ORACLE Red Bull RACING

RB19

MAX VERSTAPPEN

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Qatar 2023
Practice and qualifying



The high temperatures and peculiarities of the Losail circuit made it clear from the outset that the Qatar Grand Prix weekend was going to be full of thrills. But the Oracle Red Bull Racing team was focused on going all out to win.

Almost 19 miles (30 km) from Doha, the Losail International Circuit was decked out in its finest to welcome the big stars of Formula 1, gathered to contest the 17th round of the 2023 season, just after the thrilling Japanese Grand Prix. For the fourth time, the event included a Sprint race, which reduced Friday's practice sessions to a single run before the battle for pole position. It meant that the teams couldn't afford to experiment too much.

Max on fire

The scorching heat, treacherous wind, and blowing sand were some of the unwelcome guests at the newly built Losail track. The conditions meant that mistakes could be extremely costly, but there was no time to dwell on this.

The drivers took to the track and, with each lap, got used to the unpredictable surface, although the threat of a lack of grip remained. From the outset, the Oracle Red Bull Racing cars entered the circuit

Max Verstappen went into the 2023 Qatar Grand Prix 177 points ahead of his teammate Sergio Pérez.



Verstappen on the Losail International Circuit during practice for the 2023 Qatar GP on October 6.

with the clear objective of getting the most out of a track where tire degradation would play a key role.

Max Verstappen wasted no time. With relentless pace, he made it clear that his RB19 was one of the favorites to beat. But he wasn't the only one. The McLarens of Oscar Piastri and Lando Norris topped the timesheets in the first half of free practice. However, in the final stint, the results varied significantly. Max Verstappen laid down the law with a time of 1:27.428, ahead of the Ferraris of Carlos Sainz Jr. and Charles Leclerc. Fernando Alonso's Aston Martin came close to snatching third place from Leclerc, while Sergio Pérez – despite a difficult start where he struggled with the balance of his car and was unable to find the same stability as his teammate – finished in fifth position.

Evening qualifying

The onset of nightfall and the drop in temperatures brought relief to the drivers ahead of qualifying, which took place on Friday. Norris celebrated by topping the timesheets. Several drivers attempted to improve their times, but some found their times invalidated for exceeding track limits. When the teams began to call for extreme caution, champion Max Verstappen appeared and took the lead in Q1, ahead of Norris and Alonso.

The celebrations were muted in the Oracle Red Bull Racing paddock, as Sergio Pérez struggled more than expected to make the cut. The Mexican had been unable to find the necessary grip and his times kept him in a dangerous elimination zone. In a last-ditch attempt, Checo managed to escape the abyss and make it into Q2, although he clearly struggled to match his teammate's pace.

Things get complicated

In Q2, Verstappen set out determined to prove that his RB19 was the fastest car on the circuit. But the Mercedes cars also came out hungry for glory, and Lewis Hamilton stole the show, beating the champion by 0.102 seconds. The McLarens of Norris and Piastri also pushed hard and finished third and fourth.

The real surprises of Q2 came with the eliminations. Yuki Tsunoda and his AlphaTauri were out after finishing in 11th position, just ahead of Carlos Sainz Jr., who left the Ferrari team completely perplexed.
For a moment, it looked like Checo would get through to Q3, but after being penalized for exceeding track limits, he dropped to 13th place. The Mexican was out.



Sergio Pérez pictured during qualifying for the Qatar GP, where he qualified in P8.



Pole winner Verstappen is flanked by George Russell (left, second place) and Oscar Piastri (right, third place) after qualifying, though Piastri was later demoted to sixth place on the grid.

That pole is mine

The 10 drivers who made it to Q3 were all eager to secure pole position, but Verstappen took to the track with a confidence that left his rivals in his wake. On his first attempt, he set a benchmark time that left the others with no chance. With a perfectly balanced car and great control of the track, the Dutchman crossed the finish line with a spectacular time of 1:23.778. None of the remaining contenders managed to break the 1:24 mark.

The Ferraris tried to apply pressure, but Charles Leclerc fell short. Mercedes, with Hamilton and Russell, was also unable to do anything against the crushing pace of the RB19. All efforts were in vain. Verstappen had shown that he was on another level, which caused serious concern for the teams ahead of Sunday's race. Because if the champion put the car back on autopilot at that level, no other car would be able to catch him.

