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DI GRASSI FIGHTS BUEMI TO THE FINISH IN MONACO

Title rivals a class apart in first European race of the season

MONACO (May 13 2017) - Sebastien Buemi withstood enormous pressure from Lucas di Grassi to claim his fourth FIA Formula E Championship win of the season in Monaco, and extend his points lead to 15.

From his first Julius Baer pole position of the season, Buemi made a perfect start and soon established a comfortable lead over his title rival, who in turn was easing away from Nelson Piquet Jr. in third.



The NextEV NIO driver had no such luxury, as the TECHEETAH of Jean-Eric Vergne was swarming all over him. The Frenchman was clearly anxious to make a move and stop the front two from getting away, and in his desperation, he tried an ambitious move around the outside of the Turn 3 hairpin.

The cars were completely side-by-side and as they banged wheels Vergne was sent crashing into the Tech-Pro barriers. Remarkably Piquet survived having only lost third place to the Mahindra of Nick Heidfeld, but Vergne's car was heavily damaged and the Qualcomm Safety Car was deployed as it was recovered.

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After the success of the ABT Schaeffler Audi Sport's tactical gamble in pitting di Grassi early last time out in Mexico, all the teams opted to follow the Brazilian into the pits for the mandatory car change during the caution period.

This was the prelude to a sensational finish that had the more than 18,000 fans who packed the grandstands on the edge of their seats. After using his FanBoost to briefly open up the lead to 1.6s, Buemi could only watch his mirrors as di Grassi homed in over the closing stages.

The advances in Formula E technology mean that not only are the cars faster this year than they were in season one when the first Monaco ePrix was held, the races are now significantly longer. Indeed, the race in Monaco was a full four laps longer than the 47 it was run over first time around.

For a visual representation of how much faster the cars are now compared to season one, visit <https://tinyurl.com/n7q975z>

As they crossed the line to start the 51st and final lap, Buemi's lead was down to just 0.4s, but despite having the leader in his sights, di Grassi couldn't quite get close enough to attempt a passing move, and Buemi duly notched up his 10th win in the all-electric racing series, defending his Monaco ePrix crown in the process.

Buemi said: "In the first stint I managed to pull a little gap, but Lucas was using a bit less energy than me. When the safety car came out we knew we had to try to learn from them [ABT] after what they have done in Hong Kong and Mexico by stopping very early, so that was the right call and then we knew it was going to be very difficult because to finish we would have to save quite a lot of energy. I managed to build a bit of a gap just to be safe and he played with me a bit because when we were passing the guys who were a lap down he consumed a little bit more than expected so I had to do the same. Then he did two laps where he kind of backed off, which was good for me, but in the end we both finished with nothing left."

Second place for di Grassi meant that he minimised the amount of points lost to his main title rival - in fact the championship already appears to be a two-horse race as there is more than a 40-point gap to Buemi's Renault e.dams team-mate Nico Prost who's third in the standings.

Di Grassi said: "On the first stint the pace was not really there, but we were saving much more energy. In the second stint I was trying to keep up with him. I had around one per cent more than him, so I knew if I had the right strategy I could attack him in the end. The problem is here in Monaco there is nowhere to overtake and if you're an experienced guy like Seb you know how to close the door. Also, I would never go for a gap where you cannot overtake or I would risk all the race. If he'd left any door open, or any of the straights were longer than 360 metres, for sure I would have had a go."

After making a superb start and perfectly picking his way around three cars through the first corner, Heidfeld had a relatively lonely run to third place. It was his first podium finish since the season-opener in Hong Kong back in October.

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Heidfeld said: "It's good to be back on the podium especially as we have been unlucky in the past two races. I tried to go through the start in my head and I knew there might be a train on one side and this could be a chance to overtake a lot of cars and obviously, we know from two years ago how it can pan out in Turn 2 with cars flying over each other, so it was very important to get clear to get back into the line and it worked very well and I managed to take three cars there. We'd discussed a lot about strategy and I said we just follow Lucas and that's what we did and it was a good strategy!"

For almost the entire second half of the race, Piquet was locked in an intense battle for fourth place with Venturi's Maro Engel, the second Mahindra of Felix Rosenqvist and di Grassi's team-mate Daniel Abt. The quartet were never more than a couple of seconds apart, but the tight nature of the track meant that overtaking was almost impossible.

Andretti's Robin Frijns was running eighth, but ran out of usable energy on the final lap and dropped out of the points. This promoted Esteban Gutierrez into eighth place and a second points finish in as many races for TECHEETAH.

