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No change for title rivals as Austin challenge looms

Mature Alonso ready as Vettel hits 100

AUSTIN, Texas (Nov.15, 2012) – Circuit of The Americas™ is the 19th chapter in the thrilling story of the 2012 drivers' world championship fight – but don't expect the two challengers to be making any changes in their preparations as they head for the brand-new Austin venue.

That was the message from both Sebastian Vettel, who leads by 10 points with just two races remaining, and Fernando Alonso, the man chasing him, as the drivers faced the opening press conference at the Texas track.

"Nothing really changes in terms of preparation and approach for the weekend: maximum concentration, maximum effort from everybody in the team," said Ferrari's Alonso. "There are some parts [for the car] that we are bringing every Grand Prix and hopefully we can test them tomorrow and have some feedback.

"We try to do a very good and smooth Friday, here maybe more important than other circuits to do a lot of laps and learn the racing line, the possibilities and maybe some tricks that the circuit might have! Saturday, put ourselves in as good a position as we can then Sunday, 58 or however many qualifying laps to score as many points as possible. Exactly the same as every other weekend..."

Vettel said: "The most important thing is to get into a good rhythm tomorrow and have a good start," but he was more forthcoming on the subject of Sunday's race – it will be the 100th of a Formula 1 career that started right here in the United States in June 2007.

"I remember my first race – you can't forget," said the 25-year-old German. "There are some positives, some negatives. I didn't have the best start and not the best first corner but then it was quite an interesting race and obviously a big challenge. At the end of the race I was physically destroyed! I knew then that I had a lot to do but I knew that's what I wanted to do for the future.

"Sitting here now, 100 races later, it's quite crazy. If the number tells you anything it's that you don't realise how quickly time goes by. It's always like that when you do something you enjoy a lot: you don't count the days or the months and years going by. Looking back now it doesn't seem a long time but looking on a calendar it's five years ago..."



Like Vettel, Alonso is chasing a third drivers' crown. He was 87 races into his own Formula 1 career when he claimed his second title in 2006 and this will be his fourth experience of reaching the end of the season still in the championship fight. Now he's on 195 races and the difference shows, he says.

"Much more relaxed, more focused now," he told a packed room. "In 2006 I went to the last race fighting with Michael [Schumacher] in Brazil and it was quite stressful, quite intense with him, not easy to get focused or sleep. It was a very emotional weekend. The year after, in 2007, it was also very stressful – the last race, three fighting for the world championship, Lewis, Kimi and me: these are not easy things to do. In 2010 I was much more calm, more confident, the preparation and approach was much more calm, more mature."

"In these last two races I feel completely normal. Four times we fight for the world championship in the last race and you really feel the difference. If you do everything you have a chance, if you do a mistake you lose the chance, so just focus on us," added Alonso.

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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