Qualifying classification

Pos.	Nº	Driver	Constructor	Q1	Q2	Q3	Final grid
1	1	Max Verstappen	Red Bull Racing-Honda RBPT	1:25.007	1:24.483	1:23.778	1
2	63	George Russell	Mercedes	1:25.334	1:24.827	1:24.219	2
3	44	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes	1:26.076	1:24.381	1:24.305	3
4	14	Fernando Alonso	Aston Martin Aramco-Mercedes	1:25.223	1:25.241	1:24.369	4
5	16	Charles Leclerc	Ferrari	1:25.452	1:25.079	1:24.424	5
6	81	Oscar Piastri	McLaren-Mercedes	1:25.266	1:24.724	1:24.540	6
7	10	Pierre Gasly	Alpine-Renault	1:25.566	1:24.918	1:24.553	7
8	31	Esteban Ocon	Alpine-Renault	1:25.711	1:24.928	1:24.763	8
9	77	Valtteri Bottas	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	1:26.038	1:25.297	1:25.058	9
10	4	Lando Norris	McLaren-Mercedes	1:25.131	1:24.685	DNF	10
11	22	Yuki Tsunoda	AlphaTauri-Honda RBPT	1:26.058	1:25.301	N/A	11
12	55	Carlos Sainz Jr.	Ferrari	1:25.808	1:25.328	N/A	12
13	11	Sergio Pérez	Red Bull Racing-Honda RBPT	1:25.991	1:25.462	N/A	PL*
14	23	Alexander Albon	Williams-Mercedes	1:26.118	1:25.707	N/A	13
15	27	Nico Hülkenberg	Haas-Ferrari	1:25.904	1:25.783	N/A	14
16	2	Logan Sargeant	Williams-Mercedes	1:26.210	N/A	N/A	15
17	18	Lance Stroll	Aston Martin Aramco-Mercedes	1:26.345	N/A	N/A	16
18	40	Liam Lawson	AlphaTauri-Honda RBPT	1:26.635	N/A	N/A	17
19	20	Kevin Magnussen	Haas-Ferrari	1:27.046	N/A	N/A	18
20	24	Zhou Guanyu	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	1:27.432	N/A	N/A	19

* Sergio Pérez started from the pit lane in the main race after his team repaired his car, which had been damaged in a collision during the Sprint race.

2023 Qatar Grand Prix

Not even the heat can stop Max Verstappen



Max Verstappen leads the field during the early stages of the 2023 Qatar GP.

If Friday's qualifying had ended with Verstappen out of reach, Saturday's Sprint raised doubts after the champion was overtaken by Piastri's McLaren. Was he saving his best for Sunday? Various signs of concern among the Oracle Red Bull Racing team did not suggest that this Sprint result was part of a strategy, although perhaps the discontent was more a response to the accident that had knocked Checo Pérez out of the Sprint; the Mexican seemed resigned to another weekend to forget.

All hell breaks loose

Max arrived at the starting line calm and confident. And with good reason. His second place in the Sprint had already guaranteed him the Drivers' World Championship. But at the start of the Grand Prix in Losail, his rivals showed that the Dutchman's victory meant nothing in terms of the upcoming race. The Mercedes cars made their strategy clear, with an aggressive George Russell launching an attack as soon as the lights went out. Verstappen had to go on the defensive to avoid losing his advantage, but the Mercedes' excessive ambition ended up backfiring on them. In the first few corners, a misjudged maneuver caused a collision between the two teammates. Hamilton had to retire, while Russell was forced to make an early pit stop that would make it extremely difficult for him to secure a place on the podium.

Meanwhile, Verstappen took advantage of the confusion to consolidate his lead, with Oscar Piastri and Lando Norris in pursuit. Sergio Pérez, meanwhile, had a more complicated start from the pit lane, finding himself in the middle of traffic and fighting to gain positions. "We lost our car yesterday due to the incident in the Sprint," recalled the Mexican. "So we brought out a completely new car for today. Therefore, it was very difficult to draw conclusions and we had to go back to the specifications."

Three stops for all

Before the race, the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) had imposed an unusual rule:



Having already secured the World Championship after the Qatar Sprint race, Verstappen drove superbly to win the Grand Prix.

