

PIETRO FITTIPALDI (LOTUS) TAKES HIS WORLD SERIES MAIDEN VICTORY IN SILVERSTONE

› **Brazilian Lotus driver claims his first win in the Season Opener at the Circuit of Silverstone with thousands of spectators enjoying the first joint event with the FIA WEC. Egor Orudzhev (SMP Racing by AVF) and Alfonso Celis Jr (Fortec Motorsports) complete the first 2017 Podium**

(15/04/2017) Pietro Fittipaldi (Lotus) cruised to his first win of the 2017 World Series Formula V8 3.5 by leading race 1 from the pole at Silverstone. The Brazilian crossed the line in front of Egor Orudzhev (SMP Racing by AVF) and Alfonso Celis Jr (Fortec Motorsports) while Italian Damiano Fioravanti (Il Barone Rampante) ended up as the best rookie.

At the start of the race, Fittipaldi maintained the lead while Orudzhev and Matevos Isaakyan (SMP Racing by AVF) passed René Binder (Lotus). In P5, Celis was followed by Fioravanti, Konstantin Tereschenko (Teo Martin Motorsport), Diego Menchaca (Fortec Motorsports), Nelson Mason (Teo Martin Motorsport), Yu Kanamaru (RP motorsport), Giuseppe Cipriani (Il Barone Rampante) and Roy Nissany (RP Motorsport).

The Israeli racer soon came back to the pit-lane and retired, while Menchaca also had to stop following to an early contact with Tereschenko. Fighting with the Russian, his teammate Mason went wide losing P8 to Kanamaru. In the meantime, Celis got close to Binder for P4.

On lap 10, the Fittipaldi's advantage on Orudzhev went down to 5.5 seconds, with Binder fending off the attacks of Celis. Mason rebounded at the last chicane on lap 2, reclaiming eight place from Kanamaru. On lap 15, Celis passed Binder for P4 on the inside of Woodcote, while Fittipaldi continued to lose ground on Orudzhev.

On lap 16, Celis caught up with Isaakyan and fought for podium after setting the fastest lap, while Mason passed Tereschenko for seventh place. On lap 26 the battle between the Mexican and the Russian, who ended up wide and eventually let the final podium position slip from him.

At the end of the race the car of Orudzhev was disqualified by the stewards for breaching article 21 of Sporting Regulations, and article 4.2 of the Technical Regulations. The team appealed the decision, so the results stand still, pending appeal.

The second race will take place tomorrow at 9:58 with mandatory pit-stop between lap 5 and 15.

Pietro Fittipaldi (Lotus)

"It was a great day we've been able to catch all the pole positions and also the victory in race 1. Lotus gave me a fantastic car. Throughout the race we had a great start, but then I had a problem, I think it was an exhaust, and I was losing a lot of speed. After that I had to adapt myself and push as hard as I could to stay within a good gap from Egor, but we've been able to score this win and I'm really happy".

Egor Orudzhev (SMP Racing by aVF)

"Both qualifying sessions were disappointing for us as we could have been able to go higher. The race went well and we had a good pace, the tyres didn't go off too much but when I caught Pietro I lost the front ones as I had no grip. It was dropping and I could do nothing. Alfonso caught me just in the last lap, let's see for tomorrow and thanks to SMP Racing and AVF".

Alfonso Celis Jr. (Fortec Motorsports)

"Since Collective Test 1 where we set the pace our potential was clear, even if we couldn't take advantage of it in qualifying with a yellow flag yesterday and a red flag today. It's disappointing start from the back with this downforce, but I did my best. There was not much more I could do and I gave it all on track. I'm pleased with the result".

Damiano Fioravanti (Il Barone Rampante)

"It was a difficult race for me as it was my first in the World Series. I'm a bit tired, but it's fine, considering it's such a powerful car on a difficult track like Silverstone. The start was not amazing but the others struggled too so I was sixth after second corner and I kept my position until the end, being the best rookie, I'm pretty happy with that".