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Tyres go the distance at tough Jerez

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McLaren's Lewis Hamilton and Fernando Alonso celebrate with Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen

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Putting the groove on

A new solution for identifying the softer of the two tyre compounds taken to each Formula One race this year was warmly praised after its first trial run in the Malaysian Grand Prix.

The inner middle groove of each tyre is painted white with a special pen while the tyre is spun on a balancing unit. This line is clearly visible in the pitlane and on the track, enabling fans and the media to understand who is using which compound during each stint of the race.

The inner middle groove was picked as it is less likely to fill up with the rubber marbles and debris that tyres accumulate while on track.

"The new marking was a big success," said Bridgestone Motorsport's Head of Track Engineering Operations for F1 Kees van de Grint. "Watching pit stops and the cars on TV it was clear which tyre each driver was using."



F1 TITLE FIGHT IS CLOSER THAN EVER

McLaren's Fernando Alonso and Lewis Hamilton are level on points with Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen after Malaysia and Bahrain

This year's Formula One championship looks set to be one of the most closely contested in years, with three different winners from the opening three rounds of the season, and three drivers currently tied for points at the top of the standings.

McLaren's Fernando Alonso took the spoils in Malaysia, while Felipe Massa followed the lead of Ferrari team-mate and Australian Grand Prix winner Kimi Raikkonen to secure victory in Bahrain.

Perhaps the most astounding performer in the first three races, though, was McLaren rookie Lewis Hamilton. After finishing third in Australia, he took second in Malaysia and then second in Bahrain, where he beat his world-champion team mate, becoming the first driver to score podiums in his first three grands prix. He is now joint drivers' championship leader with Alonso and Raikkonen on 22 points, while Massa is on 17 points.

The Malaysian and Bahrain races – two of the hottest on the F1 calendar – offered a real test for Bridgestone in its new role as sole tyre supplier.

The hard and medium compounds chosen for the events proved ideal, though, with most drivers actually favouring the softer tyre. In fact, there were no significant tyre problems for any of the 22 drivers and 11 teams in either race.

"Both specifications of tyre withstood the heat in Malaysia and Bahrain very well," said Kees van de Grint, Bridgestone Motorsport's Head Of Track Engineering Operations. "I also believe that Bridgestone was an important contributor to the excitement by producing a very well suited high-performance tyre."

F1 feature – page 4



Facts & figures

- Temperatures in Malaysia and Bahrain are among the hottest seen in the F1 season.
- The ambient air temperature in Bahrain was around 30 Celcius, with track temperatures up to 41C – similar to a hot European race.
- The earlier race in Malaysia had proved to be even tougher, though, with an ambient air temperature of 35C and a track temperature of 50C – 10C more than at European tracks.
- In these conditions, drivers can lose up to four litres of body fluid during the race.



Gresini Honda's Toni Elias was the top Bridgestone runner in Jerez, finishing in fourth place

ELIAS SCORES A FIGHTING FOURTH

Gresini Honda's Toni Elias maintained the positive performance of the Bridgestone-shod riders in the opening rounds of this year's MotoGP series as he narrowly missed out on a podium finish at Jerez.

The Spaniard started his home round from eighth place on the grid after MotoGP's closest ever qualifying session, but quickly moved up the order to lead the pack chasing the final podium runner in the closing laps of the race.

Ducati's Casey Stoner – who won the Qatar season-opener – was unable to defend his points lead after being squeezed down the order at the start, but staged a brilliant recovery to finish fifth. Both riders and their fellow Bridgestone-shod

runners were able to benefit from the longevity of Bridgestone's soft compound, which had been picked in anticipation of cool weather for the race.

"Naturally, we're disappointed that our riders couldn't finish on the podium, but I'm still pleased with the overall competitiveness of our tyres," said Bridgestone Motorsport's Motorcycle Sport Department Manager Hiroshi Yamada.

"The cool conditions enabled riders to extract the full performance from the soft rear tyre to post quick times over the full race distance. There are many positives to take away from the opening two races. However, we have some tough tracks coming up, so we have plenty of work to do."

In brief...

New F1 rules set to test tyres
New Formula One rules have been unveiled for 2008 that place further emphasis on tyre performance. Traction control will be banned, while plans to re-introduce slick dry tyres and increase the cars' width and lower its weight from 605kg to 550kg have been dropped. Bridgestone starts a three-year deal to be F1's official tyre supplier that same year.

