

= 2008 German Grand Prix =

The 2008 German Grand Prix (formally the LXIX Großer Preis Santander von Deutschland) was a Formula One motor race held on 20 July 2008 at the Hockenheimring , Hockenheim , Germany . It was the 10th race of the 2008 Formula One season and was contested over 67 laps . It was won by Lewis Hamilton for the McLaren team after starting from pole position . Nelson Piquet Jr. finished second for Renault , with Felipe Massa third for Ferrari .

Hamilton maintained his startline advantage and led until he made his first pit stop on lap 18 . As other cars made their pit stops , Hamilton regained the lead on lap 22 . On lap 36 , Timo Glock crashed , and the race was neutralized by the deployment of the safety car . Hamilton , on a two @-@ stop strategy , did not stop to get more fuel during this period , while all the cars around him did . Thus , when he did eventually stop on lap 50 , he rejoined the race in fifth position . In the closing stages of the race , Hamilton first overtook his teammate Heikki Kovalainen , then Massa , and finally Piquet , whilst also gaining a position due to Nick Heidfeld 's late pit stop . This allowed him to take the lead again on lap 60 , which he maintained to win the race .

The victory was Hamilton 's second consecutive win , having won the preceding British Grand Prix at Silverstone . The win also put him ahead of his two main rivals in the Drivers ' Championship , Kimi Räikkönen (who finished sixth) and Massa , who were on equal points with him before the race . After the race he was four points ahead of Massa , and seven ahead of Räikkönen . In the Constructors ' Championship , McLaren drew closer to the two teams ahead of them , BMW Sauber and Ferrari . Ferrari still led by 15 points from McLaren , and 12 from BMW , whose drivers ? Nick Heidfeld and Robert Kubica ? finished fourth and seventh respectively .

= = Report = =

= = = Background = = =

The Grand Prix was contested by 20 drivers , in ten teams of two . The teams , also known as " constructors " , were Ferrari , McLaren @-@ Mercedes , Renault , BMW Sauber , Honda , Force India , Toyota , Red Bull Racing , Williams and Toro Rosso . Prior to the race , Lewis Hamilton , Kimi Räikkönen , and Felipe Massa led the Drivers ' Championship jointly , all with 48 points . Behind them was Robert Kubica in fourth with 46 points for BMW Sauber , and his teammate Nick Heidfeld in fifth with 36 points . In the Constructors ' Championship , Ferrari were leading with 96 points , 14 points ahead of BMW Sauber , who at this stage were ahead of McLaren , despite Hamilton tying for the lead of the Drivers ' World Championship . This was due to Heikki Kovalainen 's low point score of 24 . Toyota were fourth , with 25 points , ahead of Red Bull by one point , who in turn were one further point ahead of Renault .

Hamilton had won the preceding British Grand Prix by 68 seconds from Heidfeld and Honda 's Rubens Barrichello . Of his championship rivals , Räikkönen had finished fourth , Kubica had retired , and Massa had had a nightmare of a race , spinning five times and finishing 13th . In the run @-@ up to the German Grand Prix , Hamilton had tested the McLaren MP4 @-@ 23 's new front wing ? introduced at the British Grand Prix ? extensively in the team 's simulator , and then during a pre @-@ race test session at the Hockenheim circuit . Having honed the car 's setup to his liking after initially finding the handling difficult , he used it in the race . Kovalainen was not as comfortable with the car 's handling and ran a greater front wing angle to produce more downforce , at the expense of having to run larger radiators due to the reduced airflow produced over the car . This led to a slight reduction in his car 's overall performance . In other technical developments , Ferrari introduced revised bargeboards , exhaust exits and an altered windscreen for its F2008 car . BMW Sauber added turning vanes to the top of its F1.08 's nose , while Toyota removed some bodywork from its TF108 's exhaust exits . Honda also introduced new bargeboards for its RA108 chassis . All of these changes were carried out with the aim of improving each car 's aerodynamic performance .

