

= 2008 Monaco Grand Prix =

The 2008 Monaco Grand Prix ( formally the LXVI Grand Prix de Monaco ) was a Formula One motor race held on 25 May 2008 at the Circuit de Monaco ; contested over 76 laps , it was the sixth race of the 2008 Formula One season . The race was won by the season 's eventual Drivers ' Champion , Lewis Hamilton , for the McLaren team . BMW Sauber driver Robert Kubica finished second , and Felipe Massa , who started from pole position , was third in a Ferrari .

Conditions were wet at the start of the race . Massa maintained his lead into the first corner , but his teammate Kimi Räikkönen was passed for second by Hamilton , who had started in third position on the grid . Hamilton suffered a punctured tyre on lap six , forcing him to make a pit stop from which he re @-@ entered the race in fifth place . As the track dried and his rivals made their own pit stops Hamilton became the race leader , a position he held until the end of the race . Kubica 's strategy allowed him to pass Massa during their second pit stops , after the latter 's Ferrari was forced to change from wet to dry tyres . Räikkönen dropped back from fifth position to ninth after colliding with Adrian Sutil 's Force India late in the race . Sutil had started from 18th on the grid and was in fourth position before the incident , which allowed Red Bull driver Mark Webber to finish fourth , ahead of Toro Rosso driver Sebastian Vettel in fifth .

The race was Hamilton 's second win of the season , his first in Monaco , and the result meant that he led the Drivers ' Championship , three points ahead of Räikkönen and four ahead of Massa . Ferrari maintained their lead in the Constructors ' Championship , 16 points ahead of McLaren and 17 ahead of BMW Sauber , with 12 races of the season remaining .

= = 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 , Honda , Force India @-@ Ferrari , BMW Sauber , Toyota , Red Bull @-@ Renault , Williams @-@ Toyota and Toro Rosso @-@ Ferrari . Tyre supplier Bridgestone brought four different tyre types to the race : two dry @-@ weather tyre compounds , the softer marked by a single white stripe down one of the grooves , and two wet @-@ weather compounds , the extreme wet also marked by a single white stripe .

Before the race , Ferrari driver Kimi Räikkönen led the Drivers ' Championship with 35 points , and his teammate Felipe Massa was second with 28 points . McLaren driver Lewis Hamilton was third , also on 28 points , with one win fewer than Massa ; BMW driver Robert Kubica was fourth on 24 points , ahead of his teammate Nick Heidfeld on 20 points . In the Constructors ' Championship , Ferrari were leading with 63 points , 19 points ahead of BMW Sauber , and 21 points ahead of McLaren @-@ Mercedes .

Ferrari had responded to Hamilton 's win in the opening round of the season in Australia by winning each of the subsequent four races , giving them a commanding lead in the Constructors ' Championship . Ferrari 's dominance had been highlighted by two one @-@ two finishes : Massa ahead of Räikkönen in Bahrain and Räikkönen 's win over Massa at the following round in Spain . A strong drive despite an unfavourable strategy had helped Hamilton to split the Ferrari drivers on the podium in Turkey , coming second , behind Massa but ahead of Räikkönen . Ferrari had not won in Monaco since 2001 , and had been unable to match McLaren 's pace in 2007 . After tests at the Circuit Paul Ricard in mid @-@ May , Räikkönen said his team had developed a strong car for the tight , low @-@ speed Monaco circuit , but they still expected a challenge from McLaren and BMW Sauber . Hamilton claimed that McLaren would be competitive at Monaco , but Kubica played down his team 's chances , saying " I think a win will be very difficult . "

Toro Rosso 's main 2008 car , the STR3 , was also introduced that weekend ; the team had used a modified version of their 2007 car , the STR2 , for the opening five races . Originally due to be introduced at the previous race in Turkey , a crash in testing had left the team short of spare parts ,

delaying the car 's race debut . As the STR3 used a different transmission than that used in the STR2 , Toro Rosso driver Sebastian Vettel was forced to take a five @-@ place penalty on the grid for an unscheduled change of gearbox . His teammate Sébastien Bourdais escaped a similar penalty because he had failed to finish the race in Turkey , allowing him a free gearbox change .

