

Formula 1: The GOAT

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"I can now say that I'm looking forward to this competition, as the performance we have seen in the first free practice of Group A alone is enough to raise expectations for the competitive sessions," Gianni Moretti said, commentating on the performance shown on the track in Italian as the drivers were now returning to the pit lane before Group B was allowed to enter the track to start their practice.

"The Russian, Alexander Vartanyan from Ward Racing, has shown a very dominant performance in this session, coming out with the fastest lap, followed closely by the Italian Tommaso Mosca from Mosca Diego, who was chasing very closely but failed to go faster than Alexander," Martina, the second commentator, said in a youthful, excited voice as the final karts entered the pit lane and an official with a green flag in hand headed to the pit exit and stood there, waiting for the go permission before he would wave it and allow the Group B practice session to start.

"There are very few notable drivers who have shown a good performance, but these two overshadowed everyone else in this session. I wonder what surprises we are going to have in Group B's session, as there are quite a few drivers who are entering the competition for the first time, and we might be in for another surprise like the first session here," Gianni said. Two minutes after Group A left the track, Group B was finally allowed to join as the official at the pit exit waved his green flag, allowing all the drivers to go through.

Coaches pushed their drivers' karts to start them as they began joining the track, wanting to make the most of the time.

"And a second ten-minute free practice session starts. It might sound like a very short time, but for these drivers, it is enough time for them to get the grasp of the track in a few laps before they go for an initial push lap, and even better for those who have experienced this track before. Please take us through the track," he said, handing the mic to Martina to walk those who had just arrived through a basic understanding of what the session was as it went on.

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Fatih still stood on the far side of the pit lane, watching Enaam and Alex, who were his teammates, go around the track in Group B's free practice, having done the same for

Group A's free practice, which Lando had finished overall fifth. But Fatih didn't react negatively to it at all or think of him as inferior, as he remembered Fernando Alonso's attributed quote, "If they celebrate being fastest in practice, then maybe that's their championship."

He occasionally listened to the Italian commentary, which he understood perfectly, to try to gather additional information that might not be in the dossier provided to him by TOSFED. And although it was very extensive, nothing beats the niche information that can't be earned through research alone.

"...tuh. ...atih. Fatih," but his focus on the track was interrupted by someone calling for him, which turned out to be Burak when he turned and saw him in the distance, waving at him to return to the tent.

Giving the track a final glance, he stopped leaning on the railing and jogged back to where Burak was waiting for him.

"We need to prepare now if we want to finish the inspection before your session starts," Burak said, draping his hand on Fatih's shoulder as they walked back to the tent.

Upon arrival, he collected his helmet, balaclava, and a few additional things before they headed to the pit lane, finding his kart already waiting for him.

He finished putting on all the gear and turning on all of the cameras on the kart, making sure they were all recording before getting in his kart as Burak pushed it to join the line of already arrived karts. There were still five minutes left in Group B's free practice before his teammate Max joined behind him in the queue as officials started walking around and doing minimal checks, inspecting those that raised suspicion but passing those that looked normal.

As they waited, Fatih enjoyed the silence and calmness he felt whenever a helmet went on his head, as it allowed him to forget everything outside of racing. Everything else was filtered, and only information deemed important was provided to him, which was quite a good feeling to experience, as it left all of the brain's free computing power to be solely focused on his driving.

"Go and make me proud," Burak's voice was heard as he pushed him, starting the kart as his group's session had finally started.

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"I can say that I'm very happy that Group B didn't disappoint, and although no one matched the fastest time set in Group A's session, we still came very close as Enaam Ahmed topped the charts in his group. The young British driver from Ricky Flynn Motorsport, which surprisingly has five entries in this category alone today," Gianni said,

butchering Enaam's name, as it was not something an Italian would usually mention in their normal lives.

"Yes, I couldn't agree more, and although they were not in the top three in the Group A session, all of their drivers who have set a time are in the top ten of their group. In Group A, we have Lando coming out in P5, and from Group B, we have Enaam topping the chart and Alex, who came in P8. Now we have two more of their drivers entering the track in Group C. I'm sure they expect and plan to not be too far behind their teammates and might even be trying to outpace all of them," Martina said as the sound of paper being ruffled was heard through the speakers.

