

= 2015 Russian Grand Prix =

The 2015 Russian Grand Prix ( formally known as the 2015 Formula 1 Russian Grand Prix ; Russian : ????? @-@ ??? ?????? 2015 ????? ) was a Formula One motor race that took place on 11 October 2015 . The fifty @-@ three lap race was held at the Sochi Autodrom . This was the fifteenth round of the 2015 season and marked the second time that the Russian Grand Prix was run as a round of the Formula One World Championship since its inception in 1950 .

Lewis Hamilton won the race for the second season in a row , extending his Drivers ' Championship lead to 66 points . With Nico Rosberg retiring early in the race , Sebastian Vettel reclaimed second place in the standings for the first time since his round two victory in Malaysia with a second @-@ place finish . Sergio Pérez completed the podium in third for Force India .

Mercedes secured their second consecutive Constructors ' Championship , having done so at the same event the previous season .

= = Report = =

= = = Background = = =

After the previous year 's race showed lower @-@ than @-@ expected tyre degradation , Pirelli opted to supply the yellow @-@ banded soft compound as the prime selection and the red @-@ banded supersoft tyre as the option selection . The previous season 's event saw Nico Rosberg complete 52 of 53 laps on the white @-@ banded medium compound on his way to a second @-@ place finish . Even with the softer tyre choice , tyre degradation was not an issue at the event , with drivers able to record fast lap times all through the race on a one @-@ stop strategy .

Roberto Merhi replaced Alexander Rossi for Marussia , in accordance with Rossi 's five @-@ race contract that saw him sit out this race and the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix . Jolyon Palmer replaced Romain Grosjean for Lotus for Friday 's first free practice session for the tenth time this season .

Fernando Alonso began the weekend 's event knowing he would start from the back of the grid due to a number of penalties incurred for changing engine parts . Honda provided him with an upgraded internal combustion engine , which had been designed using the team 's last four in @-@ season development tokens . Alonso 's McLaren teammate Jenson Button had to continue using the old @-@ specification engine at this race as Honda only had one of the upgraded power units available . However , Alonso used the new power unit only in the first practice session before switching back to the older unit , albeit voicing satisfaction with the performance of the new specification .

Going into the weekend , Lewis Hamilton led the Drivers ' Championship with a 48 @-@ point advantage over teammate Rosberg , with Sebastian Vettel another eleven points behind in third . Mercedes led the Constructors ' Standings on 506 points , 169 points ahead of Ferrari . In third was Williams , another 129 points behind .

= = = Free practice = = =

Per the regulations for the 2015 season , three practice sessions were held , two 90 @-@ minute sessions on Friday and another one @-@ hour session before qualifying on Saturday . However , all three sessions were disrupted and little running took place . During the first session on Friday morning , a spillage of diesel on track prevented the cars from going out on until very late in the session . Eventually , Nico Hülkenberg topped the session for Force India , ahead of his compatriots Nico Rosberg and Sebastian Vettel . Since water was used to clear the surface , the first laps were run on intermediate tyres by most drivers , with both Williams cars being equipped with full wet tyres , but Valtteri Bottas spun on them entering the pit lane . Later , the track dried enough to use slick tyres , Fernando Alonso being the first to do so . Due to the limited running , the last minutes were busy with most cars out on track . Marcus Ericsson however was confined to the sidelines as he stopped with an engine problem . As Lewis Hamilton spun on his last timed lap , he needed to settle

for seventh fastest .

With a lot of rain falling , the second practice session saw only eight drivers set timed laps , with just 14 taking to the track . Felipe Massa set the fastest time with a lap of 2 ? 00 @.@ 458 . Both Lotus and Manor Marussia did not run at all , while Fernando Alonso ran the most number of laps with twelve , following an engine change .

The third practice session on Saturday saw limited running as well , as training was halted due to a massive crash by Carlos Sainz , Jr .. The Spaniard lost control of his car going into turn 13 , hit a wall and went on to crash into the safety barriers , burying the nose of his car in the process . The session was stopped while Sainz was taken out of the car and transported to hospital , albeit uninjured . Practice was not resumed afterwards and the time of 1 ? 38 @.@ 561 set by Nico Rosberg before the accident remained the fastest lap of the session . He was more than seven tenths of a second faster than Valtteri Bottas in second , with Lewis Hamilton another tenth behind . Sainz 's teammate Max Verstappen finished the session 17th fastest after spinning in the final corner .

