

= 2008 Turkish Grand Prix =

The 2008 Turkish Grand Prix ( formally the IV Petrol Ofisi Turkish Grand Prix ) was a Formula One motor race held on 11 May 2008 at the Istanbul Racing Circuit , Istanbul , Turkey . It was the fifth race of the 2008 Formula One season . The 58 @-@ lap race was won by Felipe Massa for the Ferrari team after starting from pole position . Lewis Hamilton finished second in a McLaren , with Kimi Räikkönen third in the second Ferrari .

Massa claimed pole , with teammate Räikkönen fourth , the two Ferrari cars sandwiching the McLarens of Heikki Kovalainen and Hamilton . At the first corner Räikkönen clipped Kovalainen 's rear tyre and gave him a puncture . The safety car was deployed on the first lap , after a collision , but only remained out for one lap . During the course of the race , Hamilton , intending to make one more pit stop than both Ferrari drivers , was faster than Massa due to carrying a lighter fuel load and overtook him on lap 24 . After Hamilton had made his third pit stop , he rejoined in second behind Massa but in front of the Championship leader , Räikkönen . Massa won the race , with Hamilton 3 @.@ 779 seconds behind , and Räikkönen a further half @-@ second behind . The two BMW Sauber cars of Robert Kubica and Nick Heidfeld took fourth and fifth .

In the week running up to the grand prix , the Super Aguri team had withdrawn from Formula One , due to financial problems , leaving the sport with only ten teams . Massa 's victory was his third consecutive pole position and victory in Turkey , having also won the race from pole in 2006 and 2007 . Rubens Barrichello celebrated his 257th Grand Prix start , breaking Riccardo Patrese 's previous record of 256 . Due to the race result , Räikkönen 's lead in the Drivers ' Championship was lowered to seven points . Massa rose to second from fourth , whilst Hamilton dropped to third , both drivers tying on 28 points but separated by Massa 's two wins thus far to Hamilton 's one . In the Constructors ' Championship , Ferrari increased their lead to 22 points ahead of BMW Sauber , with McLaren a further two points behind in third .

= = Report = =

= = = Background = = =

The Grand Prix was contested by 20 drivers , in ten teams of two . The teams , also known as " constructors " , were Ferrari , BMW Sauber , Renault , Williams , Red Bull Racing , Toyota , Toro Rosso , Honda , Force India and McLaren . This was two drivers fewer than in previous rounds of the 2008 season , due to the withdrawal of the Super Aguri team from the sport following the previous race .

Going into the race , Kimi Räikkönen was leading the Drivers ' Championship , on 29 points ; nine points ahead of Lewis Hamilton , with Räikkönen 's teammate , Felipe Massa , in fourth 11 points behind . BMW Sauber drivers Robert Kubica and Nick Heidfeld were third and fifth , on 19 and 16 points respectively . In the Constructors ' Championship Ferrari were leading on 47 points ; 12 points ahead of BMW Sauber on 35 points , with McLaren just one further point behind them . The race was also Rubens Barrichello 's 257th Grand Prix , which broke the record for the number of Grand Prix starts previously held by Riccardo Patrese . The particular Grand Prix at which he broke this record was disputed , as there was some disagreement about what constituted a " start " , such as the 2002 Spanish Grand Prix , where Barrichello entered but did not actually take part in the race on Sunday . Barrichello and Honda decided to make Turkey the site for their celebrations , issuing a statement that said , " In view of the lack of consensus regarding which specific race marks Rubens ? 257th Grand Prix , Rubens will celebrate the milestone of 257 Grand Prix appearances at the Turkish Grand Prix " . His Honda team gave him a special anniversary livery and helmet , both of which prominently featured the number 257 . Patrese said that he would feel some sadness at having his record broken .

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 .

Early in the week before the Grand Prix , after team owner Aguri Suzuki revealed the extent of his difficulties , the team 's trucks were blocked from entering the paddock by the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile ( FIA ) , Formula One 's governing body . This decision was taken by the FIA after being informed by Honda 's Formula One team CEO , Nick Fry , that Super Aguri , who used Honda engines and Honda @-@ derived chassis , would not be racing at Istanbul Park . Suzuki then admitted that his financial troubles could not be solved by existing primary sponsor SS United Group Oil & Gas Company , leaving the team with no choice but to withdraw from Formula One as of May 6 . Super Aguri had competed in Formula One since the 2006 Bahrain Grand Prix . After scoring its first championship points after 22 race starts at the 2007 Spanish Grand Prix , the team finished ninth overall in the 2007 Constructors ' Championship .

