



## F1 Digest - Turkey Free Practice

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### *Intro*

Hi everyone, welcome to the second F1 Digest show for the Turkish Grand Prix weekend. Yesterday, we previewed how the teams were feeling going into the race weekend, now it's time to see how they got on with their first taste of on-track action.

### *Free Practice 1*

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I mentioned briefly yesterday that the Turkish Grand Prix in 2007 was the 12<sup>th</sup> round of the championship. Being so much earlier in the year this time round, means we are looking at some much cooler temperatures than the teams are used to. Ahead of the first Free Practice session, the air temperature was just 15 degrees, and although sunny, there were plenty of menacing clouds in the air.

In the Live Comment thread on Sidepodcast.com, Dank left an early thought: "This morning is the lowest air temp of any session this season. Be interesting to see who can get their tyres working for them."

Fisichella was the first man to leave the pit lane, and he actually did so a little bit too early. The pit exit lights were still on red, and after the stewards looked into the incident, they decided Fisichella deserved a three place grid penalty from wherever he ends up on the grid. Not a great start to the Force India weekend. Meanwhile, several other teams, including Williams and Renault sent their drivers out early for an installation lap. The track was not to their liking though, as some last minute cleaning had left several damp spots around the circuit. After twenty minutes of installation laps, all but the Ferraris had been out, and everyone preferred the comfort of the pit lane, until the track began to dry.

Over on Sidepodcast.com, Alianora commented: "Heikki's car doesn't look like it's going anywhere at the moment - but it's nice just to see him back after the crash last time out."

It wasn't until 18 minutes later, when Bourdais fired up his Toro Rosso, that the action resumed. Kovalainen set an early quick time, and then the spinning began. First it was Nakajima, struggling with Turn 8, then Sutil ran wide and made use of the run-off area. Both Trulli and Hamilton also spun, as Raikkonen posted the fastest time. Hamilton recovered from his spin enough to put his McLaren second, behind the Ferrari. Kathi left a comment, pondering on the state of the track and the number of spins: "Didn't Bernie suggest some time ago, that the best way to improve the race would be to clean the track from all the rubber between Saturday and Sunday. Perhaps he was testing it. Seems to work."

Massa and Fisichella joined the list of drivers having spun, although Massa made up for it soon after, by putting his Ferrari P7 the first time round, then P3, P2 and finally hitting the top spot. Raikkonen remained in the garage, unable to defend his time, as the mechanics swarmed around his car. Kovalainen improved to second, with Alonso third, and Fisichella slid his way around another corner. Massa ran wide round another corner, Glock and Sutil both struggled round Turn 8, and Hamilton popped up into P3.

Several laps later, Kovalainen has closed the gap to Massa, but doesn't have enough time to steal the glory. The fastest five at the end of the session were: Massa, Kovalainen, Hamilton, Alonso and Button. And Dank left a comment on Sidepodcast.com regarding the other end of the table: "Good to see all Red Bull related cars propping up the bottom end of the time sheet!"



## Free Practice 2

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Between the two practice sessions, the track saw a little bit of rain which meant it was declared wet. As the session started there were a few spots of rain, but it was clearing up.

An early thought from the Live Comment thread from Scott Woodwiss: "I wonder if this session will be more lively so that I don't wander off somewhere else this time. McLaren look stronger this weekend, but Kimi seems to be having some problems." Having only completed one timed lap in FP1, Raikkonen's car was diagnosed with a gearbox problem, and Ferrari changed the component to be on the safe side. Bourdais was out first, but Raikkonen emerged relatively early, for a Ferrari, to make sure everything was ship shape. One installation lap later, Raikkonen returned to the pits, and that was it for a quarter of an hour.

The Ferrari was the first to resume the action, followed by both Force India cars. Soon they are joined by Hamilton, Massa and Alonso, with Hamilton going second to Massa's third.

Webber ran wide at the exit of Turn 6, which sent his car into a spin, and he crashed into the barriers. The front of the car was wrecked, the tyres were hanging off but Webber was okay. He climbed out of the car as the session was red flagged, and the marshals hurried to clear up the debris. Alianora summed up the state of the action for us in the Live Comments: "Adrian treats a straight like a chicane, and Rosberg treats a corner as a rallycross opportunity. Webber treats his car like a banger and there's a red flag."

