



## Racing Engineering - GP2 Belgium Qualifying – Giorgio Pantano will start the Feature Race from 4<sup>th</sup> on the grid.

Giorgio Pantano continued his fight for the 2008 GP2 Championship with a very competitive 5<sup>th</sup> fastest lap in today's Qualifying session held on a very wet and slippery Spa Francorchamps circuit.

Once again Giorgio and the Spanish Racing Engineering team were competitive from the first moment the cars took to the track in this morning's Free Practice with Giorgio finishing the 30 minute session second fastest with a time of 1m 57.103s just 0.048s slower than the quickest time.

However by the time the afternoon qualifying session was due to start the track was very wet with heavy rain falling and all the teams were adjusting their car set-ups to suit the very difficult conditions. Giorgio waited for 6 minutes after the start of Qualifying before leaving the pits and already there had been several incidents with cars running wide and yellow flags being displayed. Visibility was poor and many drivers were finding it difficult to set a good time but not Giorgio who was immediately on the pace with the 5<sup>th</sup> fastest time.

The session was bought to a halt after 10 minutes when Maldonado crashed and the red flags were shown and all the cars returned to the pits. After a delay of six minutes Qualifying resumed and within a few laps Giorgio had moved his Repsol and Telefónica backed Dallara to the top of the timing list but almost immediately Senna went faster. Over the remaining minutes of the session Giorgio continued to press hard but, as is usual in wet conditions, setting a quick time is often as much a matter of luck as it is of skill and at the end of the session he had to settle for 5<sup>th</sup> fastest with a 2m 16.291s lap, but he will start from 4<sup>th</sup> on the grid as Chandhok, who set the quickest time, has a 10-place grid penalty for a collision in the previous race at Valencia.

For Javier Villa neither the Free Practice nor the Qualifying session went well for the young Spaniard, the morning session saw him only able to set the 23<sup>rd</sup> fastest time with a 1m 59.146s lap. Things did not improve in Qualifying and Javi, who set a fastest lap of 2m 21.482s, will start tomorrow's Feature Race from 22<sup>nd</sup> on the grid.

For Giorgio tomorrow's Feature Race will be a chance to further increase his lead in the Drivers Championship and with the great reliability that the Racing Engineering cars have shown all season a victory is a real possibility. For the Spanish Team a good result for Giorgio will help them in their battle to win the Team Championship in which they lie third, just 12 points behind the leader.

**Alfonso de Orleans Borbón (team principal):** *"Fantastic work from Pantano, considering the difficult conditions, it was a lottery. Both cars went really well, so thanks to the team for their good work. A pity about Javi's position, hopefully he will recover in tomorrow's race."*

**Javier Villa (driver car 11):** *"It was a difficult qualifying. It started to rain heavily five minutes before the session started. I did the maximum number of laps to become confident with the car. However, I would have needed some more laps, but the run was over. The car went well, but the difficult conditions didn't allow more. If tomorrow it's dry, we can do a very, very good race."*

**Giorgio Pantano (driver car 12):** *"During the last 10 or so minutes of qualifying we had yellow flags, so I couldn't improve my lap time without risking a penalty. Otherwise I am convinced I could have fought for pole. The car is fine and I have a very good feeling. The positive thing is that we are strong in the wet as well as in the dry, which was shown with P2 in free practice. Therefore I am confident about tomorrow's race."*