



## Racing Engineering - GP2 Valencia Feature Race – Last lap retirement when in the lead ends Giorgio Pantano's race.

It was almost the perfect day for Giorgio Pantano and Racing Engineering in today's Feature Race on the exciting new Valencia street circuit as the Italian took the lead at the start and proceeded to dominate the race until with just a few corners to go his car slowed dramatically and pulled off the track.

Telefonica

As the cars took to the track for the formation lap a few drops of rain were falling but fortunately for all the teams the rain stopped as the lights went out and the race got underway. Giorgio made a great getaway from pole position and took the lead into the first corner, he immediately began to pull away from the other cars and at the end of the first lap he was an amazing 2.45 seconds ahead of Petrov. Unfortunately for Giorgio an accident between Kobayashi and Tung saw the Safety Car briefly deployed until the damaged cars were removed.

MAPFRE

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As the race got under way again Giorgio immediately began to push hard in the Repsol and Telefónica backed car pulling away from Petrov at nearly a second a lap for the next three laps but the Russian driver slowly began to reduce the gap and by lap 11 it was 1.7 seconds. Lap 13 saw Petrov make his mandatory pit stop leaving Giorgio with a 3.8 second lead over Maldonado but on the next lap Giorgio made his stop and he was able to resume the track still ahead of Petrov following the usual very efficient tyre change from the Spanish team.

KC  
KC GRUPP

Over the next few laps Giorgio gradually opened out the gap again to 1.6 seconds and then, as the fuel load lightened, he began to press harder setting the fastest lap of the race so far on lap 19 with a time of 1m 47.540s. It now appeared as if Petrov was unable to challenge Giorgio and the Italian wisely held the gap at a couple of seconds in order to not risk making a mistake and also to not use too much fuel as all the teams were aware this was a potential problem on this new circuit.

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Snap-on

PAGO

With only two laps to go it seemed that Giorgio and Racing Engineering were heading for another great victory as Giorgio set the fastest lap of the race at 1m 46.791s. Suddenly, half way round the final lap, Petrov was suddenly closing in quickly on Giorgio as he slowed dramatically and within a couple of corners he was forced to pull off the track. It appeared that the Dallara had run out of fuel although, since it had been filled to the maximum before the start, it was very bad luck on both the driver and the team. Fortunately for Giorgio his main rival in the Championship, Bruno Senna, also ran out of fuel on the last lap and finished out of the points so Giorgio retains his Championship lead. If both Giorgio and Senna had not had their last lap problems Giorgio would have significantly increased his Championship lead over the Brazilian, as it is the gap remains unchanged.

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For Javier Villa it was a race to forget as an incident on the first lap when he made contact with a concrete wall saw him retire from the race. For tomorrow's Sprint Race Giorgio will start 14th and he will be looking to try and gain as many places as possible and score some points, whilst for Javier it will be a case of doing the best he can from 21<sup>st</sup> on the grid on what, so far, has been a difficult weekend for the young Spaniard.

**Alfonso de Orleans Borbón (team principal):** *"I am highly disappointed by GP2 in regards to the race length, which could have been shortened by one lap. Our rules do not permit us to refill during the race and we already did everything we could to reduce the fuel consumption. It's a real shame as we lost 11 very precious points today. Nevertheless I want to thank all the team and Giorgio for the great job they did. It was a great race, but destroyed by the fact of improper calculations beyond our scope."*

**Javier Villa (driver car 11):** *"It's a difficult weekend. I thought I could be faster, but it's difficult. The qualifying was going better than free practice and we had the problem located. I thought that I could do a really strong race today and also had a good start, but a contact in lap 1 meant an early end to my race keeping me from showing what would have been possible today."*

**Giorgio Pantano (driver car 12):** *"We did our best today and I still can't believe what has happened. Everybody knew about the fuel consumption problem. We didn't pass through the pit lane, but went straight to the grid. We didn't do any practice start and also had a safety car. It is actually impossible to realize that we didn't finish the race. It is really unbelievable what has happened today. And I am not just talking about myself, but also others. Do 32 instead of 34laps, if you know about this problem. We did a perfect race and not only did I lose the win, but also the point for fastest lap."*