



F1 Digest 2010 – Bahrain GP

Hello and welcome to the final Digest episode for the Bahrain Grand Prix weekend. We've been building up to this, the big one, the race, and... well, it was a bit of a let down. But don't let that put you off! Let me tell you what happened.

Race Round-Up

Weather-wise, Sunday was very similar to the previous few days - hot and sunny, humidity relatively low, and the track heating up all the time. Both Ferrari drivers had changed their engines - Massa's was apparently showing some worrying characteristics, so they swapped out Alonso's as well as a precaution. No penalties due, though. The HRT cars were starting from the pitlane, so the mechanics could still keep on working.

Vettel made a fabulous start and led the first few cars away cleanly. Webber's car started spewing smoke out the back, although he didn't seem to have any mechanical troubles, so it may have just been oil burning off. The smoke did pour straight into the path of Kubica, and he and Sutil collided, sending them both spinning backwards. Sutil ended up 23rd. Rosberg had moved up to 4th, and Alonso had got past Massa to take 2nd.

After just one lap, Chandhok crashed out - he said he had found a new bump which sent him careering off track and into the barrier. Hulkenberg spun his Williams off track, but managed to continue onwards, if a little further down the field. Di Grassi also pulled to a halt out on track, with some hydraulic problems.

Cars began to come in for their pit stops, Senna was in for Hispania and it was a good stop until he struggled to pull away again. A bit of clutch trouble for the rookie. Kobayashi came into the pitlane, but he never came back out again, the first retirement for Sauber. At the front, the top ten all managed to pit and come out in the same order. Senna's engine blew up and he came to a stop out on track. Both Hispania drivers out. Moments later, Glock was retiring, meaning both Virgin cars were out as well.

Petrov came in for his stop and the mechanics swarmed about his car but there didn't seem to be much tyre changing going on. Eventually, they pushed him back into the garage, and it looked as though there was some mechanical problem with the Renault as well.

Vettel started to slow up a little, and it transpired that he had a faulty spark plug, which meant he couldn't push, he had a loss of power. That being the case, Alonso closed right up and after a couple of laps, easily passed the struggling Red Bull. Massa did the same thing, making it a Ferrari 1-2. Hamilton passed him for third place, and Vettel began falling into the clutches of Rosberg, about 15 seconds down the road.

During the last few laps, Buemi pulled off track, bringing out yellow flags in that area, but it wasn't about to slow Alonso who crossed the line to take his first victory since Japan 2008.

Results

So, our first race drew to a close with a Ferrari 1-2 - Alonso ahead of Massa, and Hamilton joined the pair on the podium. Vettel managed to hold on to 4th, whilst Rosberg stayed in front of teammate Schumacher for 5th and 6th respectively. Button was 7th, Webber 8th and Liuzzi and Barrichello picked up the final points positions.

Kubica just missed out in 11th, followed by Sutil, Alguersuari and Hulkenberg - who was the first to fall one lap down, Kovalainen was 15th, two laps down, whilst Buemi classified 16th and Trulli 17th, both three laps off the leader.



The retirements were de la Rosa, Senna, Glock, Petrov, Kobayashi, di Grassi and Chandhok.

Championship Standings

Of course the drivers championship echoes the finishing order, with Alonso picking up the full 25 points. Massa has 18, Hamilton 15, Vettel 12 and Rosberg has 10.

For the team standings, Ferrari take maximum points with 43, with McLaren behind on 21. Mercedes have 18 points, Red Bull 16 and Force India pick up 2.

Team Quotes

Let's start with Mercedes, and our comeback king Michael Schumacher who says: "After three years away, I'm happy to say that I had fun out there today, especially at the beginning with the good start that I had. I can live very well with sixth position and it gives both me and the team a good base to make progress." Meanwhile, Rosberg is reasonably satisfied with his points haul today, he says: "I couldn't quite get Sebastian at the end as I lost grip in the dirty air when I got close. However, fifth place is a good start for us and I am confident that we can develop well from here."

Over at Red Bull, you can imagine that Vettel is disappointed but he seems to be trying to stay positive. "I think about 15 to 20 laps from the end, you could see my lap times were getting slower. It seems something mechanical broke, luckily we could continue and finished fourth, but we should have won today. It cost us a lot, but we've got 12 important points." Webber is open and honest as usual: "It wasn't the most exciting grand prix I've driven - following gearboxes all afternoon - but the world class drivers who were ahead don't normally make mistakes."

Sister team Toro Rosso had a trying day really, Buemi said: "I'm not sure what happened at the start, but I got a lot of wheelspin, so I did not get away well and everyone passed me." Regarding the incident at the end of the race, he says the car just stopped. Alguersuari says: "It was positive that I managed to finish the first race of the season, also the first with the new no fuelling regulations... I feel that I am in much better shape than last year, when I had very little time to train, so that most of my races were just taxi drives."

Sauber had a double DNF and Kobayashi explains his: "Unfortunately it was a short race for me because on lap 12 I lost the power steering and from then on I wasn't able to shift anymore due to a hydraulic problem." Pedro de la Rosa adds his thoughts: "I felt we had a car that was good enough to fight for points, and there still was a chance to achieve this when I was called into the pits on lap 29 because of an hydraulic problem."

