Beat: Sports

2021 French Grand Prix

Le Castellet

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USPA NEWS - Lewis takes P2 and Valtteri P4 for the Mercedes-AMG Petronas F1 Team at the 2021 French Grand Prix

Lewis took the lead on the opening lap before losing it to a powerful undercut from VER after the team triggered the pit stop sequence with Valtteri on lap 17 owing to a growing tyre vibration.

VER pitted again for the Medium tyre on lap 32 but the Team was prevented from following a two-stop strategy by the prospect of ceding track position to PER further behind.

Lewis and Valtteri held track position and managed their wearing tyres well but VER caught Lewis on the penultimate lap.

PER also managed to pass Valtteri to round out the top three with the Finn on the oldest tyres of the four.

Lewis secured the 170th podium of his F1 career with his P2 finish.

Max Verstappen (131 points) leads the Drivers' Championship by 12 points from Lewis (119) and Sergio Perez in P3 (84), with Valtteri (59) moving up to P5.

Red Bull (215 points) lead the Mercedes-AMG Petronas F1 Team (178 points) by 37 points in the Constructors' Championship.

Lewis Hamilton

Congratulations to Max, he did a great job today. The Red Bulls had better straight line speed all weekend but considering that we had such a difficult Friday, I'm really happy with this result. Of course, we didn't win and we had the lead but I had no tyres left at the end so unfortunately we lost the position, but it was still a good race. We've got to find some pace, that's for sure. Most of the time we lost today was on the straights, so we've got to dig deep, try and figure out where that is, and whether it's power or drag but overall, we've still got a good package. We didn't know how strong the undercut was going to be but what was really surprising was just how we ran out of that front tyre so early on but obviously they had a good strategy and it worked really well for them.

Valtteri Bottas

I gave it everything I could to try and finish on the podium, we thought with the cooler temperatures the tyres would hold on for longer but they didn't, our predictions in terms of tyre life didn't quite match the reality. I was one of the first to stop for the Hard tyre, my front-left tyre wear was quite high and the last stint wasn't fun at all today, the last 10 laps with the Hard tyre were terrible - I had no front tyres left. We didn't pit for fresh tyres at the end to set the fastest lap because Sergio was under investigation, so we wanted to stay out. A disappointing race, especially because my overall pace this weekend was good but at least I got some points.

Toto Wolff

Today went back and forwards, we were in the lead because Max made the mistake but our overall pace was good - maybe a little bit of a margin, even. We created a 3 second gap for the undercut, to protect it, but it wasn't enough and we came out of the pits a few tenths behind. In the first stint, Valtteri's tyre started to have a vibration early on and we were really worried. We knew that by pitting we were going to trigger the stops too early but we had no choice. The guys managed their hard tyres well after that but in the end it wasn't enough. We have lots to learn from today and we need to understand the great pace of the Red Bulls on their out laps. It's something we'll look at to help us improve but I think we had a solid racing car today and I'm glad it was an exciting race, we love entertainment too.

Andrew Shovlin

A frustrating day, we had a good opportunity to win and get both cars on the podium so the result is obviously very disappointing. Lewis had control of the race in the first stint and if anything we looked to be a bit better on degradation. We triggered the stops ourselves with Valtteri who was struggling with a growing vibration and that was clearly earlier than we wanted to come in but it was getting to a level where we didn't have an option.

Max obviously took the next lap to protect against Valtteri but with Lewis having just over three seconds of margin, we thought that he would have just enough protection from the undercut but that wasn't the case. The pitstops were good, the hard tyre was obviously quick but there's more that we need to go through to understand why we lost the place.

We've not got long to prepare for the next race and there are some areas we know we can do a better job on; we've clearly got a decent race car, we need to find a bit of speed on single lap and we need to be perfect on our operations but we're happy that we'll be back on track in a week.

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:
United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com