

= 2008 Spanish Grand Prix =

The 2008 Spanish Grand Prix (formally the L Gran Premio de España Telefónica) was a Formula One motor race held on 27 April 2008 at the Circuit de Catalunya , Barcelona , Spain . It was the fourth race of the 2008 Formula One season . The 66 @-@ lap race was won by Kimi Räikkönen for the Ferrari team after starting from pole position . Felipe Massa finished second in the other Ferrari , and Lewis Hamilton was third in a McLaren .

Räikkönen began the race from pole position alongside Renault driver Fernando Alonso . Massa began from third , alongside BMW Sauber driver Robert Kubica . Hamilton , the eventual Drivers ' Champion , began from fifth and passed Kubica into the first corner , as Massa passed Alonso . Räikkönen maintained his lead through most of the race , leading to Ferrari 's one @-@ two finish . The safety car was deployed several times throughout the race , including for a serious crash involving McLaren driver Heikki Kovalainen , though the Finn escaped with only a minor concussion .

Prior to the race weekend , the event was put on probation by the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile , the sport 's governing body , for racist taunting during pre @-@ season testing at the circuit . Subsequently , no such racism was reported during the race weekend . The event was Super Aguri 's final Grand Prix , withdrawing afterwards due to financial pressures , leaving the sport with ten teams ; this was also the last race for both of the team 's drivers , Takuma Sato and Anthony Davidson . The result promoted Ferrari to the lead in the Constructors ' Championship , 12 points ahead of BMW Sauber and 13 points ahead of McLaren . Räikkönen extended his lead in the Drivers ' Championship to 29 points , nine points ahead of Hamilton and ten points ahead of Kubica . Massa moved into fourth place on 18 points , with 14 races remaining in the season .

= = Report = =

= = = Background = = =

The Grand Prix was contested by 22 drivers , in 11 teams of two . The teams , also known as " constructors " , were Ferrari , McLaren @-@ Mercedes , Renault , Honda , Force India , BMW Sauber , Toyota , Red Bull Racing , Williams , Toro Rosso and Super Aguri . Tyre supplier Bridgestone brought two different tyre compounds to the race ; the softer of the two marked by a single white stripe down one of the grooves .

Prior to the race , Ferrari driver Kimi Räikkönen led the Drivers ' Championship with 19 points , and BMW Sauber driver Nick Heidfeld was second with 16 points . McLaren driver Lewis Hamilton , BMW driver Robert Kubica and Hamilton 's teammate Heikki Kovalainen held the next three positions , all with 14 points . In the Constructors ' Championship , BMW Sauber were leading with 30 points , one point ahead of Ferrari , and two ahead of McLaren @-@ Mercedes .

After Hamilton won the season opener in Australia , Ferrari had dominated the next two races in Malaysia and Bahrain . In the Malaysian Grand Prix , Ferrari driver Felipe Massa had claimed pole position , and while he later spun off and retired , his teammate Räikkönen went on to win the race . Ferrari 's form had continued at the Bahrain Grand Prix , where Massa had led Räikkönen to a one @-@ two finish . Despite the promising start to the season , Ferrari team principal Stefano Domenicali said the team was not celebrating prematurely :

The real Ferrari is not the one we 've seen at the Australian GP . The team reacted immediately and has shown the great potential of our package , which is extremely competitive . Having said that , we have to be aware . We 're approaching the Spanish GP with a maximum effort , keeping our feet on the ground : we were not depressed after the first race and we are not euphoric after Bahrain . We need absolute motivation and we are aware of the fact that our competitors are getting better .

With his team leading the Constructors ' Championship , Heidfeld said BMW was outperforming expectations : " It 's better than expected after the winter time , of course , but it could also be better . It can always be better . " BMW had opened the season with podium finishes in each of the first

three races , which team principal Mario Theissen said put his team amongst the top three , along with Ferrari and McLaren .

After a poor race in Bahrain , where he narrowly avoided stalling on the grid before colliding with Renault 's Fernando Alonso a lap later , Hamilton said he would return stronger in Spain : " I approach it in the same way and obviously I won 't be making the same mistake again . This weekend being here , feeling fresh after a good break from racing , and making sure we come here fresh has been important . I feel good . " His team said that they had made significant improvements to their car , the McLaren MP4 @-@ 23 , in the three @-@ week break , but were reserving judgement until the race to see how their performance had improved in comparison to their rivals .

The event also took place under the shadow of incidents that had taken place at the same circuit during pre @-@ season testing . At one of the test sessions , Hamilton was subjected to racist taunting by some of the spectators . In response , the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) launched a " Racing Against Racism " programme , and placed the Spanish and European Grands Prix on probation , the latter event being held in the Spanish city of Valencia . During the course of the event itself , no such incidents were reported . Hamilton was particularly unpopular with the country 's Formula One fans due to his acrimonious inter @-@ team rivalry with Spaniard Alonso during the previous year 's championship , which had resulted in the latter leaving the McLaren team and returning to Renault for 2008 .