MotoGP gets wet in Jerez

The MotoGP series' latest official two-day test, held straight after the second round at Jerez, proved ideal for Bridgestone to test its new generation of wet tyres for the 800cc bikes as rain hit the Spanish track on the Monday. Bridgestone also tested new rear tyres for qualifying on the dry Tuesday, with the products set to appear at future races.



F1 racks up the travel miles

The F1 teams and Bridgestone overcame a huge logistical trial between the Australian Grand Prix on March 18 and the Bahrain GP on April 15. The entire paddock – comprising 600 tonnes of cargo – flew direct to Sepang after the 2007 season-opener for a four-day tyre test before the Malaysian GP on April 8. The teams then had just three days to get the same equipment to Sakhir in Bahrain to complete a hat-trick of globe-spanning races.

Arta Honda wins in Okayama

Bridgestone-shod cars locked out the podium in the latest Japanese Super GT round at Okayama. The Arta Honda NSX of Daisuke Ito and Ralph Firman won the race from the Raybrig Honda NSX of Dominik Schwager and Shinya Hosokawa and the Motul Autech Z of Michael Krumm and Tsugio Matsuda.

FNippon and F3 start in Japan

Impul team-mates Benoit Treluyer and Satoshi Motoyama shared the spoils in the first two races of the Bridgestone-backed Formula Nippon series at Fuji and Suzuka. In Japanese Formula 3, double race winner Kazuya Oshima leads the points from Briton Oliver Jarvis after the opening four rounds.



Luca Filippi leads the way at the start of Saturday's GP2 feature race in Bahrain as he heads to his first victory

GP2 RIVALS CLINCH FIRST WINS

Italian Luca Filippi and Frenchman Nicolas Lapierre both scored the first wins of their career in the Bridgestone-supported GP2 Series as the one-make single-seater Formula One feeder championship got off to a spectacular start at the Sakhir track in Bahrain.

Super Nova International driver Filippi took a lights-to-flag win from pole position in the feature race on Saturday afternoon, with iSport International team-mates Timo Glock and Andi Zuber completing the podium.

In Sunday morning's sprint race Dams driver Lapierre took the lead on the first lap from pole-sitter Borja Garcia, eventually beating Glock and Filippi to the chequered flag. As a result, Filippi now leads the standings by 16 points, just two ahead of Glock and eight ahead of Lapierre.

"It was a great weekend," said Filippi. "It's so big, I have no words to explain how I'm feeling now. I knew we had the potential, but this is just incredible. I don't think anyone in the paddock expected this for me."

Flying start for IRL in Florida

Former Indy Racing League champion Dan Wheldon and Helio Castroneves shared the spoils in the opening two rounds of the US oval-based single-seater series.

Target Chip Ganassi racer Wheldon took his third straight victory in the season-opener at the Homestead oval on March 25, from Ganassi team-mate Scott Dixon and Penske Racing's reigning champion Sam Hornish Jr.

The second race of 2007 took place on the street course in nearby St Petersburg, with Penske Racing's Castroneves repeating last year's win and Dixon and Andretti-Green's Tony Kanaan completing the podium.

Dixon now heads the standings by five points from Wheldon and Castroneves, while Alex Lloyd leads the Bridgestone-backed Indy Pro feeder series by 48 points, after a hat-trick of wins in the opening three races.



Ganassi's Scott Dixon leads the IRL standings after the first two races



POWER LEADS IN CHAMP CAR

Australian racer Will Power heads the Champ Car World Series standings after a mixed first two rounds of the year for three-time champion Sebastien Bourdais.

The Frenchman suffered a problematic race in the Las Vegas season-opener as Power gave Champ Car's new one-make Panoz chassis its first win. Minardi Team USA's Robert Doornbos and Forsythe's Paul Tracy completed the podium.

Bourdais fought back in Long Beach, however, dominating from pole to top the podium from Forsythe draftee Oriol Servia – replacing an injured Tracy – and Power, who now has a 15-point lead in the standings. Bourdais is third on 40 points.

THOMAS SCHOLZ

Chief Co-ordinator
(MotoGP)

INSIDE LINE



What exactly does your job entail?

I organise the logistics for the 11 staff in our MotoGP headquarters in Germany. My job is to make sure that everything is where we need it, when we need it. I'm responsible for sorting travel, budgeting, checking stock in the warehouse and liaising with Bridgestone in Japan. At the track, I make sure that we have good communications with our teams to make their life easier and I do media work, explaining Bridgestone's role in MotoGP to reporters.

How did you start working in motorsport?

