

Hamilton wins thrilling Hungarian Grand Prix

BUDAPEST: Lewis Hamilton regained the momentum in the world championship with a memorable strategic victory on Sunday when he overcame young rival Max Verstappen with three laps to go in a tense Hungarian Grand Prix.

The 34-year-old defending five-time world champion started third on the grid in his Mercedes and, after stalking the 21-year-old Dutch tyro for most of a fascinating tactical contest swept into the lead on lap 67 of a stirring 70-lap contest.

It was Hamilton's record seventh win in Hungary, his eighth this year and the 81st of his career, wrecking Red Bull's hopes of turning Verstappen's maiden pole position into vic-

tory, and increased his lead in the title race to 62 points before the sport's European summer break.

Verstappen, who led most of the race before his tyres faded, had no time to match Hamilton's tactics when the Briton made his second stop, came home 17.796 seconds behind in second and clocked a record race fastest lap for the Hungarian after a late pit-stop.

Four-time champion Sebastian Vettel was third for Ferrari ahead of team-mate Charles Leclerc, Carlos Sainz of McLaren and Pierre Gasly in the second Red Bull.

Kimi Raikkonen was seventh for Alfa Romeo ahead of Hamilton's Mercedes team-



Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton (center) celebrates on the podium with second placed Red Bull driver Max Verstappen (left) and third placed Ferrari driver Sebastian Vettel after winning the Hungarian Formula One Grand Prix at Budapest, Hungary, Sunday

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mate Valtteri Bottas who had been forced into an early pit-

stop after a first lap incident. British rookie Lando Norris

was ninth in the second Mercedes and Alex Albon 10th for Toro Rosso.

"What a drive, what a strategy," said Hamilton's race engineer Peter Bonnington. "Only you could make that work today."

Mercedes matched Red Bull's strategy until gambling with a late additional pit-stop that left Hamilton with 20 laps to make up a 20-second deficit on fresh tyres -- a move that worked as Verstappen's tyres faded away.

"They rolled the dice and it worked for them, unfortunately," Red Bull team boss Christian Horner told Verstappen. "But you drove your heart out."

A week after his forlorn

error-riddled exit from last weekend's tumultuous German Grand Prix, won by Verstappen, Hamilton had bounced back in style.

"It feels like a new win for us," he said. "I didn't know if I could do it and I am sorry I doubted our strategy -- it was brilliant."

A crestfallen Verstappen admitted: "We just weren't fast enough. I tried everything I could to keep the tyres alive, but I couldn't."

Hamilton had earned a 1,000-euro fine for Mercedes for speeding in the pit lane before the start on a hotter-than-expected afternoon with an air temperature of 26 degrees Celsius.

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