

= 2008 Brazilian Grand Prix =

The 2008 Brazilian Grand Prix ( formally the XXXVII Grande Prêmio do Brasil ) was a Formula One motor race held on 2 November 2008 at the Autódromo José Carlos Pace , Interlagos , in São Paulo , Brazil . It was the 18th and final race of the 2008 Formula One season . The 71 @-@ lap race was won by Ferrari driver Felipe Massa after starting from pole position . Fernando Alonso finished second in a Renault , and Kimi Räikkönen third in a Ferrari .

Massa started the race alongside Toyota driver Jarno Trulli . Massa 's teammate Räikkönen began from third next to McLaren driver Lewis Hamilton . Rain fell minutes before the race , delaying the start , and as the track dried Massa established a lead of several seconds . More rain late in the race made the last few laps treacherous for the drivers , but could not prevent Massa from winning the Grand Prix . Sebastian Vettel of Toro Rosso finished in fourth place behind Alonso and Räikkönen . Hamilton passed Toyota 's Timo Glock in the final corners of the race to finish fifth , securing him the points needed to take the Drivers ' Championship .

Hamilton received praise from many in the Formula One community , including former Champions Damon Hill and Michael Schumacher . The McLaren driver also received official congratulations from Queen Elizabeth II and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown . Massa 's win and Räikkönen 's third place helped Ferrari win the Constructors ' Championship . The Grand Prix was David Coulthard 's final race ; the Scot retired after 246 race starts .

= = Report = =

= = = Background = = =

Heading into the final race of the season , McLaren driver Lewis Hamilton was leading the Drivers ' Championship with 94 points ; Ferrari driver Felipe Massa was second on 87 points , seven points behind Hamilton . A maximum of ten points were available for the final race , which meant that Massa could still win the title if Hamilton finished in sixth place or lower . Otherwise , Hamilton would be Champion . In the event of a points tie , Massa would win the Championship on a count @-@ back , having more wins . Behind Hamilton and Massa in the Drivers ' Championship , Robert Kubica was third on 75 points in a BMW , and Massa 's Ferrari teammate Kimi Räikkönen was fourth on 69 points . In the Constructors ' Championship , Ferrari were leading on 156 points and McLaren ? Mercedes were second on 145 points , 11 points behind , with a maximum of 18 points available . If the two Ferraris finished in the top six , the team would secure the Constructors ' Championship , even if the McLaren drivers were to finish as the top two . Prior to this race , Hamilton was criticised by many pundits for not keeping a cool head at the 2008 Japanese Grand Prix . The Times columnist Edward Gorman said that Hamilton should win the Championship , but :

Alternatively Hamilton may suffer another one of his rushes of blood to the head and do something utterly unnecessary at Interlagos , just as he did in Japan eight days ago and in Brazil last year , and throw it all away ... Suddenly defending even a seven @-@ point lead sounds a tall order .

Former Formula One team owner Eddie Jordan created controversy when he said that " if Massa tries to take him out as he did in Japan in order to steal the title then Lewis has to be ready for it , " adding " If he tries that on then Lewis has to turn his wheel into Massa to ensure he does not finish the race either ? he has to take his wheel off . " Both Hamilton and Massa rejected the comments ; Massa said " Playing dirty has never been part of my game . I don 't want anything to do with it . The only thing on my mind is winning the race . "

The weekend marked David Coulthard 's final race . Coulthard 's Red Bull RB4 was decorated in the colours of " Wings for Life " , a charity dedicated to raising awareness of spinal cord injuries . Coulthard said " I 'm dedicating my last race to the vision of making paraplegia curable " . Red Bull Racing received approval from the Fédération Internationale de l 'Automobile , Formula One 's governing body , to run Coulthard 's car in different colours than his teammate Mark Webber . This was also the last Formula One race broadcast by ITV in the United Kingdom and Telecinco in Spain

; the rights went to the BBC and La Sexta , respectively , for 2009 . Also , this was the last race for the Honda team before they announced that they would pull out of F1 due to the global economic crisis .

== Practice and qualifying ==

Three practice sessions were held before the race ; the first on Friday morning and the second on Friday afternoon . Both sessions lasted 90 minutes . The third session was held on Saturday morning and lasted an hour . The two sessions on Friday were affected by occasionally damp conditions , which made the track moderately slippery . Massa was quickest with a time of 1 : 12 @. @ 305 in the first session , less than two @-@ tenths of a second faster than Hamilton . Räikkönen was just off Hamilton 's pace , followed by Kubica , Heikki Kovalainen , and Fernando Alonso . Webber was seventh , still within a second of Massa 's time . In the second practice session , Alonso was fastest with a time of 1 : 12 @. @ 296 , less than six @-@ hundredths of a second quicker than second @-@ placed Massa . Jarno Trulli took third place , ahead of Räikkönen , Webber and Sebastian Vettel . Hamilton only managed ninth place , locking his McLaren 's wheels and struggling for grip . Kovalainen was only quick enough for fifteenth position . The Saturday morning session was held on a much warmer track , which reached temperatures as high as 36 ° C ( 97 ° F ) . Alonso was again quickest , posting a time of 1 : 12 @. @ 141 , narrowly faster than both McLaren drivers . Massa , Vettel , and Nick Heidfeld rounded out the top six positions . Räikkönen only managed twelfth , failing to improve on his times set early in the session .