The Super Aguri team had been in financial trouble since a proposed takeover deal backed by equity firm Dubai International Capital , under the " Magma Group " banner , failed to take effect . The team narrowly avoided folding in mid @-@ April , and were only given confirmation to compete by team owners Honda on the Friday prior to the race . This would be the team 's final Grand Prix , withdrawing after two years in Formula One prior to the Turkish Grand Prix , leaving the sport with ten teams for the first time since the 2005 season .

= = = Practice and qualifying = = =

Three practice sessions were held before the Sunday race ? two on Friday , and a third on Saturday . The Friday morning and afternoon sessions each lasted 90 minutes . The third session was held on Saturday morning and lasted an hour . The Ferraris were fastest in the first session ; Räikkönen was quickest with a time of 1 : 20 @.@ 649 , ahead of Massa , who recovered from a spin and an off @-@ track excursion on his first two laps to take second . Hamilton , Kubica and Kovalainen took the next three positions , ahead of home driver Alonso in sixth . Räikkönen repeated his morning effort in the second session , with a time of 1 : 21 @.@ 935 , as the frontrunners experimented with higher fuel loads . Renault driver Nelson Piquet was next quickest , ahead of Alonso , Williams driver Kazuki Nakajima , Massa and Red Bull driver Mark Webber . The McLarens had a less successful session ; Kovalainen struggled with gearbox problems , and difficulty with Hamilton 's set @-@ up meant he managed 11th after suffering from excessive oversteer . Heidfeld was quickest in the final session , his 1 : 21 @.@ 269 benefiting from use of the quicker soft compound tyre . Webber 's teammate David Coulthard was next quickest , ahead of Alonso , Kubica , Toyota driver Jarno Trulli and Sébastien Bourdais of Toro Rosso . Ferrari and McLaren again ran heavier cars , and neither team managed better than ninth quickest . Mechanical problems meant Webber failed to set a time , his car coming to a halt in the pit @-@ lane exit after two installation laps .

The qualifying session on Saturday afternoon was split into three parts . The first part ran for 20 minutes , and cars that finished the session 17th or lower were eliminated from qualifying . The second part of qualifying lasted 15 minutes and eliminated cars that finished in positions 11 to 16 . The final part of qualifying determined the positions from first to tenth , and decided pole position . Cars which failed to make the final session could refuel before the race , so ran lighter in those sessions . Cars which competed in the final session of qualifying were not allowed to refuel before the race , and as such carried more fuel than in the previous sessions .

Räikkönen clinched his first pole position of the season with a time of 1 : 21 @.@ 813 . Alonso would start alongside him on the grid , amid suspicions the Spaniard was fuelled light for the race .

Massa , Kubica and Hamilton qualified next quickest ; just 0 @.@ 2 seconds separated Hamilton 's time from that of Räikkönen . Kovalainen would line up on the third row of the grid next to his teammate ; Webber and Trulli would start from the fourth row . Heidfeld was disappointed with his ninth place , after suffering from tyre problems on his final lap ; Piquet , who made it into the final session for the first time in his career , qualified just ahead of Honda driver Rubens Barrichello and Nakajima . Honda driver Jenson Button and Timo Glock of Toyota would occupy the seventh row ; Williams driver Nico Rosberg was outqualified by his teammate for the first time in the season , and would start from 15th , ahead of Bourdais . Coulthard failed to make it through the first session after failing to get sufficient heat into his tyres ; Toro Rosso driver Sebastian Vettel and the two Force Indias of Giancarlo Fisichella and Adrian Sutil took positions 18 to 20 . The Super Aguri of Anthony Davidson and Takuma Sato would line up on the back row of the grid in their final race .

== Race ==

The conditions on the grid were dry before the race . The air temperature was 23 ° C (73 ° F) and the track temperature was 38 ° C (100 ° F) ; weather forecasts indicated a light wind , but otherwise calm conditions . Räikkönen held his lead into the first corner , as Massa passed Alonso to take second ; Hamilton passed Kubica to take fourth . However , an incident further down the field brought out the safety car . Sutil 's car entered a spin after attempting to pass Coulthard ; the resulting collision eliminated Sutil and Vettel from the Grand Prix . The race restarted on lap four when the safety car peeled off , Räikkönen quickly increased his lead over Massa to more than a second . The gap between the Ferraris increased as Räikkönen continued to lap the quickest on track ; Hamilton began to close in on Alonso , only to see the Renault pit on lap 16 , promoting the McLaren to third place .

Further down the field , several incidents reduced the field to 15 cars . Piquet , after running off the track on lap five , collided with Bourdais two laps later while attempting to pass at turn 10 . The Renault retired from the race immediately ; Bourdais struggled back to the pit lane before Toro Rosso decided to retire his car . The resulting debris ended Davidson 's race when he retired on lap eight after sustaining radiator damage . On lap 22 Kovalainen 's front left tyre suffered a rapid deflation , hurling his car into the barriers at an estimated 210 kilometres per hour (130 mph) , with an impact of 26 g . As the track marshals extracted the McLaren from the barriers , the safety car was once again deployed . Heidfeld was forced to pit immediately as he was low on fuel , incurring a ten @.@ second stop @.@ go penalty for coming in before the pit @.@ lane was officially re @.@ opened . Barrichello and Fisichella then collided in the pit @.@ lane on lap 26 , heavily damaging the Honda 's front wing , and requiring Barrichello to drive the whole lap with a disintegrating car , before retiring into his team 's garage .

