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F1 drivers hail “spectacular” Circuit of The Americas™

Enjoyable challenge lies ahead

AUSTIN, Texas (Nov. 15, 2012) – Superlatives were the order of the day when six Formula 1 drivers faced the first official press conference of the first FORMULA 1 UNITED STATES GRAND PRIX at Austin’s Circuit of The Americas Thursday.

Among them was Fernando Alonso, the Ferrari star who is gunning for his third drivers’ world title this weekend with Ferrari. “The track seems spectacular, very, very nice, it will be challenging for us drivers and for the engineers as well,” said the 31-year-old Spaniard.

Like most of the 24-driver field, Alonso, a three-time winner in 2012, already ‘knows’ the circuit thanks to technology. “We did some simulator programs after Singapore,” explained Alonso, “then we started getting a little bit more intense this week.”

Alonso also resorted to a less sophisticated method: “We also did two laps on the bicycle and hope to do some more this afternoon,” he added. “I think it will be a good show for everybody and hopefully some good overtaking opportunities around the track so it can be a really good weekend.”

Another F1 world champion, Lewis Hamilton, agreed: “It’s quite difficult to learn initially but it looks fantastic to drive,” said the Englishman who is going into his second-last race with the McLaren Mercedes team. “I really started to enjoy it once I got used to it – it took perhaps a little bit longer than some other circuits to learn, but it’s going to be very interesting this weekend.”

Alonso’s title rival, Red Bull driver Sebastian Vettel, was a little more circumspect: “We have to wait until we get out [on track] until we have a judgement on how the circuit feels,” said the reigning champion. “It looks quite interesting but it’s the feeling inside the car which I think is most important so I’m looking forward to tomorrow.”

Veteran Pedro de la Rosa of the HRT team acknowledged the challenge that lies ahead on the 3.4-mile Texas track.

“It looks like a very difficult track with very big gradient changes and most of the corners are blind,” said De la Rosa, whose team’s future is in some doubt with the news this week that it is up for sale. “It’s going to be difficult and challenging.



Kimi Raikkonen, winner of the last Grand Prix in Abu Dhabi for Lotus, just got into Austin and couldn't offer an opinion, but Sergio Perez summed it up neatly: "I walked the track and it's amazing," said the 22-year-old Mexican. "It will be very enjoyable for all the drivers."

About Circuit of The Americas

Circuit of The Americas is a world-class destination for performance, education and business. It is the first purpose-built Grand Prix facility in the United States designed for any and all classes of racing, from motor power to human power, and is home to the 2012 FORMULA 1 UNITED STATES GRAND PRIX™ set for Nov. 16-18. Racing series joining the Circuit's 2013 line-up include MotoGP™, V8 Supercars™ and GRAND-AM Road Racing™. The Circuit of The Americas' master plan features a variety of permanent structures designed for business, education, entertainment and race use. Its signature element is a 3.4-mile circuit track. Other support buildings include an expansive outdoor live music space, an iconic 251-foot tower with observation deck, an events and conference center, a banquet hall as well as a state-of-the-art medical facility. For more information and downloadable video, audio and photos, visit: www.CircuitofTheAmericas.com.

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