

Beat: Sports

2018 Russian Grand Prix

Sochi

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USPA NEWS - Mercedes-AMG Petronas Motorsport claim a 1-2 victory in Sochi

Lewis scored his 70th career victory today in Formula One – his eighth of the 2018 season and third at the Sochi Autodrom

Valtteri finished the race in P2 – taking his 20th podium finish with Mercedes-AMG Petronas Motorsport

Today's result marks the fifth consecutive victory in Russia for Mercedes-AMG Petronas Motorsport, making it the joint-longest winning streak at a race alongside the British and Italian Grand Prix

Lewis (306 points) leads the Drivers' Championship by 50 points from Sebastian Vettel (256 points) with Valtteri (189 points) in P3

Mercedes-AMG Petronas Motorsport (495 points) leads Ferrari (442 points) by 53 points in the Constructors' Championship

James Allison, Technical Director, accepted the Constructors' trophy on behalf of the team

Lewis Hamilton

Valtteri was an incredible gentleman today. Honestly, it's the strangest day I can remember having in the sport in my career. I remember, we have crossed this situation and discussion before. It's always felt super uncomfortable, I was like "Look, I want to win the right way, that's always how it is for me. I would say "Look, as racing drivers we exist to win, and if you tell us we can't win, it's like you are taking our air away, our life away". It's that deep. I would never wish it upon anyone else and would never ask for it, ever. I made sure when we were in a meeting before, I was like "Just so you know, I've never gone to Toto and those guys, this is not how I want to win".

Obviously, the team took the decision when they saw that my tyres were blistered and Vettel was charging from behind. There are stronger heads in the team who are like "We have to win, it's all about the win. We have got to win both Championships, we don't care who finishes ahead". I think ultimately, it's really important right this second to first acknowledge Valtteri, because as I said he was just the ultimate gentleman. It is very weird to feel down but we've also got to feel grateful to the guys back at the factory. So many people are working flat-out to make sure we have a 1-2 like this, the team have just done an incredible job this weekend. We have to really embrace the moment still, but it's definitely a victory on my list of wins that I am least proud of.

Valtteri Bottas

It's been a tough day. We got a good result for us as a team with maximum points, but for me personally it was a difficult race. Although I already understand the situation. If you put yourself in the team leader's shoes, for them it doesn't matter if it is me or Lewis winning, as long as we are 1-2 we get the maximum points. For the end of the year, it's only Lewis fighting for the Championship, I am not. So, for the team, it is always better that Lewis wins – that's how it goes. It is not ideal for me as an athlete and a person, but that is a fact. We are playing as a team and I am prepared to play as a team. I took one for the team today, I will take one for the team tomorrow. That's how it goes, but I am also looking forward to next year, starting a new season. I know that today I was supposed to win and I could've won the race on equal terms. I know myself I am the winner of this weekend. I don't have the trophy but it doesn't matter. That's how it is and I move on.

Toto Wolff

We are all racers at heart and what we want to see is out and out racing and may the quickest man win. But then we are a bunch of rational guys - we discuss things in the morning and then everything is different in the race. This is what happened today. We should be over the moon with a 1-2 and fundamentally we are. But we also feel that it went against Valtteri – it would have been a race win for

him and we changed it. Valtteri is such a tremendous team player, but it's deflating for a driver and deflating for a team. We discussed who to pit first and then we did it with Valtteri because that would protect his win.

It was one lap too late with Lewis and he lost the position to Sebastian. This triggered this mess because Lewis came out behind Sebastian and then needed to attack. That caused the blister and we needed to protect when Sebastian was all over Lewis on damaged tyres. Lewis was far back, but when we told Valtteri to switch position at Turn 13, he did it immediately. This is who you want to have within the team because you need to rely on these guys in the same way they rely on us. This is what makes it feel even worse. But there is a harsh reality also that on such a day you can extend the lead by several points more in a Championship that has been very tough and very difficult at times. Sometimes you have to take it and this is what we did today. We finished 1-2, we have a 50 point advantage and that feels good on a day that has otherwise been very difficult.

James Allison

After the margin of yesterday's Qualifying that was a really, really tough race. The pace of the Ferrari put us under pressure all the way through the first stint and we rather fumbled things as a consequence, allowing us to lose the place to Sebastian at the first stop. Lewis spared our blushes with a beautiful overtaking move and put things back on an even keel for us. But a little later in the race we got into a degree of difficulty once again when Lewis followed Valtteri quite closely from behind, damaging his rear tyres. At that point we were fearful of losing a position to a hard-charging Vettel.

With Valtteri in front and on rubber that was working well, we took the very difficult decision to allow Lewis to go in front and have a car with good rubber protecting the 1-2 that would come our way if we would just look after the tyres to the finish. And that's what happened in the end, we managed to get the 1-2, but it was a desperately difficult day for Valtteri. He took this disappointment like a Trojan, but I could see standing next to him on the podium looking into his eyes that it was hurting him. Valtteri is a brilliant teammate and a racer of real quality who had the pace to win today and who will have much better days ahead "" and here's to that!

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