

= 2015 Monaco Grand Prix =

The 2015 Monaco Grand Prix , formally known as the Grand Prix de Monaco 2015 , was a Formula One motor race that was held on 24 May 2015 at the Circuit de Monaco , a street circuit that runs through the principality of Monaco . It was the sixty @-@ second running of the race as a World Championship event , and seventy @-@ third running overall .

Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton entered the race with a twenty @-@ point lead over teammate and defending race winner Nico Rosberg in the Drivers ' Championship , with Mercedes having a seventy @-@ point lead over Ferrari in the Constructors ' Championship .

World Champion Lewis Hamilton secured his first ever Monaco pole position during Saturday 's qualifying . In the race , Nico Rosberg took his third consecutive win at Monaco , second win of the season , and the tenth of his career , while Sebastian Vettel finished second . Championship leader Hamilton , who had led for most of the race , moved from first into third place following a " pit stop misjudgement " during a late safety car period , for which his team , Mercedes , later apologised . The renewed McLaren @-@ Honda partnership scored its first points since Honda 's return to the sport . With Rosberg 's victory , he was able to reduce his deficit in the World Drivers ' Championship to ten points .

= = Report = =

= = = Background = = =

Ahead of the race weekend , Mercedes announced they had extended their contract with world champion Lewis Hamilton for three additional years , keeping him at the team until the end of the 2018 season .

Revisions to the Tabac corner at the harbour section of the race track meant that the drivers now entered the turn slightly earlier , shortening the track by 3 metres ( 9 @.@ 8 ft ) compared to previous years , and making the corner slightly tighter and slower . The corner had seen a race @-@ stopping accident involving Pastor Maldonado and Max Chilton in 2013 , leading to the changes being made . This resulted in the circuit being officially classified as a new layout . The barrier on the right of the swimming pool chicane was moved back , with new kerbs , to allow for a better view of the corner . Much of the track was resurfaced before the event . As in Australia and Singapore , the pit lane speed limit for the duration of the event was reduced to 60 km / h ( 37 mph ) , instead of the standard 80 km / h ( 50 mph ) , due to the confined nature of the circuit . The race schedule for the weekend was different in Monaco compared to the other races on the calendar . The first two free practice sessions were held on Thursday instead of Friday .

Tyre supplier Pirelli brought its yellow @-@ marked soft compound tyre as the harder " prime " tyre and the red @-@ marked super @-@ soft compound tyre as the more elastic " option " tyre , just as they did the previous three seasons . It was the first time in the 2015 season that the super @-@ soft compound would be used at a race weekend .

= = = Free practice = = =

As per the regulations for 2015 , three practice sessions were held , two one and a half @-@ hour sessions on Thursday and another one @-@ hour session on Saturday morning . After a thunderstorm on Wednesday night , the first of the two free practice sessions held on Thursday morning , started with every driver setting their installation laps on intermediate tyres . The track soon dried up , and the cars changed to slick tyres . Nico Rosberg had an early shunt when he clipped his front wing exiting the Tabac corner though he did not sustain considerable damage to his car . The two Mercedes drivers swapped places at the top of the time sheets for most of the session , until late improvements pushed Rosberg down the order to finish ninth , more than a second off his team @-@ mate Lewis Hamilton . Rookie Max Verstappen surprised the paddock by finishing

second , two @-@ tenths of a second down on Hamilton . The Renault @-@ powered cars all finished within the top seven , while the Williams team ended the session in tenth and seventeenth , owing to the car not being well suited for wet and low @-@ temperature conditions .

The second session on Thursday afternoon saw considerably less running than the first . A red flag was shown ten minutes into practice after Roberto Merhi crashed on the exit of the tunnel . During the stoppage , rain began to fall , keeping most drivers in the garage when practice was restarted . It was not until ten minutes from the end of the session that the drivers took to the track again , but under damp conditions they managed times that were slower than the pace set at the beginning . Lewis Hamilton finished the session fastest , more than seven @-@ tenths of a second in front of his team mate . Toro Rosso confirmed their high pace with Carlos Sainz , Jr. and Max Verstappen in sixth and seventh respectively , while McLaren proved they might challenge for points as predicted , with Fernando Alonso in eighth place .

