



J. VILLA



S. JIMENEZ



Racing Engineering – GP2 Bahrain Race 1

Through no fault of their own it was a very disappointing day for the Racing Engineering team in the opening round of the 2007 GP2 series at Bahrain.

Hopes were high at the start of the day that, following a lot of hard work from the team following the problems encountered by both drivers in yesterday's qualification, both drivers could expect to do well in the race.

Unfortunately things started to go wrong before the race even began when the team detected a problem with Javier Villa's Renault engine. Following assurances from Mechachrome that the engine would be fine for the race, the team prepared the Dallara for the race.

Following the initially aborted start Villa made a good getaway at the second attempt and was soon involved in some hard battles for position but after only a handful of laps his engine suffered a major failure and Villa was forced to pull off the track trailing clouds of smoke.

For Sergio Jimenez things went a little better, despite having to start from the pits following clutch problems, something that several other drivers also suffered from in the high ambient temperatures. Jimenez was making steady progress through the field despite high engine temperatures but two laps from the finish the Brazilian driver was forced to retire as his engine eventually succumbed to having to run too hot.

A poor reward for the team after all their hard work but they will not let these problems get them down and both cars will be back on the grid tomorrow ready to go with both drivers looking to have a competitive race.

Alfonso D'Orleans (team principal): "I am quite upset considering the amount of work that has been put in by the team and the good performances by both drivers.

We felt there was a problem with Javier's engine before the start of the race but we were assured by Mecachrome that everything was in order, sadly the engine failed after only a few laps. We are sure that if Javier had not retired he would have been in the points, perhaps he would have been on pole for tomorrow's race.

Sergio suffered from overheating from the start possibly as a result of a punctured radiator; his engine was running at 124 degrees on the grid, this caused him a substantial power loss during the race. Despite this problem his was in 12th place until he started to fall back as things worsened.

The team will be working all night to change both engines and we will be ready to race again tomorrow."

Javier Villa (driver car 14): "I was going quite well, getting closer to Borja and his teammate when my engine failed. We had already warned Mecachrome about it not sounding right and not running well and, at the end, it just went off. A shame as our strategy was to do the pit stop a bit later in the race to get some clean laps and this would have allowed us to push more. Now everything is more difficult for tomorrow as we are starting 21st and given that there isn't pitstop in the sprint race we'd have to push as much as we can right from the start."

Sergio Jimenez (driver car 15): "I had a problem at the start with the clutch due to the heat; luckily for me so did several other drivers so the start was delayed. I was pushed to the pits and the team restarted the engine and I started the race from the pits. The car was OK on the opening laps and I made my pitstop on lap 3 but then the car began to be affected by understeer from the tenth lap. I felt I could still have a good finish but my engine problems were getting worse and with 6 laps to go the engine broke, I tried to keep it running to make the finish but two laps from the finish I had to pull off. The team will be working very hard to get my car ready for tomorrow's race."

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