

FIA FORMULA E CHAMPIONSHIP
Punta del Este ePrix

The MICHELIN Pilot Sport EV storms through the sand at Punta del Este

The third round of the 2014/2015 FIA Formula E Championship in the Uruguayan coastal resort Punta del Este, on Saturday, December 13, 2014, took place in hot summer weather. Sébastien BUEMI (e.dams-Renault) followed up his podium finish on the previous round in Putrajaya, Malaysia, with his first victory in the series after a dramatic ePrix that was marked by several safety car interruptions. The Swiss driver came out on top of an exciting battle with Jean-Eric VERGNE (Andretti) – which lasted until the Frenchman was halted by a mechanical problem on the penultimate lap – to beat Brazilians Nelson PIQUET Jr (China Racing, +0.732s) and Lucas DI GRASSI (Audi Sport ABT, +2.365s). Third place allowed DI GRASSI to extend his lead in the championship over Virgin Racing's Sam BIRD to 18 points.

Despite suffering a last-minute disappointment, Jean-Eric VERGNE surprised observers by claiming pole position even though this was his very first experience of the Formula E Championship. That said the start of the race saw Nelson PIQUET Jr emerge from second on the grid to lead through the first turn. The Brazilian then lapped in front for almost half the distance until VERGNE finally found a way into the lead just prior to the car-swap window.

As the drivers re-joined the track after switching to their second race cars, though, it was Sébastien BUEMI who appeared at the top of the order thanks to a slick change.

The second part of the race was marked by VERGNE's bid to bridge the gap to BUEMI and he was given a helping hand by a fourth safety car appearance in dying moments. The Andretti driver had yet to play his 'FanBoost' advantage, a temporary power boost awarded by web users before the start, when he suddenly found himself at slow speed. Cruelly, his car came to a stop during the penultimate lap, allowing BUEMI to cruise home to his maiden Formula E success.

Jarno TRULLI (Trulli) and Jaime ALGUERSUARI (Virgin Racing) rounded off the top five in Uruguay.

"The circuit which the organisers succeeded in designing for the Punte del Este ePrix was extremely interesting from the technically angle," noted **Serge GRISIN**, manager of Michelin's FIA Formula E programme. "That said, the surface was rendered very slippery by a top-coating of sand blown in from the nearby beach. True, the seaside setting provided a great backdrop for the race, but it also meant extra work for the tyres! We are therefore delighted to be able to report that the Michelin Pilot Sport EV overcame the unfavourable conditions to fulfil its mission to the letter. Our engineers took advantage of the race to analyse the circuit and this data will soon be fed into the simulation systems we use at Michelin Motorsport. We now have to gauge the performance of the MICHELIN Pilot Sport EV in wet conditions, but there's still plenty of time for that."

The next round of the 2014/2015 FIA Formula E Championship will take teams to Buenos Aires, Argentina, on January 10, 2015.