== 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 . During the first practice session the track was wet following early @-@ morning rain , and shortly after the session started , further precipitation made the track even wetter , although it did begin to dry out as the session progressed . Hamilton was fastest in this session ahead of his teammate Kovalainen . The Ferraris of Massa and Räikkönen came third and fifth respectively , with Renault 's Fernando Alonso sandwiched between them in fourth place . Kubica spun off the track and Sébastien Bourdais had a mechanical problem with his flywheel sensor towards the end of the session . Both ended up at the bottom of the timesheets as a result of these problems . Friday 's second session was held in dry conditions . Hamilton again set the fastest time . Massa and Räikkönen improved to second and third positions , pushing Kovalainen down to fourth . Mark Webber set the fifth @-@ fastest time , after earlier having electrical and clutch problems with the car . Alonso , Nico Rosberg , Kubica , Heidfeld and David Coulthard made up the rest of the top ten .

In the final practice session on Saturday ? which was held in dry conditions ? Kovalainen was fastest , ahead of Massa and teammate Hamilton . Alonso continued his strong practice form , finishing fourth , with Toro Rosso 's Sebastian Vettel making it to fifth position . Kubica once again was at the bottom of the table , this time due to a transmission problem . The qualifying session on Saturday afternoon was split into three parts . The first part ran for 20 minutes , and cars that finished the session 16th or lower were eliminated from qualifying . The second part of qualifying lasted 15 minutes and eliminated cars that finished in positions 11 to 15 . 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 .

Hamilton took pole position for the ninth time in his career with a lap time of 1 : 15 @.@ 666 , having beaten Massa by two @-@ tenths of a second in his final lap of the third session . Kovalainen , coming back after an error during his first run , qualified third , with Jarno Trulli taking fourth position . Alonso and Räikkönen were close together in fifth and sixth positions , with just 0 @.@ 006 seconds separating them . Kubica took a comfortable seventh , half a second quicker in the third session than eighth @-@ placed Webber . Vettel and Coulthard completed the top ten . Timo Glock took 11th place on the grid for Toyota , seven places behind his teammate Trulli . He was immediately in front of compatriots Heidfeld and Rosberg . Jenson Button and Bourdais took 14th and 15th positions respectively . Both Heidfeld and Button later said that they suffered from tyre problems during the session .

Completing the field , Kazuki Nakajima was 16th , Nelson Piquet Jr . 17th , Rubens Barrichello 18th , whilst the Force Indias of Adrian Sutil and Giancarlo Fisichella brought up the rear of the grid in 19th and 20th positions . Piquet later complained that he was blocked during his first @-@ session run by Vettel : " During my lap , Vettel was in front of me , which unsettled me a little , although the FIA felt that he did not impede me . " Kovalainen was , however , penalized by the stewards and fined ? 5 @,@ 000 for using a refuelling system during qualifying which had not been approved by the FIA .

== Race ==

At the start , Hamilton , Massa and Kovalainen all maintained their grid positions . Hamilton quickly began to pull away from the other cars , at the rate of about half a second per lap . Behind the leading trio , Kubica passed Räikkönen off the grid , and went on to pass both Alonso and Trulli at the hairpin (turn 4) , when Alonso 's own attempted pass on Trulli delayed both drivers . The fight for fourth position continued in the early stages of the race . Kubica ran wide at the final corner on lap four , impeding Trulli and therefore allowing Alonso to attempt an overtaking manoeuvre on the

Toyota down the main straight . However , Trulli held on to his position , and Alonso was instead passed by Räikkönen , moving him down to sixth position . At the back of the field , Nakajima spun his Williams but recovered back onto the track and continued in the race .

