



F1 Digest – Hungary GP

Intro

This is F1 Digest, and our fourth show for the Hungarian Grand Prix weekend. We've covered everything that happened in the previous Free Practice and qualifying sessions, and now it's time to look at the race.

The Race

As per the rest of the weekend, Sunday in Hungary was hot, hot, hot. The air temperature was around about 29 degrees C, the track at 44 and only bound to get hotter.

Off the line, Massa jumped up past Kovalainen straight away, and round the first corner, he and Hamilton were side by side. Massa took the outside line, and despite locking up his tyres, he managed to out-drag Hamilton through the corner to take the lead. Scott in Italy joined us in the Live Comments: "That is one of the best starts I've seen for a long time, but how are his tyres?"

Vettel, Button and Rosberg all lost places of the line, moving backwards almost as quick as Massa was moving forwards. Glock also made up a place by jumping Kubica.

Massa was trying to pull out a lead over Hamilton, but the McLaren was doggedly holding onto his tail, the two were trading fastest laps. There was some overtaking during the first few laps, Raikkonen got past Webber after himself having a bad start, and moved up behind Alonso. Heidfeld also managed to make his way to 12th. Sutil ran wide, but everyone else appeared to have their cars under control, and the race proceeded to the first round of pit stops. Massa was still leading the way, Ryan commented on Sidepodcast.com: "Massa is driving that Ferrari like he's stolen it!" It turned out that Massa was the lightest man on the field, coming in on lap 18, but Hamilton was in next time round. The McLaren mechanics had actually appeared at the pit box when Massa came in, but this was obviously just a ruse.

The McLaren pit stop appeared to be longer than the Ferrari's, and when Hamilton rejoined the track he was not only behind Massa, but also Alonso and Raikkonen as well. When those two took their pit stops, they dived in the pit lane at the same time and it was a straight fight for the mechanics but the positions remained the same. Scott left a comment about the Ferrari's performance so far: "It's been absolutely fantastic stuff from Massa, so far. In a car slower than the McLaren, with a similar fuel load, he did a great job to get a nice advantage over Hamilton in the first stage of the race."

Unfortunately for Vettel, having lost some time at the start of the race, and in his pit stop, he was running last, and then he dived back into his garage. His race was over.

Coulthard was up to fifth, having yet to stop. This was a pretty impressive feat, as he started on the soft tyres and ran 29 laps before coming in for a change. During the next batch of pit stops, we started to see some small fires. First Bourdais had a minor fire, and got covered in foam when they tried to put it out. Barrichello also had refuelling issues, which both delayed his pit stop and caused a small fire. And Nakajima also saw some flames as well. Steven Roy commented on Sidepodcast.com: "If three rigs have failed in about five minutes, all rigs are suspect."

The second stint seemed to be running like clockwork for everyone, until lap 42. Hamilton ran wide, and far from making a mistake, the McLaren had picked up a puncture. He had to limp back to the pits, and bring forward his scheduled stop. Putting on softs, it was a worrying time for the team, knowing that there were 28 laps remaining,



and Hamilton hadn't completed that distance on those tyres at all during the weekend. Alex Andronov thought so: "They can't survive on those tyres. Not in a McLaren." And Lou, also: "He is gonna have to be really careful."

Massa came in for his second pit stop a couple of laps later and rejoined in second, just behind Kovalainen who still had to come in. On lap 46, Webber came in for a pit stop and this also required a fire extinguisher. Thankfully that seemed to be the end of the fires, but this is something the FIA definitely need to investigate. When Kovalainen came in for his stop, Massa retook the lead. Raikkonen was behind him, after Alonso came into the pits, and even though the Finn ran wide during his lap, when he came back from his pit stop, he had jumped the Renault.

By the end of the second round of stops, Hamilton was back up to sixth, meaning his damage limitation from the puncture was working really well.

Heading towards the end of the race, Sutil ran wide, and then dived into the pit lane. He was pushed into the garage, with some kind of brake problem. Raikkonen was looking close to Glock for third place, but he soon had reason to back off slightly.

At the front, with only 3 laps to go to the end of the race, Massa's engine blew up right opposite the garage. Kovalainen inherited the win, Glock moved up to second, and Raikkonen, despite easing off, finished third. Rich summed this up in the comments: "What terrible luck for Felipe – he deserved this race!" And Scott Woodwiss praised the McLaren: "Awesome stuff, Heikki. OK, maybe not the deserving winner on the day as there were other people better than him, but nonetheless a thoroughly deserved and overdue first win."

The remaining points went to Alonso, Hamilton, Piquet, Trulli and Kubica. I'm sure it doesn't make him feel any better at all, but despite stopping three laps from the end, Massa still finished ahead of Bourdais... who was three laps down.

Championship

Ferrari are still in the lead of the constructor's championship with 111 points, but McLaren are catching up fast with 100 points now. BMW have 90, Toyota have 35 and Renault have 31.

