



Racing Engineering - GP2 Italy Sprint Race – Giorgio Pantano finishes 5th in the last race of the season



Giorgio Pantano, crowned yesterday as the 2008 GP2 Champion, finished his campaign with 5th place in today's Sprint Race at Monza in his Racing Engineering Dallara. Giorgio was the sole Racing Engineering driver following Javier Villa's exclusion from today's race.



Once again the skies were grey and it was raining as the cars lined up on the grid for the 21 lap race, and although the conditions were not as bad as yesterday all the drivers had opted for wet tyres. As the lights went out Giorgio was slow away as his car struggled to find grip on the wet circuit and he lost several places into the first chicane. It was very slippery out on the track and there were numerous incidents of cars missing corners and having to cut across the chicanes but Giorgio was looking to gain places and he was quickly moving back up the field passing Asmer to lie 11th behind Tung at the end of the first lap.



Starting lap 2 Giorgio missed the first chicane, along with two other cars, but he correctly moved back behind Tung so as not to incur any penalty. Lap 3 saw Giorgio move his Repsol and Telefónica backed car ahead of Tung to take 10th which quickly became 8th as di Grassi made contact with Conway and Senna causing Senna to lose several places and Conway to retire. Giorgio was now chasing Maldonado and Buemi and on lap 5 he was 1.5s behind the Swiss driver and closing fast.



Giorgio quickly caught Buemi and was immediately looking for a way past trying the outside line at both the first chicane and the Parabolica and on lap 8 he passed the Arden car to take 7th. It was then announced that the Stewards had given di Grassi a drive-through-penalty for his earlier incident with Conway so Giorgio was now 6th.



The Racing Engineering car was now closing in on D'Ambrosio and pulling away from Buemi and on lap 11 the Italian passed the Dams car into the chicane to take 5th. Giorgio was now some three seconds behind Maldonado and although he was able to reduce the gap, initially by about a tenth of a second a lap and then, as he closed in, by larger margins there weren't enough laps left and Giorgio had to settle for fifth at the chequered flag.



Although Giorgio would have liked to finish the year with a win it was not to be but once again Racing Engineering have given Giorgio a very competitive car and it was yet another perfectly reliable race for the Spanish Team in what has been a very successful 2008 season for the Sanlucar de Barrameda based team.

Alfonso de Orleans Borbón (team principal): "A great end of season capped by a perfect technical team that gave us reliability to win this championship. I have to thank absolutely everyone in this team for the work they've done this season. Congratulations once again to Giorgio, he is a champion. Hope to see him next year in F1."

Giorgio Pantano (driver car 12): "It was a great last race of the season. Unfortunately the start was not good and I dropped back, but the car was very good and I had a good feeling. I tried to get back up and I finished 5th. I want to say thanks to all the team for the job they did this year. It was brilliant. Perfect!"