The Toro Rosso team 's plan to introduce its new car , the STR3 , at this race were postponed due to a lack of spare parts . This was due to an accident suffered by driver Sébastien Bourdais during testing prior to the previous race , which had resulted in the chassis sustaining heavy damage . Toro Rosso had already used an updated version of its 2007 car , the STR2 , for the first four races of the season , and were now forced to race with it in Turkey as well . The team 's other driver , Sebastian Vettel , said that he was " disappointed " that the new car was not ready . However , this was the last race in which the STR2 competed , as the STR3 subsequently made its début at the next race .

Ferrari decided not to use a new nose for their car that had made its début at the previous race due to the low @-@ downforce nature of the Turkish circuit . According to team manager Luca Badoer , " The cars used by Kimi [ Räikkönen ] and Felipe [ Massa ] are basically to the same specification as those that were used in Spain , with the exception that at Istanbul Park we will not use the slotted nose . This is because this solution is much more efficient at medium to high downforce levels , whereas Turkey requires less downforce . The new nose worked very well , but as we said when we gave it its race debut in Barcelona , we would only use it at circuits where we deem it will bring us an advantage over a more conventional component . "

McLaren 's Heikki Kovalainen was passed fit to race in the days leading up to the race . At the previous race , Kovalainen had suffered a serious crash , although he escaped uninjured apart from minor concussion . Kovalainen said that he felt ready to race again : " I arrived here today feeling confident that I would pass the FIA test as I feel 100 % and if I had not felt 100 % I would have told the team already and stayed at home . My preparation for this weekend has gone well and we have done a lot of fitness training . "

= = = 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 . In the first free practice session , several large damp patches around the circuit ? caused by late track cleaning rather than rain ? dissuaded drivers from attempting laps and left the frustrated teams sitting in the pits waiting for the surface to dry as low track temperatures made the situation worse . When the cars did take to the track , many of the drivers either went off the road or spun . Räikkönen only did three laps , before retiring with a gearbox problem , causing him to finish last . Massa set the session 's fastest time , ahead of McLaren duo Heikki Kovalainen and Hamilton . After the session had ended , Fisichella was given a three @-@ place grid penalty by the stewards for exiting the pit lane whilst the light at its exit was still red .

The second free practice session was held in dry conditions , but the track was still damp from earlier drizzle . After 30 minutes , Red Bull 's Mark Webber crashed at turn six , his car sustaining serious damage . Webber was unhurt , although the crash meant that he finished the session in 19th position as he was unable to complete any further laps . The session was briefly stopped as a result while the marshals cleared away the debris . In this session , Räikkönen set the fastest time , with Hamilton next up . Massa was third , while David Coulthard of Red Bull broke up the Ferrari @-@ McLaren domination by setting the fourth @-@ fastest time , ahead of Kovalainen . The third and final practice session was held on the Saturday morning in dry conditions , but with damp

patches on the track from earlier rain . As was the pattern for the season , the championship contenders appeared to work on preparations for the final part of qualifying and the race in this session and thus carry heavier fuel loads . Webber set the fastest time in the session , with Renault 's Fernando Alonso in second , and Coulthard in third . Massa was fifth , Hamilton seventh , Räikkönen 11th and Kovalainen 12th .

Following the withdrawal of the Super Aguri team 's two entries , minor changes were made to the qualifying procedure . In the first qualifying session , which would run for 20 minutes , the five slowest cars ( a reduction from the previous number of six ) would be eliminated , leaving 15 drivers to continue into the second session . In the second session , which would last 15 minutes , the five slowest runners ( again reduced from six ) were to once again be eliminated , leaving the ten fastest drivers to compete in session three , as had previously been the case . The time taken for each session remained the same . The third session would determine the positions from first to tenth , and would decide pole position . Cars which failed to make the final session could refuel before the race , so ran lighter in first and second 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 .

