

Beat: Sports

2016 Belgian Grand Prix

Spa

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USPA NEWS - Double podium for the Silver Arrows in chaotic Belgian Grand Prix. Nico today took his 20th career victory "" his first at the Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps and sixth of the 2016 season so far. Lewis produced a fantastic comeback drive to make the podium after starting from the back row of the grid.

Nico Rosberg -

I am so happy to win here in Spa at this legendary track. It wasn't an easy weekend for us. We had to work a lot on the setup "" but in the race it was perfect. The stints on the medium tyres were really good and I felt really comfortable at the start on the softs too. Our car was really great today, so thank you to the team for all their hard work in getting it spot on.

It's great for the team that Lewis was able to recover to finish in third place, so overall a great result for us. It was a great atmosphere here with all the Dutch people coming to see Max. They shouldn't be sad because he is still young and I'm sure he will have a lot more races here with much better results. Now, it's only a few days until Monza. The penalties for Lewis made things easier for me today "" but he will be back in the battle for the win again next weekend, which will be exciting.

Lewis Hamilton -

If you'd offered me third coming into this race with all the penalties I would definitely have taken it! I really wasn't expecting that! As I said yesterday, I really didn't know what would be possible today. But I came into the race with a positive mental attitude and it all came together. It was a steep mountain to climb "" but we did it together as a team. I'm so happy and so proud of everyone. Changing so many parts on the car, it would have been easy to make mistakes.

But the guys did an exceptional job and all three Power Units worked flawlessly. I think I now have more engines than most of the others, which is great. Now, the fight is really on for the second half of the season. The car worked really well out there today. The most difficult part of the race really was the mental approach from the beginning in terms of whether I risked it all at the start or hung back and tried to pick my way through carefully. I kind of went for somewhere in the middle "" but then all this commotion happened along the way and I'm grateful I could capitalize on that.

Coming from the back and having to make overtaking manoeuvres, I had to push a little bit more than you'd normally plan to, so we went for a three stop strategy. Whether or not I would have made it on a two stop with the medium I'm not sure "" but I'm glad we didn't take that risk. The team made the right call. I've been so impressed with the fans here this weekend. Naturally, a lot of them were here for Max. But I've seen loads of Brits here too and generally I feel like I've had great support right the way through, so thank you everybody.

Toto Wolff, Head of Mercedes-Benz Motorsport -

A fantastic result this afternoon for the whole team after what proved a pretty tough weekend for us. Nico had it all under control today from the moment the lights went out. It was a perfect drive, with great pace on each of the tyres he used and he just steadily built the gap to Ricciardo behind him when he needed to. He didn't put a foot wrong and delivered everything possible. On the other side, I'm delighted for Lewis climbing back up to P3 after starting from the back. Sure, we benefitted from the chaos at Turn 1 and the decision of some people to pit under the Safety Car before the red flag came out.

But we had decided to run an aggressive three-stop strategy with him so that he could attack the other cars and move forward today and we stuck to our guns after the red flag. Doing something different to Ricciardo was the only possible way to beat him "" and that was a long shot anyway. But Lewis drove a squeaky clean race and really deserved the podium finish "" at one point in the final stint, we thought maybe we could chase Ricciardo down. But then even the medium tyre started to blister from Lewis and we played it safe from there. Most of all, I want to say congratulations to the whole team.

To have prepared the engine penalty strategy for this weekend, to get everything ready and to deliver it perfectly at the track with no mistakes at all really shows that we are working in a great way. Our mechanics were faultless all the way through this demanding challenge and I'm really proud of what they achieved. Likewise, the engineering team worked their way from a pretty tricky situation on Friday to delivering the kind of performance we are used to seeing this afternoon. A super impressive job all round and a great way for us to come back to work after the summer break.

Paddy Lowe, Executive Director (Technical) -

We knew coming into today that it was going to be a tough race. Not just because we were starting from the back, but because tyre endurance on all three compounds was very low and we didn't feel we had a great performance margin to several of our competitors. As it turned out, a dramatic start to the race ruled several of the main contenders out of the running straight away. Meanwhile, Nico immediately showed good pace from the start and, with all the incidents ahead of him, Lewis made good progress.

We lucked in with the Safety Car because many teams stopped and lost position, while we deliberately chose to stay out on a two stop plan. We then lucked in again with the red flag, which effectively created a fresh race and sealed our positions in first and fifth. Going into that with two sets of the medium compound available for Nico, we had a safe two stints to the flag. With Lewis, we chose a three stint strategy as we knew he had to push to improve on his fifth place and he only had one set of mediums available having started on that compound.

We're delighted to get two cars on the podium this weekend, as it didn't look like it would be an easy task earlier in the weekend. Nico drove superbly to manage the tyres in difficult conditions and take a dominant win. And, regardless of the circumstances, it was a really great drive from Lewis to come from 21st to third. We leave Belgium thoroughly satisfied and with a tantalising battle in store with our drivers separated by such a narrow margin.

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