



F1 Digest 2010 – Malaysia GP

Welcome to F1 Digest for the Malaysian GP. We saw a brilliant mixed up qualifying yesterday, thanks to some changeable weather conditions, and the grid looked set to produce some great racing. Here's what happened.

Race Round-Up

It was dry as the pitlane opened and the cars took to the grid. De La Rosa stalled at the end of the pitlane, and then stopped out on track as well. His car was pushed out of the way, and out of the race before it had even begun.

Vettel had a great start and pulled alongside pole sitter Webber at the first corner. The pair of them tussled, but cleanly, and Vettel took the lead. Hamilton had an even better start though, up to 13th, and overtaking several cars in the first few laps.

Glock stopped out on track, his Virgin car hoisted away by the tractor. Hamilton closed up to Petrov in the Renault and passed him, but ran wide, handing the place back. He eventually managed to get past on the final corner, and down the home straight, began weaving back and forth. You're not really allowed to do that and after a few minutes, he was shown a black and white flag - indicating a warning for bad behaviour.

Schumacher slowed out on track and pulled off out of the way. Liuzzi also slowed but managed to get back to the pitlane before retiring. Kovalainen and di Grassi were battling for position, and they managed to collide - giving Kovi a puncture, and losing some of di Grassi's front wing. Kovalainen headed to the pitlane and retired, whilst the Virgin car continued onwards.

Vettel came in for his first pit stop, from the lead, and came out just marginally in front of Hamilton. Webber was in next time round, but there was a problem with the front right wheel gun that saw his stop extended. He came out behind Hamilton.

Alonso waited really, really late for his first stop - so late that Buemi had come in for the second time before we saw the Ferrari stop. He set the fastest lap of the race so far soon afterwards, but then started to struggle with a gearbox problem - he kept on going but it didn't sound healthy.

The Ferrari boys closed up on Button, who was sat behind his teammate in 7th. Massa easily got past the McLaren, but Alonso couldn't make it work. He chased him down but after one attempt, just a few laps from the end, the Ferrari gave up, white smoke spewed from the back of the car, and his race came to an abrupt finish.

Vettel took the chequered flag, with Webber and Rosberg behind him.

Results

Sebastian Vettel finally got the win he's been after, with Webber just four seconds behind him for a Red Bull 1-2. Rosberg joined them on the podium, whilst Kubica, and Sutil were 4th and 5th respectively. Hamilton finished up 6th - a great result after the low qualifying position. Massa was 7th, followed by Button, Alguersuari and Hulkenberg to round out the points.

Buemi just missed out in 11th, followed by Barrichello who was one lap down, and Alonso who was two. di Grassi and Chandhok were down three laps, Senna four and Trulli five.

The retirees were Kovalainen, Petrov, Liuzzi, Schumacher, Kobayashi, Glock and de la Rosa.



Championship Standings

With Alonso failing to make it to the end of the race, he has lost the championship lead to his teammate. Massa has 39 points, with Vettel and Alonso joint second on 37. Button and Rosberg come next, both on 35 points.

Ferrari still lead the constructors championship with 76 points, McLaren have closed up with 66. Red Bull have 61, whilst Mercedes have 44 and Renault have 20.

Team Quotes

Let us begin with Williams and Hulkenberg has very little to say: "We picked up a point today, maybe because our car was more reliable, but that's racing. It was a tough race because we just don't have the pace at the moment. I wish we could do better but we have some work to do to catch up." Barrichello didn't get away from the grid well at all and says: "I don't know what happened at the start, I'll go through that with the team. From there, I went to the back of the field. We tried a different strategy to get us back up, but our car was just not competitive."

Over at Renault, Petrov explains his retirement: "The first half of the race was great fun and I enjoyed fighting with the cars around me, especially the battle with Hamilton. Then, in the middle of the race, the car just stopped and I think it was a problem with the gearbox." Teammate Kubica had a much better day though saying: "It was another enjoyable race and the car was consistent with good pace all afternoon. The start of the race was really important because I managed to get ahead of Hulkenberg into turn 1, and then I got a good exit out of turn 2, which helped me overtake Sutil."

Now, onto Rosberg who finished up on the podium and says: "I want to thank the whole team for all of their hard work this weekend and over the winter. This results is the start of the reward for our efforts. It's a great feeling to be back up on the podium again and to have so much support from the Malaysian fans here." Schumacher didn't have such a good afternoon: "It was a shame that I could not finish the race but unfortunately the wheel nut on the left rear wheel was lost. The car suddenly became very unstable in turn six and I could hardly steer and had no drive left." He adds: "It makes no sense to get angry about it, you have to accept it as part of the game and look ahead. At least Nico scored our first podium finish and I am happy for him and the team."