FINAL CLASSIFICATION

Pos.	Driver	Team
1	Max Verstappen	Red Bull-Honda RBPT
2	Oscar Piastri	McLaren-Mercedes
3	Lando Norris	McLaren-Mercedes
4	George Russell	Mercedes
5	Charles Leclerc	Ferrari
6	Fernando Alonso	Aston Martin A.M.
7	Esteban Ocon	Alpine-Renault
8	Valtteri Bottas	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari
9	Zhou Guanyu	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari
10	Sergio Pérez	Red Bull-Honda RBPT
11	Lance Stroll	Aston Martin A.M.
12	Pierre Gasly	Alpine-Renault
13	Alexander Albon	Williams-Mercedes
14	Kevin Magnussen	Haas-Ferrari
15	Yuki Tsunoda	AlphaTauri-Honda RBPT
16	Nico Hülkenberg	Haas-Ferrari
17	Liam Lawson	AlphaTauri-Honda RBPT
RET	Logan Sargeant	Williams-Mercedes
RET	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
DNS	Carlos Sainz Jr.	Ferrari



Checo Pérez was able to make up 10 places and finish in 10th place to secure a point for Oracle Red Bull Racing.

all drivers had to make at least three stops due to tire problems detected by Pirelli. This rule forced the teams to rethink their strategies on the fly. "Making three mandatory stops was not the fastest way to race that race," Oracle Red Bull Racing Team Principal and CEO Christian Horner complained afterwards. "But the strategy team did their job, got their calculations right, and helped secure the victory."

Oracle Red Bull Racing decided to execute its plan with surgical precision. A visibly comfortable Verstappen completed his pit stops without any problems and took advantage of the opportunity to gradually pull away from his closest rivals. Pérez, on the other hand, had a day to forget. The Mexican was involved in several incidents, received penalties for exceeding track limits and, during one of his pit stops, lost valuable time in the pits. "I suffered a lot with the new track limits," Checo admitted candidly. "They were introduced at the last minute, which I don't think is right. But it's the same for everyone, and I should have done a better job. I found it difficult to differentiate them in the car because I think, a bit like in Austria, I'm sitting too low, and that made things difficult."

Battling the extreme heat

The high temperatures on the circuit not only caused the tires to wear out quickly, but also took their toll on the drivers. Fernando Alonso, for example, asked for water to be poured on his Aston Martin seat during a pit stop, complaining that the seat was burning hot. Logan Sargeant ended up retiring due to heatstroke, and many others admitted to driving part of the race visibly dizzy from the high temperatures.

It was certainly not an easy race for anyone. But there were those who managed to cope better with the elements, such as Verstappen. The same applied to the McLarens. Oscar Piastri and Lando Norris delivered one of their best performances of the year. The Australian, buoyed by his victory in Saturday's Sprint, remained the only driver who could trouble Verstappen, although he never had a real chance to overtake him. Norris, meanwhile, executed a brilliant strategy and made some of the most spectacular overtakes of the night.



Second in the Sprint race, winner of the Grand Prix, and newly crowned Drivers' World Champion all amounted to a very successful Qatar weekend for Max Verstappen.

The extreme conditions, with temperatures above 86ºF (30ºC) and stifling humidity, took their toll on the drivers.

Further back, Russell, who had been ranting on the radio since the initial incident with his teammate, fought his way back up to fourth place in a titanic effort. To do so, he had to overtake Charles Leclerc – he was the only representative of Scuderia Ferrari, as an unexpected breakdown just before the start had left Carlos Sainz Jr. unable to participate.

Hungry for victory

Despite the sweltering temperatures and extreme physical demands, Verstappen managed the race masterfully and crossed the finish line with a comfortable lead, securing his 14th victory of the season and further consolidating his dominance. "Of course, with the three mandatory stops, we couldn't get the best out of our car," said the champion after the race. "But we won, and that's the main thing. My hunger for victory hasn't let up since I won the championship. I want to keep going and maximize the car's performance every weekend."

Oscar Piastri finished an impressive second, underlining his talent in his first year in Formula 1. Lando Norris completed the podium, rounding off an exceptional weekend for McLaren. Sergio Pérez rounded out the points with a 10th-place finish, which, given the complications of his race, was quite respectable.

Driving to the limit



Max Verstappen attempts to cool down in *parc fermé* during one of the hottest Grands Prix in Formula 1 history in Qatar in October 2023. For many of the drivers, just completing the race was a victory in itself.

Rarely in the championship has there been such unanimity. All the drivers described the Qatar race as hell – it was evident during the race and as the drivers crossed the finish line. Many of them needed help from the mechanics to get out of their cars and literally collapsed on the pit floor dehydrated, dizzy, and exhausted.