At the first round of pit stops , Hamilton had a lead of nearly 20 seconds over Massa , and fuelled longer than all the other drivers in the points @-@ scoring positions when he pitted on lap 18 . Coming out of the pits , Hamilton made an error and was passed by Trulli . The two drivers then nearly collided at the hairpin , with Hamilton holding back for the rest of the lap waiting for Trulli to pit . Trulli 's teammate Glock stayed out on the track longer than all of the other drivers except Barrichello and Piquet , meaning that when he pitted , he was actually in third position and rejoined the race in eighth . Hamilton regained the lead by lap 22 after Massa , Kovalainen , Trulli and Räikkönen made their pit stops , and had in the region of an 11 second lead over Massa at the half @-@ way stage of the race . Behind the leaders , fourth @-@ placed Kubica was beginning to catch Kovalainen in third , while Trulli , Räikkönen , Alonso and Vettel battled over the final four point @-@ scoring places .

On the 36th lap , Glock 's right @-@ rear suspension failed coming out of the final corner . He spun through 180 degrees before hitting the pit wall with a strong rearward impact , with debris flying across the track . The car , pointing the wrong way , rolled to a stop on the grass . A dazed Glock extracted himself before being treated at the medical centre . The safety car was deployed after the accident . When the pit lane opened on lap 38 , most drivers headed in , including all of the leaders except Hamilton . McLaren believed that Hamilton had enough fuel to stay out , the plan being for him to then rapidly pull away from his heavily @-@ fuelled rivals , after the safety car went in . Hamilton needed to build up enough of a lead to rejoin still in first position , following his final pit stop . This would prove to be very risky , as Massa rejoined in fourth position , fuelled to the finish .

Piquet , on a one @-@ stop strategy after his poor qualifying performance , had fortuitously pitted immediately prior to the safety car 's deployment and was also fuelled to the end of the race . Promoted to third place from 14th beforehand following the pit stops , he was set to take the lead once Hamilton and Heidfeld (who also had not pitted under the safety car conditions) pitted for their final stops . Further back , Vettel squeezed past Alonso at the pit exit , pushing him over the white line separating the pit lane exit from the track . Alonso complained over his radio but no action was taken against either driver . Meanwhile , Räikkönen dropped several places to 11th , having had to queue behind Massa at the second pit stops .

When the safety car came in on lap 42 , Hamilton led , while Heidfeld and Piquet were running second and third . Behind them were Massa , Kubica , Kovalainen , Trulli , Vettel , Alonso , Webber , Rosberg and Räikkönen . Webber 's Red Bull had been dripping oil for a couple of laps after picking up debris from Glock 's crash , and on lap 40 he pulled out of the race . Räikkönen quickly passed Rosberg , and then overtook the squabbling Vettel and Alonso on the way down to the hairpin , while Hamilton desperately tried to pull away at the front . Räikkönen passed Trulli two laps later , while Kovalainen overtook Kubica for fifth place . Coulthard and Barrichello collided on the 48th lap with both cars pitting for repairs . Barrichello retired three laps later due to damage sustained as a result of the incident . Hamilton pitted on lap 50 , coming out behind Heidfeld , Piquet , Massa and Kovalainen . Kovalainen let his teammate past at the hairpin one lap later , meaning that Hamilton was now fourth . On lap 52 , Heidfeld set a new fastest lap time of 1 : 15 @. @ 987 . He was the only driver to go under one minute 16 seconds during the Grand Prix . At the end of the following lap , Heidfeld entered the pits with a sizeable gap over Piquet , returning to the field comfortably ahead of Kovalainen , but behind Hamilton .

Hamilton 's speed allowed him to quickly catch Massa in second position , with Piquet in the lead by a further three seconds . On lap 57 , Hamilton passed Massa at the hairpin . Massa appeared to have the inside line covered , but he was not fully committed to the line into the braking zone , giving Hamilton the chance to take second position . Three laps later , he used a similar overtaking move to overtake Piquet , although the Renault driver put up a greater fight than Massa had . Hamilton led easily to the finish , although Piquet kept within six seconds of him . Heidfeld threatened a slowing Massa in the last laps , while Räikkönen was able to pass Kubica for sixth place on lap 60 .

