



## Racing Engineering – GP2 Magny Cours – Race 1

A day of high drama for Racing Engineering with new driver Ernesto Viso lucky to escape from a horrific accident with relatively minor injuries and Javier Villa driving a storming race from the back of the field to finish 7<sup>th</sup>.

Telefonica

The race got off to a farcical start when the two iSport cars on the front of the grid veered towards each other as the lights went off in the manner made infamous by Michael Schumacher. A collision was inevitable and both cars were out on the spot. Smiles quickly turned to concern as TV cameras suddenly showed Viso's car airborne and rolling, the Dallara sickeningly made contact with the trackside barrier and rolled along it before disappearing behind the wall in a shower of carbon fibre. Marshalls and the medical team were immediately attending to the stricken driver as the Pace Car was deployed and the cars pulled up on the grid. Viso was removed from the car after sometime and gradually word filtered through that he had fortunately escaped with concussion and arm injuries.

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The race was restarted after an hour for one lap behind the Pace Car and then the race began again, Javier was down in 17<sup>th</sup> following his mandatory pitstop which he and most of the other drivers took following Viso's accident, he lost time when he couldn't leave the Racing Engineering pit as both DAMS cars had pitted together and Nakajima was blocking his exit. He lost a place almost immediately to Soucek but he instantly began to put pressure on the DPR driver and for the next 10 laps was clearly the quicker car. Taking advantage of a faster corner exit Javier drafted past Soucek immediately pulling out several car lengths. Driving with great purpose Javier was soon on the tail of Bakkerud and Hirate and when the two made contact at the hairpin Javi was up to 12<sup>th</sup>. More controlled yet very fast driving saw Javi reel in Garcia and Yamamoto and a superb exit from Turn 2 on lap 26 allowed the young Spaniard to gain a place at the Adelaide hairpin. After getting ahead of Garcia next came Zaug and Negrao and Javi was soon harassing both cars, once again there was contact from the two cars ahead and Negrao spun on lap 32 allowing Javi to dive through almost passing Zaug as well.

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Over the remaining nine laps Zaug and Javier had a wonderful battle for position and when both Lapierre and Maldonado spun in front of them the two drivers crossed the line inches apart in sixth and seventh. A brilliant drive from Javier, two more points in the Championship and second on the grid for tomorrow's sprint race and if he can duplicate today's speed, a real chance of a win.

**Alfonso D'Orleans (team principal):** "Today has been a day with three bits of good news for Racing Engineering: first and most important, Ernesto is fine after his horrific crash. We haven't yet got the official report from the FIA doctors but we have been told that he's conscious, talking and out of danger although they will keep him under observation. The second was the 'recovery of the century' made by Javi which really impressed us all, his race was spectacular. It's a shame he lost a lot of places in the pitstop because Nakajima's car was blocking his exit after the two DAMS car pitted together. Without that and the time lost behind some slower drivers he caught on the track I believe we'd have been on the podium. The third good news is that Javi is starting tomorrow from the front row and with a real chance of getting a very good result."

**Javier Villa (driver car 14):** "We had a good start and went straight to the pits as they deployed the safety car but I couldn't come back to the track as soon as the tyres were changed because both DAMS cars pitted at the same time and Nakajima was blocking me. At the beginning it was difficult to be fast but after a few laps I started to push and pass other cars to finish seventh. I really needed a couple more laps without traffic to run a bit faster. Tomorrow we are starting second and the key will be a good start and get in front at the first corner."