With humidity above 70 percent, the temperature felt by the drivers during the race was over 104°F (40°C). A real nightmare. During the race, several drivers reported symptoms of extreme heat exhaustion. Fernando Alonso complained that his seat was burning, Ocon vomited inside his helmet, and Sargeant reported over the radio that he was not feeling well. James Vowles, Williams team principal, told him to make the decision he felt was best, but not to be ashamed of stopping. The driver managed to make it back to the pits with great difficulty and had to be treated at the medical center for heatstroke. Had he continued, he would likely have fainted at the wheel. Stroll admitted that one of his fears throughout the race was losing consciousness. The unbearable heat clouded the drivers' vision and made them feel like they couldn't breathe. Russell admitted to opening his helmet visor in an attempt to cool down, until he realized that the remedy was worse than the disease, as it felt like having a hot air dryer in his face.

Losail became a veritable oven that pushed the drivers to the limit of their abilities. Dehydration, loss of reflexes, and dizziness were a constant threat. Finishing the race was something only heroes could achieve. Winning it, as Verstappen did, was something only legends could do.

BUILD THE

ORACLE Red Bull RACING RB19
MAX VERSTAPPEN

FRONT RIGHT SUSPENSION (2)

In this issue, we will begin the assembly of the front right brake disc.

PIECES IN THIS ISSUE

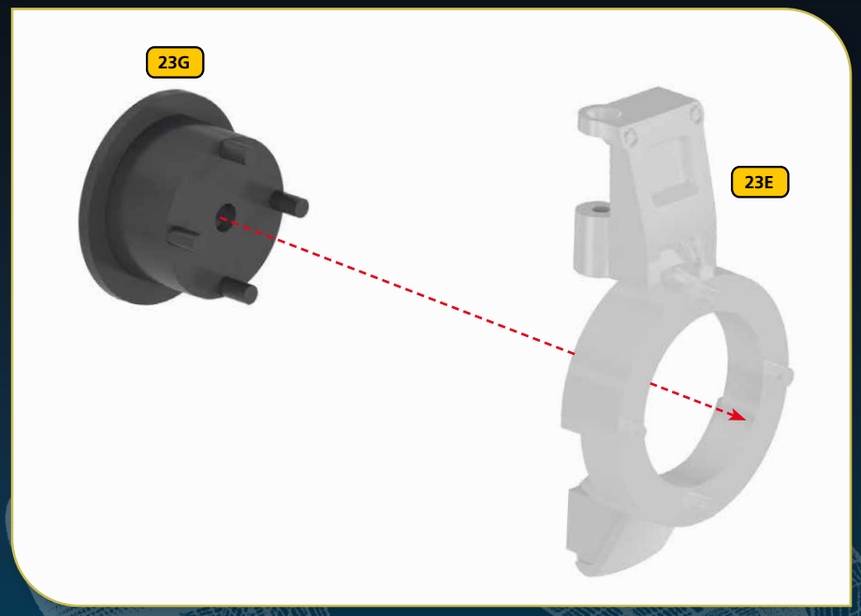


23A Central brake disc
23B Inner brake disc
23C Outer brake disc
23D Brake disc ventilation grille
23E Front right hub support
23F Front right brake plate
23G Inner part of the hub
B Screws 2.3 × 6 mm (2 + 1*)