Another team with both drivers not able to finish the race was Virgin, and di Grassi completed only a couple of short laps. He says: "I got a great start and the car was feeling pretty good. I think we could have had a good race with the car that we had but then just a few laps into the race I had to pull over in turn 9 and my race was over before it had really begun. There's no point being downhearted." Glock went a little further, but still ended up back in the garage. "The race was going quite well for me after I managed to overtake Heikki. We were having quite a good battle for where we were and it was nice to have that racing feeling again. But first I lost 3rd gear and I was having to drive around it. Then 5th followed and it was impossible to continue."

For Williams, Barrichello picks up one point and says whilst that is good news, he was hoping they would do a little bit better. The competition is fierce though. Hulkenberg explains his spin: "I am still not really sure how it happened, initially I thought there was something broken on the car, but it was not the case. I jumped the kerbs and maybe hurt the car a bit, as it was quite difficult to drive for the rest of what was a long and lonely afternoon for me." Awww.

Now onto Force India and Sutil is pretty annoyed it seems: "At least we finished. After the incident in the first corner it was the maximum we could do." Actually, he goes on to say that it was a good race really as they learnt plenty



about the car and the tyres, but there was no chance of improving after the first lap incident. Liuzzi meanwhile is super happy: "I'm really pleased. We achieved our target and scored some points, which is a great result for myself and for the team. It was a difficult race as with this amount of fuel and the tyres, plus the heat, we had a bit of control but overall I think we can be pretty happy about how we handled it and to be in the points is magic."

Hamilton finished on the podium today, and is happy with that, saying: "Third place was a very strong result for us today. I feel that we did a good job: our reliability was great and the pace today was pretty good, but we still need to push very hard to close the gap to the cars in front." Button wishes he could have done more: "I was a bit disappointed that we pitted when we did, because I'd probably looked after the tyres a little too much - because in the last five laps of the stint, I was able to push to catch Mark and Michael."

Renault missed out on both sides of the garage, as first Petrov retired. He says: "It was an extremely disappointing end after such a great start, but I'm pleased with how things went up to that point, and I want to thank all my mechanics and the whole team for the car they gave me this weekend. They did a fantastic job." Kubica finished the race, at least, but missed out on the points. He says: "I think Sutil just didn't lift off because he couldn't see anything and he hit me. I spun during the incident and that cooked the rear tyres: they were overheating from that point onwards."

Lotus take great pride in being the only new team to get both cars to the finish, and Trulli really struggled. He says: "At the end of the race I had a hydraulic problem so I just had to get it to the end of the race. I'm really happy and proud for the team because in six months every single target we have fixed we have met so it's really good, and, as Tony said, one day Lotus will win and I hope to be here when we do." Kovalainen finished two places ahead of Jarno, and says of his own race: "My tyres were fine, and the pitstop was good, but I lost a bit of time whilst letting cars past, and we'll look at the strategy for Australia to work around that better. I really enjoyed driving the car, it felt really good and it was good to push."

The other new team, Hispania, didn't get quite such a positive result, but Senna is philosophical about it. "It was certainly a relief to have been in the race for so many laps. Everything was going well... There was a vibration from the back of the car a lap earlier and then the car suddenly stopped. We'll have to investigate what happened." Chandhok only completed the one lap and is quite apologetic: "Sorry, this was my fifth lap on this track. I hit a bump in the new part of the circuit... I want to thank my mechanics for accompanying my first laps on this track and the whole team for a great weekend and long sleepless hours."

And finally, we have our race winners Ferrari. Massa picked up second and says: "It is my best opening race of a season since I started in Formula 1 and, given all the problems we had, I am very pleased. We had to manage the temperatures on the car, and for around thirty laps, I was not able to push as hard as I could." Alonso thanks the team and dedicates his victory to Luca di Montezemolo, but then he talks tyres: "Today, on the harder tyres, we went very well, but with the softer ones, I was struggling a bit to stay close to Vettel. I was planning to attack in the final ten laps, but luck gave me a hand: you always need a bit in every race."

My View

As the first race of a brand new season, I wasn't all that impressed. The situation with Vettel made for an interesting second half of the race, although once the Ferrari boys got past, it was clear that excitement was over. I won't get into the refuelling debate here, but suffice it to say that if you take Vettel's bad luck out of the equation, the finishing order was eerily similar to the starting order, in the top ten at least.

Further back, it was disappointing that the new teams struggled as much as they did, although great to see how excited Lotus were to be the only new team to finish. They were quite emotional, by all accounts. There were



rumours that some of the teams might have struggled with fuel consumption, but we didn't get to see whether that would have been a factor or not.

It certainly didn't blow me away, as a race, and I can't say it fills me with joy for the rest of the season, but I'm not about to give up just yet.

Outtro

That's all for this episode of F1 Digest, and all for our Bahrain weekend. You can recap all the results and standings on sidepodcast.com, and join me back here ahead of the Australian GP.

sidepodcast.com
YOUR WEEKLY F1 FIX