

Mercedes's Valtteri Bottas in action during qualifying at Silverstone.



FASTEST FINN

Bottas pips home favourite Hamilton to pole position in Mercedes domination at Silverstone

LEWIS Hamilton faces a fight to win a record sixth British Grand Prix tomorrow after Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas spoilt the party by claiming pole position at Silverstone.

Five-time world champion Hamilton leads Bottas by 31 points in the standings after nine races this season and had claimed pole at his home race six times previously, including the last four years.

But a mistake on his first flying lap in the final part of qualifying cost Hamilton dearly. He did improve on his final run, but the Finn edged him out by six one-thousandths of a second at the Northamptonshire circuit.

"Congratulations to Valtteri," said Hamilton. "Ultimately I was not good enough. We worked really hard but it got a little bit away from us."

"I had that mistake in the first lap and the second one wasn't that great. It's a long race tomorrow (on Sunday) so hope-



Bottas (centre), along with teammate Lewis Hamilton (left) and Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, on the podium on Saturday.

fully I can do something good."

Bottas said: "It feels very good – it reminds you why you do this. It's been pretty close all weekend so I'm really happy to get on pole."

A seventh front-row lockout for the Mercedes pair this season will be little consolation for Hamilton, who will surpass the victory tally of Jim Clark and Alain Prost if he can pass Bottas

on Sunday.

Perhaps the capacity crowd should have seen this coming. The form book had been thrown out of the window after the three practice sessions, with Ferrari quicker than Mercedes for whom Bottas was faster than Hamilton.

But normal serv-

ice was soon resumed as Hamilton topped the timesheet after the first part of qualifying.

Moments after Leclerc had broken the lap record, Hamilton narrowly beat it – his effort greeted with grins by father Anthony in the Mercedes garage.

—Daily Mail

The British reigning champion loses on top spot by 0.006 sec

QUALIFYING

1. Bottas, Mercedes, 1:25.093
2. Hamilton, Mercedes, 1:25.099
3. Leclerc, Ferrari, 1:25.172
4. Verstappen, Red Bull, 1:25.276
5. Gasly, Red Bull, 1:25.590
6. Vettel, Ferrari, 1:25.787
7. Ricciardo, Renault, 1:26.182
8. Norris, McLaren, 1:26.224
9. Albon, Toro Rosso, 1:26.345
10. Hulkenburg, Toro Rosso, 1:26.386

It feels very good – it reminds you why you do this. It's been pretty close so I'm really happy to get on pole.

I knew the first lap was good but it wasn't perfect and honestly but I am glad it was enough for pole.

—VALTERRI BOTTAS, MERCEDES DRIVER