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MOTOGP

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PLUS

FORMULA ONE

Victory for Felipe Massa in Spain

US RACING

Getting ready for the Indianapolis 500



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Stoner grabs title advantage

Ducati's Casey Stoner has moved ahead of the rest of the MotoGP pack after a pair of decisive back-to-back wins in Turkey and China. He now has a 15-point advantage in the standings.

Stoner's victory in Turkey was the 10th win for Bridgestone since it made its MotoGP debut in 2002, while strong results for Honda Gresini's Toni Elias and Ducati's Loris Capirossi ensured Bridgestone's first ever 1-2-3 podium lockout.

In China, Stoner took his third win of the season to further consolidate his new title lead. Suzuki's John Hopkins took the first front-row start of the year, finishing the race with his first podium.

Although Stoner's Ducati GP7 has been the class of the field in 2007, the young Australian has been quick to praise the role that Bridgestone's tyres have played in his success so far.

"The speed of the Ducati on the straight is an advantage, but you have to go round the corners as well," he said. "The tyres kept getting better during the race, and the lap times improved a lot."

Bridgestone's Director of Motorsport Tyre Development Hirohide Hamashima has also been pleased with the strong start to the season.

"The three victories in Qatar, Turkey and China have been at tracks where we have not previously been victorious, so we are happy to have made such technical advances compared to last year," he said. "However, the season is long and we are working on a race-by-race basis to continue this momentum through the busy European season."

We'll be taking a behind-the-scenes look at Bridgestone's strong start to 2007 in the next issue of *The Challenge* on May 29



Casey Stoner and Ducati dominated the MotoGP races in Turkey and China

Ferrari's Felipe Massa (left) topped the podium in Spain, but it's McLaren's Lewis Hamilton who leads the points standings



MASSA SEALS SPANISH VICTORY

Ferrari's emerging star wins the day in Barcelona as McLaren rookie Lewis Hamilton tops the points

Brazilian Felipe Massa clinched his second victory of the 2007 Formula One season and the fourth of his career in Barcelona, but it was McLaren's Lewis Hamilton who left the Spanish Grand Prix leading the title race after taking the fourth podium of what has been a dream start to his debut F1 campaign.

Massa dominated the race from pole position after fighting off an attack from reigning double champion Fernando Alonso at the first corner that ultimately dropped McLaren's Spanish star down to fourth. That soon became third as Massa's Ferrari team-mate Kimi Raikkonen was forced to retire from the place with an electrical problem.

Back at the front, Hamilton gave chase to Massa, but was unable to close the gap and finished the

race 6.7 seconds behind the Brazilian. His stunning run of podiums, though, has given him a two-point lead over Alonso, while McLaren has a nine-point advantage over Ferrari in the constructors' table.

Massa was naturally delighted with his victory. "I can't find the words to describe the emotions after such a closely-fought race," he said.

Hamilton has admitted that he's already targeting his first race win and hasn't ruled out victory in the next race in Monaco. "I've worked so many years for this, so to finally be in this position is a dream," he said. "I said to Felipe - we'll get him soon."

Facts & figures

- McLaren's Lewis Hamilton is the youngest driver to lead the F1 standings, beating the benchmark of team founder Bruce McLaren from the 1960 season-opener in Argentina.
- Felipe Massa's victory was the 195th win for the Ferrari team from 754 F1 starts and came on the same day the Italian company celebrated its 60th anniversary of racing.
- Super Aguri driver Takuma Sato's eighth place was the first points finish for a Japanese driver in a Japanese car using Japanese tyres.

F1 feature – page 4 →

In brief...

F1 delivers safety message

Formula 1 drivers helped promote the United Nations' first Global Road Safety Week from April 23 to April 29. Retired seven-times champion Michael Schumacher spoke at the campaign launch in London, while Williams driver Alex Wurz addressed the UN World Youth Assembly for Road Safety in Geneva. Other F1 stars signed a petition and delivered messages backing the event's aims.



E-reporter finalists revealed

The seven competitors vying for this year's Bridgestone e-reporter prize for aspiring F1 writers have been announced. Tom Hornsby (above) from the UK was the first of them to attend a GP2 Series race in Spain, with Jake Schembri from Malta, Andreas Kittka from Hungary, Laura Postma from the Netherlands and Peter Hodges, Michael William Scott and Michael Lea-O'Mahoney from the UK set to follow his lead at future events.

