

F1 – Rosberg wins, Ricciardo disqualified in Australian Grand Prix

Nico Rosberg cruised to victory in the opening race of the season, but the main talking point in Melbourne was the disqualification of Australian driver Daniel Ricciardo, who saw his 2nd place stripped from him after the race.

Mercedes were widely touted as favourites going into the race, and it was Lewis Hamilton who started the race on pole position after a tense and thrilling qualifying session the day before. Unfortunately for the British driver, an engine problem saw him retire early in the race while his team mate Rosberg, who started in 3rd, shot ahead to take the lead and dominate the rest of the race.

Even with a brief appearance from the safety car, Rosberg's lead was never under threat and 2nd placed Ricciardo was unable to find himself in a position to put the German under pressure. Nevertheless, Ricciardo was able to put in an impressive performance of his own, and bring his car home for what seemed to be his first ever podium. The Aussie was ecstatic to be celebrating in front of his home fans, marking what appeared to be the first time an Australian driver had been on the podium at the Australian Grand Prix, but the joy was short-lived when the FIA called him in for investigation regarding a fuel flow issue.

The new 2014 regulations state that the fuel flow cannot exceed 100kg/h, a limit which the Red Bull was judged to have exceeded. Ricciardo's 2nd place, and the 18 championship points that came with it, was taken away – a crushing disappointment to the new Red Bull driver at his home race.

The ruling, which Red Bull are appealing, means that rookie

driver Kevin Magnussen now provisionally takes 2nd place, ahead of world-champion team mate Jenson Button. The 21-year-old Dane put in a composed and mature performance, driving the car with a determined aggression and giving his more experienced team mate a thing or two to consider for the long season ahead.

The opening few laps of the race saw a number of retirements – something which was not unexpected given the reliability issues of the new 2014 cars. Kamui Kobayashi suffered a brake failure at the first corner, taking out Felipe Massa and ending both their races, while four-time reigning world champion Sebastian Vettel was plagued the engine problems and had to retire.

It was a good race for Toro Rosso's new driver Daniil Kvyat, who at 19 years of age became the youngest driver to score points in Formula 1 thanks to his 10th place finish. Valtteri Bottas was another GP3 graduate who showed his stock in the race with a solid 5th place finish, though he perhaps could have been in contention for a podium had he not suffered a puncture after brushing the wall halfway through the race.

The Ferraris of Fernando Alonso and Kimi Raikkonen finished in 5th and 7th respectively after suffering electrical problems, neither driver being particularly pleased with the cars' lack of competitiveness.

With only 14 of the 22 cars finishing the race, reliability seems to be a significant factor for many of the teams. Mercedes, who are the favourites at this early stage, had mixed fortunes themselves with a win from one driver and a retirement from the other. The next race in Malaysia is two weeks away, and all the teams will be working hard to make sure the cars are as ready as possible as the 2014 season continues.

Australian Grand Prix Full Results

- 1 ROSBERG
- 2 MAGNUSSEN
- 3 BUTTON
- 4 ALONSO
- 5 BOTTAS
- 6 HULKENBERG
- 7 RAIKKONEN
- 8 VERGNE
- 9 KVYAT
- 10 PEREZ
- 11 SUTIL
- 12 GUTIERREZ
- 13 CHILTON

RICCIARDO (DQ)
HAMILTON (DNF)
VETTEL (DNF)
GROSJEAN (DNF)
ERICSSON (DNF)
KOBAYASHI (DNF)
MALDONADO (DNF)
MASSA (DNF)
BIANCHI (DNF)