When I was an economics student in Hamburg in 1988 I worked with Bridgestone as a motorbike road tyres test rider and also assisted race riders in Germany. I've been a full-time employee since 1992. My first job was in Japan helping the bike race tyre team, which was a dream start. I've been a bike fan since I was 15, so it was lucky that my hobby became my job, as I had never really considered anything else.

How did you get into your current role?

Until 2002 I worked directly with teams and riders in the 125cc and 250cc classes, but, slowly, my job changed. When Bridgestone entered MotoGP a lot of technical people came in and the team got bigger. It was the right time, after 10 years, to move to a logistical role.

What's your proudest moment while working for Bridgestone?

I'm still waiting for it! For everyone in our team, it doesn't matter what we're doing, our job is to do it well, and the final step will be the MotoGP title. It's interesting to see how we're improving as we get more experience. In such a closely contested series, absolutely everything is related to the fine-tuning. Unfortunately, we haven't been in a position for one of our teams to win the title yet, but we're getting bigger and better every year.



The pre-season hot weather test in Bahrain (main) was followed by another in Sepang in late March (below)

Test miles take the heat off F1 teams

Bridgestone has gone to great lengths this year to develop highly durable tyre compounds for the early-season hot weather races in Malaysia and Bahrain

Bridgestone's new Formula One tyres for 2007 faced two of the toughest tests of the season at the recent grands prix in Malaysia and Bahrain. The tracks feature some of the hottest and high-wearing conditions for tyres on the F1 calendar, but Bridgestone has put in considerable effort to ensure that its new compounds perform well in such harsh situations.

Track and air temperature, humidity and atmospheric pressure all significantly affect how a tyre performs, and although the weather conditions at the regularly used test venues in southern Spain give a reasonable idea of how F1 tyres will perform in the European summer, they are a long way from those expected in Malaysia and Bahrain.

"Any chance to test where you're going to be racing is important," says F1 Head of Track Engineering Operations Kees van de Grint. "But it is even more important at a track such as Sepang, which the teams do not normally test on.

"Sepang is one of the toughest tracks for wear because, although it is smooth, the high temperatures and humidity levels combine with the circuit characteristics to create a low-grip high-degradation surface. Bahrain is usually very hot, with track temperatures as high as 50 Celcius. The track is quite smooth and features tight corners followed by high-speed changes of direction. There can also be varying levels of sand on the track, blown in from the surrounding desert."

"It has been very useful for us this season to see how the new tyres respond to hot conditions"

Kees van de Grint, Bridgestone



To more accurately evaluate the new compounds that would be used at these two events, Bridgestone and the F1 teams worked together to organise a pre-season test in Bahrain and another four-day session at Sepang between the Australian Grand Prix and the Malaysian Grand Prix.

Although the two long-haul trips required extra logistical effort and expenditure, they gave both Bridgestone and the teams a valuable insight into how the tyres and their cars would work at the hotter tracks on the calendar.

"Although it was not usual in previous years for us to test overseas, it has been very useful for us this season to see how the new tyres respond to hot conditions," says van de Grint. "For the teams, it also gives them a chance to test for all sorts of other issues, like cooling for example."

In the end, Bridgestone's medium and hard compounds proved ideal for Malaysia and Bahrain.

"The Bahrain test was very beneficial because you run in temperatures relevant to those you're going to be racing in," said Red Bull Racing boss Christian Horner. "Concentrated at a venue like that it was very productive and much more preferable to staying in Europe. We learned a great deal."

Driving home safety first

Bridgestone has used its high-profile racing role to highlight issues for road users

There's no doubt that road safety has taken big strides forward in recent years, and Bridgestone has been heavily involved in promoting both passive and active accident prevention through its innovative tyre technology and the 'Think Before You Drive' awareness programme, which has been organised in conjunction with the FIA Foundation.

The campaign uses simple-to-understand graphics and a recognisable 'crash test dummy' character to convey simple road safety messages for drivers, focusing on activities such as using a seat belt or child seat, checking head restraints and regularly inspecting tyre wear and pressures – all of which can help reduce the severity of injuries in a crash or can even help prevent crashes from occurring.

In 2007 Bridgestone will once again join forces with the FIA Foundation and the Commission for Global Road Safety to promote the 'Make Roads Safe' campaign – an initiative targeting improvements in road infrastructure in developing countries and emerging economies, where around 60 per cent of the annual 1.2 million global road deaths occur.

Bridgestone recently used Toyota driver Ralf Schumacher at the Australian Grand Prix to promote the safety and environmental implications of under-inflated tyres and, at the Bahrain Grand Prix, maximised its highly visible involvement and strong media profile in Formula One to help raise public awareness of the United Nations' Global Road Safety Week.

