

= 1995 Japanese Grand Prix =

The 1995 Japanese Grand Prix (formally the XXI Fuji Television Japanese Grand Prix) was a Formula One motor race held on 29 October 1995 , at the Suzuka Circuit , Suzuka . It was the sixteenth and penultimate round of the 1995 Formula One season . The 53 lap race was won by Michael Schumacher for the Benetton team after he started from pole position . Mika Häkkinen finished second in a McLaren , and Johnny Herbert third in the other Benetton car .

Jean Alesi , driving for Ferrari , started second , alongside Schumacher . However , Alesi was forced to serve a 10 second stop and go penalty because his car moved forward before the start . Alesi climbed back up to second , before retiring on lap 25 . Schumacher 's rival in the Drivers ' Championship , Damon Hill , started fourth amidst pressure from the British media after poor performances at previous races . Hill moved up to second because of Alesi 's retirement , but spun off the track on lap 40 .

Schumacher 's win was his ninth of the season , matching the record set in 1992 by Nigel Mansell . Benetton was confirmed Constructors ' Champions as Williams could not pass its points total in the one remaining race .

= = Report = =

= = = Background = = =

Heading into the penultimate race of the season , Benetton driver Michael Schumacher had already won the season 's Drivers ' Championship , having clinched the title at the previous race , the Pacific Grand Prix . Schumacher led the championship with 92 points ; Damon Hill was second with 59 points . A maximum of 20 points were available for the remaining two races , which meant that Hill could not catch Schumacher . Although the Drivers ' Championship was decided , the Constructors ' Championship was not . Benetton were leading on 123 points and Williams were second with 102 points heading into the 16th race , with a maximum of 32 points available . In the week leading up to the race , Hill was criticised by the British media after poor performances in previous races ; there was continued speculation that Williams were going to replace him with Heinz Harald Frentzen or Gerhard Berger for the 1996 season . Despite the rumours , Williams team boss Frank Williams gave Hill " an unequivocal vote of confidence " heading into the race .

There were two driver changes heading into the race . Having been in one of the two Sauber cars since the fifth race of the season at Monaco , Jean Christophe Boullion was released from the team and replaced by Karl Wendlinger . The Austrian was given another chance to prove himself after suffering an accident at the 1994 Monaco Grand Prix , which left him in a coma for weeks . The second driver change was Mika Häkkinen 's return to McLaren after missing the Pacific Grand Prix because of an operation for appendicitis .

= = = Practice and qualifying = = =

Two practice sessions were held before the race ; the first was held on Friday morning and the second on Saturday morning . Both sessions lasted 1 hour and 45 minutes with weather conditions dry throughout . Schumacher was fastest in the first session , posting a time of 1 : 40 . 410 , two tenths of a second quicker than Häkkinen . The Williams and Ferrari cars occupied the remaining top six positions ; Williams drivers Hill and David Coulthard third and fifth respectively . The Ferraris were fourth and sixth fastest ; Jean Alesi ahead of Berger . Häkkinen lapped faster than Schumacher in the second practice session with a time of 1 : 40 . 389 . Eddie Irvine took second place in the Jordan car , three tenths of a second behind Häkkinen . Hill was third in the Williams , two tenths behind Häkkinen , with Schumacher fourth behind Hill . The Ferraris were fifth and eighth ; Alesi in front of Berger . Frentzen 's Sauber and Coulthard 's Williams split the Ferraris . Despite both the Williams cars going off into the gravel , Hill and Coulthard made the top

10 .