= = = Practice and qualifying = = =

Three practice sessions were held before the Sunday race ? two on Thursday , and one on Saturday . The Thursday morning and afternoon sessions each lasted 90 minutes ; the third session , on Saturday morning , lasted for an hour . One hour into the first session , officials noticed a loose drain cover in the run through Beau Rivage , and suspended practice . Ferrari and McLaren took the top four spots after the resumption ? Räikkönen ahead of Hamilton , McLaren driver Heikki Kovalainen , and Massa . Behind Williams driver Nico Rosberg , Kubica was the best of the BMW Saubers in sixth ; his teammate Heidfeld was forced to retire because of an engine failure , and stopped his car in Casino Square after just 13 laps . Despite further delays during the second session ? both Renaults crashed in separate incidents at Sainte Devote , requiring the marshals to sweep the track of debris ? Hamilton again proved strong , fastest ahead of Rosberg , Räikkönen , Massa , Kovalainen and Kubica . Apart from the Renaults , two more cars struck the barriers : Toyota driver Jarno Trulli scraped the wall out of Piscine ; Adrian Sutil 's Force India lost its front wing after tagging the barrier at Rascasse . While light rain fell on Saturday morning , Kovalainen set the fastest time in the final session , before losing control at Piscine and damaging the rear of his car . The rain increased as the marshals cleared the debris , and in the ensuing poor track conditions Kovalainen 's time remained unbeaten . Hamilton managed second fastest , ahead of Räikkönen , Rosberg , Kubica and Massa .

Saturday afternoon 's qualifying session was divided into three parts . In the first 20 @-@ minute period , cars finishing 16th or lower were eliminated . The second qualifying period lasted for 15 minutes , at the end of which the fastest ten cars went into the final period , to determine their grid positions for the race . Cars failing to make the final period were allowed to be refuelled before the race but those competing in it were not , and so carried more fuel than they had done in the earlier qualifying sessions .

Massa clinched his third pole position of the season with a time of 1 : 15 @.@ 787 , and was joined on the front row by teammate Räikkönen . Hamilton took third place on the grid , with a qualifying time just 0 @.@ 052 seconds slower than Massa 's . Kovalainen edged out Kubica to take fourth , the latter struggling to get heat into his tyres for his final run . Rosberg 's attacking style took him to sixth ; Renault driver Fernando Alonso , Trulli and Red Bull driver Mark Webber occupied the next three places . Webber 's teammate David Coulthard ended his second session in the barriers after the tunnel , after his car jerked sideways at the crest under braking . Although Coulthard was unhurt , the position of his stricken car and the subsequent caution flags surrounding it denied many drivers the opportunity to make their final flying laps in the session . Honda driver Jenson Button , who took 12th behind Timo Glock of Toyota , blamed the disruption for his performance , having prepared his car specifically for the final run . Heidfeld suffered from similar tyre problems to his teammate and managed 13th ; Williams driver Kazuki Nakajima and Honda driver Rubens Barrichello took the next two places ahead of Bourdais in the new STR3 . Renault driver Nelson Piquet lined up from 17th and Vettel managed 18th before his gearbox penalty demoted him to 19th . The Force Indias of Sutil and Giancarlo Fisichella qualified slowest ; Fisichella 's penalty for a change of gearbox after morning practice meant he started from 20th on the grid .

= = = Race = = =

On Sunday morning Coulthard became the third driver to incur a gearbox penalty , after changing his transmission following his crash during qualifying . The penalty moved him from 10th to 15th on the grid . In contrast to Saturday 's dry qualifying session , frequent showers soaked the track on Sunday morning , making racing slippery and potentially hazardous . Although the showers

subsided by early afternoon , they resumed 20 minutes before the start , the changeable conditions forcing teams to delay tyre choices for as long as possible . By the time of the three @-@ minute warning most drivers had opted for the standard wet tyre ; only Piquet started the race on the extreme wet . Kovalainen 's engine stalled as the cars set off on their formation lap ; his car was pushed back to the pit lane by his mechanics , where it was restarted and a new steering wheel fitted to solve the problem .

