

= 2015 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix =

The 2015 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix ( formally known as the 2015 Formula 1 Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix ) was a Formula One motor race held at the Yas Marina Circuit on 29 November 2015 . The race was the nineteenth and final round of the 2015 season , and marked the seventh running of the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix as a round of the World Championship since its inception in 1950 .

Lewis Hamilton was the defending race winner and had already secured his third Drivers ' Championship earlier in the season at the United States Grand Prix . His team , Mercedes , had decided the Constructors ' Championship in their favour at the Russian Grand Prix .

In Saturday 's qualifying , Nico Rosberg ( Mercedes ) secured his sixth consecutive pole position and went on to win the race ahead of teammate Hamilton . Kimi Räikkönen finished third for Ferrari . It was the twelfth one @-@ two finish for Mercedes , cementing a record @-@ breaking season that saw them finish with the highest ever number of points scored by a constructor , most front row lookouts and one @-@ two finishes over the course of any Formula One season .

= = Report = =

= = = Background = = =

Going into the race weekend , both Championships were already decided . Lewis Hamilton had already secured the drivers ' title three races earlier at the 2015 United States Grand Prix and was leading the Drivers ' Championship with 363 points , 66 points ahead of his teammate Nico Rosberg . In the Constructors ' Championship , their team Mercedes had also secured the constructors ' title four races earlier at the 2015 Russian Grand Prix and was leading Ferrari on 660 to 401 points . However , several positions in the standings were still undecided . In the battle for fourth place in the Drivers ' Championship , Valtteri Bottas was just one point ahead of compatriot Kimi Räikkönen , with Felipe Massa in sixth also still able to get the position , being 19 points behind his Williams teammate Bottas . Red Bull teammates Daniil Kvyat and Daniel Ricciardo were just ten points apart in the battle for seventh in the championship . In the Constructors ' standings , sixth placed Lotus was just nine points ahead of Toro Rosso , while McLaren needed at least nine points as well to overcome Sauber for eighth , a points tally they had only managed once during the rest of the season .

Pirelli supplied the teams with the yellow banded soft and the red banded super @-@ soft tyres as the two dry weather options for the race . It was the 150th race for Force India under their current moniker .

= = = Free practice = = =

Per the regulations for the 2015 season , three practice sessions were scheduled , two 1 @.@ 5 @-@ hour sessions on Friday and another one @-@ hour session before qualifying on Saturday . Lewis Hamilton was fastest in the first free practice session , run in clear and sunny conditions , lapping in a time of 1m43.754s , over one @-@ tenth of a second faster than teammate Rosberg in second . Rosberg had set new fastest sector times on his last fast run , but a mistake in the last part of the track lost him a chance at the best time . Kimi Räikkönen was third fastest for Ferrari , ahead of Daniil Kvyat . Kvyat 's Red Bull teammate Ricciardo changed back to his older specification Renault power unit , after being unsatisfied with the performance of his updated unit at the previous race in Brazil . He finished the session seventh fastest . At Lotus , Jolyon Palmer replaced Romain Grosjean , but had to sit out most of the session due to a water leak , managing just nine laps .

In the second session of Friday afternoon , Nico Rosberg topped the timesheets , setting a time of 1m41.983s , finishing more than a tenth of a second ahead of Hamilton . Third fastest was Sergio Pérez for Force India , although he was unable to run in the last twenty minutes of the session due to brake issues . The Red Bull drivers Kvyat and Ricciardo were fourth and sixth respectively , while

Fernando Alonso came within one second of Rosberg 's time in ninth .

Rosberg was again fastest in the third session on Saturday with a time of 1m41.856s. Hamilton was second quickest , almost three @-@ tenths of a second slower , unable to get a clean lap to match his teammate . On the slower soft tyres , one lap was impeded by traffic , another was disturbed by Hamilton spinning after hitting the kerb at turn five . He again failed in his attempt on a very fast lap on the super @-@ soft tyres later in the session , being forced wide after repeating his mistake at turn five . Hamilton was just marginally ahead of Sebastian Vettel , who finished third ahead of Pérez . Daniil Kvyat was unable to set a timed lap as his team worked to solve an electrical problem .