Qualifying was a two @-@ way battle between Ferrari and McLaren , with BMW Sauber not showing as strong a pace as they had in previous qualifying sessions , and Alonso not on as light a fuel load as he had in Spain . Massa qualified on pole with a time of 1 : 27 @.@ 617 , ahead of Kovalainen and Hamilton . Hamilton elected not to run a lap on the softer option of the two tyre compounds , feeling that they were running low on grip in the later stages of the lap . He completed his final lap of the session on a " scrubbed " set of the harder tyre compound and it got him third place . Afterwards Hamilton said that he felt that his tyre choice had been incorrect . However , he changed his mind the following day , having made an examination of the relevant telemetry data . Championship leader Räikkönen qualified fourth , ahead of Kubica and Webber . Alonso , Trulli , Heidfeld and Coulthard completed the top 10 . Nico Rosberg driving for Williams qualified 11th , ahead of Barrichello and his teammate Jenson Button . Vettel qualified 14th , followed by Timo Glock for Toyota . Nakajima qualified in 16th , ahead of Nelson Piquet Jr . ( Renault ) and Bourdais . Afterward Bourdais said that his low position was due to being held up by both Force India drivers : " Bad traffic , basically the Force India guys , ruined my afternoon : on my first run I was held up by Sutil as early as Turn 3 and on the second , I came up behind Fisichella in Turn 8 " . Fisichella qualified 19th but his three @-@ place penalty saw him drop behind teammate Sutil to 20th and last place on the grid .

= = = Race = = =

At the start , Hamilton immediately overtook Kovalainen to claim second behind Massa . Räikkönen had a bad start and was squeezed into the first corner by Kovalainen . The two cars made light contact , with Räikkönen 's front wing touching Kovalainen 's left rear tyre . This resulted in a puncture for the McLaren driver which forced him to make an unscheduled pit stop on the second lap , which dropped him to 18th and last position . Räikkönen damaged his front wing but continued the entire race distance without changing the nose section of his car . Meanwhile , Kubica took advantage to move up into third position , whilst Räikkönen was also passed by Alonso . Further back , Vettel collided with Sutil and both were forced to pit , Vettel with a puncture and Sutil for a new front wing . Sutil 's team mate Fisichella and Nakajima collided at the first turn as well , after Fisichella braked too late and could not avoid the Williams driver . Fisichella retired on the spot but Nakajima , despite losing both his front and rear wing in the incident , was able to make it back to his pit box before retiring . The incident resulted in the safety car being deployed .

The safety car was withdrawn at the end of the second lap and the race got underway again with Massa in the lead . Räikkönen , meanwhile , overtook Alonso for fourth place . Between lap four and lap eleven , Massa and Hamilton exchanged fastest laps and the McLaren driver managed to hold the gap between him and the leader at one and a half seconds . The two drivers left third @-@ placed Kubica behind , who in turn was being caught quickly by Räikkönen . Further back ,

Kovalainen passed Sutil on lap 12 and Vettel on lap 17 . Hamilton then began to close the gap between himself and Massa , posting consecutive quick lap times and was within seven ? tenths of a second by lap fifteen . Alonso was the first of the leading runners to make a pit stop on lap 15 , dropping to tenth . Hamilton pitted one lap later and dropped to sixth , while Massa stayed out for another three laps . Both he and Kubica pitted at the same time , leaving Räikkönen temporarily in the lead . On lap 20 , he set the fastest lap of the race , a 1 : 21 @. @ 506 , before he himself pitted at the end of lap 21 , as did the then second @- @ placed Heidfeld . Räikkönen rejoined ahead of Kubica , while Heidfeld came out ahead of both Alonso and Webber , to elevate himself to fifth . Massa was now back in the lead , but with Hamilton just 0 @. @ 8 seconds behind . Running lighter on fuel with a view to making an additional pit stop to the Ferrari driver , Hamilton was able to close the gap on Massa and on lap 24 , he overtook him at turn twelve . Hamilton now led , with Massa second and Räikkönen third .

Hamilton soon broke away from Massa , lapping over a second quicker than the Ferrari driver . Further back , Bourdais spun off at turn twelve , with a rear suspension failure that put him out of the race . The top five in the race were now Hamilton , Massa , Räikkönen , Kubica and Heidfeld . Over the next six laps , Hamilton stretched his lead to over six seconds before pitting on lap 32 . He rejoined the race in third , 2 @. @ 6 seconds behind second @- @ placed Räikkönen . Further back , on lap 34 , Kovalainen passed Glock , only to be immediately re @- @ passed . He did succeed up the main straight , on the same lap . Two laps later , he passed Button .

