

Beat: Sports

2016 Monaco Grand Prix

Circuit de Monaco

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USPA NEWS - Stunning victory for Lewis Hamilton in chaotic Monaco Grand Prix. Lewis took his 44th career victory today – his second at the Circuit de Monaco and first of 2016. A tough afternoon for Nico saw him finish seventh after a race-long battle in traffic.

Lewis Hamilton -

This might be the best place ever to have won number 44 – it's been eight years since I won here! What a special day – truly one of the hardest races I can ever remember having. To stay in the zone, not make any mistakes and come out on top is just unbelievable. I walk along here every day and think about the greats who have won this race – the likes of Fangio, Moss, Hill and Senna – and it's a truly amazing feeling to have my name added to that list again.

It's very unusual that I'm able to take any credit for a strategy decision – but when the team first asked me to box, I could see the track drying and my tyres still felt pretty good. So I told them all that and they said to stay out, which worked out great. I just carried on looking after the tyres – picking up the pace a bit when I saw what times people were starting to do on the intermediates as it dried out.

I was matching their times at that stage so I thought "I could actually hold onto this until it's dry"^[2]. Staying in that window was really tricky, though, as the first two sectors were almost dry. When I came out on the slicks it was like driving on ice. It was tough knowing how hard to push and we came out very close together. If he hadn't had a bad stop I wouldn't have been ahead. But these things happen for a reason – and today the reason was that 44th win.

Nico Rosberg -

In racing you have good days and bad days. Today was a bad day for me. I didn't have the pace to fight for the win and we need to understand why. It was possibly a brake issue – but I don't know for sure yet. I didn't feel like I could push to the limit at the beginning of the race on the wet tyres. It was a simple decision to accept the request from the team to let Lewis pass – even if it hurt very much in that moment.

I was very far off the pace and Lewis quite clearly had the speed to win for the team. We've always had that rule – if you're ahead and the other guy has a chance to win, you give him that chance. From there it just didn't go my way. I had a tricky pit stop and was held in the box because there was traffic in pit lane. So the cars were just streaming by and suddenly I was down to sixth. Once you're behind in Monaco that's it – you're stuck.

At the end, Nico [Hülkenberg] had a lot more rubber left on his Soft tyres and my UltraSofts were finished, so I lost temperature in the drizzle and lost grip, which let him past too. That kind of summed it up, really. I'm massively disappointed with today – I really wanted to win my home race again but it didn't work out. It's been tough and I'll probably need a day to take it all in – but then I'll shift my focus to Canada and a chance to come back stronger.

Toto Wolff, Head of Mercedes-Benz Motorsport -

What an incredible drive from Lewis: he didn't put a foot wrong, we took some risks together as a team and lady luck smiled on us as well. It was an amazing race and just what the doctor ordered after everything we have been through together in recent weeks. But I feel really bad for Nico, too; he endured a messy race in a car that didn't have the pace today, a delayed second pit stop that cost him track position and then found himself stuck behind Alonso for the rest of the race.

It was like all his bad luck came on one day and the result was P7. In the first stint we told him to let Lewis pass, as that was our best chance of winning the race at that time. The fact that he did so was the gesture of a great team player. But we don't leave Monaco

feeling in any way complacent: Red Bull had the performance this weekend and Montreal and Baku will present some very different challenges for us to tackle. So we need to keep pushing on performance and keep chasing the root causes of the problems we have experienced. For this evening, though, we can also savour a special win for Lewis who was at his very best today.

Paddy Lowe, Executive Director (Technical) -

We woke up this morning to rain, as predicted. Not having pole position, this was a welcome opportunity to find a way to win the race. As it panned out, we started under the safety car which lost us one opportunity. And then, once the race did get underway, it soon became clear from Nico's pace that he had a problem. We're still trying to analyse what that was "" but the initial signs are that it was related to brake temperatures.

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It came to the point where we told Nico he would either need to pick up the pace or let Lewis past. One lap later, he hadn't managed to find that extra pace, so we asked him to move aside "" which he did immediately. Great credit to Nico for his team ethic and playing for the overall team result. Unfortunately, his pace didn't recover all afternoon "" to the point where he even lost sixth place at the final corner as light rain began to fall once more. We need to look into why that was. Once Lewis was past, he instantly began to stretch away from Nico with pace that was on a par with the leader.

Once Daniel pitted for Intermediates, we had a very interesting situation where Lewis was in the lead and we had nothing to lose strategically "" thanks to the buffer he had built over Nico in third. We gambled on stringing out the stint until the track was sufficiently dry to change to slicks. Fortunately, the wet tyre clung on at a reasonable pace until we made the switch to the UltraSoft and the rest is history! A fantastic job from Lewis to maintain the lead in difficult circumstances with changing conditions, traffic, VSC incidents and all sorts "" and credit again to Nico for the way he handled a tough situation.

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