

## **MATEVOS ISAAKYAN (SMP RACING by AVF) STORMS TO VICTORY IN SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS**

**René Binder (Lotus) ended up second in front of Alfonso Celis Jr. (Fortec Motorsports) who also grabbed the lead in the driver's championship with 63 points, one point ahead Fittipaldi (6<sup>o</sup>).**

(06/05/2017) Matevos Isaakyan scored his first win of the year today in the second and final race of the World Series Formula V8 3.5 round of Spa-Francorchamps in front of thousands of spectators. The Russian driver took advantage of a winning strategy. After gaining the lead during the pit-stops, he stayed out front until the end to cross the line ahead of the pack. René Binder (Lotus) ended up second in front of Alfonso Celis Jr. (Fortec Motorsports) who also grabbed the lead in the driver championship with 63 points. Rounding out the overall top-5, Diego Menchaca (Fortec Motorsports) was once again the best rookie.

As the lights went off, Pietro Fittipaldi (Lotus) got a slow start and Binder cruised to the lead followed by Menchaca. The Mexican went wide at La Source though, enabling his Brazilian contender to make up to second place. Fittipaldi then reclaimed the lead on Binder with a move at Les Combes. Completing the early order were Celis, Roy Nissany (RP Motosports), Isaakyan, Yu Kanamaru (RP Motorsport), Egor Orudzhev (SMP Racing by AVF), Damiano Fioravanti (RP Motorsport), Nelson Mason (Teo Martin Motorsport), Konstantin Tereschenko (Teo Martin Motorsport) and Giuseppe Cipriani (Il Barone Rampante).

On lap 3, Tereschenko lost braking point at La Source, while Nissany was passed by Isaakyan for fifth. On the following lap, Mason took eight place away from Kanamaru. The pit window opened not too much later on lap 5 with Mason as the early taker while Cipriani cut the Bus Stop chicane. On lap 6, Celis and Fioravanti stopped for their pit. Isaakyan successfully attacked Menchaca on the Kimmel Straight and Cipriani dived to the pits for his tire change.

On lap 8, bad luck hit Fittipaldi. The Brazilian came back to the pits but lost 19 seconds in the process due to a problem. The lead was inherited by Binder in front of Isaakyan and Menchaca. On lap 9, Binder, Menchaca, Orudzhev and Nissany all dived into the pits and the lead went to Isaakyan who was followed by Tereschenko. In the pits, Celis claimed one spot on his team-mate Menchaca.

On lap 10, Isaakyan and Tereschenko completed their pit-stops. The Russian returned to the track ahead of Binder, Celis and Menchaca. Although the Austrian tried to make a move, he was forced to desist. On lap 11, Fittipaldi got by Mason as the Canadian went wide at Puhon and also cut the Bus Stop.

On lap 16, Fittipaldi moved on Orudzhev at Kimmel for sixth place. In lap 19th Nissany got the nod on Menchaca for fourth at Les Combes. Isaakyan cruised to his first win this season, his second in the series after Jerez 2016. With two podium finishes, Sahara Force India Formula 1's third driver Celis clinched the championship lead by 1 point over Fittipaldi (63 versus 62).

### **Matevos Isaakyan (SMP Racing by AVF)**

"The race was tough as we struggled a bit with the clutch, and after the start I was fifth. I knew that the race was going to be long and AVF was great in the pit-stops so we made a good strategy. I tried to find a good pace and gain as many places I could before pitting. We were the last to come in and it paid off as we gained the lead and made it to victory. Thank you to all the team and SMP Racing for this result".

### **René Binder (Lotus)**

“I had a very good start and went on the lead before the first corner. My teammate was then really close at Eau Rouge end managed to pass me on turn 4. I think the race was going to be really close, the pit-stop was not perfect and we lost something on Matevos. That has been the deciding moment for us”.

### **Alfonso Celis Jr. (Fortec Motorsport)**

“It was a good race, even if we found the track to be more tricky than yesterday. It was also hard to find clean air and warm up the tires. I struggled a bit, especially in the end for the race. I think we had some issues, I just made a mistake but we still secured valuable points for the championship”.

### **Diego Menchaca (Fortec Motorsports)**

“It was a difficult race, had a really good start entering the first corner in P2, then I went on the outside and overshot the corner. I was third for most of the first stint, but then I made a mistake and Matevos overtook me before the pit-stop. After that it was good, Alfonso was coming fast through the Eau Rouge and I let him by but the pace was really good. Unfortunately, in the end I start struggling with the brakes having soft pedal in the last chicane, so it was difficult to stop the car. I’m still learning, I was the top rookie in all the sessions but I’m not here for that championship, I want to win the overall”.

### **Overall Standings**

**Alfonso Celis Jr. 63 pts, Pietro Fittipaldi, 62 pts, Egor Orudzhev, 57 pts, Roy Nissany, 45 pts, Matevos Isaakyan, 3 pts.**