

México City, October 26, 2019.

MEXICO TO THE MAX!

- *Red Bull stun Ferrari, crash stuns Mercedes*

Max Verstappen took pole for the fifth FORMULA 1 GRAN PREMIO DE MÉXICO 2019™ of the modern era – then had it taken away from him by race stewards and found himself demoted to the second row of Sunday's 20-car starting grid.

The 22-year-old Dutchman seemed to have given himself the perfect platform for a third straight win in Mexico by setting the fastest time in qualifying ahead of the much-fancied Ferraris of Charles Leclerc and Sebastian Vettel.

But a last-minute accident involving Mercedes driver Valtteri Bottas changed everything. Yellow flags were waved, instructing drivers to slow down, when the Finn crashed heavily into the barrier on the left, winding himself and taking some time to emerge from his wrecked car.

While other drivers obeyed the yellow flags Verstappen did not lift off the throttle. Race official said he clearly 'attempted to set a meaningful lap time and failed to reduce his speed', and inflicted a three-place grid penalty.

Verstappen was asked about his action in the post-qualifying press conference and said, 'I think we know what we are doing – otherwise we would not be driving an F1® car. It's qualifying and, yeah, you go for it.'

The way he went for it means AHR now has its first all-Ferrari front row since the race returned, with Leclerc's time of 1:15.024 giving the Monaco driver his seventh pole of the season and Ferrari's sixth straight since the summer break.

Lewis Hamilton will start third for Mercedes, two places ahead of Bottas, whom he must beat by 14 points to claim his sixth drivers' crown on Sunday.

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