

Raikkonen Wins The Spanish Grand Prix

The April 27 Spanish 2008 Grand Prix in Barcelona was quite an adrenaline rush for Formula One fans around the world. Close calls, one potentially-serious accident and pressure to perform dominated the Barcelona race.

During the race, Raikkonen followed a well-built strategy and emerged victorious. Sunday's success was his 17th career win. In a post-race interview Raikkonen said, 'I didn't make the perfect start but did enough to stay in front.' He went on to say, 'If we wanted, we could have gone a bit faster, but there was no point in pushing more than we need to.'

This steady speed and exceptional use of common sense likely had a great positive impact on the end result. Raikkonen's win on Sunday placed him nine points ahead of Lewis Hamilton in driver standings.

Hamilton had a rocky start in this year's championship standings. The Australian Grand Prix, the first Formula One race of the season, was Hamilton's best race to date. He was able to dominate the track and take the checkered flag with relative ease. The following two races, however, saw very different endings for the McLaren-Mercedes driver.

In Malaysia, he finished 5th and then 13th in Bahrain, causing quite a setback in championship standings. Hamilton said in a post-race interview, 'After two bad races, to be back on the podium is fantastic. It's a great relief.' He also said, 'When we qualified fifth, we knew it would be very difficult to match the Ferraris.'

The race for second position was hard-won for Ferrari driver, Felipe Massa. Lewis Hamilton wasn't backing down in his quest for another win at Barcelona. In turn, Kubica maintained a less-than-three-second following behind Hamilton and finished the race in fourth position.

Race fans who filled the [hotels in Barcelona](#) for the weekend cheered their favourite drivers on, as the race for second and third was quite an event in itself. 'We did our homework and we brought home two Ferraris first and second, which is a great position for the championships', said Massa. Thousands of Massa supporters from around Spain had trekked own to Barcelona to see him race.

Heikki Kovalainen was unable to complete the race after the 21st lap due to a nasty accident that embedded his car in the tyre barrier. A breakage in the left front wheel area is believed to have caused the accident. Kovalainen gave a thumbs up to the crowd after it took the on-site medical team 10 minutes to remove him from the car. He was taken to the hospital for a medical check-up, but no injuries have been reported.

In response to the accident involving Kovalainen, fellow drivers have expressed concern for his well-being. Hamilton said, 'It was a bad day for Heikki, but I'm glad he's OK. Ron [Dennis] came on the radio and told me he was OK. I'm sure he'll bounce back and we will keep pushing forwards.'

Early pit stops seem to be a growing strategy among Formula One drivers. Alonso made a pit stop much earlier than expected, with Felipe Massa making his first pit stop only three laps later. Alonso was forced to retire from the race on lap 34 after serious engine problems. 'We had an engine problem; we blew up. Unfortunately, it was not the right place, as it's my home Grand Prix, but I am very happy', said Alonso.

Mark Webber's Red Bull team took fifth place after Alonso's engine problems caused his premature departure. Webber had a comfortable lead on the sixth position driver, Jenson Button. Button, however, had the fastest lap in the final laps of the race. Jarno Trulli completed the race in 8th position after a communication error caused the team to call him to the pits in error.

About the Author

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