



## F1 Digest 2009 – Spain GP

---

Welcome to F1 Digest 2009 – Spain GP.

If Alonso was going to impress the home crowd, he'd have to do so from 8<sup>th</sup>. Could he manage it? Let's find out.

### The Race

---

As the cars lined up on the grid, the track temperature was at 38 degrees C and the air at 24. The formation lap was completed, and all the drivers started on soft tyres except Fisichella and Bourdais. When the lights went out, Glock had a slow start, whilst Barrichello was quick off the mark, making it past Vettel and Button. Massa also made use of his KERS and got past Vettel.

The front runners got through the first corner safely, but in the middle, Trulli ran wide and spun back into the pack. Buemi and Bourdais ran into each other as well, and Sutil got caught up in the incident. There was a huge cloud of dust and debris, and the Safety Car came out. The Toyota, Force India and both Toro Rossos were instantly out of the race, whilst Nakajima had to pit for a new nose.

The safety car came in on lap 5, and Alonso jumped past Webber on the restart, but only momentarily, as Webber dived straight through again in a great overtaking manoeuvre. Kovalainen slowed right down and gradually made his way back to the garage – he retired with a gearbox problem.

At the front, Rubens was told on his radio to get a move on and pull out a lead, whilst Button was on the radio to his engineers telling them he wanted Rubens to go faster!

Heidfeld was keeping Kimi behind him, the pair of them fighting for 9<sup>th</sup> place, and it was clear that the Ferrari's KERS wasn't working at all. The BMW managed to keep him behind for a good few laps, and then Kimi slowed and pulled to a stop on the track. He had a throttle problem.

Button and Alonso stopped at the same time as each other, and when Barrichello came in for his first pit stop, he was out miles ahead of Button. Massa and Vettel came in for their stops and Massa remained ahead. For a moment it looked like Vettel would try and get past, but then he was stuck behind the Ferrari.

The middle stint of the race was pretty quiet with Barrichello stretching out his lead to about 12 seconds, before he came in for his second pit stop of the day. His three stop strategy left Button leading for the time being. Heidfeld and Hamilton appeared to be one-stopping, and came in on the same lap. The order remained as they came out of the pits, but they put on the same tyres again, so it was clear they would have to stop again.

About ten laps later, Hamilton was on the radio telling the team his tyres were ruined, and this was proved when Alonso came out of his pit stop side by side with Hamilton, managing to stay ahead. Button came in for his final pitstop, having just started overtaking the backmarkers. He came out behind Barrichello and Webber, both of whom would have to stop again. They came in together, and came out in the same order, with Button have gone through to take the lead. Webber managed to jump both Massa and Vettel during that pit stop as well.

Massa was on the radio to his team, with Rob Smedley telling him that they didn't have enough fuel to finish the race. Shock and awe all round, as Massa had spent the whole race trying to keep Vettel behind him and now was faced with the decision to either back off and save fuel or face an extra pit stop. There was no option, and Vettel



zoomed past him on the straight. Unfortunately, Massa also had to give in to Alonso, who caught up the 16 seconds he was behind and more to get in front.

Button led the way to the chequered flag, and Massa made it to the line but ran out of fuel on the in lap.

## Results

Button and Barrichello celebrated a 1-2 for Brawn GP, with Rubens coming in 13 seconds after Jenson. Webber wasn't far behind him in third. Vettel came fourth and Alonso fifth, with Massa struggling across the line in sixth. Heidfeld finished seventh, and Rosberg picked up the last of the points in 8<sup>th</sup>.

Hamilton was 9<sup>th</sup>, and the first man to go a lap down, followed by Glock, Kubica and Piquet. Nakajima was 13<sup>th</sup> and Fisichella was the last classified down in 14<sup>th</sup>. The retirees were Raikkonen, Kovalainen, Trulli, Buemi, Bourdais and Sutil.

## Championship Standings

Button extends his championship lead again, now with 41 points to Barrichello's 27. The gap just gets bigger. Vettel has 23 with Webber behind him on 15.5 and Trulli with 14.5. It's worth noting Massa finally picked himself up some points with three.

In the constructors championship Brawn GP have 68 points to Red Bull's 28.5. Toyota are third with 26.5, McLaren have 13 and Renault round out the top five with 9.

