

Beat: Sports

2018 French Grand Prix

Circuit Paul Ricard

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USPA NEWS - Lewis wins the French Grand Prix as Valtteri fights his way through the field

Lewis claims his 65th career victory at the return of the French Grand Prix – his third of the 2018 season and 44th with Mercedes-AMG Petronas Motorsport

After an accident in the opening lap, Valtteri fought his way through the field to finish today's race in P7 and set the fastest lap of the race

Today's result marks the 300th race on the podium for Mercedes-Benz power

Lewis (145 points) reclaims the lead in the Drivers' Championship from Sebastian Vettel (131 points) with Valtteri in P4 (92 points)

Mercedes-AMG Petronas Motorsport (237 points) lead the Constructors' Championship by 23 points from Ferrari (214 points)

Lewis Hamilton

When you're constructive and criticise yourself, approach a challenge with new methods and a new-found determination, it's a great feeling to then get the result. But it's also disappointing for the team as we had the opportunity to take a 1-2, which is always incredible as you achieve your ultimate goal as a team. I was very comfortable with the balance this afternoon. Max had decent pace, but I could maintain the gap at around five seconds. The fresh engine put us back in line with everyone else who took a new PU in Canada and everybody in the team should be feeling happy today for the good work they have done. But there's a long way to go and we'll keep approaching the rest of the season like we approached today.

Valtteri Bottas

That was a shame because we had a strong car today as Lewis' result shows. But my race was lost in Turn One. I was on the outside going into it and I knew that keeping that line would put me on the inside for Turn Two. Then suddenly I got a hit from behind, had a puncture and damaged my floor. After that it was difficult as the car was quite damaged and I could feel the lack of rear end. I was sliding around and had to do a second pit stop which was unfortunately slow so we lost more time there. I guess today was just not my day; in a way it sums up my season so far. But there are some positives – we were strong as a team, although unfortunately we could not turn that into a perfect points result. I also set the fastest lap of the race despite the condition of the car. I'll keep my head down, work hard and hopefully the luck will turn around at some point – I think it's about time.

Toto Wolff

This was a perfect way for Lewis to start the triple header and to bounce back from the disappointment of Canada. Whenever he has a tough weekend, he has this fantastic ability to bounce straight back, and we saw that again here in Paul Ricard. He pretty much controlled the whole race and didn't put a wheel wrong at any point. For Valtteri, it was a much tougher day: Sebastian clearly misjudged his braking for Turn One and made a mistake, which cost both him and Valtteri dearly.

When the car stopped, we saw that the floor area around the tyre was pretty badly damaged and flapping about – and Valtteri described the car balance as "shocking". Taking that into account, it was a battling performance from him, too. Overall, though, we leave seeing the positive side of our performance this weekend. The car was quick and with our upgrades, it felt like we made a step forward; thank you to everybody in the team who worked so hard to bring them to the track this weekend. But we can't afford to make any assumptions about what this means for the next races – it's still a three-way fight and we will need to be at our very best if we

wish to repeat this performance.

James Allison

It is hard to be unhappy on a day when you have won the race in fine style, both reclaiming the lead in the drivers' championship and extending our advantage in the constructors'. Lewis drove a splendid race and had everything under control throughout; it was a faultless performance. But it is hard not to feel very sorry for Valtteri, who also had a terrific weekend and saw his race compromised at Turn One through no fault of his own. On the bright side, though, the car performance was good all weekend and we can travel to Austria with the optimism that we can keep up the good work in the next races.

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