Hamilton took the chequered flag first , while Piquet enthusiastically celebrated his drive from 17th

to second , just 5 @. @ 5 seconds behind . Massa held on to take third ahead of Heidfeld , Kovalainen , Räikkönen , and Kubica . Vettel secured eighth ? the last points @- @ scoring position ? for Toro Rosso , ahead of Trulli in ninth , and Rosberg in 10th . Alonso finished 11th , ahead of Bourdais . Coulthard was 13th , Fisichella 14th , Nakajima 15th , Sutil 16th and Button was last of the classified finishers in 17th . A record of sixteen drivers finished on the lead lap , beating the previous highest number of fourteen at the 1999 Belgian Grand Prix .

= = = Post @- @ race = = =

Following the podium ceremony , in which two Brazilian drivers participated for the first time since the 1991 Belgian Grand Prix , the top three finishers appeared in the obligatory press conference . Hamilton said that the decision to not make a pit stop during the safety car period was the team 's decision : " We had two very comfortable , two very decent stints and the team opted for me to stay out . I guess they thought I could pull out a gap but it was a 23 second gap I needed and I only had seven laps or something , so I don 't know how that worked out . " Hamilton added that he felt that things looked good for the rest of the season , stating that " if we [McLaren] can continue with this momentum we have got we are looking very good " .

Ron Dennis , McLaren 's team principal , also commented on the pit stop decision :

The deployment of the Safety Car presented us with a difficult decision : should we or should we not bring Lewis in for a pitstop ? We decided that , since he still had quite a lot of fuel on board , we would leave him out until lap 50 . We 'd expected the track to be cleared of debris a little faster than it was , which would have allowed the Safety Car to come in a bit earlier . As a result , Lewis was unable to rejoin the race in the lead .

Piquet was delighted with his drive to second after qualifying 17th , saying :

I am obviously very happy ! After qualifying yesterday I was thinking that my weekend was over , but we opted for an aggressive strategy in the race and the team made some great decisions when the safety car came out . Then I had to concentrate to keep my pace up and look after my tyres as much as possible towards the end of the race . I knew that Lewis was much faster than me , so I did not want to take any pointless risks . This second place today is a great reward for the whole team .

Although Piquet 's result was fortuitous , Renault Engineering Director , Pat Symonds , subsequently praised him for stepping up to the job of staying with the leaders in the final stint of the race . Meanwhile , Massa commented that his car was not in good order during the race : " It was just slow with difficult stability and also on braking I think I had a little problem as well and lost a lot of performance . I didn 't have the car to fight . I tried but it was not possible . " Teammate Räikkönen also struggled with low grip and hot brakes for the duration of the race , while Kovalainen and Kubica had problems with their tyres .

Fisichella was penalised 25 seconds for unlapping lead cars during the safety car period , which dropped him from 14th to 16th position . The stewards issued the following statement about the decision : " While the safety car was deployed , the driver of car 21 [Fisichella] chose to enter the pits before ' Lapped cars may now overtake ' was shown on the timing monitors . Having done so the driver of car 21 on leaving the pitlane should then not have unlappped himself . "

The treatment of Glock after his crash caused Toyota some concern . Toyota did not think that normal FIA procedure had been followed . After crashes , drivers are normally taken out of the car in their seat , whereas Glock was unstrapped and then hauled out by the marshals . Glock stayed in hospital overnight for observation , but was released the next day with no injuries . Toyota subsequently confirmed that the failed suspension component had already completed a full race distance at the previous Grand Prix , and resolved to adjust its checking procedures .

The new gap between Hamilton and Massa in the Drivers ' Championship after the race stood at four points in Hamilton 's favour . In the Constructors ' Championship , McLaren somewhat caught up on Ferrari , although the gap between the two teams was still sizeable at 19 points . McLaren were ten points behind BMW coming into the race and the deficit was reduced to three due to the race result .

= = Classification = =

= = = Qualifying = = =

= = = Race = = =

= = Championship standings after the race = =

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