"I don't know if you know this, but they have a very interesting driver of theirs joining in this session," Gianni said in a teasing voice.

"Please enlighten me. I'm sure many are now curious based on how you said it," Martina said, playing the game the way he wanted, knowing it was very good at keeping listeners' attention and even giving people storylines to follow.

"The number 99 driver of theirs, Fatih Yildirim, is participating in his first-ever international competition, but that is not even the most interesting part, which is that he is only ten years old," Gianni said, revealing the bombshell.

"What do you mean? I'm pretty sure the KF-Junior category he is participating in has a license requirement that can only be earned when they are at least 12 years old. Shouldn't he be in the mini category then?" she asked, acting as the viewer to probe for additional information.

"Well, that is the thing. He has been temporarily included in the FIA talented drivers list, which allowed him to apply for the exemption that was provided to him due to the career he had in his country before moving to the international scene."

"Now, I'm curious. What sort of career did he have to warrant such a consideration from the FIA? I'm sure you already know, so stop dragging it, or else you risk us missing his performance," Martina said teasingly, knowing that dragging it too long might not be good.

"He has won every championship he has participated in in his country since the age of five."

"What? From five to ten, you're telling me he won all of them?"

"Yes, and other than a few DNFs and penalties in his first season, he has won all of the races starting from his second year all the way to age ten, winning his country's KF-Junior championship this year before moving internationally. It is something his country's ASN (TOSFED) is very proud of, as they have it spread all over their official website about karting drivers in their country, which made it quite an easy find for us."

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As Gianni was bringing people up to speed on Fatih's exploits, the scouts who were sent by different teams to observe and see the talented drivers they had on their radars or discover new ones immediately took note of the name Fatih. And although they considered drivers coming from the Turkish karting scene to be no different than footballers who come from other countries' top football leagues outside of Europe – meaning it was not something exciting – they still decided to keep an eye on him because even from those leagues, there are sometimes players who transcend it and move to Europe and still perform well.

And as their eyes landed on the number 99 kart that was finally coming out of the final hairpin in a compromised line in order to carry as much speed into the straight, marking the start of his first push lap, both the scouts, spectators, and off-duty drivers all had their eyes on him, wondering what all of the hype the commentators were giving was about as they watched him.

Turn one was taken flat and smooth, turn two was sharper but still full throttle. He danced over the bumps like he knew them by heart. At turn three, he rode the exit kerbs without lifting, then braked early into turn four, skipping the apex kerb but catching the exit to stabilize the kart for the long straight.

At the marshal post, he braked early again, clipped the first apex cleanly, and flowed into the double-apex corner, missing the first but nailing the second with a smooth exit. Into the chicane, he just missed the first kerb and brushed the second, using all the exit space before the final triple hairpins.

He braked early into each, opening up the entries and maximizing exit speed through the last corner. Full throttle down the straight, completing his first officially recorded international lap as all of their eyes turned to the timing board to see the lap time for themselves, the moment of truth, where hype met reality in digits that would either confirm the legend or expose the illusion.

Chapter 98: Race Weekend | Friday | Eyes on the Board

"Are we sure he is running a medium setup, as we agreed?" Ricky turned to Steve and asked, his eyes not leaving the small timing screen in their tent, though the large timing board on the track was also clearly visible from there.

"Yes," Steve said with confidence.

"...." Instead of replying, Ricky pointed to the timing board, then looked back at Steve. Steve understood the silent question and replied, "Yes, we expect him to be even faster if we switch to his full dry setup and have a run."

Ricky turned to the timing board once again and saw the lap time, a 1:04.121, which catapulted Fatih to the third-fastest driver overall. He then turned back to the track and saw Fatih in the middle of his second push lap, which looked to be faster than the first. However, Fatih had to abort the attempt mid-lap due to a driver sliding and going off the track a few corners ahead of him, causing a yellow flag to be waved. He had to lift his foot from the power, killing all the momentum and time he had gained.

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"Let's keep an eye on him for the rest of the competition," Guillaume Le Goff from ADD Management said to himself as he looked at Fatih on the track. Although it was not the fastest lap time on the board, the story the commentators had made him privy to was very interesting. But even without it, Fatih would have attracted his attention on the strength of this lap alone, though Guillaume would have preferred to observe him a bit longer before making a decision.