Massa held his lead into the first corner at Sainte Devote , while behind him Hamilton used the pit lane exit to pass Räikkönen down the inside . Kovalainen 's vacated fourth position was filled by Kubica , as Alonso moved into fifth , passing Rosberg . The latter pitted soon after for a new front wing after making contact with Alonso at the hairpin , promoting Trulli to sixth . These positions were maintained for several laps , but the distances between the cars increased , in part because the spray thrown up by their wheels made close racing difficult . The conditions proved to be crucial when Hamilton made contact with barriers on the outside of Tabac on lap six , necessitating his return to the pits for a new set of tyres . The McLaren mechanics fuelled the car for a longer second stint and Hamilton emerged in fifth , the distances between his competitors ' cars resulting in him losing only three places during the pit stop . Alonso had a similar accident to Hamilton 's at Massenet two laps later , and emerged in seventh after pitting and taking on extreme wets .

Massa 's lead ? 12 seconds over the second @-@ placed Räikkönen by lap six ? was reduced to nothing when the safety car was deployed on the eighth lap . Coulthard and Bourdais had crashed into the barriers at Massenet just seconds apart , requiring the marshals to separate the cars and lift them off the track . When the safety car pulled off after three laps , Massa consolidated his lead over his teammate . Räikkönen , however , was called into the pit lane for a drive @-@ through penalty after to failing to have his tyres attached by the three @-@ minute warning before the race , dropping him back to fourth . Kubica , now second , took the lead when Massa slid off down the escape road at Sainte Devote , the undamaged Ferrari rejoining in second as the rain eased . The two swapped positions again after their pit stops ? Kubica on lap 26 and Massa on lap 33 ? but Hamilton , carrying more fuel than his rivals , took the lead .

As a dry line appeared on the track , Hamilton extended his lead over Massa , from 13 to 37 seconds , by the time he pitted for the second time on lap 54 . His timing proved fortunate , as he changed to dry tyres just as such a strategy emerged as the strongest , and he emerged 13 seconds ahead of Massa . The Ferrari 's own pit stop two laps later dropped Massa behind Kubica . Hamilton 's lead was reduced when the safety car once again deployed on lap 62 after Rosberg crashed at Piscine , hitting both sides of the track and scattering debris . Rosberg was unhurt .

Of the 20 cars which started the race , Sutil had gained the most places by the second safety car period . The Force India started from 18th , rose one place after Kovalainen was pushed back to the pits , passed Piquet on the second lap and Bourdais a lap later . Sutil benefited as Button , Rosberg , Glock and Trulli pitted for repairs over the following laps , to sit in 11th by lap 14 . Alonso , on extreme wet tyres behind Heidfeld , attempted to pass the BMW at the hairpin , but succeeded only in damaging his front wing and forming a stationary queue behind him . He also benefitted by overtaking three cars under yellow flags and would have been penalised if he had finished the race . Sutil took advantage of the situation and passed four cars to take seventh , behind Heidfeld and Webber . Running a long first stint until lap 53 , he moved to fourth as the cars ahead of him pitted . Vettel gained 12 places from the start , battling with Barrichello and Nakajima early on before jumping several places on his first stint as his rivals pitted , eventually switching to dry tyres when he stopped on lap 52 . Webber improved three places from the start to sit in sixth , ahead of Vettel , Barrichello and Nakajima .

The safety car was withdrawn on lap 68 . Later on the same lap , Räikkönen lost control of his car under braking out of the tunnel , and by the time he regained control his speed was too great to avoid a collision with Sutil . The Ferrari damaged its front wing and pitted for a replacement before resuming , but the damage to Sutil 's rear suspension led to his retirement . Webber benefited from the incident and moved to fourth place , while Räikkönen dropped back to ninth .

