

Bottas wins Austrian opener

Valtteri Bottas wins F1 Austrian Grand Prix after Hamilton suffers penalty

● Charles Leclerc is second and Lando Norris is third

● Lewis Hamilton suffers a dramatic late-racing demotion

AFP | Spielberg

Valtteri Bottas stayed calm in a stormy race yesterday to claim a measured victory for Mercedes as Formula One returned with a bang in a belated, dramatic and incident-strewn 2020 season-opening Austrian Grand Prix.

Seven months after the final race of 2019, the Finn, who had started from the 12th pole position of his career, led from start to finish to come home ahead on the road of team-mate six-time champion Lewis Hamilton.

The Briton, however, had been given a five-second penalty during the race and was demoted to fourth behind Charles Leclerc, who brought his Ferrari home second and Briton Lando Norris who claimed his maiden podium for McLaren.

Hamilton, hit with a late pre-race grid penalty that dropped him from second to fifth, had clashed with Red Bull's Alex Albon in the final laps, forcing him into a spin off track.

"There was definitely quite a bit of pressure on me there," said Bottas, speaking through a face mask afterwards.

"One Safety Car was ok, but I was like 'another one? And come on?' Lewis was quick, but I was able to control it."



Valtteri Bottas celebrates winning the Austrian Formula One Grand Prix

Leclerc admitted the result was a surprise after Ferrari's dismal form in practice and qualifying.

"I did not expect this - it's a huge surprise, but a good one. We did everything perfectly to finish second."

Norris said: "I'm speechless - there were a few points where I thought I had fudged it. I am so proud of the team for coming back from where we were a couple of years ago."

In a race of three Safety Car interventions, run behind closed doors at the Red Bull Ring, Ferrari-bound Carlos Sainz finished fifth in the second McLaren ahead of Sergio Perez of Racing Point.

Pierre Gasly was sixth for Alpha Tauri and Esteban Ocon eighth on his return to racing

with Renault ahead of Antonio Giovinazzi of Alfa Romeo and Sebastian Vettel, the four-time champion in his final season at Ferrari, finishing 10th.

Before the race even started, there was drama when six of the 20 drivers opted against taking a knee to protest against racism.

Hamilton wore a Black Lives Matter t-shirt, while other drivers, who all lined up with him at the front of the grid, sported black tops saying "End Racism".

Six drivers opt not to take knee

Leclerc and Red Bull's Max Verstappen had confirmed a split among F1 drivers when they said they would not take a knee on the grid, but that they remained committed to fighting racism.

Carlos Sainz of McLaren,

Daniil Kvyat of Alpha Tauri, Antonio Giovinazzi and Alfa Romeo team-mate Kimi Raikkonen also chose to stay on their feet.

On a very warm day in the Styrian Alps and following a late Red Bull protest that pushed Hamilton to fifth from second on the grid, Bottas was coolness personified.

At lights out, he pulled clear to open a gap ahead of the battling duo of Verstappen and Norris behind him.

Hamilton, fired by his penalty for ignoring yellow flags in Q3 on Saturday, was soon in a rhythm and by lap ten was up to third, 10 seconds behind Bottas and seven off Verstappen.

Within a lap, he was second when Verstappen slowed, his engine spluttering, gifting the champion a pass to pursue the



Lewis Hamilton led a majority of the 20 drivers in taking a knee in a gesture of anti-racism solidarity on the grid

leader as the 'black arrows' took control.

A full 217 days after the last race, many teams struggled for reliability and it was clearly a battle of attrition led, almost inevitably, after their practice domination, by Mercedes until lap 25 when Kevin Magnussen went off at Turn Three in his Haas following brake problems.

This brought out a Safety Car. On resumption, the luckless Vettel tangled with his future replacement at Ferrari, Sainz, at Turn Three.

The four-time champion spun after hitting the McLaren and fell to 15th while Sainz retained seventh.

At the front, Bottas led, but Hamilton closed up.

On lap 52, Mercedes' meander was rudely interrupted when Haas' Romain Grosjean went off and George Russell stopped in his Williams and a second Safety Car was deployed.

With 17 laps to go, Mercedes stayed out as their rivals pitted, Albon taking softs for a late charge, but another crash when Raikkonen's Alfa Romeo lost its front right wheel at the final corner, brought a third Safety Car.