He was here today as an on-site talent scout to evaluate a few drivers who had shown interest and wanted to sign with their management firm.

His eyes remained on Fatih for a short moment before he picked up a pencil that was between his notebook pages and wrote Fatih's name and number on it, adding him to the list that had Lando Norris at the top and a few more drivers below him that they were planning to observe this weekend.

With the name already in the book, he now returned to watching his other listed drivers who were on the track, but every few moments, he would turn and look to find where Fatih was and what he was doing, which at the moment was very obvious: he was trying to open a gap to go for another push lap.

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"Should we report it to the Doctor?" Mark, covered in black clothes from top to bottom, turned to ask his friends the moment Fatih finished his first lap, and he saw the time registered on the board.

"But isn't the Doctor now focused on trying to see Max's development and bring him to us?" Willian, wearing similar clothes to Mark, answered, even though he too was impressed by the drive Fatih had shown.

They were going to be responsible for monitoring drivers for their academy, one of them for each day starting tomorrow, with today being the day they all agreed on the targets they were going to focus on from tomorrow's qualifying and onwards.

"You think he is going to want to miss a new talented driver just because at the moment, he is focused on evaluating another? What happens if his recruitment of Verstappen fails, or what if he later learns that we came across Fatih in his first international race

and didn't report to him? Isn't it better to report him and have him dismissed by Dr. Marko than to not report him at all, only for Dr. Marko to later ask us why we did nothing? Plus, do you think other scouts are going to do nothing about it just because he is new? And what if it is decided later to push for him, won't that mean we will be on the back burner when chasing after him?" Mark asked his friend very reasonable questions.

As Red Bull Junior Team observers, the importance of looking for talent while it was still a diamond in the rough had been instilled in them. One of their discoveries from karting was now dominating and on the way to winning his fourth consecutive Formula 1 World Championship title.

With its effectiveness proven, the Red Bull driver academy had put more emphasis on monitoring talents still at the karting level compared to other Formula 1 academies, which rarely did that, as they usually focused on drivers who had either shown a spark or proven themselves in single-seaters, which for many had worked extremely well.

Although at the moment Vettel was dominating, like any other company with sane leadership, they were already preparing for a drought during their years of abundance. Even though they were in the middle of negotiating to extend his contract, and Vettel was very responsive, there were still rumors in the paddock of interest from Ferrari.

As a result of those rumors, but even without them, Dr. Helmut Marko, proud of discovering Vettel, was now in the middle of looking for the next Vettel. Just like when he recruited him while he was still in karting, that is where he went looking, and at the moment, he was attracted to Max Verstappen and was monitoring him before he was to make a move and try to recruit him.

Although not transformative or too jaw-dropping, Fatih was now on the radars of many teams and management agencies like Infinity Sports Management, who most of the time interviewed drivers and families to build profiles; Ward Racing & Baby Race reps, who were feeder teams with F1 links; and with this being a historical Italian race in its 42nd year, even scouts from the Ferrari Driver Academy were present. However, they were among the few who didn't take much interest in Fatih following his first session. But for those who were now curious about how he would perform this weekend, it was clear they were going to watch him closely.

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"After a few of his push lap attempts were met with either flags or were interrupted by unaware drivers, he has now managed to open a perfect gap to avoid the majority of problems as he is on the way to complete his final lap in this session. He places his kart close to the optimal route as he goes through the chicane and uses all of the curbs on the exit, entering the short straight, leaving only the triple hairpins before he finishes his lap. Depending on how he takes them, there will be a huge time difference.

He brakes early into the hairpin and goes wide to open the entry into the second hairpin, which might look like a longer-than-optimal route, but due to the speed difference, going wide on the exit to set up for the optimal entry into the next hairpin, you gain time instead of losing it. And he shows where to place the kart as if following a template, repeating the same into the third hairpin and the final corner, maximizing exit speed.

And now he only has the final straight, which he pushes to the maximum, leaning ahead to induce a mini DRS and... Oh my god, the fastest time has been equaled! Fatih Yildirim, the number 99 driver, moves to second overall due to him setting his lap time second, with Alexander Vartanyan remaining on top but with a zero-second difference! That is a first in a long time, as there is almost always going to be a small difference, but it looks like this lap would have needed us to go to the fourth decimal to find it," Gianni commentated excitedly as Fatih slowed down. The practice session clock had already hit zero as he headed back to the pit lane.

