight division 5-pounds up, making it up to 175 lbs, and created a new Super Lightweight division, with its limit up to 165 lbs. Those five pounds might not seem much at first glance but it makes a world of difference for athletes who were stuck on a limbo between 155 and 170 pounds -- or, the original Lightweight and Welterweight limits.

A great example of the importance of the measure for such athletes will be seen inside the BRAVE CF Arena yesterday, August 8, in Stockholm, Sweden, with France's Benoit St. Denis meeting Mario Saeed in a super lightweight match.



Benoit St. Denis and Mario Saeed during weigh-in

Both St. Denis and Saeed are slightly small for the Welterweight division, which would put them at a disadvantage against bigger foes, but also are unable to healthily make a cut down to Lightweight.

In other words, they're naturally 165ers.

But the bout between St. Denis and Saeed is not only interesting from a weight class perspective. The fight is a clash of

two very skilled and decorated grapplers, that can either offer the fans a high-level ground match or cancel each other in it and the more well-rounded of them will have the edge then.

The "God of War" St. Denis is a Brazilian jiu-jitsu brown belt with all his professional wins by way of submission and will face the only Kurd with a BJJ black belt in Mario Saeed. "Rudeboy"

is also very fond of finishing his fights on the ground, with 8 of his 13 professional wins coming by way of submission.

It is safe to assume that the winner of St. Denis vs Saeed will not only get the more important victory of his career but take a huge step towards a potential title shot for the BRAVE Combat Federation Super Lightweight world championship.



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## Al Rumaihi strikes late in East Riffa, Busaiteen stalemate



Action from Najma's game against Shabab

TDI | Manama

Mohammed Al Rumaihi scored four minutes from full time to help East Riffa salvage a 2-2 draw against Busaiteen last night in their Nasser bin Hamad Bahrain Premier Football League match, played at Shaikh Ali bin Mohammed Al Khalifa Stadium in Muharraq Club.

The Bahrain international striker headed home from close range off a precision cross from the left wing.

His strike saved East Riffa from near-defeat, after teammate Abdulla Al Hazza had put them in front with a goal in the second half.

Busaiteen's Abdulla Al Hashash then scored twice for his team within a 10-minute span in the final 45 minutes, setting the stage for Al Rumaihi's heroics.

Al Hazza netted a wonder goal in the 31st minute from more than three-quarters length of the pitch. The tow-

ering national team defender appeared to be making a long pass forward, but the ball went uncollected and bounced over the outstretched arm of a charging Busaiteen goalkeeper.

Busaiteen fought back through Al Hashash, who equalised in the 54th minute with a low right-footed strike from inside the box. He then sent the ball into the net in the 63rd with a header in the face of goal.

With the deadlock, East Riffa improved to 21 points but stayed fourth on the 10-team league table. Busaiteen went to nine points as they remained eighth on the standings.

In last night's other game, Al Najma registered a big 4-1 win over Al Shabab to claim their fifth victory of the season. They improved to 18 points in fifth on the standings, while Shabab stayed second-from-bottom with seven points following their ninth loss.

## Sarri sacked after Juve's Champions League exit



Juventus' Italian head coach Maurizio Sarri holds the Champion's trophy at the end of the Italian Serie A football match

AFP | Milan

Juventus sacked coach Maurizio Sarri yesterday after the Italian club's Champions League last 16 exit to Lyon.

Despite Cristiano Ronaldo's double in a 2-1 home win on Friday, Juve fell 2-2 on aggregate to the French club, ending their quest for a title they last won in 1996.

"Maurizio Sarri has been relieved of his post as coach of the first team," the nine-time reigning Serie A champions said in a statement.

Sarri, 61, had replaced Massimiliano Allegri last summer,

after leading Chelsea to success in the Europa League.

"The club would like to thank the coach for having written a new page in Juventus' history with the victory of the ninth-consecutive championship, the culmination of a

personal journey that led him to climb all the divisions of Italian football," the team said.

The 'Scudetto' was the first league title for Sarri in his 30-year coaching career, extending a record run in Turin which Antonio Conte started with three titles from 2012 and Allegri continued with the following five.

**"We need a cold and lucid analysis, knowing that in a few weeks we will start from scratch and we will have to do it with the same enthusiasm and desire to win"**

ANDREA AGNELLI