* Spare screw

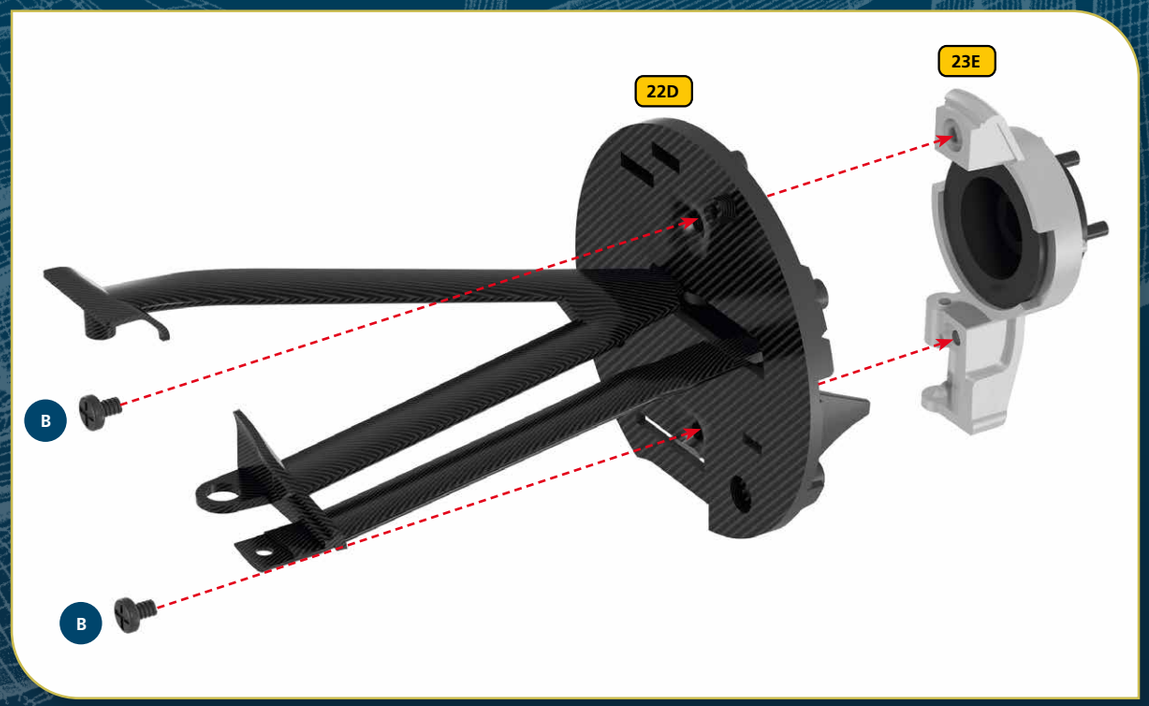
STEP 23–1

Insert the inner part of the hub **23G** into the central hole in the front right hub support **23E**.