The session resumed with just under an hour to go, and David Coulthard showed there was nothing wrong with his Red Bull by posting the fifth fastest time. Button pushed into seventh, but was soon knocked down by Glock. With renewed energy, the teams took to the track, and there was no reduction in the number of wobbles and slides we see. Kovalainen, Bourdais, and Button all visited the grass and run-off areas at various points through the session. Aside from that, there was little to report. Glock spun off, and in the process of getting back onto the track, managed to lose his nose.

All else was absolutely normal. Massa tried to close the gap to his team mate but couldn't manage it. Lady Snowcat left a comment on Sidepodcast.com, saying: "Felipe is really trying to be faster than Kimi was but he's had to resort to the options to be faster... And even then he isn't..."

The fastest five at the end of Free Practice 2 were Raikkonen, Hamilton, Massa, Coulthard, and Kovalainen.

## Conclusions

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Webber has accepted responsibility for trashing his car today, and apologised to the team for the extra work it's caused them. He said: "I didn't respect the green AstroTurf that sits on the outside of the track enough. The AstroTurf was a bit damp, and I went off." Coulthard, however, relished having no major problems but did say that setup will be critical as we've seen it's all too easy to spin off the track.

For BMW, Kubica has said he had a small technical problem during Free Practice 1 which limited his running, and therefore made the second session that little bit more stressful. He's pinpointed any leftover problems as balance issues, and says they have several setup choices to pick from - it's just a matter of getting the right one. Heidfeld admits that he found getting heat into the tyres quickly difficult, but over a long run found things much easier.

Adrian Sutil is disappointed that he couldn't get too much running done in the FP2, and technical chief Mike Gascoyne sums up their Friday nicely: "A reasonably productive day but with a couple of difficulties. As expected, we struggled with the relatively low grip of the circuit and found it difficult to get the tyres working correctly. With Adrian we had a clutch problem in the afternoon session that curtailed his running, but Giancarlo completed his



planned programme. Over the longer runs he was very consistent and competitive, but we know there is still more to come from both drivers tomorrow."

The Williams boys had quite a quiet day, just a few slides from Nakajima. He said he struggled with the slippery track and the rain was a bit of a setback, but overall he's happy going into tomorrow's qualifying. Rosberg reckons they've made some progress on the aero side of things but as ever, there's always more to be done.

Glock takes the blame for his excursion off track that saw him lose his nose towards the end of the second session. However, he looks on the bright side, saying he only missed five minutes and despite that, still had a good day. Trulli says the car is okay so far, but needs some more work to improve handling, especially on the mixed track conditions this weekend is promising.

Bourdais drove at Turkey for the first time today, and it made quite an impression on him. "It's my first time at this track and I have to say it is very interesting. Turn 8 is particularly tricky as it is both quick and bumpy and these cars don't like bumps very much! The car can step out on you quite quickly. Today, sometimes the car felt good and at other times, it seemed to get away from me." Vettel keeps things simple saying the sessions were difficult but he's happy with how things went.

Pat Symonds for Renault said the temperatures were much lower than everyone was expecting and that's why we saw so many incidents today. Alonso said he has gathered some interesting information, that should be useful for this weekend. Piquet maintained his aim for today was to feel comfortable in the car and with the balance, and feels he is suitably prepared for the rest of the weekend.

Raikkonen is clearly disappointed with his day: "Not the best of Fridays. This morning, I only managed one timed lap before a gearbox problem meant I could not go out for the rest of the session. In the afternoon, I struggled a bit to find the right settings on the car." Massa, meanwhile, believes it was a positive day on his side of the garage, that the track is nice and fast, if a little slippery, and he's looking forward to fighting for his hat-trick win this weekend.

For McLaren, Hamilton said his day was focused on evaluating the tyres, using the same set throughout the first session. Kovalainen was happy to be back in the car, saying: "I was on the pace immediately and was able to set some consistent lap times." Ron Dennis also gave him a special mention for being fast in the car on his first time since the accident.

Finally, Honda have been working on their setup, making plenty of changes to both cars to try and pick the best way to go for the rest of the weekend. Button commented on the lack of grip but did say that the car works better on the smoother asphalt in Turkey than it has at previous races. Barrichello is still talking about his celebrations for his record breaking Grand Prix start, but is also pondering the setup change they made between the two sessions that didn't turn out how he expected. Either way, though, he's confident that they have a good chance of getting all the way through qualifying tomorrow.

We will see who does make it through all three sessions, and who gets pole, when qualifying takes place tomorrow. As ever, you can take part in the discussions on the blog at Sidepodcast.com, where there will be a group of us live commenting, or if you don't make that, stay tuned to F1 Digest for a condensed version of the action tomorrow afternoon. See you then.