



"We certainly should have scored good points..."

London, February 4, 2018. I'm happy with our performance in the latest round of the FIA Formula E Championship, but once again luck didn't go my way. I'd like to think I had the pace to be in that thrilling five-car battle for the lead around the streets of the Chilean capital of Santiago. We certainly should have scored good points, and the sixth place I had in the second half of the race would have been a good result, so it's a shame I had to stop with a gearbox issue.

The DS Virgin Racing team had prepared really well for the first Formula E race in Santiago, and right from the off I felt comfortable with the track. I felt that the circuit was really good, really challenging. It's exactly the sort of track I always imagined was perfect for Formula E. We were on the pace too – I was sixth in the first free practice session, and second later on, just 0.030 seconds away from Jean-Eric Vergne, who went on to win the race. So I had high hopes going into qualifying.

I topped my five-car group in qualifying but that was only good enough for seventh overall once the four groups had all finished, and I have to say I was a bit disappointed with that. With the pace we had all day, we should have got quite comfortably into the Super Pole, for the top five qualifiers. There was no real major reason – it was difficult to put a lap together; it just wasn't fast enough.

With Lucas di Grassi having a grid penalty, that put me up to sixth in the starting line-up. Right from the beginning it was pretty frantic stuff. I had to run wide at the first corner to avoid my team-mate Sam Bird, and that allowed Jose Maria Lopez down the inside. Then Lopez crashed into the wall at the next corner while trying to pass Sam. Simultaneous to that, Nicolas Prost hit me up the back, and I hit Sam up the back. So we were all pushing each other a bit, like old-school karting! But it was all absolutely fine – we hit each other square so there was no problem.

After a long safety car, I settled in to sixth place behind Sam. I think we were both bottled up a bit by Sebastien Buemi, and di Grassi had a lot of pace and caught me up. Just as he got past me I made a strategic pit stop. I could have gone a lap longer, but we were confident we could do a quick stop to try to undercut people, because we'd been losing time in the train. Even though that would mean conserving more energy in the second car, we felt track position was more important because overtaking was so difficult on this circuit.

This was the first Formula E race without a minimum pit stop time, so it was a



case of jumping out of one car and into the other as quickly as possible. I have to say a big thank you to the guys, because they practised these new-format stops tirelessly in the workshop. It was a really good stop and that put us in a nice position for the second half of the race.

Sam had a bit of bad luck with his strategy and he came out behind me. Because we were out of synch with our stops, it made no sense to race him, so he came past me. Then, a few laps later, my race ground to a halt when I was looking good for at least sixth place. It's frustrating, and I feel bad for the team, because we should have scored good points.

So that was a shame, and we now have a month before the next round, on a shortened form of the Mexican Grand Prix circuit in Mexico City. But it's busy for me – next week I've got a four-day Michelin tyre test with Aston Martin Racing at Motorland Aragon as we gear up for the World Endurance Championship season. I can't wait to get back in the Vantage – or to get our Formula E season back on track in Mexico.

Ends

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