



Racing Engineering - GP2 France Feature Race – Giorgio Pantano takes second win of the season and leads the Drivers Championship

Giorgio Pantano did everything expected of him by winning today's Feature Race and taking the fastest lap on the day when he became the most experienced driver in GP2. Giorgio's confident race performance also puts him in a clear first place at the top of the Drivers Championship. For Javier Villa it was a day for doing the best he could from his 23rd place on the starting grid, Javi drove a steady race to move up to 13th at the chequered flag.

Giorgio made a great start passing Grosjean as the cars left the grid and slotting the Repsol/Telefónica backed Racing Engineering Dallara into second spot behind the pole-sitter Senna. At the end of the opening lap Giorgio was right on the tail of Senna as the two cars crossed the line just 0.6 seconds apart with Grosjean just behind in third. Over the next few laps the two leaders were very evenly matched with the gap constantly less than a second and by lap 8 they had dropped Grosjean who was now 2.8 seconds behind.

Lap 18 saw both Giorgio and Senna make their mandatory pit stops, Giorgio lost a place to Grosjean who had stopped a couple of laps earlier but he was quickly on the tail of the French driver. On the next lap Grosjean passed Senna and Giorgio closed in on both drivers as he looked for an opportunity to pass. Suddenly on lap 21 Senna slowed dramatically with clutch problems and Giorgio quickly moved into second place behind Grosjean. The gap between first and second was steady at around a second but as the cars were on their 33rd lap Grosjean suddenly slowed with mechanical problems and Giorgio took the lead.

With just 8 laps left to run, and a nine second lead over di Grassi, Giorgio took it easy over the remaining laps to score a great win for himself and Racing Engineering as once again the Spanish team showed what a competitive force they are this year.

It was a less dramatic race for Javier Villa. Starting from 23rd on the grid the young Spaniard made a good start to finish the first lap in 20th place. The Racing Engineering team opted for an early pit stop for Javi and on lap 7 he dived into the pits where the team quickly had him on his way again. For the rest of the race Javi was involved in a tense battle with Soucek as both men moved up through the field as other drivers had various problems.

By lap 29 there was a very close battle going on between Buurman, Rodriguez, Soucek and Javi. With 3 laps to go Soucek ran wide and Javi tried to overtake but as Soucek regained the track he made contact with the nosecone on Javi's car and the Racing Engineering driver had to back off. The battle continued right to the very end with Javi finishing 13th still right on the gearbox of Soucek.

Giorgio will start tomorrow's Sprint Race from 8th place on the reversed grid and will be looking to make up as many places as possible to consolidate his Championship lead whilst Javier will also be looking to try and move up into a points scoring position and to show the pace he had in Friday's free practice.

Alfonso de Orleans Borbón (team principal): "An absolutely fantastic job from Giorgio and the best way to conclude his 100th race, I think we might celebrate this tonight. A fantastic job also from all the boys, it is the reliability of our cars that helps us to lead Driver Championship and to second in the Team Championship. A big thank you to everyone in the team."

Javier Villa (driver car 11): "It was a pretty hard race. We thought we could be quick although starting from the back, but I didn't feel comfortable with the car. We need to improve for tomorrow."

Giorgio Pantano (driver car 12): "Everything went perfect for me today. The car, the team everything was great. We have a fast car and unfortunately didn't start on pole. But we had some luck that Senna and Grosjean had problems with their cars and I decided then to be safe with the car and get to end. Sometimes I have bad luck and sometimes good."

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