Antonio Felix da Costa charged up the order in the early stages and crossed the line ninth, but later received a 33-second time penalty for an unsafe release. This meant that, after running off the road in qualifying, Prost was promoted to ninth and the final point when to Mitch Evans for Panasonic Jaguar Racing.

It was a tough race for DS Virgin Racing, with Jose Maria Lopez sustaining front and rear wing damage in the opening lap contretemps, while Sam Bird was running seventh when he clipped the wall on the exit of the swimming pool. He limped his car back to the pits and finally re-joined three laps down with the aim of earning the bonus point for setting the Visa fastest lap, which he duly did.

There's now just a single week until the FIA Formula E Championship returns with the Qatar Airways Paris ePrix on May 20. Last year di Grassi won the race to re-invigorate his title charge. It should be a classic, so don't miss it.

2017 Monaco ePrix (Rd 5) - Race results

1. **Sebastien Buemi**, Renault e.dams, 51:05.488s (28)
2. **Lucas di Grassi**, ABT Schaeffler Audi Sport, +0.320s (18)
3. **Nick Heidfeld**, Mahindra Racing, +13.678s (15)
4. **Nelson Piquet Jr**, NextEV NIO, +19.074s (12)
5. **Maro Engel**, Venturi Formula E, +19.518s (10)
6. **Felix Rosenqvist**, Mahindra Racing, +19.599s (8)
7. **Daniel Abt**, ABT Schaeffler Audi Sport, +20.430s (6)
8. **Esteban Gutierrez**, TECHEETAH, +32.295s (4)

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TAG Heuer

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VISA



enel

Allianz

9. **Nico Prost**, *Renault e.dams*, +35.667s (2)
10. **Mitch Evans**, *Panasonic Jaguar Racing*, +38.410s (1)
11. **Antonio Felix da Costa**, *Andretti Formula E*, +1:08.330s
12. **Robin Frijns**, *Andretti Formula E*, +1:14.053s
13. **Oliver Turvey**, *NextEV NIO*, +1 lap
14. **Adam Carroll**, *Panasonic Jaguar Racing*, +1 lap
15. **Stephane Sarrazin**, *Venturi Formula E*, +2 laps
16. **Jose Maria Lopez**, *DS Virgin Racing*, DNF
17. **Jerome D'Ambrosio**, *Faraday Future Dragon Racing*, DNF
18. **Loic Duval**, *Faraday Future Dragon Racing*, DNF
19. **Sam Bird**, *DS Virgin Racing*, DNF (1)
20. **Jean-Eric Vergne**, *TECHEETAH*, DNF

Driver standings

- Sebastien Buemi**, *Renault e.dams* - 104
Lucas di Grassi, *ABT Schaeffler Audi Sport* - 89
Nico Prost, *Renault e.dams* - 48
Jean-Eric Vergne, *TECHEETAH* - 40
Sam Bird, *DS Virgin Racing* - 34
Nick Heidfeld, *Mahindra Racing* - 32

Team standings

- Renault e.dams** - 152
ABT Schaeffler Audi Sport - 115
Mahindra Racing - 60
TECHEETAH - 45
DS Virgin Racing - 44
NextEV NIO - 42
Faraday Future Dragon Racing - 19
Andretti Formula E - 18
Panasonic Jaguar Racing - 17
Venturi Formula E - 13

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About the FIA Formula E Championship:

The FIA Formula E Championship is the world's first fully-electric single-seater racing series, competing on the streets against the backdrop of some of the most iconic cities - including Hong Kong, Marrakesh, Buenos Aires, Monaco, Paris, New York and Montreal. The championship represents a vision for the future of the motor industry, serving as a platform to showcase the latest innovations in electric vehicle technology and alternative energy solutions. Future seasons will see the regulations open up further allowing manufacturers to focus on the development of motor and battery components, which in turn will filter down to everyday contemporary electric road vehicles.

The 2016/17 FIA Formula E Championship sees 10 teams and 20 drivers go wheel-to-wheel in nine cities spanning five continents in the fight to be crowned Formula E champion. The inaugural season of Formula E sparked into life in September 2014 around the grounds of the Olympic Park in Beijing. The third season of the electric street racing series started on October 9 in Hong Kong, with the season finale double-header taking place in Montreal on July 29 & 30.

About FIA & Michelin - Today's partners for tomorrow's mobility:

As well as being the official Formula E tyre supplier, Michelin is an official partner, at the international level, of the FIA Action for Road Safety campaign. The programme is designed to support the Decade of Action for Road Safety initiated by the UN, the aim of which is to save five million lives over the next 10 years. This programme is set-up to educate and advocate for safer roads, vehicles and behaviours around the globe.

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