The third practice on Saturday morning was interrupted midway through the session when Kimi Räikkönen crashed his Ferrari at Sainte Dévote . His team mate Sebastian Vettel set the fastest lap during the session , ahead of the Mercedes ' of Rosberg and Hamilton . Hamilton reported problems with his car , believed by his race engineer to be caused by over @-@ pressured tyres . The two Renault @-@ powered teams , Red Bull and Toro Rosso , confirmed their strong pace by placing all four cars in the top ten .

= = = Qualifying = = =

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 . The first part ( Q1 ) saw a " a surprise casualty " when Valtteri Bottas failed to cross the line for his final lap in time , leaving him seventeenth on the grid . The two Manor Marussias finished last , as they had in every qualifying session they participated in up to that point during the 2015 season . Joining them on the sidelines were the two Saubers of Felipe Nasr and Marcus Ericsson , split by Bottas .

While McLaren once again succeeded in advancing both cars into Q2 , Fernando Alonso 's car stopped in the first corner due to an electrical fault at the start of the second session , and he took no further part in qualifying . Team mate Jenson Button was more successful , missing out on Q3 when his second fast lap was interrupted by Nico Rosberg going off at Sainte Dévote . The second Williams of Felipe Massa completed a problematic Saturday for the team , claiming only 14th on the grid , while Nico Hülkenberg and Romain Grosjean also did not make it into Q3 .

The third part of qualifying , contested by the top ten drivers , started with drops of rain falling , meaning all drivers took to the track quickly . Sergio Pérez , who made his first Q3 appearance of the 2015 season , had only one set of super @-@ soft tyres left and finished seventh . Lewis Hamilton took an early lead with his first run and team mate Nico Rosberg was denied a chance to challenge him for pole position when he made a mistake in turn one during his second fast lap . The two Red Bulls separated the two Ferraris , leaving Kimi Räikkönen with another disappointing qualifying performance down in sixth . It was the first pole position for Hamilton in Monaco , who called it " incredibly special " .

Carlos Sainz , Jr . , who had qualified in eighth position , was adjudged to have missed a call to go to the weigh bridge during the first part of qualifying . Following the session , he was given a penalty which required him to start the race from the pit lane .

= = = Race = = =

At the start of the race Hamilton , Rosberg and Vettel maintained their grid positions into the first corner , while Daniil Kvyat managed to overtake team @-@ mate Daniel Ricciardo for fourth . Trying to get past Nico Hülkenberg on the inside of turn five , Fernando Alonso made contact with Hülkenberg , who hit the wall but was able to continue , though at the back of the field . Alonso was reprimanded with a five @-@ second penalty to serve at his first pit stop . Meanwhile , Felipe Massa made contact with Pastor Maldonado , damaging his front wing . Massa came into the pits for a new

wing and equipped the harder tyre compound . Maldonado suffered from brake problems in the early laps , eventually retiring on lap seven .

By lap ten , Hamilton had built a three @-@ second lead over his teammate Rosberg , who was an additional 1 @.@ 7 seconds ahead of Vettel . While some drivers came into the pits for their first regular stop as early as lap 13 , the top runners stayed out until lap 37 , when Vettel was the first to come in , followed by Rosberg and Hamilton one lap later respectively . Following the stops , Hamilton led Rosberg by seven seconds . Max Verstappen dropped down the order when a problem at the rear of the car caused him to be stationary for 31 seconds during his stop on lap 30 . Fernando Alonso , who had been running in ninth place , retired from the race with a gearbox failure on lap 43 . By lap 45 , Hamilton had extended his lead to ten seconds , while Rosberg remained two seconds ahead of Sebastian Vettel .

