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# Raikkonen Wins Malaysian Grand Prix

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By Roger Munns

Lewis Hamilton may have wrapped up the opening race of the Formula One season, but Kimi Raikkonen snagged the second. Determined to defend his world championship record, Raikkonen raced to victory at the Malaysian Grand Prix. The rest of his competition appeared to have a very eventful race, but for Raikkonen it was total domination after his first pit stop.

Raikkonen put the hammer down and memories of Melbourne far behind him as he raced to the finish line. 'We had quite a difficult weekend in Australia and we were not 100 percent sure it was going to be any different here, but everything worked perfectly. This is a good start to the season for us and we're in a pretty good position', said Raikkonen.

Shortly after the race began, he secured the race by setting fastest times for each corner before his first stop. When he exited the pits before team mate Massa, he continued to pull ahead and dominate the rest of the race. He said, 'We were pretty similar speed-wise, but once he went in (to the pits) my car went better and I was able to go much quicker on my in-lap and pass him. After that the car was handling perfectly and I was able to go away.'

Early in the race Hamilton and Webber battled for their position in the standings. Webber made his pit stop on lap 16 and Hamilton saw this as his chance to get ahead. After securing a comfortable lead over Webber, Hamilton made his pit stop. Hamilton's strategy was quickly foiled when his mechanics struggled to get one of his wheels off. This twelve second delay caused him to re-enter the race behind Webber.

'We got off to a very, very good start from ninth to fifth and I was pushing Mark for a long, long time but being behind someone is extremely difficult so it doesn't matter how much quicker you are, it makes it extremely difficult to get past', Hamilton said.

Although Hamilton and Raikkonen have taken home the first two wins of the season, Hamilton is still leading the championship. Hamilton received ten points for winning the first race of the season in Australia last week and four points for finishing fifth this week in Malaysia.

'The great thing is I was able to drive the race without water and I feel better than I did last year but we just have to do a better job in qualifying at the next race', Hamilton commented after the race.

Hamilton said his water wasn't working and he was pushing hard for fourth but, 'Jarno did a great job' keeping him at bay for that position.

After winning the second race of the season, Raikkonen is a mere three points behind Hamilton for the season championship. Both drivers are aware of their standings and look forward to an eventful remainder of the season. Formula One drivers and fans alike are looking forward to the highlight race of the season, the Monaco Grand Prix on May 25, 2008.

Raikkonen's Ferrari team mate Felipe Massa spun out of second place, leaving BMW Sauber's Robert Kubica to finish

second. Heikki Kovalainen's McLaren finished the race in third place. Jarno Trulli battled Kovalainen for third place much of the race, but finished in fourth after his final pit stop of the race. Lewis Hamilton completed the race in fifth place. Nick Heidfield had the fastest lap of the race on lap 55 at 1:35:366 and took sixth place with his BMW Sauber and Mark Webber finished in seventh.

Wrapping up the final top ten spots were Fernando Alonso in eighth, David Coulthard in ninth and Jenson Button in tenth.

This year's Formula One season is well underway, and the highlight of the season is the Monaco Formula One scheduled for May Sunday May 25.

YourMonaco.com has ticket details of the race run around the streets of Monte Carlo and Casino Square, with accommodation covered at their Monaco hotels and hotels in Nice sections.

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