F1 compound choice decided

Bridgestone has chosen the compounds to be used in the next five F1 races – the Soft and Super-Soft for Montreal in Canada and Monaco, the Soft and Medium for the US Grand Prix at Indianapolis and the French GP at Magny-Cours, and the Medium and Hard for the British GP at Silverstone.

Castroneves takes Indy pole

Penske Racing's Helio Castroneves grabbed pole for this year's Indianapolis 500 with a dramatic last-ditch dash. The two-time event winner was set for a second-row start, but sacrificed that time in the closing minutes of the six-hour qualifying session for another run. His 225.817mph average speed over the four laps enabled him to pip Andretti Green Racing's Dario Franchitti for the top spot.

Fuji 500 win for Nismo Z duo

Xanavi Nismo Z drivers Satoshi Motoyama and Richard Lyons have taken the lead of the Japanese Super GT standings after winning the Fuji 500. Bridgestone-shod drivers again filled the podium, with the Motul Autech Z of Michael Krumm and Tsugio Matsuda coming second from the Forum Engineering SC430 of Tasuya Kataoka and Bjorn Wirdheim.

Bourdais back on top in Champ Car

Defending multiple Champ Car title winner Sébastien Bourdais took his second victory of the 2007 season in Houston at the end of April, moving into the lead of the points standings for the first time this year.

The Frenchman beat his Newman/Haas/Lanigan team-mate Graham Rahal by just four seconds, with Minardi Team USA's Robert Doornbos completing the podium.

Early-season points leader Will Power finished 11th after a mid-race collision and has dropped to second in the standings.



WHELDON NETS INDYCAR LEAD

Former IndyCar Series title winner Dan Wheldon has moved into the lead of the US championship after strong results in the races at Motegi in Japan and Kansas.

The Briton took second place behind Andretti Green Racing's Tony Kanaan in the year's sole overseas round, then won his second race of 2007 as the series returned to US soil. He has now passed Chip Ganassi Racing team-mate Scott Dixon to lead the standings by 27 points.

Firestone chose the Motegi event to test the tyres that will be used for May's Indianapolis 500 – the centrepiece of the IndyCar Series. The new tyres proved their longevity, with some cars running the equivalent of a stint and a half on one set.

"The new tyres received widespread praise," said Firestone Racing Executive Director Al Speyer. "Several cars ran 70 laps with almost no performance drop-off. That makes both the teams and Firestone confident heading into the Indy 500."

Indy 500 feature – page 5 →

Timo Glock has established a decisive points margin in the GP2 Series after Spain



SENNA AND GLOCK WIN IN GP2

iSport International's Timo Glock has established a clear lead in the Formula One-supporting GP2 Series after taking his first win of the year in the Spanish Grand Prix double-header in Barcelona.

The German scored his third podium of 2007 with second place in Saturday's feature race, but victory in Sunday's sprint race enabled Glock to extend his title advantage to 13 points.

Arden International's Bruno Senna took the first win of his GP2 Series career in the feature

race, but the Brazilian could only manage a fourth place finish in the sprint race and now lies second in the standings on 18 points.

Pre-event points leader Luca Filippi failed to finish Saturday's feature race after being hit by one of his rivals early on, and could only manage 11th place in Sunday's sprint race.

The Super Nova driver has now dropped to third in the championship table, just two points ahead of ART Grand Prix's Lucas Di Grassi.

MONICA SANTUCCI

Travel Co-ordinator
(Formula One and GP2)

INSIDE LINE



What exactly does your job entail?

My main role is organising the travel for all our staff going to the Formula One and GP2 tests and races. This means organising flights, hotels, transfers, transportation and catering for between 10 and 60 people at a time. Since Bridgestone became sole F1 tyre supplier at the start of the 2007 season, my job has become much more complicated as there are greater numbers of staff to be moved across the world.

How did you start working in motorsport?

Before joining Bridgestone I worked as a travel agent. This helped me develop the co-ordination, organisational and administration skills that are needed in my role. I am fluent in Spanish and I have a working knowledge of Italian, which helps when dealing with different people from all around the world. I'd never really thought about having a career in F1, but after working here for nearly four years I have a real passion for the sport as well as a passion for my job.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

What I enjoy most is seeing all my hard work come together. Trying to organise transportation for such large numbers of people is difficult at the best of times, but often schedules change and things become even more difficult. Knowing I arranged travel for up to 60 people and it's all running smoothly is a great pleasure.

