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Change marks start of 2013 Formula 1™ season as teams set their sights on return to Texas *Drivers share memories of first Austin Grand Prix during preseason tests in Barcelona*

AUSTIN, Texas (March 11, 2013) – The 2013 FIA Formula 1™ World Championship kicks off with the FORMULA 1 ROLEX AUSTRALIAN GRAND PRIX in Melbourne on Sunday, March 17, and drivers, teams and fans are already eagerly anticipating returning to Austin, Texas, for the second annual **FORMULA 1 UNITED STATES GRAND PRIX** Nov. 15-17 at the Circuit of The Americas. Circuit correspondent Dan Knutson caught up drivers prepping for the 2013 competition during preseason testing in Barcelona, Spain.

“I am massively excited to go back there!” exclaimed Lewis Hamilton who won last year’s inaugural event. “The race we had last year is one that I will always remember. I will make sure I go back there this year and put the (U.S.) flag back on my helmet, and hope that the car is developed to the point that we can challenge some of the guys at the front.”

After spending his entire six-year Formula 1 career with McLaren, Hamilton has switched to the Mercedes team in 2013. As for being at the front, he and teammate Nico Rosberg, son of 1984 United States Grand Prix winner Keke Rosberg, set the fastest lap times on the final two days of preseason testing.

Mexico’s Sergio Perez, who drove for Sauber in 2011 and 2012, has replaced Hamilton at McLaren where he teams up with veteran Jenson Button. Perez has fabulous memories of racing in front of so many fans who attended last year’s FORMULA 1 UNITED STATES GRAND PRIX.

“It is incredible,” he said. “It is still a long way to go, but the time in F1 goes so quick that as soon as we realize it, we are going to be there in Austin. I am very much looking forward to it. It will be a great event for me and also for my team. I will get a lot of support; everybody back home is very excited, so I am very happy for them. Austin is a great place, very, very nice. I really liked it and the circuit as well.”

Asked if Austin was a “cool” place, Button replied: “Austin, yeah!”

“He (Perez) had quite a lot of support,” Button said when referencing the thousands of Mexican fans at the Circuit of The Americas who turned out to support his new teammate, Perez. “They made it fun – it was a really good atmosphere.”

“They have good fans there,” Perez agreed.

The 19-race 2013 season is shaping up to be jammed with close racing. Leading teams Red Bull, McLaren, Lotus, Mercedes and Ferrari were all very competitive in preseason testing.

“Overall I think it has got tighter again this year, so it will be close until the end – and we are not even at the beginning,” predicted Red Bull’s Sebastian Vettel who is gunning for his fourth consecutive Formula 1 World Championship.



One of the rookies this season is Esteban Gutierrez who replaces Perez at Sauber. So there are now two Formula 1 Mexican drivers in the line-up.

“It’s going to be quite an amazing experience because it is the Grand Prix that is closest to Mexico,” Gutierrez said of the Austin installment. “There were many thousands of Mexicans spectators last year, and now that there are two Mexican F1 drivers, I don’t really know what to expect! But it is a great experience to share this racing and to be racing in front of our fans.”

For information about tickets and hotel accommodations for the 2013 FORMULA 1 UNITED STATES GRAND PRIX, visit www.CircuitofTheAmericas.com.

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 FORMULA 1 UNITED STATES GRAND PRIX while also hosting MotoGP™, V8 Supercars™, GRAND-AM Road Racing™, American Le Mans and the FIA World Endurance Championships. 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 the **Austin360 Amphitheater**, an expansive outdoor live music space; an iconic 251-foot, 25-story tower with observation deck; an events and conference center; a banquet hall; and a state-of-the-art medical facility. For more information and downloadable video, audio and photos, visit: www.CircuitofTheAmericas.com or www.Austin360Amphitheater.com.

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