By lap 59 , Verstappen on the fast super @-@ soft tyres was chasing Lotus ' Romain Grosjean for tenth position , with Verstappen making several attempts to pass over the following laps . At the beginning of lap 64 , coming into turn one , Verstappen crashed into the back of the Lotus , sending him flying into the barriers . While he was able to walk away from the accident without injuries , a " Virtual Safety Car " condition was called by the race director to allow marshals to safely recover the damaged car . This was the first time a Virtual Safety Car had been used in Formula One . Shortly thereafter , the regular safety car was sent out on track . Lewis Hamilton , who had been leading the race by almost twenty seconds , was pitted apparently with the intention of returning him to the track ahead of his pursuers . The Mercedes pitwall crew , however , miscalculated the gap allowing Rosberg to take the lead while Hamilton emerged from the pit exit lane marginally behind Vettel who had stayed out under the safety car behind Rosberg . With the safety car coming into the pits on lap 70 of 78 , Rosberg retained the lead unchallenged going on to win the Monaco Grand Prix for a third consecutive time whereas Hamilton finished third , unable to overtake Vettel for second position . Daniel Ricciardo had also pitted under the safety car , and on fresh tyres he was able to pass Kimi Räikkönen in controversial circumstances . His teammate Kvyat then let him past in order to give him the chance to try and pass third @-@ placed Hamilton . When Ricciardo was unable to overtake , he handed fourth place back to Kvyat . Ricciardo set the fastest lap of the race in the process . Jenson Button finished eighth , scoring four championship points for himself and the McLaren team , the first points for the renewed McLaren @-@ Honda partnership since their return at the start of the 2015 season .

== = Post @-@ race == =

Following the race , Mercedes apologised to Hamilton for the pit call , which commentators such as F1Fanatic 's Keith Collantine , Formula One correspondent for The Guardian Paul Weaver , and former Formula One driver David Coulthard felt cost him the victory . Team boss Toto Wolff told the press : " We got our numbers wrong . We thought we had the gap for Lewis to take fresh tyres and come back out in the lead behind the safety car , ahead of Nico and covering off any risk of another competitor taking fresh tyres . But the calculation was incorrect and he came out in third place . " Indeed , more than half of the teams pitted at least one car when the safety car was deployed , just as Hamilton did . However , he as race leader caught up with the safety car quicker and lost a considerably larger amount of time on his way into the pits , leading to him coming out behind Rosberg and Vettel .

During the post @-@ race press conference , Hamilton revealed the decision to pit him was made after he had voiced concern over the heat in his tyres , being under the false impression that his rivals behind had already pitted for the softer compound . When asked whether he would have full confidence in the team 's strategy decisions in the future , he answered " yes " . At the podium interviews , conducted by Martin Brundle , Rosberg admitted his victory " was just a lot of luck " and added that " Lewis drove brilliantly and he would have also deserved the win for sure " . Rosberg became the fourth driver overall , and the first since Ayrton Senna , to win the Monaco Grand Prix three times in a row .

Following the accident with Romain Grosjean , the race stewards handed Max Verstappen a five

@-@ place grid penalty for the next race , the Canadian Grand Prix . For the first time in his Formula One career , Verstappen also had two penalty points added to his FIA Super Licence . Verstappen was criticised for his actions by fellow driver Felipe Massa , who said that he deserved the penalty . Verstappen reacted by insisting that he had done nothing wrong , instead pointing to Massa 's own accident at the 2014 Canadian Grand Prix , where Massa had crashed into the back of Sergio Pérez in similar fashion . Immediately following the race , Verstappen had accused Grosjean of " brake @-@ testing " him , a claim denied by Grosjean , who insisted that he had braked even later than the lap before .

The race results meant that Nico Rosberg moved closer towards his teammate 's championship lead , now ten points behind Hamilton . Sebastian Vettel followed another 18 points behind . Meanwhile , in the Constructors ' Championship , Mercedes extended their lead over Ferrari to 84 points .

= = Classification = =

= = = Qualifying = = =

Notes

^ 1 ? Romain Grosjean received a five place grid penalty for an unscheduled gearbox change .

^ 2 ? Carlos Sainz , Jr. was penalised with a pit lane start for bypassing a weight request following Q1 .

= = = Race = = =

= = = Championship standings after the race = = =

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