

ALFONSO CELIS Jr. DOMINATES RACE 1 IN SPA

- › « EL Rey » cruises to his first maiden win the Day of the Pride of Mexico!
- › Roy Nissany (RP Motorsport) and Egor Orudzhev (SMP Racing by AVF) were podium finishers with the best rookie, Diego Menchaca (Fortec Motorsports) in 4th place

(05/05/2017) Alfonso Celis Jr (Fortec Motorsports) scored his maiden World Series Formula V8 3.5 win today at Spa-Francorchamps. After cruising to pole in qualifying, the Mexican racer sailed at the front and brought home a well-deserved victory. It was an outstanding result for the Sahara Force India Formula 1 third driver, who was followed by fellow podium finishers Roy Nissany (RP Motorsport) and Egor Orudzhev (SMP Racing by AVF). Diego Menchaca (Fortec Motorsports) was again the best rookie in fourth.

As the lights went off, Celis held onto the lead while Pietro Fittipaldi (Lotus) was slowed down by his car's anti-stall system and had to let the whole pack by. At the Source corner, René Binder (Lotus) was second in front of Nissany and Menchaca. Nissany attacked the Austrian on the Kimmel straight, but remained behind his former teammate while Orudzhev successfully moved on Menchaca for fourth. In the second sector, Matevos Isaakyan (SMP Racing by AVF) went off-track on the Kimmel straight.

On lap 2, Fittipaldi moved past Giuseppe Cirpiani (Il Barone Rampante) for tenth place. The Italian then went sideways at Stavelot, making his way to the pits. On lap 4, Nissany went for an inside slipstream move on the Kimmel straight and got the nod on Binder.

On lap 5, Orudzhev passed Binder for third place at Fagnes, while the Austrian also had to fend off the attack of Menchaca on the following lap at La Source. Powering out of the corner, the Lotus driver retained the fourth position.

On lap 7 Mason lost braking point at Les Combes while trying to go around Menchaca and dropped to the back of the field in ninth place. In the meantime, Fittipaldi moved past Damiano Fioravanti (RP Motorsport). In the mid sector, Kostantin Tereschenko (Teo Martin Motorsport) ended up outside the track limits at the Campus Corner. Meanwhile Fioravanti responded to Fittipaldi reclaiming his previous position.

At the end of a long confrontation, Fittipaldi managed to get ahead of Tereschenko and claim eight place on lap 12, while three laps later, Nelson Mason (Teo Martin Motorsport) also got by his team-mate at Les Combes. The same spot where Binder went wide losing fourth place to Menchaca.

At the beginning of the final lap, Kanamaru also made past Binder, who locked-up at La Source. Celis crossed the line out front to secure victory and bolster his third place in standings. Despite ending up only eighth, Fittipaldi retained his championship lead and stands with 54 points and a 3-point gap on Orudzhev. The Russian is the only driver to have scored podium finishes in every race this season.

Alfonso Celis Jr (Fortec Motorsports)

"This is my favourite circuit and I've managed to do a good job here over the last three years. It's absolutely the best place to score pole position and victory. The race was all about the first lap and then I managed the gap with Roy. I also had a big flatspot, and after that it was difficult to keep the pace, but I'm happy for this great result".

Roy Nissany (RP Motorsports)

“It was a spectacular race, I managed to pass some guys and then, while on P3, I had a great fight with my former teammate Binder. In the end I was very very close, I could have caught Alfonso bu. It has been a good race”.

Egor Orudzhev (SMP Racing by AVF)

“I got a good start and after first corner I was already up from 10th to 5th. I think I managed the battles pretty well and I gained positions, but after that it was difficult with René as I couldn’t be faster than him on the straight due his LDF configuration. When I saw the opportunity to pass him I took it, so here we are, thanks SMP Racing and AVF for the great effort”

Diego Menchaca (Fortec Motorsports)

“It was a very interesting race, I had a good start but unfortunately Fittipaldi stalled in front of me so I had to avoid him and lost a lot of time, being passed by Orudzhev and Nissany. I was fifth and fighting with Binder who was on an LDF configuration and it was really difficult to overtake him, as he kept escaping on the straights. In the end he made a mistake and I passed, so I’m really happy and I’ve also ended up as the top rookie. Not satisfied 100% because the target is to win, but we did a clean week-end here and we are 4th, so this must be the right way”.