"This now creates a very interesting situation for all of us to look forward to. Will he cause an upset and continue showing us a great performance today, or is this a difference in warming up for the drivers? But no matter the outcome, it is something I'm looking forward to in the following two sessions we are going to see him in today, as that will set the tone of our expectations for tomorrow's qualifying and the heats," Martina said, reminding everyone that although doing well in practice was good, doing so in the first practice only meant that you had dialed in the setup earlier than the rest, who were most likely bound to catch up in the remaining two free practice sessions. So there was no need to take everything as a preview of what to expect tomorrow or even in the second session.

This was the sentiment carried by drivers, spectators, and recruiters. That's why, although they were impressed, they only placed him on the list to observe and did nothing more, as they wanted to first see his overall performance over the whole competition before deciding to do anything else. And if he performed badly, he might find himself struck from the list as early as tomorrow, as motorsport has a very short memory, and you are only as good as your last performance.

Chapter 99: Race Weekend | Friday | Setting Precedent

"With that, ladies and gentlemen, the KF part of practice today comes to an end with a very interesting overall time table," Martina said as the Group C karts drove back to the pit lane, having completed their third and final free practice of the day. This gave all of the drivers a total of forty-five minutes on the track in stints of ten, fifteen, and twenty minutes.

It was designed specifically to allow for those who had their first drive in free practice to have a gradual acclimation to the track. Should they make mistakes in their first session, they wouldn't lose too much time and be at a disadvantage in the following sessions. Although it was a competition for these kids, it was still a learning phase, and

the competition needed to allow for mistakes to happen and the opportunity to recover from them, retaining the spirit of karting.

"Although the overall top ten kept constantly changing between each session, a few drivers were constants in the list, and a few have shown consistent improvement in rising to the top across sessions.

The biggest surprise of them all is Fatih, who, despite others constantly improving, has managed to maintain a top-four position in all three sessions, a slight fall from the co-lead he had in the first session. He seemed to have stagnated, peaking at the times he drove in the first session, but you have to keep in mind that this is his first international stint. The other surprise is Lando Norris, who has risen to put in a lap that put him in P5, just behind his teammate Fatih, with Enaam peaking at P9. Through this, they have shown that they are the team with the best average drivers for the day, and I can't help but look forward to the performance they are going to show us tomorrow.

Then there is the Russian, Alexander Vartanyan, who kept delivering top performances. It seems like Fatih matching his lap time in the first free practice lit a fire under him, as he improved by more than five-tenths between the next two sessions.

As for our Italian, Tommaso Mosca, he too has shown an impressive drive, constantly challenging and vying for the top position. Depending on his performance tomorrow, a pole position from him will not be too much of a surprise. But even if that doesn't happen, there are going to be four heats for each driver, and then there will be a pre-final. If he improves during them, he could start from pole position, but from the look of it, a front-row seat doesn't look outrageous to expect," Gianni said, giving a summary of the session and what he expected for tomorrow.

"But from the weather forecast, it looks like Saturday is going to start with rain, but Sunday is expected to be dry. Considering their karts will be in parc fermé conditions the moment they enter the track for qualifying, it poses a very important question: do you set up your kart for a wet qualifying and good performance in the heats, or do you set it for a dry setup to benefit from its pace on Sunday? You will have to suffer tomorrow, and in the worst-case scenario, you might even be eliminated and made ineligible to participate in the final and pre-final races if you fail to keep it on the track in the wet with a dry setup. But if you survived Saturday in that setup, on Sunday you are going to have blistering pace compared to those who went with a wet setup, but in return, they will have the grid position," Martina said, verbalizing what was now in the minds of many teams as the drivers returned to the pit lane.

It was a dilemma of whether to have grid position or blistering pace in the final race. Depending on how the teams and drivers saw which of the two was more important, it was a very interesting dilemma for the neutral viewers and scouts as it placed the drivers in a very challenging position where their capabilities had a better chance of shining depending on how they performed.

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"I want to go with the dry setup we fine-tuned during the unofficial sessions," Fatih said with a look that showed he was not going to budge from that decision, despite knowing the difficulty he would be facing. They had just finished debriefing and had started the discussion for tomorrow.