What's your proudest moment while working for Bridgestone?

This year I had the opportunity to go to the Australian Grand Prix. Not only did I get to go to an event and work as part of the team, but I also got to see my hard work put into practice. I was thrown right in at the deep end and spent a lot of time helping out, but it was interesting to see what life at the track is really like as I am normally based at our UK headquarters.

The soft approach

The upcoming F1 races in Monaco and Montreal may be an ocean apart, but they both place focus on the softest and grippiest tyres in Bridgestone's range

After the hot weather, high tyre wear races in Malaysia and Bahrain, Formula One heads to the other extreme for the upcoming grands prix in Monaco and Canada. Bridgestone will be taking its soft and super-soft compound tyres to these events, offering teams the grippiest product in its range.

Although you'd imagine that Monaco, with its multitude of tight corners, works an F1 car's tyres harder than at other circuits, it's the track surface that makes the difference. As Monaco uses public roads, the low maintenance asphalt is less grippy than materials used at dedicated racing facilities.

The slow corner speed also places a premium on traction out of turns – a problem exacerbated by the lack of grip.

Canada's Montreal circuit is a world away from Monaco in terms of layout – its long straights making it similar to Monza in terms of aerodynamic setup. But although the high speeds and the hard braking zones build up tyre temperature, the lack of high-speed turns means tyre wear is again minimal.

"It's like running with athletic shoes," says Bridgestone Director of Motorsport Hirohide Hamashima. "If the surface is smooth, the soles are less likely to grip and it's harder for you to run fast. It's the same with tyres on a slippery track.

"In high-speed corners, there's a lot of stress on the tyres that increases the temperature and tyre wear, which requires a harder compound. Monaco and Montreal, however, have a lot of slow corners, so temperature isn't as big a factor.

"If we took the soft and medium tyres to these tracks, we felt the teams would struggle to get the medium compound up to an effective temperature, so we specifically made the super-soft tyre for low-friction circuits such as these."

Although the super-soft compound tyres won't be tested until just before Monaco, Hamashima is confident that –



"We have a lot of confidence that our soft compounds will be equally up to the job"

Hirohide Hamashima, Bridgestone

based on previous experience – they will be up to the task for the two races at which they will definitely be used.

"We actually decided the 'recipe' of our four compounds of tyre for 2007 in September 2006," he explains. "Thanks to our 10 years' in F1, we were able to design a good spec for our harder compound tyres right away and didn't change them after October. Knowing how well those tyres worked in the opening races of the year, we have a lot of confidence that our softer compounds will be equally up to the job."



Bridgestone's harder compound tyres proved their worth in Malaysia and Bahrain, but the races in Monaco and Canada call for a softer compound

The high-speed banking at tracks such as Indianapolis can produce some incredibly close racing



1996

RACING MILESTONES

After its purchase of Firestone, Bridgestone targeted US racing's top trophy – the Indy 500

When Bridgestone acquired Firestone in 1988, it was keen to revitalise the US tyre firm's profile and, as shown by the marketing benefits of Bridgestone's recent racing success around the world, motorsport was the ideal medium in which to do that.

Between 1909 and 1975, Firestone had tasted much success in both the hugely popular NASCAR stock-car series and the prestigious Indianapolis 500 single-seater race. Bridgestone wanted to reignite those racing glories.

In 1995, after an absence of 20 years, Firestone was back on the tracks in the Indy Car single-seater series and Firestone-shod drivers were quickly winning races.

The real jewel in the US crown was the Indy 500, but a feud between the owners of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and the Indy Car teams meant that, for 1996, there was a rival blue riband race on the same day.

Despite the huge logistical effort required, Firestone supported drivers in both.

Jimmy Vasser's victory in the US 500 – the event run by Indy Car in Michigan – was satisfying enough, but Buddy Lazier's win in the new-look Indy 500 really marked a return to the top for Firestone and the start of a new era in US racing for Bridgestone. Not bad for a weekend's work.

Indy's ultimate speed test

The Indianapolis 500 is one of motorsport's highest profile races, but Firestone has a real technical challenge to conquer as it looks to its 58th win in the event

This month's Indianapolis 500 – the centrepiece of the IndyCar Series – is probably one of the toughest tests of the year for the slick Firestone radial racing tyres used by all the drivers in the US-based championship.

