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Sports-powerboat

SCOTT GILLMAN GRABS POLE POSITION

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 4 (Bernama) -- American ace and former world champion Scott Gillman of team Emirates F1 clocked the fastest time after he completed the final official qualifying of the Formula One (F1) World Powerboat Championship at The Mines Resort City, here today.

The two-time world champion roared off his mercury machine with a fastest lap of 0:52.46s at an average speed of 137.24 kph, to outrace reigning world champion Guido Cappellini of team Zepter Tamoil who completed today's qualifying in third place with a fastest lap of 0:52.73s.

In second place was Massimo Roggiero of Baba Seaquest Racing who posted a fastest lap time of 0:52.56s. Roggiero was the winner of the Malaysian leg last year.

Earlier in the first qualifying, Gillman was in third position with a fastest lap time of 0:54.33s behind Duarte Benavente of Atlantik Team and Cappellini who won the first qualifying with 0:53.83s.

Gillman's supremacy in the final qualifying will give him the pole position in tomorrow's race which is expected to be close.

After going through four rounds of the nine-leg championship, Gillman was in 4th overall standings with 27 points.

"I am looking forward to make a strong comeback tomorrow, and the machine should be in order and running smoothly," said Gillman.

"My boat is doing fine but I don't like the racing condition, calm water and low wind speed. It's not good for my boat," he said.

Cappellini, who will start the race in third row tomorrow, had similar view on the wind but warned his opponent that it would be a different race tomorrow.

"I only focus on the engine and boat condition today and so far it has been going on smoothly. I have to make sure that it is in perfect tuning to avoid problems," said Cappellini who is joint leader with Francesco Cantando in the overall standings with 55 points each.

Cantando, from the Singha Racing Team, was in fourth position today with a fastest lap time of 0:53.28s.

Malaysia's Simon Saw of Viemero Spirit of Malaysia team had something to be proud off. He finished 14th in the final qualifying with a fastest lap time of 0:55.80s while teammate Semi Selio will start tomorrow's race in the 10th row after finishing 10th in the final qualifying. Selio recorded a fastest lap time of 0:54.55s.

Tomorrow will be the d-day for the racers and based on current performance, drivers to watch will be Cantando, Cappellini, Gillman as well as the 2000 Malaysian leg champion Laith Pharaon of Green Team Saudi Arabia.

The racers will be flagged off by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who will also give away prizes to the top three winners.

The Malaysian GP will be the first race in this year's world championship to use electronic start that can detect jump starters, who will face a one-lap penalty.

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