= = = 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 . At the beginning of the first part of qualifying ( Q1 ) , Mercedes sent both their drivers out on the faster super @-@ soft compound , while Ferrari stayed on the slower soft tyres . Even though Ferrari eventually decided to give both their drivers out on the faster tyres towards the end of the session , Sebastian Vettel aborted his last flying lap , believing his time to be sufficient for proceeding into the next round , only for Jenson Button to set a time to relegate Vettel into 16th place on the grid , eliminating him from qualifying . Vettel would later describe his and the team 's judgement as " a small mistake with a big consequence " . Fernando Alonso in the other McLaren did not make the cut , after a puncture on his last lap left him without a chance at a faster time , while Marcus Ericsson was held up by a technical issue , qualifying 18th . Both Manor Marussia drivers were eliminated at the bottom of the standings , with Will Stevens 1 @.@ 137 seconds ahead of his teammate Roberto Merhi .

Lewis Hamilton was fastest in Q2 , two tenths of a second ahead of his teammate Rosberg . In his last qualifying session with Lotus , Romain Grosjean experienced technical difficulties that forced him to come back into the pits . Even though he was sent out again , he was unable to set a time , stopping his car at turn seven . His teammate Pastor Maldonado also did not proceed into Q3 , as did Jenson Button who missed out by two tenths of a second . The two other drivers eliminated were Felipe Nasr for Sauber and Max Verstappen , who was unable to match the time of his teammate Carlos Sainz , Jr .

The top ten drivers competed for pole position in Q3 and it was a battle between the two Mercedes . Lewis Hamilton set his fastest time first with Rosberg right behind him . A much better time in the third sector of the track allowed Rosberg to take his sixth consecutive pole position almost four tenths ahead of his teammate . Sergio Pérez held third spot for much of the session but was beaten to it by Kimi Räikkönen during the second turn of runs . The two were followed by Daniel Ricciardo and Valtteri Bottas on the third row of the grid . Following a gearbox change after qualifying , Romain Grosjean was demoted five places on the grid . Roberto Merhi and Will Stevens also received five place penalties : Stevens for a change of the Control Electronics unit , Merhi for changes made to his suspension . Both would start the race from the back row of the grid .

= = = Race = = =

At the start of the race on Sunday , Hamilton got away slowly but was able to keep both Pérez and Räikkönen behind him while Rosberg retained the lead . Further back , Fernando Alonso made contact with Felipe Nasr and then crashed into Pastor Maldonado , who was forced to retire . Alonso needed to pit for a new front wing and was later given a drive @-@ through penalty , dropping him to the end of the field . Meanwhile , Nico Hülkenberg and Sebastian Vettel made up places , sitting in fifth and twelfth respectively after the first lap . Valtteri Bottas on the other hand lost positions , finding himself in tenth . Rosberg soon built a lead of over one second , giving Hamilton no chance to deploy DRS for an overtake manoeuvre . By lap 5 , both Kvyat and Nasr had come into the pits for the harder compound tyre , followed by Ricciardo , Massa and Pérez one lap later . On lap seven , both Hülkenberg and Sainz Jr. pitted . While Hülkenberg was able to stay ahead of Massa , Sainz

's stop was unfortunate and he lost time due to a problem with the tyre change . Another two laps later , Valtteri Bottas pitted and was sent out into the path of Button , damaging his front wing , which he needed to replace the following lap . He also received a five @-@ second penalty to be served at his next scheduled stop . The leaders pitted for new tyres around laps ten and eleven , with the order now being Rosberg ahead of Vettel , who was yet to stop , Hamilton , and Räikkönen . Romain Grosjean , who started on the harder tyres just as Vettel , was up to sixth .

