



Racing Engineering - GP2 France Qualifying – Giorgio Pantano qualifies third

There were mixed fortunes today for the two Racing Engineering drivers with Giorgio Pantano qualifying an impressive 3rd but Javier Villa could only manage the 24th fastest time.



Both drivers made an excellent start to the day in this morning's Free Practice when Javier was on fantastic form to set the third fastest time of 1m 22.874s, less than two tenths of a second behind the fastest driver. Giorgio was similarly as competitive setting the fourth best time in 1m 22.892s, just two tenths of a second behind his team mate. It was clear that all the hard work carried out by the Spanish team and their two drivers at the recent Paul Ricard tests was paying off.



With such fast times in the morning both drivers were looking forward to the afternoon's 30 minute qualifying session confident that their Racing Engineering Dallaras were as fast as any of the other cars on the track.



Giorgio Pantano continued his excellent performance in the afternoon and at the end of qualifying he had set the third quickest time in his Repsol/Telefónica supported car. His fastest lap of 1m 22.301s was only 0.051seconds away from the pole position time and indeed, following a red flag incident resulting from an accident to Bruno Senna, the Italian driver set the fastest time in the first two sectors of the lap but a small mistake in the final sector cost him pole position.



For Javier Villa it was not such a good result, the good setup he had for the morning session did not suit the warmer track conditions in the afternoon and the young Spaniard could only set a time of 1m 23.998s for 24th on the grid.



For tomorrow's Feature Race Giorgio Pantano is clearly capable of taking a podium position and a win is a real possibility as his car is very competitive on the Magny Cours track and the Racing Engineering team have an enviable reputation for reliability this season. Meanwhile for Javier the team will be looking to improve the setup on his car so that Javi can push as hard as possible to try and get a good grid position for Sunday's Sprint Race.



Alfonso de Orleans Borbón (team principal): "A strange qualifying for us. Giorgio did a fantastic job and I am sure he would have had pole without his little error in the last corner. On the other hand, after Javi's fantastic time this morning, it's a pity that he wasn't able to replicate this in qualifying. Hopefully tomorrow he will be able to fight back to allow him to have a good starting position for Sunday. Once again, everyone in the team did a great job and now we have to prepare for tomorrow's race."



Javier Villa (driver car 11): "I don't really know what has happened. In free practice we went really, really quick. Now in qualifying the track was very different as it was much warmer. The set up we had was not the perfect one for these conditions. We have to now check everything as we don't want to be in the same situation in case we encounter the same conditions tomorrow."

Giorgio Pantano (driver car 12): "I am trying to do the best I can everywhere to put all my best sectors in one lap. In the last lap I was heading for pole, but I couldn't take the last corner perfect. In the end I am 0.051 seconds off pole, which disturbs me a lot, but I know that we have a fast car and I will go for the win tomorrow."