Räikkönen , Massa , Hamilton , Kubica and Alonso , having already made their pit stops , trailed the safety car until it peeled off on lap 29 . As Räikkönen again increased his lead over Massa to more than two seconds , Alonso pulled over to the side of the track , smoke billowing from his engine , and retired . Rosberg 's engine also suffered a failure , and the Williams retired on lap 42 from seventh place . Four laps later , Räikkönen set the fastest lap of the race , a 1 : 21 @.@ 670 (a lap record that still stands) , as Massa pitted from behind him . Räikkönen , Hamilton and Kubica followed into the pit @.@ lane on lap 47 . Coulthard and Glock collided on lap 53 after the Toyota driver attempted to pass the Red Bull at the first corner . Glock sustained front wing damage , and Coulthard suffered a puncture to his left rear tyre ; both pitted soon after for repairs .

Räikkönen took his second win of the season when he crossed the line at the end of the 66th lap , 3 @.@ 2 seconds ahead of the second @.@ placed Massa . Hamilton took third , ahead of Kubica , Webber and Button , who scored Honda 's first points for the season . Nakajima finished in seventh place , ahead of Trulli , who was running in sixth place before his team mistakenly called him into the pit @.@ lane . Toyota had mistaken Glock 's damaged car for Trulli , dropping the latter down the order after the stop . Heidfeld , recovering after his penalty , finished in ninth place ahead of Fisichella . Glock and Coulthard filled the next two positions after their late collision , ahead of Sato in 13th . Rosberg , Alonso , Barrichello , Kovalainen , Davidson , Bourdais , Piquet , Vettel and Sutil

were the retirements from a punishing Spanish Grand Prix .

== Post @-@ race ==

The top three finishers appeared on the podium and in the subsequent press conference , where Räikkönen said his pole position start was an important factor in his victory : " This circuit is very difficult to overtake . The start is the best place and when you have a lot of things going with the safety car you might be lucky or very unlucky , so the best place to try to win is always from the front . It was good yesterday and it really helped us today . "

Massa said that the result was a good one for his team , as they moved ahead of BMW Sauber in the Constructors ' Championship : " We did our homework and brought two Ferrari 's in the front ? first and second ? which is very important for the Championship . " Although Ferrari had performed well , Massa said their speed was not significantly better than their opponents , so " we need to keep working like crazy in the factory to improve the car in every area . "

Hamilton agreed that the start was the most important part of the race : " Obviously when we qualified fifth we knew that it would be very difficult to beat the Ferraris . But the key was to get a good start and make as many places as possible and fortunately I was able to do that . " Apart from the start of the race , only two passing manoeuvres were recorded : Heidfeld 's lap 55 pass on Fisichella and Coulthard 's lap 61 pass on Sato .

Despite his accident , Kovalainen suffered no physical injuries , except for minor concussion . After spending the night under observation in a nearby hospital , the McLaren driver was cleared to race in the next Grand Prix , two weeks later . McLaren said that the wheel failure was due to a faulty wheel clamp which made it vulnerable to the rapid changes in load and pressure that a Formula One car endures , eventually leading to the deflated tyre and Kovalainen 's accident . Kovalainen praised Formula One 's safety procedures and medical staff :

It was a serious accident and I managed to walk away . I was a bit lucky , but the safety standards the FIA has been pushing worked very well , ... The chassis , the impact , all the barriers took the impact well , the FIA medical team plus the marshals and the team took the job very well and did a fantastic job to get me out of there quickly in a short period of time ... I was able to make a recovery without any injuries . I think it is something that we must still keep working on , but the work paid off that day .

However , Mark Webber , a director of the Grand Prix Drivers ' Association , said that standards at the track should have been better . Speaking in his regular BBC Online column , Webber said the " run @-@ off on that corner is too tight and we need to have a look at it because any driver that has an error there is going to have a big crash . If Heikki 's accident had happened two seconds later he would have been fine and controlled the car , but it probably happened on the worst section of that whole track . "

Räikkönen 's win increased his points tally in the Drivers ' Championship to 29 points , nine ahead of second @-@ placed Hamilton . Kubica and Massa were one and two points behind Hamilton , respectively ; Heidfeld was fifth on 16 points , after failing to score . In the Constructors ' Championship , Ferrari took the lead with 47 points , 12 points ahead of BMW Sauber and 13 points ahead of McLaren , with 14 races remaining in the season .

== Classification ==

== Qualifying ==

== Race ==

Notes

1 . ^ ? Heikki Kovalainen 's accident was caused by a wheel rim failure .

2 . This marks the last race for both Super Aguri drivers , Takuma Sato and Anthony Davidson as Super Aguri decided to withdraw from Formula One due to financial troubles .

= = Championship standings after the race = =

Note : Only the top five positions are included for both sets of standings .