

Sports

Brilliant Hamilton takes record seventh pole in Australia

Ferrari's Raikkonen second, team mate Vettel third

MELBOURNE: Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton roared to a record seventh pole at the season-opening Australian Grand Prix yesterday, blitzing the field in his Mercedes with a blazing lap at Albert Park.

The Briton flew around the lakeside circuit in a record one minute, 21.164 seconds, with his final effort leaving a yawning gap of 0.664 seconds to Ferrari's second fastest Kimi Raikkonen. Sebastian Vettel was third fastest for Ferrari but Hamilton was in a class of his own and the Silver Arrows appear as dominant as ever as they bid to sweep the driver and constructors' titles for a fifth year running.

"That was intense. My heart's racing. I wish you could feel it right now," the 33-year-old Hamilton said after clambering onto his car at the finish and pumping his fists.

"I'm so happy with that lap." Hamilton moved past the six poles his idol Ayrton Senna claimed in the Australian race with a furious pace that will leave the Ferrari and Red Bull teams scratching their heads.

"Obviously the gap's bigger than we want it to be," a subdued Vettel told reporters, looking ahead to Sunday's race.

"It depends how we get off the (start) line." Red Bull

wunderkind Max Verstappen will line up alongside Vettel on the second row, with his fifth-fastest team mate Daniel Ricciardo set to start eighth after the home hope was handed a three-place grid penalty for an infringement during Friday practice.

Still pumped at the post-qualifying news conference, Hamilton made a cheeky dig at fellow four-times champion Vettel when the German asked him what he was up to before Q3. "I was waiting to put a good lap in and wipe the smile off your face," Hamilton said with a smirk.

IMPROVED HAAS

The Briton's brilliance was not matched by team mate Valtteri Bottas, who crashed early in the final shootout. The Finn, who had complained of balance problems during Q1, spun out at turn two and smashed hard into a barrier, leaving his wrecked car and debris scattered all over the track.

Mercedes' joy tempered by Bottas crash

The red flag was waved as the television broadcast showed Mercedes boss Toto Wolff bowing his head in disappointment back in the team garage. Bottas, who will start in 10th, passed a medical check but it remains unclear how much of his car is salvageable.

Haas confirmed themselves as the big improvers



MELBOURNE: Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton (R) reacts next to Ferrari's German driver Sebastian Vettel during a press conference yesterday. — AFP

after positive winter testing, with drivers Kevin Magnussen and Romain Grosjean locking down the third row. Renault's Nico Hulkenberg took a spin into

the gravel in Q2 but scraped through to the final session and will start seventh, his team mate Carlos Sainz two places behind. — Reuters

McIlroy, Spieth ousted at WGC Match Play

AUSTIN: World number four Jordan Spieth and seventh-ranked Rory McIlroy were ousted from the World Golf Championships Match Play Championship Friday with defeats in final group matches. US 18th seed Brian Harman never trailed in dispatching McIlroy 5&3 and capturing his group with two wins and a draw.

Spieth was knocked out by US Ryder Cup partner Patrick Reed, who won their much anticipated match 2&1. Reed, ranked 23rd in the world, never trailed and rolled in a 40-foot putt from off the 17th green to end Spieth's hopes of a first title of 2018. Both will now try to regroup with the first major of the year, the Masters, two weeks away. Sergio Garcia, tuning up for his Masters title defence at Augusta National, rallied from 2 down through 11 holes to beat rising US star Xander Schauffele 3&1 and reach the last 16.

"Xander played unbelievable on the front nine, tricky conditions, and he kept making good putt after good putt on me," Garcia said. "So I was just hoping to stay in it and give myself some chances as soon as he gave me a little opening on 12.

"And then I was able to make a great birdie on 13, 15 and 16," added Garcia, who next faces American Kyle Stanley. Thomas pummelled Italian Francesco Molinari 7&5 to set up a meeting with South Korean Kim Si-woo—a 2 up winner over Webb Simpson.

The only thing Thomas could find to regret was that the match only lasted through 13 holes. "Today I'd be

really excited to see how low I could go," said Thomas, who will take on Kim in the round of 16. "I could post a serious number."

WEARY MCILROY

McIlroy, managed only two birdies in his final competitive tuneup for the Masters, the only major title the Northern Ireland star needs to complete a career Grand Slam. "Rory did not play his best golf today but I played extremely well," said Harman, a two-time winner on the US PGA Tour.

"I'm proud of the way I came out. Rory is an intimidating guy. He hits it a mile. I had this one (match) circled this week and I'm glad I came out and performed pretty well," added Harman, who set up a meeting with two-time Masters winner Bubba Watson. Watson birdied the last two holes to halve his match with 64th-seeded Julian Suri.

McIlroy, coming off a victory at Bay Hill last Sunday, admitted he was feeling weary. "That takes it out of you being in contention, and all that mental energy," he said. Other top players who didn't make it past group play included world number one and defending champion Dustin Johnson, former world number one Jason Day, five-time major winner Phil Mickelson and Spain's Jon Rahm.

South Africa's Louis Oosthuizen beat Day 2 up, then won his group in a playoff against Jason Dufner with a par at the first hole. American Charles Howell rolled unbeaten to his group crown by downing Japan's Satoshi Kodaira 2&1.

That eliminated Mickelson, seeded 18th, who had kept his hopes alive by edging Spain's Rafa Cabrera Bello 1 up. Thailand's 28th-seeded Kiradech Aphibarnrat booked a last-16 clash with Howell with a 4&3 victory over third seed Rahm, who had already been eliminated and finished the week winless. — AFP

ABK hosts 7th Annual Golf Challenge Event

KUWAIT: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced the results of its 7th Annual ABK Golf Challenge event held at the Sahara Golf Resort and Spa on March 10. Around 80 golfers participated on a warm, sunny day perfect for golf. During the event, participants competed in teams of four for the sought after ABK Golf Challenge trophy.

Stewart Lockie, Ramzi Al Shamali, David Peterson and Mrs Ali Peterson won the challenge with a score of 56 points. Young Parkwon "Beat the Pro" and received a business class return to Dubai from Emirates Airline, while "Nearest-the-pin" went to Mrs Clare Hunter who received a KD 100 ABK Visa Emirates gold prepaid travel card. The "Straightest-Drive" was won by Callum Bottomley who also received a KD 100 ABK Visa Emirates gold prepaid travel card.

Furthermore, in good spirit, the last placed team walked away with a complimentary hour of golf lessons at the Sahara Golf Club. During the closing ceremony ABK thanked their partners: Emirates Airline, Visa and Sahara Golf Club for their ongoing support.



Kuwait Times

Premier Brands

To see your ad here, call:
+965 248 35 616 / 617
E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
ads@kuwaittimes.net
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

SALE

It's Shopping Time!

Panasonic CS-YC18TKF

18000 BTU/hr

1.5 طن

184
209

Symphony siesta 70

70 لتر

43
69

مكيف شباك Window AC

MWTF-18CM

18000 BTU/hr

1.5 طن

80
99

best AL-YOUSIFI

1809 809