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Felipe Massa timed his final run in qualifying for the European Grand Prix to perfection as he took the chequered flag and demoted then provisional pole sitter Lewis Hamilton to second position. Massa claimed the pole position with a best lap of 1:38.989s, two-tenths up on Hamilton who did not quite have the answer to the pace of his Brazilian rival this afternoon.

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While Massa celebrates his 13th career pole, Robert Kubica is happy to line up for the 57-lap European Grand Prix from a solid third position in the leading BMW Sauber, four-tenths off the ultimate pace.

Kimi Raikkonen starts fourth in the second Ferrari, continuing his recent run of qualifying off the front row of the grid. The Finn is clearly much happier on the harder prime tyre available this weekend and that may explain the half second deficit between himself and Massa who ran on the softer option rubber.

Hungarian Grand Prix winner Heikki Kovalainen starts from fifth position in the second McLaren Mercedes while the Toro Rosso Ferrari team were the standout performers this afternoon. Sebastian Vettel lines up a sensational sixth with Sebastien Bourdais also making it into the top ten with the tenths fastest time in the sister Ferrari-powered STR3. It is the first time this year that both Vettel and Bourdais start in the top ten.

Despite missing all of the morning practice session with a suspected gearbox issue, Jarno Trulli showed his experience and pace as he qualified his Toyota in seventh position ahead of Nick Heidfeld in the second BMW Sauber. For Heidfeld, it was a good result after his recent qualifying problems, but once again the German veteran left it late to ensure a top ten start.

Nico Rosberg leads the way for Williams Toyota as he lines up in ninth position ahead of Bourdais in the second Toro Rosso. Kazuki Nakajima missed out on a top ten start by just a hundredth of a second in the second Williams Toyota and lines up in 11th position while Renault were left disappointed with fan-favourite Fernando Alonso and team-mate Nelson Piquet just 12th and 15th.

Between the Renault duo, Timo Glock was 13th best in the second Toyota ahead of the leading Red Bull Renault of Mark Webber who admits the RB4 is lacking grip this weekend. Webber also claims that the Renault engine is not giving the power enjoyed over at sister team Toro Rosso with its Ferrari power-plants.

Despite Jenson Button's Friday afternoon pace, qualifying would prove to be a major disappointment for the Honda team. Button missed making it into the second round of qualifying by a tenth of a second and therefore lines up in 16th position fully believing he had the pace in the RA108 package to make it into the top ten. Team-mate Rubens Barrichello has been off the pace all weekend and this afternoon was no exception as the Brazilian veteran lines up 19th, a second slower than Button.

David Coulthard was 17th in the second Red Bull Renault while the Force India duo of Giancarlo Fisichella and Adrian Sutil were 18th and 20th respectively with the Italian veteran showing quite a performance advantage over his younger team-mate.

With safety cars expected in this Grand Prix, the result of the race is far from a foregone conclusion, but again Massa and Hamilton are putting themselves in the best possible position to record victory in the 12th round of the championship.

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