The seven days of activities around the world will highlight the impact on society of road accidents, with a focus on

promoting simple but essential advice to young road users. Events will include a World Youth Assembly for Road Safety on April 23/24 and European Road Safety Day on April 27.

"This is an important opportunity for improving safety for the hundreds of millions of young people who travel the world's roads every day," says former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. "Fortunately, there is growing recognition that road traffic injuries can be prevented. It has been shown that by acting on key factors – in particular drink driving, speeding, infrastructure and the wearing of helmets and seatbelts – that a significant number of lives and financial resources can be saved even as motorization continues to rise."

Throughout Europe, 1500 Bridgestone retailers will join the UN Global Road Safety Week initiative by offering free safety inspections to all their customers.

Further information

Think Before You Drive

www.thinkbeforeyoudrive.com

Make Roads Safe

www.makeroadssafe.org

UN Global Road Safety Week

www.who.int/roadsafety/week/

Safety at Heart

www.safetyatheart.eu

1998

RACING MILESTONES

Bridgestone's second F1 season got off to a winning start in the Australian Grand Prix

After a strong debut Formula One campaign, expectation was high for Bridgestone going into the 1998 season.

A switch to grooved tyres had shaken up the form guide, and the addition of the front-running McLaren team to Bridgestone's roster meant that there was a real chance of race victories for the company in its second year as an F1 tyre supplier.

McLaren's aggressive new car was the class of winter testing, while drivers Mika Hakkinen and David Coulthard had won several races during 1997 and were geared up for more in the coming races. At the 1998 season-opener in Melbourne the scale of their dominance became clear as they built a decisive early advantage that just got bigger and bigger as the race went on.

Even a radio glitch that brought Hakkinen in for an extra pitstop couldn't slow the pair down. By the time they reached the chequered flag, race winner Hakkinen and second-placed Coulthard were both a full lap ahead of the final podium finisher.

The first F1 victory for a Bridgestone-shod driver was to be the first of nine wins that year, ensuring title supremacy for Hakkinen, McLaren and Bridgestone – a fitting result to a year and a partnership that started in such a spectacular way.



The 'Think Before You Drive' crash test dummies visited the F1 paddock in Bahrain to promote the UN Global Road Safety Week

CHAMPIONSHIP TABLES

Formula One

Driver (Team)	Pts
1 Fernando Alonso (McLaren)	22
2 Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari)	22
3 Lewis Hamilton (McLaren)	22
4 Felipe Massa (Ferrari)	17
5 Nick Heidfeld (BMW)	15
6 Giancarlo Fisichella (Renault)	8
13 May	Barcelona, Spain
27 May	Monte Carlo, Monaco
10 June	Montreal, Canada

MotoGP

Driver (Team)	Pts
1 Valentino Rossi (Yamaha)	45
2 Casey Stoner (Ducati)	36
3 Dani Pedrosa (Honda)	36
4 Colin Edwards (Yamaha)	26
5 Marco Melandri (Honda)	19
6 Nicky Hayden (Honda)	17
22 April	Istanbul, Turkey
6 May	Shanghai, China
20 May	Le Mans, France

GP2

Driver (Team)	Pts
1 Luca Filippi (Super Nova)	16
2 Timo Glock (iSport)	14
3 Nicolas Lapierre (Dams)	8
4 Andi Zuber (iSport)	6
5 Bruno Senna (Arden)	5
6 Borja Garcia (Durango)	4
12-13 May	Barcelona, Spain
26-27 May	Monte Carlo, Monaco
30 June-1 July	Magny Cours, France

Champ Car

Driver (Team)	Pts
1 Will Power (Team Australia)	59
2 Alex Tagliani (RSPORTS)	44
3 Sebastien Bourdais (NHL)	40
4 Bruno Junqueira (Dale Coyne)	36
5 Robert Doornbos (Minardi USA)	35
6 Tristan Gommendy (PKV)	31
22 April	Houston, USA
20 May	Zuhai, China
10 June	Portland, USA

IRL

Driver (Team)	Pts
1 Scott Dixon (Ganassi)	80
2 Dan Wheldon (Ganassi)	75
3 Helio Castroneves (Penske)	75
4 Tony Kanaan (AGR)	65
5 Sam Hornish Jr (Penske)	61
6 Dario Franchitti (AGR)	56
21 April	Motegi, Japan
29 April	Kansas, USA
27 May	Indianapolis, USA

BRIDGESTONE

PASSION for EXCELLENCE



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