Eight laps after Hamilton 's pit stop , Ferrari called Massa in for his final stop of the afternoon , making Räikkönen the leader of the race once more . This lead , however , only lasted for a couple of laps as the Finn pitted on lap 43 , also making his final stop of the afternoon . On lap 43 , Hamilton led by 14 @. @ 4 seconds from Massa with Räikkönen a further seven seconds behind . Two laps later Hamilton was forced to make his third and final pit stop . The McLaren driver rejoined the track behind Massa but crucially ahead of championship leader Räikkönen . The top three would remain this way for the remainder of the race .

Further back in fourth and fifth were the two BMW Saubers of Kubica and Heidfeld and behind them were Alonso , Trulli , Webber , Rosberg and Coulthard , with Kovalainen pursuing closely behind them . Kovalainen passed Coulthard on lap 48 , and then on the next lap passed Rosberg . However , Rosberg immediately overtook Kovalainen to regain his position , and Kovalainen was forced to pit on lap 50 . After his final pit stop , Kovalainen rejoined the circuit in 13th position . Felipe Massa won the race , making it his third consecutive win at the circuit , 3 @. @ 7 seconds ahead of Hamilton , with Räikkönen a further half @- @ second behind in third . The two BMWs of Kubica and Heidfeld finished fourth and fifth respectively while further back Alonso , Webber and Rosberg completed the top eight . Coulthard finished ninth , Trulli 10th and Button 11th . After his puncture at the start , Kovalainen had managed to recover to 12th by the end of the race , passing Glock in the closing stages . Glock , Barrichello , Piquet , Sutil and Vettel were the last of the classified finishers .

= = = Post @- @ race = = =

The race victory was Massa 's third win in Turkey in as many years , having won in both 2006 and 2007 . The top three finishers appeared in the subsequent press conference . Massa said that :

It was a very tough race but the team work magnificently , giving me a great car . When Hamilton came underneath me at an incredible pace , I preferred not to take too many risks : the pit wall informed me that he was clearly running a lighter fuel load even if we were not certain he was on a three stop strategy . When that became clear , we were calmer , knowing we had everything in place to go for the win .

Ron Dennis , McLaren 's team principal , commented on Hamilton 's drive : " Today we saw a truly phenomenal drive from Lewis [ Hamilton ] , in which he optimised a three @- @ stop strategy that we were forced to adopt as a consequence of concerns we had with his tyres . " Hamilton said that he felt that McLaren had closed the gap on Ferrari , and that he was " very excited " about the next race in Monaco .

Räikkönen said : " It was a difficult weekend for me but six points are definitely better than nothing . At the start , I was almost alongside Heikki but then he slowed and I had to brake too to avoid a heavy crash . We touched just enough to damage the end plate of the front wing on my car : it was not a very serious problem , but it definitely didn 't help my race . " Räikkönen also said that he decided not to change his front wing , which was damaged after his collision with Kovalainen , the process would have taken too long .

Fisichella , who had collided with Nakajima on the first lap , which caused both drivers to retire , blamed Bourdais : " I made a good start but then under braking Bourdais changed direction twice and I couldn 't brake in time and went into the back of the Williams . " Nakajima said that , " I don 't know exactly what happened ; I just went into the first corner following the guy in front . I didn 't change my line and I was suddenly hit from behind . "

Bourdais commented on his retirement : " Something broke at the back of the car ... Going into Turn 12 , I braked at the usual point and the car went sideways , I felt the right rear corner of the car drop and it spun me round . "

Räikkönen 's lead in the Drivers ' World Championship was reduced by two points to seven , ahead of Massa and Hamilton , the latter two on 28 points each . Kubica was in fourth , on 24 points , followed by his teammate Heidfeld on 20 points . In the Constructors ' Championship , the Ferrari team increased its lead with a total of 66 points , whilst BMW Sauber were second with 44 points . McLaren were third with 42 points , Williams fourth with 13 points , and Red Bull were fifth , on ten .

= = Classification = =

= = = Qualifying = = =

^ 1 Giancarlo Fisichella got a three place grid penalty for exiting the pitlane whilst the red lights were still on during Friday 's first practice session .

= = = Race = = =

= = Championship standings after the race = =

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