Hamilton keeps his lead in the drivers with 62 points, and Raikkonen moves up to 57. Massa has 54, Kubica has 49, and Heidfeld remains on 41.

Conclusions

It wasn't a stunning day for the Williams team, although they perhaps fared better than they expected to. Nakajima finished in 13th, having changed strategy to a one stopper. He believes that was the right thing to do, although did struggle on heavy fuel with the tyres. Rosberg had a bad day all round, losing places off the start, and a fuel rig issue in the pits, but he remains positive saying: "In terms of the heat, I didn't have a problem with it; we've definitely had worse races this year."

Red Bull just missed out on some points with Webber 9th, and he says it all came down to not qualifying well, but also the car just didn't have the pace. Coulthard says: "Unfortunately I got some traffic before my last stop, which allowed Nick to pass me; otherwise I couldn't do anymore today. The car has a lot of oversteer and rear sliding. Now we'll just focus on the next race and see that we can do there."

Button explains his poor start: "I got boxed in at Turn 1 and had a lot of wheelspin out of the corner, which allowed a few people to get past on the outside. I was able to get past Rubens on lap three, which was fun, but after that I quickly came up to the back of Heidfeld. He was very strong on the last two corners so I had no chance to overtake on the track and he was on a one-stop strategy. However in clean air, our pace was good, so this weekend is a



definite step forward and I am reasonably happy with the outcome." Barrichello didn't have nearly as much fun though: "At my first pitstop we were unlucky to have the problem with the rig which resulted in a small fire and a long delay whilst we got fuel into the car using the second rig. After that, my race was effectively over as the number of blue flags made it impossible to make progress. We decided to drop the revs on the engine and do some testing with the tyres as we had overheating problems over the weekend and it was good to collect some data on this. For me the actual race was one to forget really."

Kubica struggled with his car, saying he had massive oversteer and couldn't get the car to grip, so believes his one point is better than nothing. Heidfeld finished 10th and says: "Now we have to analyse today's lack of race pace. Normally this is one of our strengths!"

Both Alonso and Piquet are happy with their points haul today, scoring 8 points between them. Alonso says the car was working well and allowed them to fight hard, whilst Piquet rues the couple of places he lost off the start but is happy with his learning progress so far.

Glock scored his debut podium, so there's no prizes for guessing how he felt his day went: "What an incredible feeling. I couldn't believe it when I saw Felipe's engine go and I was P2. To get such a good result in my first year is fantastic so a huge thank you to all the team, including the engineers, mechanics and everyone at the factory." Trulli is glad for Glock, but feels he could have had a better weekend himself, having struggled with the traffic.

Sutil retired from the race, and explains why: "The problems started on the third lap when my brakes started to overheat, particularly the rear ones, and I had to move my brake balance forward. From that point on I had problems, with lots of locking on the front and understeer and it was difficult to handle the car... In the final stint I had a puncture on the front right under braking and then the brakes gave up and my race was over." Fisichella finished in 15th and said: "In terms of strategy we did well, that was the maximum we could get from this race, we just need a step forward for the next few races." He may as well say Bring on the Seamless Shift gearbox.

Bourdais never really looked on the pace, but had some serious problems today: "it all went to hell at the first pit stop, as the guys had to use the fire extinguisher and I got a lot of foam on my visor. "It happened again at the second stop and this time I had foam inside and outside my visor and couldn't see a thing so had to make another stop to get it cleaned. By this stage, we had lost so much time, there was nothing else to do and I preferred to make the extra stop as the lack of visibility was dangerous." Vettel also had a bad pit stop which caused the engine to overheat and from then on it was just a matter of time before he had to retire. All in all, a weekend to forget.

Kovalainen's debut win will be one for him to remember: "I feel sorry for Felipe because he drove a great race, but my car felt good and I knew I could push for the victory. This is a great moment for me, something I've been targeting for many years. Hopefully, this victory will be the first of many." Hamilton congratulates his team mate but knows his day could have gone so differently. He says: "I don't yet know what happened. But at least I scored four points and maintained my lead in the championship, so this result is not too bad for me."

When it comes to Ferrari, Raikkonen did well to end up on the podium, of course, but we really want to hear from Massa. "When things looked already finished with only two laps to go and then you just hear something and have a strange feeling in the car as the engine breaks down, for sure it is not a great feeling. I feel really bad, and not happy for what has happened. The confidence is there. I think after a race like that, even with the bad result at the end with two laps to go, it still counts what we did in the race." Massa may be putting on a brave face, but it's heartbreaking, isn't it?



That's all for this Hungarian weekend. Formula 1 takes a three week break now, before we're back, better than ever at the brand new Valencian street circuit. Until then, you can keep up with the news at F1Minute.com, and visit Sidepodcast.com for the post race discussion. See you there.

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