= = = Qualifying = = =

Conditions were dry for qualifying on Saturday afternoon . Qualifying consisted of three parts , 18 , 15 and 12 minutes in length respectively , with five drivers eliminated from competing after each of the first two sessions . Only the two Mercedes drivers were capable of proceeding into the second part of qualifying ( Q2 ) without having to use the faster , soft tyres . Nico Rosberg was fastest , ahead of Williams ' Valtteri Bottas and Lewis Hamilton . As Carlos Sainz was unable to compete following his crash in practice , only four running drivers were eliminated . Those were both Manor Marussia drivers , the Sauber of Marcus Ericsson and Fernando Alonso for McLaren .

The two Mercedes exchanged new track record times as Rosberg , then Hamilton , and once again Rosberg set fast times during Q2 . Bottas was again the fastest non @-@ Mercedes runner , but teammate Felipe Massa was hindered by traffic and did not proceed into Q3 . Also eliminated were Pastor Maldonado , Jenson Button , Felipe Nasr , and Daniil Kvyat , the latter two being bettered by a late fast lap from Max Verstappen .

Nico Rosberg was again fastest in Q3 , denying teammate Hamilton his fiftieth career pole position in the process . His time of 1m37.113 was more than three tenths of a second quicker than Hamilton 's , ensuring he started from the front of the grid for the second race running . Valtteri Bottas confirmed his strong pace and qualified third , marginally ahead of Sebastian Vettel . The second Ferrari of Kimi Räikkönen was almost half a second behind in fifth , having made a mistake at turn 13 , followed by the two Force India cars of Nico Hülkenberg and Sergio Pérez . Hamilton had also gone off at turn 13 on his second fast lap , preventing him from challenging Rosberg for pole position .

= = = Race = = =

Carlos Sainz was cleared to race albeit not setting a time in qualifying , being allowed to start from the back of the grid . At the start , Nico Rosberg led away from Lewis Hamilton , while further back , Nico Hülkenberg spun into turn two , tagging Max Verstappen and Marcus Ericsson . Verstappen had a puncture while Hülkenberg and Ericsson retired on the spot , causing the safety car to be deployed . Meanwhile , Räikkönen and Kvyat experienced good starts , gaining two and four places respectively . Racing resumed on the end of lap 3 , with Rosberg retaining his race lead . However , further back Bottas overtook Räikkönen to take third . By lap 7 , Sainz had moved up into 14th place , while Felipe Massa was up into ninth place from 15th on the grid . Race leader Nico Rosberg needed to retire at the end of the seventh lap due to a locked throttle , handing the race lead to championship leader Lewis Hamilton . On lap 10 , Pastor Maldonado moved ahead of Jenson Button to take tenth , while Hamilton was extending his lead over second placed Bottas . A second safety car phase occurred on lap 12 , when Romain Grosjean lost the back of his Lotus in turn 3 and crashed into the barriers . While Grosjean escaped uninjured , his car was heavily damaged . With a

lot of debris on track , the safety car stayed out until lap 17 . At the restart , Vettel attacked teammate Räikkönen for third . While the Finn was able to stay ahead by going wide into turn 2 , he subsequently gave up the place to Vettel . One lap later , Ricciardo and Sainz fought for tenth place , with Daniel Ricciardo coming out on top and retaining the position .

By lap 20 , Max Verstappen , impeded by his tyre failure at the start , had moved up into twelfth while at the front , Hamilton extended his advantage over Bottas to 7 @. @ 5 seconds on lap 24 with Vettel also moving closer to the Finn . After several drivers had opted to pit during the second safety car phase , most drivers at the front decided to come in for their regular pit stops starting on lap 25 . Carlos Sainz crossed the white line when exiting pit lane , receiving a five @-@ second penalty to be served at his second stop . Bottas was the first of the front runners to pit on lap 27 , emerging into traffic . This allowed Sebastian Vettel to make up time by staying out longer , eventually emerging from his pit stop ahead of Bottas on lap 31 . On lap later , Räikkönen pitted as well , coming out just behind Bottas . Race leader Hamilton came in another lap later , retaining his lead without incident . On lap 37 , Räikkönen used the Drag Reduction System ( DRS ) to move ahead of Bottas for fifth place , only for the Williams driver to retake the position in the next corner .

