



Racing Engineering - GP2 Germany - Race 2: Fifth place for Javier Villa in Hockenheim's sprint race.

It was mixed fortunes for the Racing Engineering drivers in the GP2 Series Sprint Race run on Sunday morning at Hockenheim: whilst Javier Villa scored his best result of the season so far, finishing fifth and scoring two points for the Spanish team, Giorgio Pantano had to retire at the beginning of the race when fighting for third position.

After the rain that made things so difficult at the end of yesterday's race, Sunday's sprint was held on a dry track and under mostly sunny skies. The start was quite messy, with a crash in the middle of the grid and some quite aggressive moves in the front rows making for several position changes. The two Racing Engineering cars were amongst those who went through all the confusion without incident, and exiting the opening corners both had gained positions: Giorgio was sixth after starting 8th, while Javi was 9th, recovering a place from his 10th spot on the grid.

Midway through the first lap, Pantano was still moving up gaining another two places to be fourth at the end of the first lap, and quickly closing on third-placed Soucek. The Racing Engineering driver soon caught the SuperNova car and tried to overtake him at the tight Spitzkehre hairpin, but the two cars made contact and that was it for both drivers: Soucek was out on the spot while Pantano couldn't go much further as he soon noticed that the steering on his Dallara has been damaged and he was forced to retire from the race.

With Giorgio out all of the responsibility for scoring points for Racing Engineering was on Javier's shoulders and he was up to the job. After the incident involving his team-mate, the young Spaniard was seventh and despite losing a place next time round when passed by a recovering Grosjean, Javi kept up a good pace that kept him always among the faster drivers on track. The Repsol and Telefónica backed Dallara driven by the Spaniard was closing on a tight group of six cars fighting for third position, two cars were soon out of the fight when Maldonado and Di Grassi came together, which meant Javi moved up to a point scoring position now being sixth. However Javi was looking for more and kept on pushing hard, overtaking Parente on the eleventh lap after a spectacular dive to the inside of the hairpin that put him 5th and staying close to 4th placed Grosjean.

A slight off road moment in the fast last corner on the 13th lap meant Javi lost contact with the French-Swiss driver while Parente was back on his tail, followed closely by Tung. But the Racing Engineering had the situation perfectly under control and from there on his lap times were as fast or even faster than the leading group, which allowed him to pull away from his contenders, settling down in 5th place and crossing the finish line in that position and gaining the second fastest lap and scoring two points, being again the best classified Spaniard.

With this weekend's results, Giorgio Pantano keeps a clear lead for Racing Engineering in the Drivers Championship, with an advantage of 15 points over Bruno Senna. The Spanish team continues in the fight for the Team Championship, laying second in the overall standings right behind ISport.

Alfonso de Orleans Borbón (team principal): "You win some, you lose some. I think we have definitely proven that we are heading into the right direction. We are very happy that Javi finally is able to show what he's really capable of and I am convinced he will show us more great racing in Hungary, where our goal definitely has to be to have both cars in the points."

Javier Villa (driver car 11): "I had a very good start, approaching corner one, I was next to Giorgio, but some cars ahead of us touched slightly, so I had to lift the accelerator a bit in order to avoid a crash. Then the race was going well, I had a very good race pace, but during the first laps, I lost quite a lot of time with overtaking. Thanks to the entire team as last night was tough for them and they barely got any sleep. If it wasn't for them, I could not have brought home these precious points today."

Giorgio Pantano (driver car 12): "I had a great start. After two laps I was 4th. Shortly after, I had this light contact with Soucek and my steering column was damaged, therefore I had to retire. It's a pity as I was out for a really good race. Now we are looking forward to the next races in Hungary."

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