The qualifying session was split into two one @-@ hour sessions ; the first was held on Friday afternoon with the second held on Saturday afternoon . The fastest time from either sessions counted towards their final grid position . Schumacher clinched his tenth career pole position , in his Benetton B195 , with a time of 1 : 38 @.@ 023 . He was joined on the front row by Alesi , who was eight @-@ tenths of a second behind . Schumacher was particularly pleased with the performance of his Benetton , saying that " I have rarely had such a good car ... I think I can be confident for the race " . Alesi was satisfied about his performance , but worried about a mechanical problem which had caused him to crash on Friday , accusing the Ferrari team of withholding information from him . Alesi was scheduled to leave Ferrari for Benetton in a swap with Schumacher at the end of the season , and the relationship between him and the team was becoming increasingly strained . Häkkinen was third in the McLaren , with Hill fourth , a second slower than Schumacher . Despite Häkkinen 's best qualifying effort of the season alongside his Belgium third place , his teammate , Mark Blundell , had a disappointing qualifying session . In the first part of qualifying , Blundell crashed into the wall , meaning he could not set a time as his car was too badly damaged . Blundell had his second crash of the weekend at the 130R corner in Saturday practice , which was more serious than the first . Following medical advice , Blundell did not participate in the second qualifying session . He was unable to set a time , leaving him at the back of the grid . Aguri Suzuki crashed his Ligier during Saturday qualifying ; he was unable to start the race since he was in a hospital with a broken rib .

= = = Race = = =

The track surface was damp for most of the race , which meant that lap times were slower than the previous days ' qualifying sessions . The drivers took to the track at 09 : 30 JST (GMT + 9) for a 30 @-@ minute warmup session . Despite underperforming in qualifying , both Williams cars performed better in the wet weather warmup session ; Hill had the fastest time of 2 : 00 @.@ 025 . Coulthard was third in the other Williams car ; Schumacher split them in second position . Alesi completed the top four , eight @-@ tenths of a second behind Hill . Though 24 cars qualified for the race , only 22 took the start : Suzuki was unable to start because of his crash in qualifying and Roberto Moreno 's Forti car suffered a gearbox problem . For the first time since the Japanese Grand Prix was held at Suzuka in 1987 , tickets for the race did not sell out , despite the fact that three Japanese drivers entered the race .

The race started at 14 : 00 JST . All of the drivers opted to start on wet weather tyres as the track was damp from the morning rain . Schumacher , from pole position on the grid , held onto the lead into the first corner . Alesi , who started alongside Schumacher , was judged to have jumped the start , and served a 10 @-@ second stop @-@ and @-@ go penalty on lap three , from which he returned to the race in tenth place . Alesi 's teammate Berger also jumped the start and received the same penalty . Gianni Morbidelli , near the back of the field in one of the Footwork cars , spun at the first corner on lap one after being hit from behind by Wendlinger 's Sauber . Morbidelli stalled his car in the process , forcing him to retire from the race . On lap seven , Alesi stopped at the pits to change to dry weather slick tyres , as the track was beginning to dry . On returning to the race , he began to make his way through the field constantly recording fastest laps ; the first of which was 1 : 54 @.@ 416 , five seconds faster than the remainder of the field . Schumacher made a pit stop on lap 10 for slicks , handing the lead to Häkkinen for a lap before he too pitted . Alesi 's progress was interrupted when he spun attempting to pass Pedro Lamy 's Minardi for 15th place , but he made his way up to second by lap 10 , overtaking Hill around the outside in the final chicane to take the place . Alerted by Alesi 's pace on the slick tyres , the other drivers came into the pits to change to slick tyres .

The two Jordan cars collided on lap 15 . Rubens Barrichello spun in the final chicane when he attempted to brake later than his teammate Irvine . Barrichello hit a wall , which damaged his car 's rear wing and caused him to retire from the race . Irvine was involved in another collision at the chicane on lap 20 when Frentzen hit him from behind . Irvine continued without damage , but

Frentzen had to pit for a new front wing . At the front , Alesi was lapping faster than Schumacher , even though Schumacher was on dry tyres . Alesi was only six seconds behind Schumacher when his Ferrari 412T2 suffered an apparent differential failure on lap 25 . It was later discovered that the problem was a driveshaft failure , possibly as a result of his earlier spin . Schumacher pitted for a second time on lap 31 , returning to the race in second place behind Hill . Schumacher set the fastest lap of the race on lap 33 , and regained his lead on the next lap when Hill made his pit stop . Behind them , Häkkinen and Coulthard were third and fourth respectively before their pit stops , but Coulthard pitted six laps later than Häkkinen and returned to the track in third place , one place ahead of the Finn . Johnny Herbert was fifth in the second Benetton car after the second round of pit stops , with Irvine rounding out the point @-@ scoring places in sixth .

