

Beat: Sports

2014 Belgian Grand Prix - Race

Spa-Francorchamps, Aug 24, 2014

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USPA NEWS - Nico Rosberg took second place in today's Belgian Grand Prix, while Lewis Hamilton retired in the latter stages of a dramatic race at the Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps. Lewis pitted on the second lap after suffering a puncture and then retiring the car on lap 33.

Nico Rosberg - That was a tough race. We had the pace to win today but the incident cost us a top result, so I'm really disappointed because for the team it was a bad day. As drivers, we are here to entertain and to show the fans a good time, so our duels are always on the limit. I regret that Lewis and myself touched, but I see it as a racing incident "" just as the stewards did. I was quicker down the straight and went to the outside as the inside line was blocked.

I gave it a go and, after we touched, I realized that my front wing was damaged and thought that was it. In the next second I saw that Lewis also had a problem, which was very unfortunate for him and for the team. We sat down quickly after the race but there will be some more meetings to be held in to avoid races like today.

(Nico ran a three-stop strategy, including a nose change on lap eight. He pitted twice further on laps 19 and 34)

Lewis Hamilton - I'm gutted with the result "" not just for my own Championship hopes but for the team, as we really should have had a one-two today. It's been a tough year for everyone and the whole team has been working so hard "" every time we've been knocked down they've never given up. I didn't fully understand what had happened until I saw the replay just now, but I gave him plenty of space, took the corner like I usually do and suddenly felt a big hit from behind.

There was nothing I could do about it and that was effectively my race over. I wanted to retire the car early "" not because I was giving up, but because I couldn't catch the people in front of me and even with a safety car I don't think I would have been able to pass them. The car was quite badly damaged and my thoughts were to preserve the engine after the last one was destroyed in Hungary. What happens next is not my call "" that's one for the bosses to make. But I'm now almost 30 points behind in the Championship so that's the main thing on my mind. It's a big gap and it will be hard to recover from here. That's tough to swallow "" but ultimately it's just been one of those days.

Toto Wolff - Today we saw our worst case scenario when the drivers made contact on lap two "" and that ultimately cost us a one-two finish today, because we saw that our car had that kind of performance in it. It has been our clear policy to let the drivers race this year but rule number one is: don't hit each other. To see that kind of contact, so early in the race, is an unacceptable level of risk to be taking out on track. It cannot "" and will not "" happen again.

After the collision, Nico drove the first stint with a significantly damaged front wing, changed it, then had to make an additional stop after flat-spotting his left front tyre to the point where it was dangerous. He then charged back through the field and was impressively close to taking the win in spite of a dramatic race. As for Lewis, he was fighting with one hand tied behind his back after the puncture, which damaged the floor and cost him a significant amount of performance.

We left him out there in case the Safety Car came out, bunched up the field and allow us to gain some places, but it became clear that he had lost too much performance and was continuing to do so, so we retired the car before the finish. Overall, not a good day for the team "" and it is clear that we need to strengthen our focus on securing the Constructors' Championship by delivering the potential of both cars in the next races. Now we need to regroup and come back stronger in Monza.

Paddy Lowe - We got off to a strong start, with Lewis taking the lead and Nico eventually recovering second place from Sebastian. One lap later, however, the incident between the two at turn five effectively ruined our afternoon. It's a great shame, as the car had looked strong all weekend and we were in an excellent position to potentially score a one-two finish.

We opted to continue the race with Lewis in case of a safety car scenario, which may have given him an opportunity to recover the lost ground. But in the end this never came and, with his floor heavily damaged by tyre debris on the second lap, the condition of the

car deteriorated further as the race continued. For Nico it was a case of damage limitation

Our calculations confirmed that we would have to change his nose to have any chance of a podium “” but of course that cost time. As it was, although he was closing in rapidly at the end, a lockup and resultant flat spot on the second set of tyres ultimately cost him that opportunity. Overall, massive disappointment after all the hard work put in by the team to come away with a result not matching our potential this weekend.

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