Ramos strike helps Real go seven points clear



Sergio Ramos of Real Madrid scores a penalty

AFP | Madrid

Sergio Ramos scored his 22nd consecutive penalty as Real Madrid held on for another 1-0 win over Athletic Bilbao to inch closer to winning La Liga.

Ramos' fifth goal in seven games since the restart gives Madrid a seven-point lead over Barcelona.

Anything but a victory for Barca would probably leave them too much to do with four games remaining, especially as Madrid own the superior record head-to-head.

This was Madrid's toughest fixture left and they might have been content even with a point against a robust, well-organised Bilbao side.

But after edging out Getafe on Thursday, through a Ramos spot-kick, Madrid repeated the trick at San Mames, their captain's nerve from the spot combining with a gutsy display to grind out a pivotal win.

Ramos was perhaps fortunate not to concede a penalty himself when, off the ball, he seemed to slip and tread on the foot of Raul Garcia, but Madrid escaped.

Flyweight star Marcel Adur signs extension deal with BRAVE CF

TDI | Manama

One of the best strikers in the lighter weight classes in MMA, Marcel Adur has reaffirmed his commitment to BRAVE Combat Federation by signing an extension deal with the fastest-growing MMA organization on the globe. The Brazilian star is a veteran of BRAVE CF, first fighting with the promotion back at BRAVE CF 3, in March of 2017.

Since then, he's amassed a relevant 4-1 record with BRAVE CF, including three straight TKO wins in his first three fights - beating Ivan Lopez, Rodrigo Melonio, and Fernando Laurenço. The victories landed him a title shot against undefeated Velimurad Alkhasov - the winner would become the first-ever BRAVE CF Flyweight champion.

However, Alkhasov didn't make weight prior to the bout and ended up beating Marcel by decision, which meant the title stayed vacant. As he looked for a new chance to hold BRAVE CF gold, Adur beat Marlon Derik at BRAVE CF 25. He would be then matched-up against Jose



Marcel Adur celebrates after a win

“I can't wait to go back to action, go back to fighting. My goal remains that belt. It will be on my waist very, very soon!”

MARCEL ADUR

Torres at BRAVE CF 29, but Torres pulled out due to emotional stress following his father's

passing.

Even though Adur hasn't competed since his victory over Derik, the Brazilian striker is raring to go and expects to be back in action for BRAVE CF sooner rather than later, with the Flyweight belt as his biggest goal.

"Hey, guys I'm very excited to be signing a new deal for BRAVE CF. I can't wait to go back to action, go back to fighting. My goal remains that belt. It will be on my waist very, very soon!", said Adur.

Bahrain owned horse back in groove at Sandown

TDI | Manama

Bahrain owned A'Ali bounced back to his brilliant best to make a return to winning ways and open his account for the campaign in the Coral Charge at Sandown.

The horse is owned by the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Horses Care Affairs Authority, Shaikh Duaj bin Salman Al Khalifa.

Having failed to see out six furlongs on his seasonal return at Newcastle, last year's Norfolk Stakes hero appeared to appreciate the drop back to the minimum trip for this Group Three affair.

Despite being slowly away from stall one, the Simon and Ed Crisford-trained colt showed a good turn of foot once put in clear daylight by Frankie Dettori, before getting the better of favourite Liberty Beach by a length.

Ed Crisford said of the 12-1 winner: "It was nice to see the horse come back. Six furlongs at Newcastle on the all-weather didn't work out. He came out of the race really well. He was training well and back at five he did it really well."

"He is a triple Group Two winner, but he went to Amer-



A'Ali ridden by jockey Frankie Dettori in action during the race

ica (for the Breeders' Cup) and had one bad run and he became forgotten quickly.

"He is a good horse and he deserves to be where he is. He is not the biggest, but he has got an engine."

On the occasion, Shaikh Duaj bin Salman expressed thanks and appreciation to HM the King's Representative for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs, National Security Advisor and Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sport,

His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, for his unlimited support for the equestrian sport in the kingdom.

Shaikh Duaj asserted that the victory confirms the outstanding status enjoyed by Bahrain's equestrian sport in its external participations.

Shaikh Duaj praised the distinguished performance of his horse, during such an international race, paying tribute to jockey, Frankie Dettori, and trainer, Simon Crisford.