

F1 – Dominant Vettel grabs fourth consecutive victory



Sebastian Vettel made it four wins from four as he took yet another victory and inched one step closer to claiming his fourth World Championship title in a row. His nearest rival, Fernando Alonso, could only manage a sixth place finish, meaning that Vettel will have the opportunity to win the title next week in Japan if he wins the race and Alonso finishes lower than eighth. It was another relatively comfortable race from Vettel, who didn't come under any real pressure for any of the 55 laps. Two safety car appearances – one for the tyre delamination of Sergio Perez's McLaren, the other for Mark Webber's Red Bull car catching fire – served to keep things tight as the pack were bunched up, but such was Vettel's speed that he managed to get away unchallenged on both occasions.

The two Lotus drivers managed to make it a double podium, with Romain Grosjean finishing third while team mate Kimi Raikkonen came from ninth to claim second spot. Grosjean might feel somewhat disappointed with his finish – the Frenchman had looked comfortable in second place throughout most of the race after an impressive overtake on Lewis Hamilton at the start, but he lost out after the second safety car when a small mistake meant that Raikkonen could jump him at the restart to snatch second place. Grosjean was encouraged by his team to try to take back the position, but in the end it proved too much.

The most exciting battle in the race was undoubtedly the scrap for fourth, fifth and sixth positions, with Sauber's Nico Hulkenberg putting in possibly his best F1 performance to date with a heroic defensive drive to keep Lewis Hamilton and Fernando Alonso behind him. The Sauber's superior traction and

straight-line speed helped Hulkenberg, but the driver still had his work cut out for him as Hamilton pushed time and time again, looking to overtake. One of these occasions, Hamilton looked to have made the move, but Hulkenberg quickly retook the place and managed to hold on for a commendable fourth-place finish, equalling his previous best finish in Belgium last year. With the driver market still very much in motion, Hulkenberg's excellent drive will have certainly made an impression on teams looking for potential candidates for 2014.

Elsewhere, Scot Paul di Resta's miserable run of form continued when he crashed out after 24 laps. It was the fifth retirement in as many races for di Resta, and he now faces an uphill battle to convince teams that he is still worthy of an F1 seat for next season. His team mate Adrian Sutil didn't fare much better, spinning into Webber after 50 laps and causing the fire which brought out the second safety car.

With the next race in Japan only a week away, it is a quick turnaround for the teams and drivers alike. Vettel seems to be on course to extend his championship lead even further and possibly even wrap up the title, but luckily for spectators, there is still plenty of action going on in the rest of the field to keep things interesting.

Race Results

1. Vettel (25pts)
2. Raikkonen (18pts)
3. Grosjean (15pts)
4. Hulkenberg (12pts)
5. Hamilton (10pts)
6. Alonso (8pts)

7. Rosberg (6pts)
8. Button (4pts)
9. Massa (2pts)
10. Perez (1pt)
11. Gutierrez (0pts)
12. Bottas (0pts)
13. Maldonado (0pts)
14. Pic (0pts)
15. Van der Garde (0pts)
16. Bianchi (0pts)
17. Chilton (0pts)
18. Vergne (DNF)
19. Ricciardo (DNF)
20. Sutil (DNF)
21. Webber (DNF)
22. Di Resta (DNF)