

# RENE BINDER (Lotus) TAKES DOMINANT RACE 1 IN THE HEAT OF TEXAS

- › **World Series rocks in the US: Barrichello and Max Papis, Pietro's Uncle, follow the steps of the Brazilian, that extends his lead in 18 points ahead Matevos Isaakyan**

(15/07/2017) The World Series Formula V8 3.5 finally got its first taste of race action today at Circuit Of The Americas and, once again, provided plenty of excitement. The sensational Texan circuit, located in Austin, saw teams and drivers line-up for a historical Race 1. Once again, the weather was particularly challenging with hot temperatures (in excess of 35° C) and a perfect racing surface. Rene Binder (Lotus) ended up being the hero of the day, leading from pole to finish and setting the fastest lap of the race. He was followed on the podium by the hard-charging Egor Orudzhev (SMP Racing by AVF) and by team-mate Pietro Fittipaldi. In P4, Alex Palou (Teo Martin Motorsports) was again the best rookie of the day. He will also start Race 2 from the pole after prevailing in an hotly-contested Qualifying 2 session.

The first 40-minute + 1 lap race saw the Lotus pairing of Binder and Fittipaldi lock out the front row of the grid. Binder got a quick jump from the pole and soon started pulling away by setting the fastest laps of the race. Fittipaldi stayed in pursuit but lost ground as the laps went by, while after starting in P5 due to a penalty, Egor Orudzhev (SMP Racing by AVF) began to catch up, passing Alex Palou (Teo Martin Motorsport) and team-mate Matevos Isaakyan (SMP Racing by AVF). Palou tried to pressure Isaakyan too, while Force India F1 reserve driver Alfonso Celis Jr. (Fortec Motorsports) put up a spectacular duel with Konstantin Tereschenko for P6.

The pace proved highly competitive and that even included team-mates, for example RP Motorsport's Yu Kanamaru and Roy Nissany, who crossed swords for most part of the laps. In the middle stages, the situation stabilized but a safety-car situation needed to recover the spun car of Giuseppe Cipriani (Il Barone Rampante) led to more excitement in the second half.

At the re-start, Binder remained out front and was again in a league of his own again, while Fittipaldi got under attack from Orudzhev. The two went wheel-to-wheel and the Russian eventually got it done. In the meantime, Konstantin Tereschenko (Teo Martin Motorsport) got the nod on Celis, then passed team-mate Palou and proceeded to attack Issakayan. Unfortunately for him, he went too hard on a kerb, damaging his car for good with four laps to go. His team-mate Palou picked up from where he left off, proceeding to secure P4 behind Binder, Orudzhev and Fittipaldi. Finally the Spaniard lost the palce on behalf of the SMP Racing protegee due to a penalty..

## Rene Binder (Lotus)

"I'm really happy for winning the first race held by the World Series V8 3.5 here in Texas. I could control the race and the pace was really good too. I made a good start and put up a decent rhythm. Unfortunately, there was a safety car and the gap got smaller in the end but everything went on well and it's also a 1-3 result for Lotus so we hope to repeat it tomorrow."

## Egor Orudzhev (SMP Racing by AVF)

"I had a really good start but I was squeezed between Palou and Matevos so I had to back off and, after that, I had a really good pace. I took every opportunity to overtake when I had the chance. Big thanks to AVF and SMP Racing and congratulations to Rene because he was really fast and it was tough to keep it up with him at the end."

## Pietro Fittipaldi (Lotus)

"It was my first time here yesterday, it's a really good track with nice sequences of fast corners. I enjoyed it and the other drivers did too. Today we started second. I had a jump at the start but couldn't really keep the pace that Rene was having. Towards the end of the race, when the safety car came out, it became pretty tricky, Egor was fast and I did my best to defend the position but he was better today. Tomorrow is another race, we will be starting from the front row again and we will take this race as practice. I'm sure we are going to be better and push for the win."