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# Debutant Norris is quickest young gun

**MELBOURNE:** McLaren debutant Lando Norris looked a wise, old head on young shoulders as the 19-year-old enjoyed a solid qualifying debut for the successful Formula One outfit at the season-opening Australian Grand Prix yesterday.

Britain's youngest F1 driver claimed eighth on the grid for today's race after thrashing his paya and blue-coloured car into the third and final qualifying session.

While outshining senior teammate Carlos Sainz, who was knocked out in Q1 and will start from 18th, Norris was also the standout for the championship's fresh faces.

Toro Rosso's London-born Thai rookie Alexander Albon was 13th, while George Russell could manage only 19th for troubled Williams on debut.

Norris was fined for an unsafe release in the final free practice

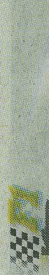
but otherwise has barely put a foot wrong in his first race weekend.

He said crippling nerves had threatened to contain his joy, however, and he was relieved just to get qualifying done.

"I was so nervous, that almost overrode a lot of the enjoyment," he said. "The enjoyment comes from once I know I've completed a lap I'm happy with and seeing how happy the whole team were."

"That's what makes me happy, seeing how hard everyone has worked and how it's all come together for qualifying. It's good to get it off my chest."

Russell, last year's Formula Two winner, said: "I enjoyed it. Obviously I would have liked to have been there a bit longer but we know the pace of the car and my job is to go out there and drive the package we've got as fast as possible. I crossed the line with a smile on my face. **Agencies**



## Formula 1's young guns

The average age is just 27 years and 2 months, half the grid is aged 25 or under

Races in F1 ♦ Team ♦ Rookie ♦ Age

**Alexander Albon** 22  
Thailand ♦ Toro Rosso  
Third in 2018 F2 season behind Russell and Norris. First Thai in F1 since 1954



**Charles Leclerc** 23  
Monaco ♦ Ferrari  
A stunning debut in 2018 at Sauber lifted him to a dream place with the Prancing Horse



**Pierre Gasly** 23  
France ♦ Red Bull  
Fourth in Bahrain in 2018 in a Toro Rosso. His consistency gave him the nod for a senior team seat



**Max Verstappen** 21  
Netherlands ♦ Red Bull  
The Golden Boy. Youngest ever competitor in F1 aged 17, youngest ever winner aged 18. Has five GP victories in 81 races



**George Russell** 21  
Britain ♦ Williams  
Winner 2018 F2 championship, 2017 GP3 championship



**Lando Norris** 19  
Britain ♦ McLaren  
Youngest British driver to compete in F1. Youngest winner (at 17) of the F3 European series



**Lance Stroll** 24  
Canada ♦ Racing Point  
His team is owned by his billionaire father. Youngest rookie on a GP podium, Baku 2017



Source: F1.com, stats.f1.com

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