

= 2012 Brazilian Grand Prix =

The 2012 Brazilian Grand Prix ( formally known as the Formula 1 Grande Prêmio Petrobras do Brasil 2012 ) was a Formula One motor race that took place at the Autódromo José Carlos Pace in São Paulo , Brazil on 25 November 2012 . The race was the twentieth and final round of the 2012 Formula One World Championship , and marked the forty @-@ first running of the Brazilian Grand Prix . The race was won by Jenson Button driving for McLaren .

It was at this race that Sebastian Vettel won the 2012 World Drivers ' Championship , his third title in a row . Fernando Alonso finished second in both the race and the championship , and had the provisional championship lead at a late stage of the race , before Vettel moved up the order to have a three @-@ point cushion .

= = Report = =

= = = Background = = =

The 2012 Brazilian Grand Prix marked Michael Schumacher 's final race before his second retirement and was also the last race for Bruno Senna and the HRT Formula 1 Team . HRT in their history did not score a point , and withdrew because of financial issues .

Tyre supplier Pirelli provided teams with early prototypes of their 2013 compounds during Friday practice for testing and review .

Pirelli brought its silver @-@ banded hard compound tyre as the harder " prime " tyre and the white @-@ banded medium compound tyre as the softer " option " tyre , as opposed to the previous year when they brought the medium and soft compound dry tyres .

In order to become world champion for the third time , Sebastian Vettel needed to defend a 13 @-@ point advantage over Fernando Alonso meaning the Spaniard needed at least third place even if the German failed to score . Conversely , a fourth place was sufficient for Vettel even if Alonso won .

= = = Free Practice = = =

During free practice on Friday and Saturday , it was Lewis Hamilton and McLaren who set the pace , closely followed by championship contender Vettel and his Red Bull teammate Mark Webber . While Hamilton topped the time sheets in both Friday sessions , Jenson Button was quickest during the third session on Saturday morning . Fernando Alonso had a difficult first free practice , trailing Vettel by 0 @.@ 465 seconds , twice as much as in previous races . However , he was able to lap faster than the German on the harder compound tyres in the second session . Ferrari looked stronger during the long run trials with Felipe Massa putting in the most consistently fast lap times , 0 @.@ 1 seconds ahead of Hamilton . With high temperatures , tyre degradation was a concern for the teams in the paddock with Hamilton commenting that " it felt almost as though I was sliding around the track with the tyres melting " .

= = = Qualifying = = =

After the very warm practice sessions , qualifying on Saturday was run under difficult weather conditions . Qualifying one ( Q1 ) started on a damp track and therefore on intermediate tyres , while by Q2 the track was almost dry and slick tyres were used . In Q1 Romain Grosjean collided with the slower running HRT of Pedro de la Rosa and lost his front wing . While he succeeded in nursing the car back into the pit lane , he was unable to change his tyres and was therefore left in a disappointing 18th position on the grid . Michael Schumacher 's last ever qualifying did not go well either . He took 14th position , almost half a second down on his teammate , admitting he had perhaps compromised his setup too much for an expected wet race . The McLarens were fastest all

weekend and easily took the front row , with Lewis Hamilton securing his last pole position with the team . Title contenders Vettel and Alonso both struggled , taking 4th and 8th position on the grid respectively . Pastor Maldonado was handed a 10 @-@ place grid penalty for missing the weighbridge in the second part of qualifying . He dropped from sixth to 16th , moving Alonso one place up to seventh .

= = = Race = = =

= = = = Pre @-@ race = = = =

Title contender Alonso and Ferrari were hoping for damp conditions during the race , stating : " Wet races are a bit more unpredictable so we need some kind of damp race with many things happening , because we know that in normal conditions , fighting for the championship will be very difficult " . Felipe Massa discounted rumours he might try to help Alonso win the title by forcing Vettel into retirement , stating " I 've always been an honest person and an honest driver . And that will continue to be the case . My limit is the limit of the regulations , and I will stay true to this limit " .

= = = = Race report = = = =

With only light rain just 10 minutes before the start , all teams opted to start on slick tyres . Vettel got away poorly , dropping to seventh position , while his rival Alonso moved up into fifth . Vettel and Bruno Senna collided at turn 4 in a racing incident , which saw Vettel spin while Senna ended up hitting the rear of Pérez . Vettel suffered damage to his left sidepod but was able to carry on , in 22nd position . However , the reigning world champion began to move up the order , as there was close racing for position at the front of the field as well . Massa helped his teammate overtake Mark Webber on lap two going into the Senna @-@ S , giving the Spaniard the crucial third position he would need to win the title . But Alonso lost the position again to the fast running Force India of Nico Hülkenberg after running wide on lap four . Maldonado crashed out on lap two , when he lost control of his car on the kerb through the inside of turn 3 , and crashed into the tyre barrier on the exit of the corner .

Rain began to fall during the next few laps and the first cars made pit stops for intermediate tyres , including the two title contenders , while Button and Hülkenberg stayed out . This proved to be the right decision since the rain decreased shortly afterwards and cars on intermediates were forced to pit for slick tyres once again . Hülkenberg continued his strong performance by overtaking Button for the lead on lap 19 .

