

Beat: Sports

## 2017 Bahrain Grand Prix

### Bahrain International Circuit

Bahrain , 17.04.2017, 13:05 Time

**USPA NEWS** - Silver Arrows seal double podium in breathtaking Bahrain Grand Prix. Lewis today took the 107th top three finish of his Formula One career in P2. Valtteri sealed a double podium for the team in P3. Lewis (61) is P2 in the Drivers' Championship, seven points behind Sebastian Vettel (68) in P1.

Lewis Hamilton -

It's been a challenging weekend. The start of the race was OK but Sebastian was in my blind spot so I didn't know where he was and I lost a position there. It was really hard to follow but we generally had similar pace. Under the Safety Car, I just misjudged it myself the situation; that was my fault, so my apologies to the team.

I had good pace in the second and final stints and we honestly thought we could catch Sebastian. But the five second penalty made that twice as hard. I believe it was the right choice to go with the Soft in the final stint. I think that was the best call as I still had a long way to go. Our guys have been making good calls all year so far. I tried my best to recover from the mistake but it wasn't quite enough. We still come away with good points.

Valtteri Bottas -

Not a good day. We had an issue with the tyre pressures at the start. I don't know what it was but I could really feel it in the first stint and was sliding around as early as Lap 2. The pace wasn't good and Sebastian put us under real pressure. I tried to extend the first stint but I couldn't keep up with the pace. The second stint was better but I was still struggling with oversteer and then I couldn't get the rear-end to work in the last stint.

Under the Safety Car at the first stop there was a problem and we lost some time in the stop; maybe otherwise I would have just been in front but I know that the team will investigate the issue. I had some good racing with Sebastian after the restart but unfortunately it was just for a short moment. I've not had the race results that I'd been hoping for so far, but will be targeting a strong weekend in Sochi.

Toto Wolff, Head of Mercedes-Benz Motorsport -

Today's race reminded us once again that we are in a very different competitive situation this year, racing against Ferrari "" and I am confident that this is a challenge we will rise to as one team. After a winter of massive regulation change, we have been in the hunt for race wins at every weekend and that is the big positive for us. But today was another reminder that we need to get everything right in order to deliver. That's a challenge we relish as sportsmen and women. Ultimately, this was a day of marginal losses which cost us the win "" however, as we saw particularly with Lewis, the pace was there in the car at the times when we were able to extract it.

Our first loss came on the grid when a generator failure left Valtteri with too high starting pressures; that limited his pace in the opening stint, meaning we could not open a gap to the field and, with Lewis running behind Vettel, our strategic choices were pretty limited. We were on the back foot and then Ferrari played the undercut perfectly to come out ahead. We got lucky with the Safety Car which gave us an opportunity to recover but a problem with the wheel guns meant we lost time and positions with both cars.

With the cars running different tyre compounds, we had to make the tough unpopular call for Valtteri to let Lewis pass; it's not something we like to do but, when the moment comes that the race win is in danger, we will always do what we need to in order to get it. After that, we offset Lewis' strategy as much as possible to give him the chance of closing down Sebastian in the final laps, but after he had served the five-second penalty, it left him with too much to do. We leave Bahrain with a lot more learning and still more work to do, in order to perform at our best and convert the car's speed into race wins.

James Allison, Technical Director -

It's always disappointing when you don't convert your grid positions into a result. We had a handful of small setbacks which

collectively cost us. In a season where the battle is very close on race day, these errors meant that we didn't manage to convert our opportunities into the victory that we'd hoped for. But the important thing is that the pace is there in the car and now we're just looking forward to getting to the next race in Russia and the opportunity to make good on what we didn't manage to achieve tonight.

**Article online:**

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-11007/2017-bahrain-grand-prix.html>

**Editorial office and responsibility:**

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDSStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Daren Frankish - Daimler AG.

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