"Doing that will put you more than a second off pace compared to those who go with a full wet setup. That's why we are suggesting a medium setup, so you don't lose too much time in the wet and dry conditions. We expect a majority of them to have a medium setup," Ricky said, looking at Fatih and trying to give him advice on the best setup.

"But that is why I will have an advantage when it comes to the final race, and that will give me a chance to go for the win. Based on the forecast, the rain will only be in the morning, which is when qualifying will be. By the later heats, the track would have already dried from the karts from different categories driving on it, so the medium setup will be out of contention. From there, I can use that to claw back the advantage I lost during the qualifying session and the first two heats, and have it continue all the way to the pre-final and the finals," Fatih argued back, knowing the pace he was going to have if he went with a full dry setup that he had practiced for more than four hundred hours was going to be scary to anyone else on the track.

"But to benefit from that pace, you need to be in the top positions. In order to be there, you need to perform well in the qualifying and the first two heats, which will be difficult for you if you are on full dry conditions. And what's to say the rain doesn't persist for the whole day? You might find yourself having to enter repechage races if the situation becomes worse or if you have bad luck on the track during the heats. Plus, you don't have any experience driving that setup on a wet surface, so you will be experiencing it for the first time during the qualifying session," Ricky said, disagreeing with Fatih's stubborn decision.

He understood that as a child, knowing that he had an option to win if he retained his fastest setup, controlling it on a wet track was going to be a nightmare since he didn't have an opportunity to try it.

"I believe in myself to be able to control it. Plus, it is my first European session. If I'm going to start being conservative from the start, what benefit is there for me in participating in these races when I could have spent more time practicing for next year's competition? These are races where I'm allowed to make mistakes, so even if I fail to qualify for the final races, it will be a lesson for me.

But if we go conservative from the start of my career, how will I know the limits of what I can do in situations like these?" Fatih argued, wanting to take the chance that gave him the opportunity to go for the win, not just a podium. Having already known about the possibility of rain, he had already started practicing on a wet track with his fastest setup

for a week, and he was confident he wouldn't lose too much ground in the qualifiers and the first two heats. The pace advantage in the remaining two heats, pre-finals, and finals was going to be enough for him to claw all of that back and gain even more.

As the back-and-forth disagreement between the two of them continued, Lando, Enaam, Max, the other young drivers, their coaches, and the technicians and mechanics just watched it happen. Both sides gave very good, convincing arguments. One wanted to take a gamble which, should it pan out well, could see Fatih go for the win, but if it failed, he would have a horrible international debut. The other wanted to take a more conservative route and go with a medium setup so that the lap times he would have in both wet and dry sessions would be about the same, allowing him to be competitive in all of them if others also went with the same neutral setup.

The surprise on their faces was a result of watching a ten-year-old give very compelling arguments for his position and not showing any intention of backing down unless his way was agreed to. It was not from arrogance but from his belief that was backed by reasoning. Yes, it was a gamble, but it was one that would give very good results if it worked, but it was a gamble nonetheless.

"Fine," Ricky said after five minutes of back-and-forth with Fatih, giving up. But he added, "However, if it doesn't work and you don't finish in the top ten by the end of the final race, you are going to listen to our suggestions in the remaining two races. We are going to listen to your suggestions, but if it doesn't match ours and we can't reconcile the two, you will go with our suggestions then. Are we in agreement?"

"Yes," Fatih said, looking Ricky straight in the face. Just as Ricky was about to move on, Fatih added, "But if I finish on the podium, my suggestions will take precedence unless a very good argument against it is provided."

Ricky looked at Fatih for a moment, not with a face of anger but disbelief, before he said, "Fine, a podium and we will do that." He then turned to the rest of the people on the table and said, "Anyone else want to take the same gamble?"

But no one went with that, as they all agreed that a medium setup was the best for the race weekend and had already decided to go with it.

Burak, who had been silent during this time, just patted Fatih on the back. As someone who had seen Fatih make what might sometimes be considered reckless decisions, like in his first season, remaining on slick tires when it started raining when everyone else pitted for wet tires, he knew Fatih always made it work within his capacity. As long as no one crashed into him, like what had happened in that race, the expected outcome of the gamble was always delivered, and sometimes with a bonus on top. Knowing that this week's results would determine if his ideas took precedence, he decided to let Fatih be the one to bring up and argue about them to make sure that they considered Fatih's words, not his, when it came to these ideas.