An early pit stop during the safety car phase had put Sergio Pérez up into third place , with Daniel Ricciardo behind in fourth . By lap 43 , Ricciardo , Bottas and Räikkönen had all moved into striking distance of Pérez , who was trying to keep his older tyres alive . On lap 45 , Bottas used DRS to move ahead of Ricciardo 's Red Bull . One lap later , Räikkönen tried to follow suit , only to run wide , having to concede the position back to Ricciardo . On lap 47 , Carlos Sainz retired after spinning off the track due to a brake failure , losing his rear wing . Retrieving the wing from the track under racing conditions , a track marshall was called " one very brave Russian " by the passing Sebastian Vettel , who barely avoided contact . Just after being passed by Räikkönen on lap 49 , Daniel Ricciardo had to retire with a suspension failure . The end of lap 52 saw Valtteri Bottas move ahead of Pérez into third place , with Räikkönen moving past the Force India as well . However , just some corners later on the last lap of the race , the two collided , forcing Bottas to retire and causing heavy damage to Räikkönen 's Ferrari . Pérez thereby reclaimed third place and achieved Force India 's first podium finish of the season . At the front , Vettel moved closer to Hamilton due to the latter suffering from a compromised rear wing , probably caused by rubber debris in the slot gap . However , Hamilton held on and took his ninth victory of the season , finishing ahead of Vettel , who was now his closest championship rival .

= = = Post @-@ race = = =

Räikkönen was demoted to from fifth to eighth place for causing the final lap collision with Bottas and scored only four points rather than ten , and this secured the constructors championship for Mercedes . McLaren driver Fernando Alonso was given a five @-@ second penalty for exceeding track limits , promoting Toro Rosso 's Max Verstappen to tenth . When asked about the collision with Bottas at the press conference for the following United States Grand Prix , Kimi Räikkönen remained unregenerate , saying : " [ My view ] hasn 't changed . There were some discussions . I would still do it tomorrow again , that doesn 't change the story . " Bottas took a different viewpoint , saying : " I don 't think it was a racing incident . I didn 't see anyone there and I was in front , and then suddenly someone hits me . I should be on the podium , but I 'm here with zero points instead . That 's just disappointing . "

Former Jordan team principal Eddie Jordan carried out the podium interviews . Hamilton expressed disappointment at not being able to battle his teammate to win the race , while he also stressed the title was " not done and dusted " . Sebastian Vettel expressed satisfaction with his car , saying that he had hoped to be able to catch Hamilton towards the end of the race . However , he was disappointed by not having both Ferrari cars on the podium . Sergio Pérez said that he had been " really unhappy " with himself until the last lap that handed him third place , calling the result " just amazing " . He would later go on to call the race " the best moment in my career " .

After the race , Sebastian Vettel criticised Lewis Hamilton for what he believed was excessive low speed at the restart after the safety car period , calling his behaviour " ridiculous " . He added : "

There was no reason to go that slow . If you want to pack up the field you can do it earlier and not in the very last bit . " Following his 46G impact on Saturday , Carlos Sainz conceded that he felt " a bit of dizziness " in the early stages of the Grand Prix , though he added : " But after lap 10 it went off and I could push normally without problems . " After his accident on lap twelve , Romain Grosjean spoke of his " biggest impact for quite a while " . He also revealed that the seat of his car broke at impact , but also emphasised the fact that he was able to escape unharmed : " It 's a testament to all the safety inherent in the car and the other safety devices . "

As a result of the race , Mercedes extended their lead in the Constructors ' Championship to 172 points , enough to secure their second consecutive title . Williams was still in third on 220 points , 71 points ahead of Red Bull . In the Drivers ' Standings , Lewis Hamilton 's lead over second place grew to 66 points , with his closest challenger now being Sebastian Vettel . Nico Rosberg dropped to third , seven points behind Vettel on 229 points .

= = Classification = =

= = = Qualifying = = =

#### Notes

^ 1 ? Fernando Alonso received a thirty @-@ five @-@ place grid penalty for a variety of changes made to his power unit . ^ 2 ? Roberto Merhi received a twenty @-@ place grid penalty for a variety of changes made to his power unit . ^ 3 ? Carlos Sainz , Jr. did not take part in qualifying after a heavy crash during FP3 ; he was later permitted to race by the stewards . ^ 4 ? Carlos Sainz , Jr. received a twenty @-@ place grid penalty for a variety of changes made to his power unit and replacing his gearbox .

= = = Race = = =

#### Notes

^ 1 ? Kimi Räikkönen originally finished fifth but received a 30 @-@ second time penalty after the race following a collision with Valtteri Bottas .  
^ 2 ? Fernando Alonso originally finished tenth but received a 5 @-@ second time penalty after the race for exceeding track limits .  
^ 3 ? Carlos Sainz , Jr. received a 5 @-@ second penalty after the race for crossing the line at the pit entry .  
^ 4 ? Valtteri Bottas and Daniel Ricciardo were classified as they completed over 90 % of the race distance .

= = = Championship standings after the race = = =

**Bold text indicates who still has a mathematical chance of becoming World Champion .**

**Note : Only the top five positions are included for both sets of standings .**