The qualifying session on Saturday afternoon was split into three parts . The first part ran for 20 minutes and eliminated the cars from qualifying that finished the session 16th or lower . 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 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 .

Massa clinched his sixth pole position for the season , and his third consecutive pole at Interlagos , with a time of 1 : 12 @. @ 368 . He was joined on the front row of the grid by Trulli , in his best qualifying performance of the season . Räikkönen qualified third , though he was happy with beginning the race on the racing line behind his teammate . Hamilton qualified fourth , half a second behind Massa , having battled both Ferrari drivers for time during the first two qualifying sessions . Hamilton 's slow pace in the final qualifying session compared to the first two suggested he was carrying more fuel than his title challengers . Hamilton 's teammate Kovalainen qualified fifth . Alonso , Vettel , Heidfeld , Sébastien Bourdais and Timo Glock rounded out the top ten . Kubica only managed 13th , having struggled with overall grip for much of the day . Coulthard , in his final Formula One race , qualified 14th ; Rubens Barrichello , in 15th , was quicker than Honda teammate Jenson Button in 17th . The Williams and Force India drivers qualified at the back of the grid , covering positions 16 to 20 with Button .

== Race ==

The conditions on the grid were damp before the race , the air temperature at 28 ° C ( 82 ° F ) ; rain or thunderstorms were expected . The race was due to begin at 15 : 00 local time ( UTC @-@ 2 ) , but was delayed by ten minutes when heavy rain hit the track at 14 : 56 . Every team but one changed the tyres on both their cars from dry @-@ weather tyres to intermediate tyres . Kubica 's car was the exception , remaining on the dry set @-@ up . Following the formation lap , Kubica returned to the pits , his team changing the car 's tyres to intermediates . This meant the Polish driver would start the race from the pit @-@ lane .

Massa retained his pole position lead into the first corner , followed by Trulli , Räikkönen , Hamilton and Kovalainen . Coulthard was hit from behind by Nico Rosberg into turn two , spinning him around . The Red Bull car then collided with Rosberg 's Williams teammate Kazuki Nakajima . This damaged the suspension and forced Coulthard to retire in his final race . Piquet spun off at the next

corner , his car hitting the barriers . Kovalainen was passed by Alonso and Vettel mid @-@ lap , dropping him to seventh . The accidents of Coulthard and Piquet prompted the deployment of the safety car at the end of the first lap . The track conditions began to dry early on ; Force India 's Giancarlo Fisichella was the first driver to stop for dry @-@ weather tyres , pitting at the end of lap two . He remained in 18th position . Racing resumed on lap five when the safety car pulled into the pit @-@ lane . Rosberg and Button both pitted on lap seven , each changing to dry @-@ weather tyres . Bourdais , Glock , Adrian Sutil and Nakajima followed a lap later . By lap 11 , the rest of the field had changed to dry @-@ weather tyres . Fisichella benefited from pitting the earliest for dry tyres , moving up the order to a high of fifth position .

Nakajima spun on lap 13 , losing five seconds on the lap . On lap 15 , Massa set a new fastest lap of 1 : 16 @.@ 888 , and extended his lead over Vettel . Hamilton remained behind Fisichella , and though his McLaren car appeared quicker , he was unable to pass the Force India driver until lap 18 . Glock passed Fisichella two laps later . Trulli and Bourdais collided on lap 20 into turn one , sending the Toro Rosso driver across the grass . Bourdais lost six places and rejoined in 13th place . Trulli 's Toyota teammate , Timo Glock , passed Fisichella later on in the same lap for sixth . Massa and Sebastian Vettel traded fastest lap times ; Vettel 's 1 : 14 @.@ 214 on lap 25 was surpassed by Massa 's 1 : 14 @.@ 161 a lap later . However , Vettel pitted soon after , having been lighter @-@ fuelled than his Ferrari opponent . He rejoined in sixth position , behind Glock . Kovalainen passed Trulli and Fisichella in separate manoeuvres , gaining seventh position . On lap 36 Massa set the fastest lap of the race , a 1 : 13 @.@ 736 .

Timo Glock was fuelled so he could complete the race without stopping again , when he pitted on lap 36 . Massa was the first of the Championship frontrunners to pit , on lap 38 ; Alonso and Hamilton pitted two laps after . When Räikkönen pitted on lap 43 , Massa had regained the lead , ahead of Alonso . Räikkönen rejoined ahead of Hamilton in third place . Fisichella 's stop was marred by transmission problems , dropping him to 18th position when he resumed . Vettel pitted again on lap 51 , his team fuelling him to the finish . He rejoined in fifth . By lap 54 , Massa had extended his already comfortable lead over Alonso to 9 @.@ 6 seconds . Vettel was closing in quickly on Hamilton , the McLaren driver needing to finish no lower than fifth to win the Championship .