Chapter 100: Race Weekend | Saturday | Qualifying

"Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It is 10 in the morning, and it looks like there is a hole in the atmosphere. The rain has been falling since after morning practice as expected, but the intensity of it is more than what was expected. The updated weather situation for today showed potential for more rainfall during the day, and the track is now fully wet.

All of the grip that had seeped on to the track during the previous sessions has now all been washed away as the drivers are now in the pit lane, waiting for the green flag before they enter the track and start the qualifying practice, with the fastest lap determining grid positions for the heats," Gianni said, starting his commentary minutes before the KF-Junior Group A qualifying session.

"I expected the rain to be a very tactically divisive part of this competition, and it looks like those who gambled on a wet weather setup will be the biggest beneficiaries for the qualifier and the heats. For those who went for a dry setup, they are in for a very difficult day. With qualifying practice now starting, we have officially entered parc fermé conditions, and setup changes are officially not allowed, barring a few minimal changes like tires, which are allowed for safety reasons, and a few more things.

Now let's see what these young drivers have in store for us," Martina said as finally the green flag was waved and drivers on wet tires entered the track, weaving right and left to put as much heat as possible into the tires from the start to bring them into the operating window, which was made to be achieved very easily for wet tires to reduce the risk of sliding and losing control. That would mean they would be disadvantaged all the way through the weekend, as they risked starting from the rear of the grid if they were unable to set a lap time in this session.

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Fatih looked calm as the staring contest between him and Ricky went on for a few minutes since the Group A karts entered the track, and neither of them seemed to have any intention of looking away.

"What is the problem?" Steve asked Ricky to deliberately cause him to break this petty fight between him and Fatih.

"I asked him if he regrets making the decision to keep his setup and not go with a neutral one, and he said no, so I was waiting for him to finish and give an additional explanation as to why not," Ricky said, giving a summary to Steve, who had just returned to the tent after watching Lando enter the track.

"But sir, why are you focused on such petty things?" Steve asked when he saw the small upward lift of Ricky's mouth, revealing that he was taking this as a learning moment for Fatih instead of actually enjoying the situation being against Fatih. After all,

he was a driver driving under their team's name, so he always wanted him to perform well because of that, but also because of the potential he had shown during the various tests.

"I was trying to use this moment to show him the importance of taking experience into account when making decisions for situations like these, but he seems to think that there is still hope for him to salvage the situation."

"Yes, I believe that. Plus, I haven't even driven a single session under these conditions, so coming to a conclusion before that is unfair, to be honest. And the bet is for the whole weekend, not just a single session," Fatih said, his face also showing that he was enjoying this moment because the higher the tension rose and the lower the expectations fell, the more rewarding he would feel if he delivered against all of them.

"Haaa..." Ricky exhaled before he said, "Start spending this time bringing your mentality up to pace before you go on the track, and be prepared to have a difficult few reconnaissance laps. But don't worry, we will do our best to reduce as much damage as possible."

"Copy that," Fatih said, collecting his helmet and heading to the pit lane, planning not to return to the tent until after the qualifying session was over, spending the time before that watching how the drivers adapted to the track.

As he walked out, he walked past Burak, who was returning to the tent after final kart checkups.

"Where are you going? You are not up for the track for about half an hour," Burak asked as he turned around to walk with him.

"To watch the qualifier..." Fatih answered and explained the situation while they continued walking.

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"...coming from the final corner, Giuliano Alesi gets on the power as early as he could without causing a wheel spin, and as he finishes his lap, HE MOVES TO POLE POSITION! AND THERE IS NO ONE TO CHALLENGE HIM IN THIS GROUP, as he was the last one to start his attempt before the clock hit zero, and the session comes to an end with him in the lead, followed by Alexander Vartanyan, Tommaso Mosca, Lando Norris, and Artem Petrov, completing the current top five standings of the qualifying session," Gianni commentated excitedly as the qualifying session came to an end and the drivers started returning to the pit lane.

"But with no more rain expected within this hour, the track will only improve faster and faster, and we can expect if the second and third group drivers have the same pace as Group A, they will put forward a better drive than the ones Group A had to put on the

wet track," Martina said as she looked forward to the level of improvement that was going to be shown by the next groups.

