



“It’s a shame we had that problem, because our car was performing really well...”

Alex Lynn – GP2 Monza review

London, September 4, 2016. I’ve got to be happy with finishing the Italian Grand Prix round of the GP2 Series at Monza with a fifth place in the sprint race, especially as I started the feature race from the pit lane after hitting problems on the way to the grid. That has to count as a decent recovery.

Again, our form was a little bit disappointing in free practice and qualifying on Friday. Right from the start, the balance wasn’t where we wanted it to be and we didn’t have qualifying pace in the car. We just couldn’t get the tyres switched on as we would like, and I didn’t have the same confidence as I did last year at Monza.

I can get a good lap out of the car straight away, and after the first quick lap on the first set of tyres in qualifying I was third. But then other people improved quite a bit and I only got another two tenths out of it, which wasn’t enough. I did improve on my second set – through the Ascari chicane and the Parabolica I nailed it quite nicely and found a bit of pace, but it wasn’t enough at the right time. That put me sixth on the grid – not a disaster but not quite where the DAMS team and I want to be.

When we do our laps to the grid we always try practice starts, and this is where my weekend unraveled before the feature race. I hit a slight issue – it was a nothing fault really, but with bad consequences. It was a real shame because it hampered our race, but there was nothing we could do about it.

Quite often when quicker cars start the race from lower down the order the strategy is to go for the prime tyre, to run long and make a late switch to the option. We could have switched once it became clear I’d be starting from the pits, but we thought that the option-prime strategy would still be the faster one. In a normal race it would have been, and I firmly believe I should have had a top-eight finish to put me right in the mix for the reversed-grid race, but then we had a safety-car fiasco, and you can never plan for that. I’d been running right behind Antonio Giovinazzi when I made my stop – he effectively got a free pit stop under the safety car and won the race...

I finished 12th, which was frustrating, but from there I made a nice clean start to the sprint race, jumped Artem Markelov and got up to seventh on the first lap when some drivers fell off. Because of those incidents we had a virtual safety car, where I lost quite a bit of ground, and we found out why afterwards



because Markelov was penalised after the race for going too fast under the VSC!

That put him right on my tail and he got past me after a nice battle, before he caught the cars in front. I followed him up to the bunch, and I was running eighth but not far off third as I caught Nobuharu Matsushita. Because we were running higher downforce it was difficult to get past him, especially as he was also using DRS because he was close behind Markelov. But then my chance came on the last lap...

Markelov got into a fight with Jordan King, and that allowed Matsushita and I right into their slipstream. It got pretty dicey into Parabolica – we were three-wide – and Matsushita tried to pass Markelov, but as he ran wide I got the switchback on him. It was a classic Monza slipstream finish and I beat Matsushita across the line by a hundredth of a second – just why I love racing there! And with penalties for Markelov and Gustav Malja, I was promoted to fifth.

So that was a result I couldn't have expected when I was sitting in the pit lane before the race on Saturday, but it is a shame we had that problem, because our car was performing really well in race trim. It could have been much better.

Qualifying: 6th

Race 1: 12th (started on soft tyres, switched onto medium)

Race 2: 5th

Ends

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