



AUSTRALIAN GRAND PRIX 2003

RACE

Sunday 9th March

Giancarlo Fisichella retired his Jordan Ford four laps from the end of today's Australian Grand Prix with a faulty gearshift. Until then he had produced a strong performance which saw him rise as high as 4th prior to his second pit stop when the fuel cap remained stuck in the closed position, forcing the team to remove it entirely in order to refuel. The race brought early disappointment for Ralph Firman, his car spearing off the track and into the wall at Turn 5 on lap 6. He had made a strong start, moving up two places on the first lap and climbing to 8th position before his accident.



GIANCARLO FISICHELLA Retired – Lap 54

CHASSIS NUMBER EJ13-04

"Well, lots of things happened in the race. First of all I lost three or four positions at Turn 6 on lap 1 when I lost the car a little under braking. Then when Ralph had his accident bits of debris hit my car smashing off the wing mirror and damaging my rear wing. After that I was running at a good pace but we had the problem on the pit stop with the fuel cover and then at the end of the race the car had some gear problem."



RALPH FIRMAN Retired – Lap 6

CHASSIS NUMBER EJ13-02

"I was not pushing one hundred percent when the accident happened. I was well within myself but then suddenly had major oversteer, lost the car and hit the barrier. Rubens went off there and I understand there was a possibility of some oil on the track but I honestly don't know. It was going well before then, I was cautious over the first few laps and this is an unfortunate outcome. The team did a very good job to make the right call on tyre choice, so it's naturally very disappointing not to finish."



GARY ANDERSON DIRECTOR OF RACE AND TEST ENGINEERING

"Obviously it was a race marked by adverse conditions at the start but everyone suffered them and I believe that we did a decent job. Our fuel strategy in qualifying was correct and we made the right call to use dry tyres. I am quite happy although we were not going to score a point today as Giancarlo was running 9th after having the drama with the fuel hatch. Then we had the gear shift problem, but I'd rather have that when we weren't going to score!"



MARTIN WHITAKER DIRECTOR OF MOTORSPORT, FORD OF EUROPE

"Formula One's successful start to the season was reflected in an encouraging debut for Jordan Ford. Although I would have liked to see both cars finish, the performance of the car gave a clear indication of the Ford Cosworth RS engine's strength and reliability. This weekend's performance bodes well for the season ahead."

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