

Lucas Di Grassi Wins Formula E Debut Race in Beijing (China)

Electric Race From Start to Finish

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USPA NEWS - Lucas Di Grassi, the Brazilian driver of Team Audi Sport ABT wins the first FIA Formula E Championship race in Beijing, China making motorports history. Second place for Montagny (Team Andretti) and third place on the podium for Bird (Virgin Racing).

The FIA Formula E Championship started, pardon, turned "on" its engines today on the city circuit of Beijing China leading the way to what might be the future of motor racing around the world.

Racing enthusiasts are already twitching their noses because these cars are playing a kind of "music" that they are not used to listening to. In fact these race cars are much more quiet than the ones running on gas combustion engines.

Formula E single seaters run on fully electric power units that surprisingly develop 270 hp. Twenty cars on the starting grid today. Thirteen ex Formula 1 drivers and two very competitive women worth mentioning: Katherine Legge and Michela Cerruti. Almost tragic epilogue on the last lap between Prost and Hiedfeld.

A few reasons why Formula E can be interesting:

1) Ex Formula 1 drivers:

Ten teams, each with four cars and two drivers. Out of the twenty drivers participating thirteen are ex Formula 1 drivers and the others are professional drivers who have raced in other series. This sets a high level in competition.

2) Technology:

The image of motor racing might change due to the use of electric energy for the power units of these cars. Manufacturers such as Renault and Dallara together with new-tech companies such as McLaren Electronic Systems and Williams Advanced Engineering have created a new concept for Formula racing. The electric powered engines can produce up to 200 kw or 270 hp.

3) Switching cars during pit stops:

The change of cars is due to the fact these cars run on batteries that need to be charged after a certain amount of time. Therefore the need to pit and jump into a freshly charged car to finish the race. This can make the race more interesting for fans because this kind of pit-stop takes a bit longer than the ones they are used to seeing.

4) Two women:

Katherine Legge and Michela Cerruti both experienced drivers who have raced successfully in other series around the world.

5) FANBOOSTER:

A new way of involving race fans in the outcome of a race. Fans can go on-line 20 minutes before the start of the race and vote for their favorite driver. This is called the "FANBOOSTER".

The three drivers that receive more votes have the chance to use extra kilowatts for 5 seconds at their convenience during the race. The cars are limited to run on 150kw so the Fanbooster allows the drivers to boost their single seaters up to 180kw. It's like having a turbo charged engine for 5 seconds when your opponent hasn't. This might let you win the race.

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com