With the two cars in front leading the field by almost a minute , debris on the track brought out the safety car on lap 23 . At this point Alonso and Vettel were running in fourth and fifth place . At the restart on lap 29 , Kamui Kobayashi took fifth position from Vettel . The damage on the Red Bull car slowed Vettel down considerably more in dry conditions , and Massa helped his teammate by overtaking the German shortly after . Meanwhile , at the front , Hamilton took second from his teammate and was able to pass Hülkenberg when the German half @-@ spun . Hülkenberg pursued the McLaren but slid into him on lap 54 , leaving Hamilton out of the race with damage to the left front suspension and himself with a drive @-@ through penalty , handing Button the lead .

When the rain started again , Vettel was one of the first to pit for intermediates , but since his radio had failed the team was not ready for him , causing a long delay . Ferrari timed Massa 's pit stop well , letting Alonso take second position from him . Vettel took sixth position from Michael Schumacher which proved sufficient to retain the title even with Alonso finishing second .

The race ended after Paul di Resta crashed on the start / finish straight shortly before the end , bringing out the safety car once again until the conclusion of the race . Caterham 's Vitaly Petrov took 11th position which meant his team overtook Marussia in the constructors ' championship . Former world champion Kimi Räikkönen had an eventful race as well , almost crashing into Vettel after the start and later trying to use an escape road only to find it to be a dead end . He later stated

the way had been open 11 years prior , having made the same manoeuvre at the 2001 race . He also had a close contest with the retiring Michael Schumacher , who finished seventh after recovering from an early puncture , but gave up sixth to Vettel in order to help him extend his small point advantage over Fernando Alonso in the championship .

== = Post @-@ race == =

International reception of the race was positive , with The Guardian calling it a " rollercoaster " . Three @-@ time world champions Niki Lauda and Nelson Piquet stated that they had never seen a race like it . German magazine Der Spiegel deemed the race " spectacular " and " historic " due to the record @-@ breaking 147 successful overtaking manoeuvres carried out during the race . Sebastian Vettel himself called it his " toughest race ever " .

At age 25 , Vettel became the youngest triple world champion of the sport , six years younger than Ayrton Senna had been in 1991 . On drawing level with Senna , Vettel commented : " To win that third title here , where one of my greatest idols , Ayrton Senna , was from , it is very difficult to imagine I join him and other great names by winning three successive titles " . Red Bull 's team principal Christian Horner praised his driver , saying " Sebastian has driven better than ever this season and has fought his way back into this championship , he 's never given up and you saw that in today 's race " .

The Daily Mirror lauded Red Bull designer Adrian Newey for making the decision to change the engine mapping on Vettel 's car after reviewing photos of the damage sustained in the first lap accident . Newey was quoted saying : " So we photographed it going past , saw huge crease in exhaust , which usually means it will soon crack and the bodywork catch fire . [ ... ] So we changed the engine mapping to keep the exhaust as cool as we could , even though it meant lost performance " .

Championship runner @-@ up Fernando Alonso expressed pride for his team , going so far as to call the 2012 season " the best season of my career " . During the podium interview with Nelson Piquet , he asserted : " Obviously we lost the championship now , but I don 't think , as you said , that we lost here in Brazil , we lost in some races where we were a little bit unlucky . But this is a sport , but when you do something with your heart , when you do something with 100 per cent , you have to be proud of your team , happy for them , and we will try next year . " The press later pointed out Alonso 's " grace after the race " , contrasting him to Vettel who had criticized the competition 's " dirty tricks " during his post @-@ race press conference .

Speaking about his victory , Jenson Button congratulated his team , saying : " This is the perfect way to end the season . We have had ups and downs and to end on a high bodes well for 2013 . "

Upon his second retirement from the sport , Michael Schumacher commented on the three years at Mercedes GP : " I have tried that mission to end successful . It didn 't work this time but I 'm quite happy to finish from here and go for a different life again . "

Commenting on the outcome of the season , former team owner Eddie Jordan said he believed Alonso would have deserved the title more , considering the " less competitive machine " . BBC columnist and former Formula One driver Jaime Alguersuari took a different viewpoint , saying the German deserved the title , having gone into the last race with " the most difficult position [ ... ] ? he had everything to lose " .

== = Controversies == =

Three days after the race , Ferrari announced they were contemplating filing an appeal with the FIA due to video footage allegedly showing Sebastian Vettel overtaking Jean @-@ Éric Vergne under yellow flags . Should the allegations have proven valid , the FIA could have added 20 seconds to Vettel 's finishing time , demoting him to 8th in the race result , handing the driver 's title to Alonso . Just two days later however , Ferrari opted not to appeal the result after receiving additional information from the FIA . Formula One CEO Bernie Ecclestone had previously stated that he considered Ferrari 's allegations " a shame " and " a joke " .

After losing 10th place in the constructor 's championship to Caterham , Marussia 's director of engineering Nikolai Fomenko accused driver Charles Pic of deliberately letting Vitaly Petrov pass him due to Pic having already signed a contract with Caterham for next season . However , no actions were taken following these accusations .

= = Classification = =

= = = Qualifying = = =

Notes

^ 1 ? Pastor Maldonado received a ten @-@ place grid penalty after receiving his 3rd reprimand of the season , for missing a call in to the weighbridge from the FIA .

= = = Race = = =

= = Championship standings after the race = =

Bold text indicates the World Champions .

Notes :

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