



Racing Engineering – GP2 Spa-Francorchamps – Race 1

Javier Villa drove a stunning Feature Race today in the Racing Engineering Dallara in his maiden race at Spa; starting from 14th spot on the grid he finished the race in 4th just over half a second away from a place on the podium. Marcos Martinez continued his rapid progression in the formula; he was running very competitively when a pitstop ended in retirement.

Telefonica

Javier showed he really has the knack of a fast getaway from the grid when he made a superb start overtaking several cars and managing to avoid the potential problems caused by several cars being left stranded as the lights went out. As the cars streamed towards Eau Rouge Javier was lying in 7th ahead of Tung and chasing Negrao. Sitting closely on the tail of the Minardi Piquet Sports car the pressure soon paid off as Negrao ran wide on lap 2 and the Repsol/ Telefonica car was up to 6th. A lap later Javier was 0.3 seconds behind Petrov and as the cars sped along Raidillon approaching Kemmel Javi dived around the outside of the Russian to take 5th.



Javi soon began to pull away from Petrov and as the leaders began their pitstops he moved up to 3rd and into the lead on lap 8. The following lap saw the Racing Engineering car making its mandatory stop and Javi was quickly on his way, now lying 8th but effectively 6th as two cars ahead were yet to stop. Lap 12 saw Javi closing in fast on Conway and pulling away from Negrao, by the following lap he was 2.1 seconds behind Conway and within two laps he was right on the Englishman's tail and with another brilliant overtaking move and he was 5th. Javi's next target was the 4th placed di Grassi who was 3.3 seconds ahead and he was soon narrowing the gap. 5th place became 4th as Carroll made a mistake and spun out on lap 19 but the laps were fast running out and at the finish Javi was 4th just 0.8 behind di Grassi.



For Marcos Martinez it was a case of what might have been, he made a great start from the back of the grid and by lap 3 he was up to 15th and running well. Keeping out of trouble Marcos continued to press hard and taking advantage of other drivers pitstops he was 3rd on lap 9 and he was leading on lap 11 and fighting hard with Garcia. Marcos pitted on the following lap and was quickly back in the race, lying 15th and fighting with Niemela. Sadly on lap 16 he was forced into the pits with overheating, the Racing Engineering team quickly removed the right-hand bodywork but a punctured radiator saw Marcos forced to retire when he had a chance to finish in the top 12 in his first race at Spa.

Snap-on

Tomorrow will see Javier starting 5th on the grid for the Sprint Race and, looking at his pace today, he has an excellent chance of another podium finish if not a win. Although Marcos will have to start from 23rd on the grid his promising run today means he has a great chance of making progress into the top half of the field and gaining even more experience.



Pago

Alfonso de Orleans-Borbon (team principal): "I am very happy with Javi's results, he did a fantastic job and with one more lap he might have made it to the podium. I am sad though for Marcos as he had a tremendous race, even leading for a moment, but sadly the punctured radiator put him out of contention. Once again I want to thank everyone in the team for the fantastic job they've done, without them this result would not have been possible."



Javier Villa (driver car 14): "Things went quite well today. I made a good start and I was 7th at the end of the first lap and I began to push hard matching the pace of the leaders. At the end of race another 2 or 3 more laps and I could have been on the podium. I think I have a good chance tomorrow to be on the podium."



Marcos Martinez (driver car 15): "A good race, I had good pace. I have been able to gain positions and when I was in 14th place I had a puncture in a radiator which forced me to retire. I hope that tomorrow it all goes well and at least I can finish the race."