Virgin Racing had a bit of a breakthrough today with di Grassi finally making it to the end of a race - albeit slowly to try and conserve fuel. He says: "We were well ahead of the other new teams, which meant that we could afford to ease off a little to make sure nothing got in the way of our result today. It has been a long wait and we've had some tough times in the past few months, but we know that we're making progress and we can go on to achieve better things." Glock barely got a few laps completed and says: "I dropped behind Jarno and in general I was quite a lot quicker than him. I tried to overtake but locked the rears and for some reason the anti-stall didn't kick in. Unfortunately I hit Jarno and it was my mistake."

Alonso also retired - but he had made it through a lot more of the race distance. "This was a very difficult weekend. We made a big mistake in yesterday's qualifying and today in the race, I had to retire with an engine problem. My race was an uphill climb from the start: I found I had a problem with the gearbox right from the start and I had to drive without a clutch for practically the whole race." Massa is philosophical about his day out on track: "Given where we started from, seventh place is probably the best we could hope for. We tried to delay the tyre change as much as possible, because over the past days it has always rained in the afternoon and if that had happened today, we would have been able to exploit any opportunity. Unfortunately, for once, the rain did not come."

For Toro Rosso, Alguersuari picked up his first points and says: "...I have to say I never expected to do it so early in the season. A big thanks to everyone in the team who have worked so hard to achieve this result. Step by step, I have improved my performance, but this weekend was very tough because I didn't know the track." Buemi just

missed out on the points and has quite a few complaints: "This race didn't go so well for me, because after quite a good start, my front wing was damaged on the first lap when I made contact with Kobayashi. It meant that from then on, I lacked grip and had a lot of understeer. I ended driving for much of the race with a damaged wing, but once it was changed I was able to put in some very fast lap times, but by then it was too late to do much."

Over to Hispania, and Senna says: "I had a good start and gained as much as I could. I am really pleased for the team to have finished the race with both cars. It has been another positive weekend for the team taking a good step forward." Chandhok echoes those thoughts, happy to finish the race and generally keep out of trouble.

Now to McLaren, who made the best of their tricky grid positions, Hamilton was 6th and Button 8th. Lewis says: "From 20th on the grid, I think sixth was a brilliant result. I reckon we showed today that we were fast enough to compete with the guys at the front - and, that being the case, if we'd started farther up we could've had an even better result this afternoon." Button found it a bit more difficult: "My first stint was very tough. I went for the outside at the first corner - and as things turned out it wasn't the right place to be. So I fell back, and was then stuck behind Fernando, who I just couldn't overtake... I couldn't overtake, and lost lots of time, so I took the gamble to pit early and drop back into a clear track."

Jarno Trulli has little to say on the race itself, but is taking away positives: "We made a good start, but then on the second lap I was hit by Glock, which made me spin, and from then on my race was compromised. Despite that I got the car home to the end and that shows our focus on reliability has been worth the effort." Kovalainen couldn't make it to the finish but says: "Even with the problems we had the car was competitive and I was very comfortable. Compared to the other new teams our times are very competitive indeed, so I'm not going to let this race trouble me - we learned a lot and now we'll move on and look ahead to China."

Sauber suffered a double DNF and both drivers are pretty disappointed. Kobayashi says: "The retirement came as a total surprise to me. After turn one I suddenly had no more power. This is really bad luck. Today I was in a good position to fight for points..." de la Rosa didn't even start really and says: "This Grand Prix is the one you prepare for all year because of the physical demands and you really want it to be driving in it. The failure was unusual, unexpected and unlucky."

Force India had a mixed result. Liuzzi didn't finish and describes it as this: "Unfortunately I had a problem with the throttle after about 12 laps. We didn't understand exactly what it was but overall we lost drive and that was the end of it." Sutil picked up plenty of points finishing in fifth place. "I was hoping for a good race as we were so close in the first two races but then had a little bit of bad luck that stopped us scoring. It was a good overall performance from the team."

Finally, Red Bull had the best day a team possible can. Webber missed out at the very start though and explains it away as a bit of wheelspin. He adds that Christian Horner had told them to behave themselves if they found themselves fighting on track, and that's exactly what they did. Vettel did all the work in the first corner: "What a day! At the start, I realised that I had a good start past Nico. I was then able to gain on Mark; it's a long sprint down to Turn 1 and I had an advantage, so I took the chance into Turn 1 and just made it through... We are here to fight, but you should always keep respect and I think we both had respect for each other."

My View

I really didn't enjoy this race enormously, for me the emphasis is still too much on tyres - tyre strategy, saving your tyres, careful your tyres are graining, that guy is on fresh tyres, blah blah, tyres, blah. However, there were still some elements to keep it interesting - Hamilton storming his way through the field was good, di Grassi getting to the end of the race, also good. The championship looks nice and close as well. It's early days but perhaps the new point system is doing it's job.



Outtro

That's it for today and for this weekend. We've got a short break now before the action returns in China, so I hope you'll visit over on Sidepodcast.com in the intervening period. I'll be back with a preview in a couple of weeks!

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