Light rain began to fall on lap 63 . Heidfeld pitted and his BMW pit crew changed his tyres to intermediates , echoing their strategy at the Belgian Grand Prix which had granted the German a podium position . Kovalainen pitted on lap 65 ; Alonso and Räikkönen pitted a lap later . Hamilton and Vettel halted their battle for fourth position when they came into the pits to change onto intermediate tyres on lap 66 . Glock chose to remain on his dry @-@ weather tyres and rose from seventh to fourth place as those ahead of him pitted . Massa pitted on lap 67 , meaning that all of the frontrunners , with the exception of Glock , were now on intermediate tyres . The rain began to fall heavily on lap 69 , as Hamilton ran wide , which allowed Vettel to take fifth position . As Massa crossed the finish line to win the race , Hamilton battled Vettel for the crucial point needed to win the Championship . However , Vettel and Hamilton passed Glock in the final corners , the Toyota driver struggling for grip as his dry @-@ weather tyres slid on the wet track . Premature joy in the Ferrari garage soon turned to disappointment as Hamilton finished the race in fifth position , clinching the Championship by a single point and becoming Formula One 's youngest Championship winner until Vettel in 2010 . Räikkönen 's third @-@ place finish behind Alonso was enough to secure Ferrari the constructors ' title . After the race , one of the Hondas caught fire .

= = = Post @-@ race = = =

The top three finishers appeared on the podium and in the subsequent press conference . Massa said that he had " almost done everything perfectly " , and expressed his disappointment that despite winning the race he had not won the Championship . However , he gave his congratulations to Hamilton for his title win :

We need to congratulate Lewis because he did a great championship and he scored more points than us , so he deserves to be champion . I know how to lose and I know how to win and as I said

before it is another day of my life from which I am going to learn a lot .

Massa 's Ferrari teammate Kimi Räikkönen expressed disappointment in the outcome of the Drivers ' Championship , but acknowledged the support of his team , saying " we won at least the team championship " . Ferrari president Luca di Montezemolo was reportedly so angry with the result , however , that he destroyed the television he was viewing the race on . McLaren boss Ron Dennis praised Hamilton , saying " He just keeps delivering and , at the end of the day , he 's just two years into his career . So there 's a long way to go . "

Hamilton received official congratulations from Queen Elizabeth II , following similar plaudits from British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Opposition Leader David Cameron . Former Formula One Champions also congratulated Hamilton ; 1996 Formula One Champion Damon Hill called the McLaren driver " one of the greatest drivers we have had in this country " . Multiple Champion Michael Schumacher praised both Hamilton and Massa , saying the Ferrari driver 's performance indicated his winning abilities . Massa was praised for his sportsmanship after the race ; Joe Saward of GrandPrix.com said " He took defeat with a grace and a style that one rarely sees in modern sport . "

However , Eddie Jordan said that Hamilton " didn 't really give himself the best chance of winning the championship ? and was very lucky " . The former team boss called McLaren 's strategy " a disaster " . GrandPrix.com expressed disbelief in the outcome : " It was a showdown so improbable that even Hollywood would not have made a film of it . The scriptwriters would have been laughed out of the studios . " Autosport magazine writer Adam Cooper called the race " epic " . After considering other Formula One title finales , Cooper concluded " nothing has ever matched what we saw [ in Brazil ] " .

Timo Glock remained certain the decision to stay on dry @-@ weather tyres , when other teams were pitting for wet @-@ weather tyres , was a correct one : " We were running seventh before the rain came and we would have probably finished there if it had been totally dry . Instead we finished sixth so that shows the strategy was the right one . " Glock added that the conditions were so poor " I didn 't even know that Lewis had overtaken me until after the race " .

Kubica 's finish in 11th position meant that he lost third place in the Championship to Räikkönen . After the race , Kubica said " We made too many mistakes during the weekend and this is the result . " His team said that they had received the wrong information about track conditions at the start of the race , which led them to keep the Polish driver 's car on dry @-@ weather tyres when the rest of the field had changed to intermediates .

David Coulthard expressed his disappointment in his early exit from his final Formula One race , saying that " I 'm pretty gutted , it 's not how I wanted to end my career . " The Scottish driver said that he had planned to perform doughnuts for the crowd , a celebration discouraged in Formula One . Coulthard left Formula One after 15 years with 246 race starts and 13 wins . Red Bull team principal Christian Horner said " It 's a great shame for David to be eliminated from his last Grand Prix at the first corner , but he can look back on a long and illustrious career where he 's achieved a great deal . " Coulthard continued to work for Red Bull Racing in 2009 as a testing and development consultant .

= = Classification = =

= = = Qualifying = = =

= = = Race = = =

= = Championship standings after the race = =

Bold text indicates the World Champions .

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