Although the tyres used on the 12 oval circuits that make up the bulk of the IndyCar calendar look the same, there are numerous subtle differences from track to track. The road surface, the degree of banking, corner severity, the length of the straight and even ambient temperature all influence the construction and compound for each event.

The high-speed banked ovals – where average speeds can exceed 270kph – all offer their own unique challenges, but it's the daunting superspeedways such as Indianapolis where the demands on the tyres really go to extreme levels.

In the Indy 500, for example, average lap speeds during the course of the three-hour race can top 370kph, with little braking used for the steep nine-degree banked corners. That means 2268kg of vertical load on the tyres and 4g of lateral force being transmitted through a contact patch that, across all four tyres, is just 30cm by 30cm.

The construction of superspeedway tyres needs to be sturdy and rigid enough to resist these huge loads, without increasing the thickness of rubber used in the tread as this can increase the temperature of the tyre beyond optimum levels. When you consider that the tread surface can reach 100 degrees Celcius at racing speeds, and that its thickness

is just 0.24cm, you begin to understand the level of the challenge that Firestone faces at these high-speed tracks.

"We're constantly working to improve the basic materials used in our race tyres in an effort to make the components stronger, light or more heat tolerant," says Firestone Racing's Senior Project Engineer Dale Harrige. "It is the improvements to these basic materials that best illustrate the technology transfer from racing tyres to street tyres."

This May, Firestone will be targeting its 58th Indy 500 victory – more than any other tyre manufacturer in the event. The Indy 500 may be one of the toughest tests in US racing, but as Firestone has proved time and time again, it's more than up to meeting the challenge.

IndyCar Series tyre facts

- The IndyCar Series uses slick tyres for grip on ovals, compared with Formula One's grooved 'dry' tyres.
- IndyCar teams can use between seven and nine sets of tyres for each race weekend, but get 35 sets of tyres for the 'month of May' build-up to the Indy 500 which includes numerous practice and qualifying sessions.
- Heading into 2007, Firestone-shod drivers have won 87 per cent of IndyCar races since the series' debut in 1996. Firestone has been sole tyre supplier since 2000.

CHAMPIONSHIP TABLES

Formula One

Driver (Team)	Pts
1 Lewis Hamilton (McLaren)	30
2 Fernando Alonso (McLaren)	28
3 Felipe Massa (Ferrari)	27
4 Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari)	22
5 Nick Heidfeld (BMW)	15
6 Robert Kubica (BMW)	8
27 May	Monte Carlo, Monaco
10 June	Montreal, Canada
17 June	Indianapolis, USA

MotoGP

Driver (Team)	Pts
1 Casey Stoner (Ducati)	86
2 Valentino Rossi (Yamaha)	71
3 Dani Pedrosa (Honda)	49
4 Marco Melandri (Honda)	41
5 John Hopkins (Suzuki)	39
6 Toni Elias (Honda)	35
20 May	Le Mans, France
3 June	Mugello, Italy
10 June	Barcelona, Catalunya

* Bridgestone riders in red

GP2

Driver (Team)	Pts
1 Timo Glock (iSport)	31
2 Bruno Senna (Arden)	18
3 Luca Filippi (Super Nova)	16
4 Lucas Di Grassi (ART GP)	14
5 Nicolas Lapierre (Dams)	8
6 Borja Garcia (Durango)	8
26-27 May	Monte Carlo, Monaco
30 June-1 July	Magny Cours, France
7-8 July	Silverstone, Britain

Champ Car

Driver (Team)	Pts
1 Sébastien Bourdais (NHL)	73
2 Will Power (Team Australia)	70
3 Robert Doornbos (Minardi USA)	61
4 Alex Tagliani (RSPORTS)	57
5 Bruno Junqueira (Dale Coyne)	53
6 Oriol Servia (Forsythe)	51
10 June	Portland, USA
24 June	Cleveland, USA
1 July	Mt Tremblant, Canada

IndyCar Series

Driver (Team)	Pts
1 Dan Wheldon (Ganassi)	171
2 Scott Dixon (Ganassi)	144
3 Helio Castroneves (Penske)	136
4 Dario Franchitti (AGR)	131
5 Tony Kanaan (AGR)	130
6 Sam Hornish Jr (Penske)	119
27 May	Indianapolis, USA
3 June	Milwaukee, USA
9 June	Texas, USA

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