At this stage , the rain began to fall again , but only at the Spoon Curve end of the track . The Williams drivers were second and third until Hill ran off the track at Spoon Curve two laps after his pit stop . He damaged his front wing in the process and returned to the track in fourth . Hill returned to the pits to let his pit crew replace the damaged wing . He rejoined fifth , but was then given a ten @-@ second stop @-@ and @-@ go penalty for speeding in the pitlane . Coulthard made the same mistake as his teammate by running through the gravel trap at the Spoon Curve but looked like he was going to escape with only minor damage . However , as he braked for 130R , the next corner , the gravel which had entered his sidepods flew out , causing him to lose control and get his car stuck in the gravel trap . Hill was told by his team on the radio to speed up as he had not yet taken his stop @-@ and @-@ go penalty , but later that lap he spun off at Spoon Curve and retired from the race without having taken the penalty . Blundell , Irvine and Frentzen also left the track at Spoon Curve but all finished the race . With his closest challenger out , Schumacher won the race after 53 laps to secure his ninth victory of the season in a time of 1 : 36 : 52 @. @ 930 . The win , along with Herbert 's third place and the retirements of Hill and Coulthard , gave Benetton the 1995 Constructors ' Championship . Häkkinen finished second in his McLaren , 20 seconds behind Schumacher . Irvine was fourth in his Jordan with Olivier Panis fifth in his Ligier . Mika Salo took sixth place and the final point in his Tyrrell . Despite starting last , Blundell finished in seventh , just 1 @. @ 6 seconds behind Salo . The delayed Frentzen , Luca Badoer , Wendlinger , Lamy and Taki Inoue completed the finishers .

== = Post @-@ race == =

This was Schumacher 's last win for Benetton , as he moved to the Ferrari team for the 1996 season . Herbert reiterated Schumacher 's opinion by stating that Benetton did " a fantastic job " . Hill was disappointed about the race and the season as a whole ; he said afterwards :

Just when you think that it couldn 't get any worse , it does . There is no easy way out of this , you just have to keep pressing on . The easiest thing to do is to give up , and it would probably be less painful that way , but that is not an option . While we were in the race we were competitive and I was in with a shout , I suppose , all the time I was on the track . But things took a massive turn for the worse , I am afraid . I drove through the rain and the second time I spun off I think it was oil rather than rain . It is not a glorious end to the season but the ingredients are all there and there is no reason why we should not get into the winning habit again .

As a result of Hill not taking his 10 @-@ second stop @-@ and @-@ go penalty because of his retirement , Williams were fined \$ 10 @, @ 000 by Formula One 's governing body , the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) . In an interview with Motor Sport magazine in 2008 , Hill said that the 1995 season , as a whole , " went down , mentally , and it all just got to me " . He also said he believed that it was in 1995 that Frank Williams and Patrick Head decided to replace him for the 1997 season .

1980 Formula One World Champion Alan Jones praised Alesi 's performance , saying that it " will go down as one of the great drives in Grand Prix racing " . Alesi stated that if his driveshaft had not failed , he would " have fought for it , all the way to the end " . Alesi added that he believed he did not jump the start , but admitted that " the car crept forwards by a few centimetres " because of the downhill slope of the grid . In an interview with Autosport magazine in 2009 , Alesi said that he went

to see the race director before the race to see how he could avoid a penalty at the downhill start and that he was " totally fed up " with the penalty decision given . Berger also questioned his penalty , claiming that his car did not move before the green light went on .

= = 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 .