"The difference won't be big, but it should be enough to allow a good driver to take the overall pole and carry that advantage throughout the heats. And I, for one, can't wait to see how the new drivers, including Fatih, who had shown us consistent performance, are going to deliver," Gianni said when the camera on the starting straight zoomed in to show Fatih watching the track from the other side of the pit lane with his helmet in his hand as he conversed with his coach beside him.

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"Let's go and get ready," Burak said, tapping Fatih, before they started walking to their karts, as there were now only five minutes on the clock before the Group B qualifying was complete and they were to be allowed to enter the track to start their session.

Upon arriving at their agreed-upon locations, he put on his balaclava and helmet before checking if everything was fine and boarding his kart, momentarily closing his eyes to feel the kart through his other senses.

In a few minutes, the final inspections took place as the inspectors made sure the reported setup was what the karts were running and no changes were made to it. If discovered to have tampered with it, they would be immediately disqualified, but no one wanted to take that gamble. Within just a few minutes, the inspection was completed, and the track was green-flagged as the Group B session was already completed, and they had already returned to the pit lane.

"There are no ballasts this time, so in the first lap, you might have to adapt to the more power under you. Go ahead and show us the pace you have, and good luck," an RFM mechanic said to Fatih, tapping him on his back before he pushed him to start the kart.

Raising a thumbs-up to the mechanic, he placed his foot on the power and joined the track, using the silence he was feeling to focus fully on how the track was feeling and trying to correlate it to which phase the track was in from his wet track practice he had done in the simulation for the whole week.

Since the track condition changed constantly depending on the amount of water on it, Fatih had practiced different levels of wetness to be ready for any of them. In just a few corners, he managed to match the current track condition to a practice he had already run in the simulation, and a smile graced his face as he started putting moderate heat into the tires, slowly bringing them into the operating window while making sure the warming was gradual and didn't gather too much heat, or else he would lose some performance.

"From our experience, Fatih has a habit of going for a push lap starting from his second lap once he joins the track. Let's see if he keeps that tradition, as he now has a very

nice gap in front of him, allowing him to have a clean run if he decides to go for it and... He gets on the power on exit in a slower and gradual manner, but his intentions are very clear in his driving. He has kept to his tradition and is now on a qualifying lap, but the conditions are different from yesterday's dry track.

Although two more sessions have been run ahead, the track still maintains its wetness, albeit at a reduced level. He keeps his driving style into turn 1, but the rear is on the verge of stepping out, but he catches it with a flick of the wrist before he loses more time. Through the sweeping left-hander, he is dancing on the limit as he brings the kart beneath him alive with constant minor corrections, keeping the same vigilance throughout the following corners..." Gianni commentated excitedly as Fatih, on the track, looked to be in full-focus push mode, depending on his instincts only, as he most certainly didn't have any experience on the track in its current condition, but he still managed to keep it on the track.

"Now into the tight chicane, this is where most drivers back off, but Fatih doesn't, as he throws the kart in, trusting the front-end grip. But the rear shows intentions of betraying him, but he counter-steers mid-apex and powers out with a spray of water trailing behind. That dry setup is punishing him heavily, but he is making it work somehow. This is a very good drive for the young driver..."

The crowd now focused on him, as he was the only one pushing on the second lap, making it quite easy to attract attention as they watched him finish sector two with a very good pace.

"And coming out of the final corner, once again avoiding wheelspin out of the final hairpin, keeping the highest speed I have seen across the three qualifying sessions as he drags the kart across the line, and what overall position is he in... P10! Wow, he managed to gain as much time as possible in his dry setup, which should have been a nightmare to control in these conditions, but he has managed it." Gianni comentated, making his excitement obvious to all.

However his co commentator Martina followed by saying "But it is going to be very difficult to keep that position, as there are a few in full wet setup in his group as well, and if they show as much pace as he did, he is going to have to deliver another magical lap because at the moment, he is more than a second off pace from the leading driver who delivered the lap in the second session in full wet setup. But now let's return our attention to Max, his fellow teammate, who, on his third lap on the track, has decided to go for a push lap. Will he match Fatih, or will he outpace him due to his medium setup? This drive will give us answers to all of those questions, and I, for one, can't wait to see what it is..."