On lap 13 , Felipe Massa passed Marcus Ericsson for ninth place and one lap later , Hamilton capitalised on a mistake by Vettel and overtook him to retake second position . Vettel lost another position when he let Räikkönen pass him on lap 16 , the two being on different strategies . Meanwhile , Rosberg had built up a lead of around six seconds to Hamilton . On lap 19 , Carlos Sainz , Jr. allowed teammate Max Verstappen to pass him , while Alonso came in for what was his third pit stop of the race , leaving him in last position . Two laps later , Verstappen created flatspots on his tyres when he locked up his brakes , forcing him to pit . He emerged in 15th position . Vettel came in for his first pit stop on lap 24 , coming out in sixth place ahead of compatriot Nico Hülkenberg . At the same time , Hamilton started to reduce the gap to Rosberg in front , cutting it down to less than two seconds by lap 29 . With his teammate closing in , Rosberg pitted on lap 32 , with Räikkönen following suit , whose pit stop was delayed , losing him around four seconds . Sergio Pérez was starting to close the gap to both Ferraris in front of him after pitting early . Vettel reacted on lap 41 and changed to the super @-@ soft tyres , coming out behind both Pérez and Ricciardo in sixth . One lap later , Hamilton came in for his second and final stop , having asked his team before if it would be possible to finish the race without stopping again . He emerged twelve seconds behind Rosberg and started to cut into his advantage immediately .

Further back in the field , Max Verstappen overtook Nasr and Button to move into twelfth place on laps 44 and 46 respectively . However , he was deemed to have forced Button wide and was handed a five @-@ second penalty to be added to his finishing time . Lap 53 saw Romain Grosjean move into the final point scoring position of tenth by passing Carlos Sainz , Jr. into turn eight . Just one lap later , he took ninth place from Daniil Kvyat . At the front , Hamilton proved unable to reach his teammate , who took the checkered flag for his sixth win of the season . Kimi Räikkönen completed the podium , followed by Vettel , Pérez and Ricciardo .

== = Post @-@ race == =

In the podium interviews , conducted by former Formula One driver David Coulthard , Nico Rosberg expressed excitement over how the end of the season had worked out for him , describing the race in the United States as his " low point " . Speaking about racing his teammate Hamilton , he called him " one of the best out there " and said that it was " an even better feeling to win , definitely against such opposition " . Hamilton in turn praised his team for their performance over the whole season , saying that they had " surpassed their own expectations " , albeit confessing that he was happy that the season was over . During the press conference , third @-@ placed Kimi Räikkönen said : " It ? s never nice to finish third but I ? ll take it after previous races " , pointing to a season that had been marred with small mistakes and misfortunes for him . He also stated that securing fourth place in the World Championship did not mean much to him , dismissing the idea of a " Finnish championship " between himself and Valtteri Bottas .

Fourth @-@ placed Sebastian Vettel said after the race : " The best result one way or another would be P3 and P4 so we can be very happy with today " , adding that he and Räikkönen had " a clean race for P3 " . He also described his 2015 campaign as " a miracle " , after Ferrari had endured a winless 2014 . Speaking about the incident between Bottas and Button at the first round of pit stops , Williams ' head of performance engineering Rob Smedley said that the team had released their driver at the right moment , declaring the accident happened because Bottas saw Button too late . Following two incidents during the race , Max Verstappen was given time penalties and three penalty points on his FIA Super Licence ? one for overtaking Jenson Button outside track limits and two for ignoring blue flags while Lewis Hamilton tried to lap him . The penalties meant that he was just four points away from a one @-@ race ban .

Räikkönen taking fourth position from Bottas in the Drivers ' Championship was the only change in both championship standings as a result of the Grand Prix . Following the Grand Prix , Renault confirmed their takeover of Lotus , meaning that it was the last Grand Prix for the team in their incarnation under the Lotus moniker that had started in 2012 .

= = Classification = =

= = = Qualifying = = =

Notes :

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

^ 2 ? Will Stevens received a five @-@ place grid penalty for a change of his Control Electronics unit .

^ 3 ? Roberto Merhi started the race from pit lane after the team took his car out of parc fermé to alter his suspension set @-@ up .

= = = Race = = =

Notes :

^ 1 ? Max Verstappen originally finished twelfth , but received a five @-@ second time penalty for overtaking Jenson Button outside track limits and another twenty @-@ second penalty for ignoring blue flags while being lapped .

= = = Championship standings after the race = = =

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

Bold text indicates 2015 World Champions .