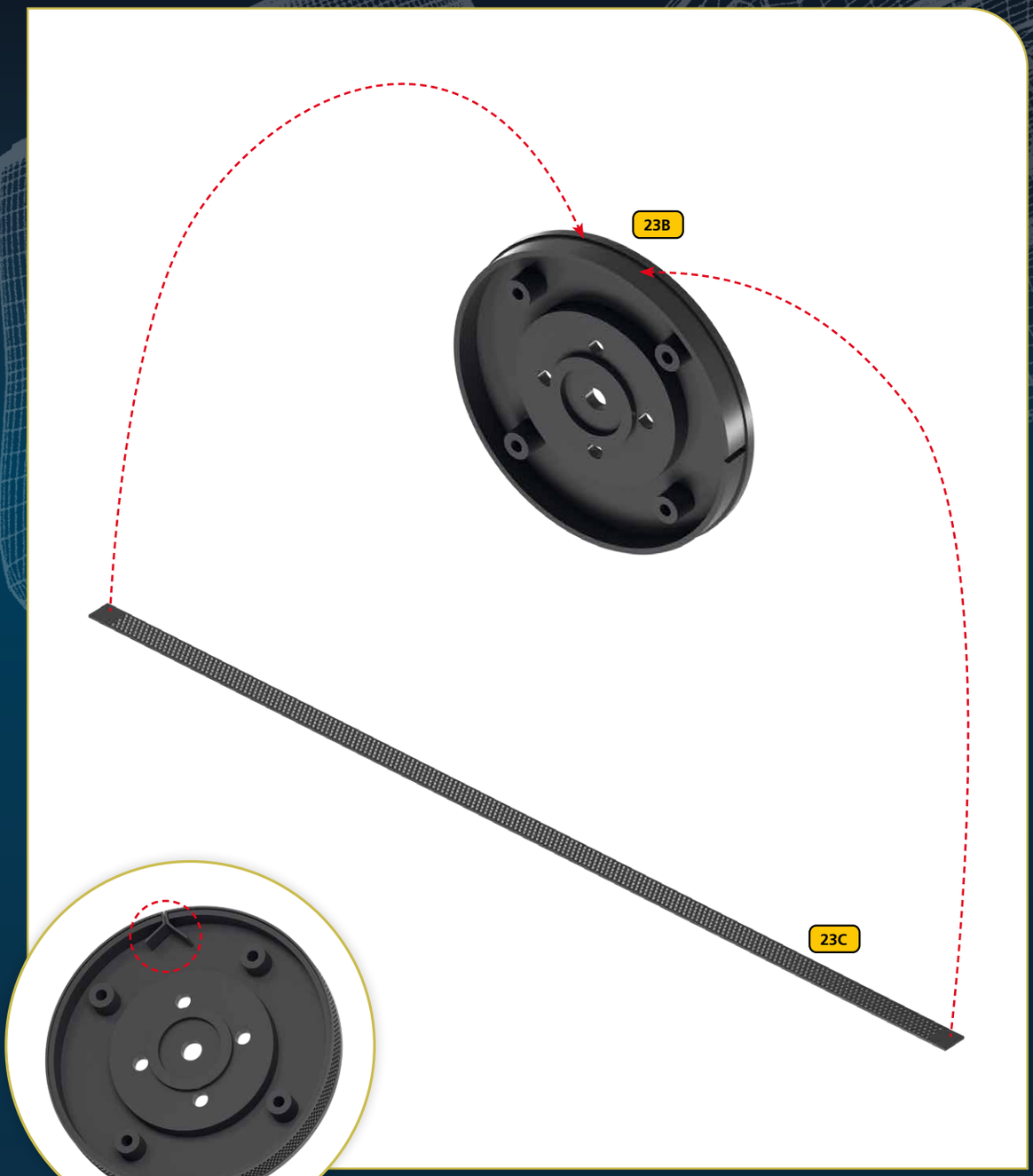
STEP 23–2

Retrieve the front right lower suspension arm assembly from the previous issue. Secure the front right hub support **23E** to the inner side of the steering knuckle **22D** with two **B** screws.



STEP 23–3

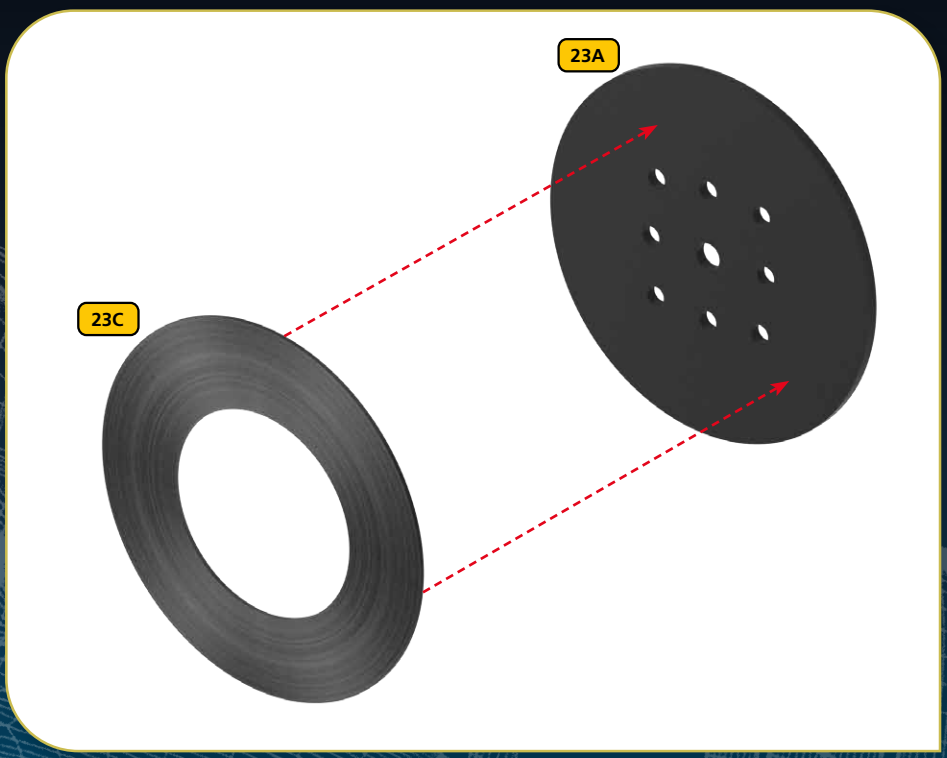
Insert one end of the brake disc ventilation grille **23C** into the highlighted slot on the inner brake disc **23B**. Then, wrap the ventilation grille around the entire contour of the brake disc and insert the other end into the same slot on the disc (see detail image).



Front right suspension (2)

STEP 23-4

Connect the outer brake disc **23C** to the central brake disc **23A**.



FINAL RESULT



This is how the pieces look at this stage of the assembly.