The slow pace during the opening laps meant the race ended after two hours , or 76 laps , rather than the 78 laps originally scheduled . Hamilton , despite suffering a slow puncture on the final lap ,

crossed the finish line to take his first win in Monaco . Kubica followed in second , ahead of Massa and Webber . Vettel took the STR3 to its first points in its maiden race , coming fifth , ahead of Barrichello and Nakajima . Kovalainen recovered from his stall to finish eighth , one place ahead of Räikkönen , who set the fastest lap of the race on lap 74 , a 1 : 16 @. @ 689 . He was followed by Alonso , Button , Glock and Trulli . Heidfeld was the last of the classified finishers , in 14th position , four laps behind Hamilton . Fisichella retired with a gearbox failure after 36 laps ; Piquet ? two laps after he switched to dry tyres on lap 46 ? finished his race in the barriers at Sainte Devote . Sutil , Rosberg , Coulthard and Bourdais were the four other retirements .

= = = Post @-@ race = = =

The top three finishers appeared in Prince Albert II of Monaco 's Royal box to collect their trophies . In the subsequent press conference Hamilton said that conditions early in the race made driving difficult : " When the weather is like this , when it starts to rain and we had an idea it was going to start to dry , the important thing is to keep it on the track but I can 't explain how difficult it was for all of us . You were aquaplaning all the time and you were tip @-@ toeing almost . " Hamilton also said that his crash at Tabac had been the result of a stream of water running over the track , causing his car to oversteer and resulting in a puncture to his right rear tyre . Nevertheless , he praised his team and strategy for helping him take the victory . Kubica said that tyre problems in his middle stint meant he was unable to overtake Massa , who was driving a heavier car . Noticing Glock 's success on dry tyres , Kubica asked his team to make a similar change , resulting in his pass on Massa . During the post @-@ race interview Massa said that although he was fuelled to the end of the race after his first pit stop , the drying track forced him to pit again for new tyres : " It was a shame that we made a little mistake on the strategy but it is good to be on the podium . "

Sutil expressed his disappointment after being knocked out of the race when he was on course to record his team 's first points :

I can 't believe it , it was so close . It feels like a pain in my heart . It is like a dream gone to a nightmare ? suddenly you are in the car and it looks all fantastic , then you have to accept it is not going to happen ... It was after the restart after the final safety car that Kimi had a problem under braking and crashed into the back of my car . The race was over and it was a real shock . A few tears came out as the adrenaline was high ? I just can 't explain it .

Räikkönen apologised to Sutil for their collision , blaming cold brakes for his loss of control . Mike Gascoyne , Force India 's technical chief , called for the stewards to investigate the incident , but after deliberation no action was taken . " The frustration is that if that was a Force India driver hitting a world champion we 'd expect to get a one or two @-@ race ban , but the other way round nothing ever seems to happen " said Gascoyne . Sutil was called to the stewards ' room and reprimanded for passing three cars under yellow flags on lap 13 . Because he had retired , he was issued with merely a warning , but had he finished the race he would have been given a 25 @-@ second time penalty , which would have dropped him out of the point @-@ scoring positions .

Hamilton 's win was praised by Jackie Stewart , a three @-@ time winner of the Monaco Grand Prix . " At his age , Lewis can win this race many times , " he said . " This is the first , I hope , of many victories for him in Monaco so that he can join the greats of Formula One . " Damon Hill , the 1996 World Champion , said Hamilton " did very well indeed . I was most impressed , and the race as a whole was also a great advertisement for what F1 should be about . " The race result left Hamilton leading the Drivers ' Championship with 38 points . Räikkönen , who failed to score in Monaco , was second on 35 points , one point ahead of Massa and three ahead of Kubica . Heidfeld was sixth on 20 points . In the Constructors ' Championship , Ferrari maintained their lead with 69 points , McLaren jumped to second on 53 points , and BMW Sauber dropped to third on 52 points , with 12 races of the season remaining .

= = Classification = =

== Qualifying ==

== Race ==

== Championship standings after the race ==

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