

Beat: Sports

2017 United States Grand Prix - Preview

Austin

Austin, Texas, 16.10.2017, 18:54 Time

USPA NEWS - Battle continues with Round 17 of the 2017 season from the Circuit of the Americas

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Featured this Week: The Team behind the Glamour

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Still four races to go and 100 points to score: we can take nothing for granted as we fly to Austin this week. We approach every race with a healthy dose of scepticism rather than wishful thinking, and our focus must be on making sure we score every point within our reach this weekend in Austin.

Since we began the final flyaway leg of the season, we have seen a strong points swing in our favour in both championships. Good fortune has played its part, of course "" and we have put ourselves in the right position to make the most of the opportunities that have come our way. But nobody within the team is allowing those good results to disguise the challenges we have faced.

We returned from those races with a lot more understanding of our car and of the reasons for the performance swings we have experienced this season. Some of that understanding is already being applied to the final races, some of it will flow into next year's project. But the bitter taste of our defeat in Malaysia once again confirmed that the tough days are the ones when you learn most "" and when you lay the foundations for future success.

Likewise, we have maintained clear sight of the reasons for our success this year. The team is operating at an incredibly high level in every area and continuing to develop; we have applied an obsessive attention to detail to how we go racing over the past three seasons; and we have continued to develop our car at a competitive rate through the season. Our mindset has always been one of constant improvement, regardless of the results we were enjoying, and this is now paying off.

We must also add our drivers to our list of strengths. Lewis has driven brilliantly this year "" and since the summer break in particular, he has been on another level. It has been impressive to watch him extracting everything from the car and working with the team to solve problems and improve even further. Valtteri has had a tougher time in recent races "" but he demonstrated his work ethic and character to deliver a strong weekend in Suzuka, and he will be aiming to build on this performance in the final four rounds.

As a venue, Austin offers our sport a fantastic home in the United States, combining a state-of-the-art race track with an exciting destination city. The organisers have worked hard to build the event character of the weekend and there are some exciting moments planned for this weekend, too. We will be aiming to play our part by delivering an exciting and successful performance on the track.

Featured this Week: The Team behind the Glamour

Since arriving on the Formula One calendar as home to the United States Grand Prix in 2012, the Circuit of The Americas has established itself as a firm favourite amongst teams, drivers and fans alike. On the surface, the lively party city of Austin might not quite rival the more obvious glamour of races like Monaco and Singapore "" but no race on the calendar is a tougher test in terms of

marketing operations for the teams.

This week's race is a sell-out for our hospitality operations. And to give just a snapshot of the scale, the team will host more than 1,000 guests over the course of the three-day race weekend. 210 VIPs will enjoy the luxury of the Silver Arrows Lounge – the team's Paddock Club Suite, which looks out over the Silver Arrows garage – from Friday to Sunday, while another 40 guests will be entertained in the team's paddock hospitality unit on each of those days.

International media are also welcomed, pushing the number of people passing through the team's doors up to 150 per day – and all this without the benefit of the spacious motorhome seen at the European races!

Over the course of a busy U.S. Grand Prix week, the team can expect to serve around 1,700 meals. That's 500 per day from Friday to Saturday as the crew cater for the media, Paddock Club guests and other team VIPs.

It really is a schedule to rival the engineering programme. And to manage it, the team requires 14 marketing personnel on site, ranging from partner services executives to hospitality managers. Assisting them are 13 of the very best, hand-picked hospitality staff, speaking six languages between them to ensure each and every guest from around the world enjoys the full Silver Arrows experience.

A typical day for a Paddock Club attendee starts with an introduction in the Silver Arrows Lounge. Guests are then entertained with commentary and insight from the team's expert moderators, followed by the ultimate behind-the-scenes look at life inside the team – an in-depth tour of the garage.

A lucky few will then get to experience a session live from inside the garage from the team's viewing gallery. With space for 10 guests, this exclusive area is tucked neatly at the back of the garage, offering an unrivalled insight into the hub of the team's on-track operations. And that's not all – these guests also get the chance to meet the drivers before settling down for drinks and dinner – the true VIP experience!

Initial planning for the United States Prix actually started before the W08 rolled out for the first time on a windy day at Silverstone in February, with reservations rolling in since March. Two weeks before the race itself, the hospitality team will package and distribute all 210 guest tickets in individually designed boxes, customised per partner, in addition to preparing minute-by-minute schedules for each of those partner groups.

Work on the Silver Arrows Lounge itself begins the Sunday before the race, with the stunning suite – of the team's own unique design, matching the motorhome – built from the floor up. Covering 360 square metres in Austin, the impressive suite takes a crew of seven people almost five days to build from start to finish, working for approximately 10 to 12 hours per day. And perhaps even more incredibly, it takes a whopping 74 freight cases to transport all the necessary kit from race to race.

While all eyes are on the track, there's plenty more going on behind-the-scenes as the team coordinates a guest programme to rival the very biggest and best in world sport. And the guest programme holds extra significance on this particular weekend too, with some exciting news to follow from across our partner portfolio – watch this space!

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Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-12179/2017-united-states-grand-prix-preview.html>

Editorial office and responsibility:

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDSStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Daren Frankish - Daimler AG.

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