



## Hall a shot for podium after strong Perth qualifying run

PERTH – Australia's Matt Hall had two strong runs in Qualifying on Saturday and put himself within striking distance of a shot on the podium in Sunday's Red Bull Air Race World Championship in front what is expected to be the largest crowd at a sporting event in Australia.

Hall, who struggled at times earlier this week in some of the training sessions, dazzled an enormous Qualifying Day crowd of 65,000 with the fourth fastest time in the first Qualifying session even though he ended up seventh overall after he wasn't able to improve upon his time 1:29.95 in the second Qualifying round. His Qualifying 2 time was a mere 0.05 slower in 1:30.00.

Hall, who tends to use second Qualifying runs to experiment in search of better racing lines through the 20-metre high Air Gate-filled obstacle course if he has a strong time from the first round, was only 4.88 seconds behind the fastest pilot, Paul Bonhomme.

The British ace, who won the 2008 Perth race and the 2009 world championship, had a blazing time of 1:25.07 on the 6.6-km course set up over the Swan River in front of Perth's central business district.

Organisers are expecting a crowd of more than 100,000 for Sunday's race, the second stop in this year's eight-race championship.

"I'm pretty happy with the way I flew today although I was a bit tired at the end," Hall said, a former RAAF fighter pilot who started his military flying career in Perth two decades ago.

"We know we have a bit more in the aircraft," added Hall, who switched from the Air Force to the Air Race last year.

"Because I was disqualified in two of my four training opportunities earlier in the week I hadn't had as many runs through the track as I would have liked. But now I feel confident I know which lines to fly and how to get the best out of my aircraft."

Hall said he was "over the moon" with his first Qualifying run on Saturday – especially because it was a clean, penalty-free flight at speeds of up to 370 kph through the 16-Gate course that has been called one of the most difficult race tracks in the world.

Eager to get a good result in his home race, Hall nevertheless knows that many other Red Bull Air Race pilots have struggled with sub-par performances in front of their

For more information on Matt Hall Racing go to [www.matthallracing.com](http://www.matthallracing.com) or contact Team Coordinator David Lyall at [david@matthallracing.com](mailto:david@matthallracing.com)



home crowds because of the enormous pressures. But he has said he wants to channel that into positive energy.

“It’s inspiring to me to see so many people out here,” Hall said before flying on Saturday. “I want to represent Australia well. This is the most important race of my career.”

**Ends**

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