



"It was definitely a dramatic beginning to my first full season in Formula E..."

London, December 3, 2017. It was definitely a dramatic beginning to my first full season in the FIA Formula E Championship in Hong Kong with DS Virgin Racing. I came away with points in both races, although it could have been so much more. But the main plus is that the team has come away leading the teams' championship, and that's a good thing for all of us.

Hong Kong was one of the few double-header events in the championship, so we had races on Saturday and Sunday – the same deal as when I made my Formula E debut back in July in New York, where I took pole position. This time qualifying was disappointing on the Saturday. We had a braking issue and that left me 16th on the grid, and with a difficult job to do in the race.

It nearly went wrong on the first lap. There was a pile-up at the chicane and I just about got through an incredibly narrow gap. I made contact with Kamui Kobayashi, just a slight glance, and I was praying that the car was OK. It was all fine – these Formula E cars are used to a fair bit of contact! I had good pace and got into the points, which was our realistic target at the beginning of the race. There was a big gaggle of cars ahead all on the same energy levels, and all battling for fourth place, so I cruised up to them quite quickly, but this track is not an easy one to pass on.

It's a bit like the Norisring street circuit in Germany, where I won in my Formula 3 days. If you go for a lunge into the hairpin, you've got to make sure you can stop without T-boning the other car in the middle. So there are a lot of half-chances, but when everyone's on the same energy target, and they're all top-class drivers, it's difficult to make things happen. Still, eighth was a good result from where I started.

Sunday started off much more brightly. I was second in free practice and then in qualifying I just missed out on making it into the top five for the Super Pole session – I was pipped for the last slot by my team-mate Sam Bird, who had won brilliantly on Saturday, by the massive margin of 0.032 seconds...

Still, Sam had a grid penalty, so that moved me up from sixth to fifth for the start. Everything was going really well in the race, and I spent most of the distance in fifth place. I was trying really hard to get past Mitch Evans, but in the end it was a case of trying too hard and that's what cost us. I ended up with a serious lack of energy remaining on the last lap so I had to coast to the finish, losing five places, and that dropped me to 10th. But, as I write this, I've just found out the race winner was excluded for a technical infringement, so



that lifts me to ninth and gives me another point.

I'm gutted for the team for losing what would have been a great fifth position. But we win and lose as a team, and we're all learning all the time. This is an extremely challenging and difficult championship, with some of the best teams and drivers in the world competing, and we can only move on from this.

If we had come away from Hong Kong with that fifth place I would have been quite content, so what happened at the end left a slightly bitter taste. But it's just made me hungrier for the next race in Marrakesh in January. That's me done for the year now – it's been a great season, with a lot of variety, fantastic cars and people I've worked with. And I can't wait to get back into action in Morocco next month!

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