## Team by Team

Let's start with Ferrari who had a bit of a disastrous race. Massa isn't really boosted by the fact that he picked up some points: "It's a real shame to have lost two places in the final stages, even if we've finally made it to the scoreboard. We knew we couldn't match the pace of the Brawns but we had managed to get ahead of the Red Bulls and, but for the fuel problem, I could have certainly stayed ahead of Vettel and Alonso. The final part of the race was a pain." Kimi is also disappointed: "I am very unhappy because I could have finished in the points. Unfortunately, I had a hydraulic problem linked to the control of the accelerator which meant I had to retire."

Defending Champion Lewis Hamilton just couldn't get a handle on the car today, he says: "It was a tough, long race and it was incredibly hard to keep the car on the road - it felt like driving on ice at times, especially at the end of the second stint, when the tyres were finished, and in the final stint, when there was very little grip on the prime." Heikki isn't exactly happy either: "Luck just doesn't seem to be going my way right now. It's been a difficult weekend - the car's performance is not where we want it to be and this was tough for us all - but that's life."

Heikki may feel that luck isn't on his side, but Fisi is thankful that it went his way on the first lap: "The first corner was quite messy as Trulli spun in front of me and there was a lot of debris around the circuit. I was a little worried about having picked up some damage but in the end I was out of trouble and didn't pick up anything." Sutil, though, was caught up in the incident, and says he couldn't do anything to avoid Trulli and it was over in an instant.

The other half of that incident, Trulli explains what happened from his point of view: "Rosberg went off, then during the next corner he came back on to the track right next to me. I had to avoid him because he came back on really quickly. I had to steer off the track and lost control of the car over the grass, so I spun and someone hit me." Meanwhile Glock finished tenth, and also found that Rosberg was his nemesis, as he got stuck behind him for most of the race.



For his part, Nico was concentrating on his own race more than what happened to other people, he says: "I really believe we could have taken fifth place today but things didn't go too well. I had a very good first few laps but, after 10 laps or so, I started to experience a problem at the rear of the car which I've had all weekend. Something inexplicable would just happen and affect the balance which caused a lot of oversteer." Nakajima struggled after the first lap: "I didn't have anywhere to go off the line and ended up damaging my front wing as I was caught in the middle of the first lap incident. Fortunately, I didn't lose a massive amount of time because the safety car was deployed, but my race was really over from there."

Heidfeld had his fingers crossed for good things: "It was a tough race but I think it was one of my better ones. I had hoped for points as a birthday present, but honestly didn't really believe in this as I was starting from 13th." He finished up 7th, so the birthday wish came true. Meanwhile, Kubica finished 11th, and found he struggled with grip, so he wants to analyse what happened before the next race.

Piquet blames his performance on the fact that he doesn't have the fully updated car yet, so he is looking forward to more upgrades before Monaco. Alonso says their projections before the race suggested a 10th place finish, so to end up 5th is a bonus.

Over at Red Bull, Webber is intrigued by the team's gradual improvement: "It's good to be back on the podium. It's interesting how the team's mentality has changed - last year we would have been happy to score points and now we want podiums at every race! We're working incredibly hard and the guys' eyes are falling out of their heads with all the late nights and long hours. Sebastian had more trouble with traffic today, but the team got us both home with a lot of points, which is fantastic." Vettel agrees that getting stuck behind Massa was the end of his race, but he's buoyed by the strong performance of the team.

Toro Rosso had a double DNF, and Bourdais says it was frustrating because before he had time to brake he was already in the back of the car in front. That just happened to be Buemi, who had to brake to avoid the action in front of him. Race over for the entire team.

Finally, from a double DNF to a 1-2 finish, Brawn GP had a successful weekend from start to finish. Barrichello is annoyed not to have won as he was in a good position from the start, but he says he had issues with the tyres. Button says: "To come away with the win is a little unexpected but it means so much to continue our run of success. Obviously Rubens is disappointed not to have got the win today and he has been a huge help over the weekend in helping me overcome the issues that I faced on Friday. His turn will certainly come."

### Quote of the Day

That's it for this race weekend. Next up we're in Monaco, so I will be back then with four more Digest shows covering all the action. For now, I'll leave you with this quote from Pat Symonds at Renault: "Barcelona is not renowned for producing exciting racing, but that certainly wasn't true today. It was a fight all the way through to end and a great result from Fernando. Nelson was extremely lucky not to have been taken out in the first corner accident..."