

FORMULA 1 GULF AIR BAHRAIN GRAND PRIX 2021 – SUNDAY

HAMILTON WINS TACTICAL TYRE BATTLE WITH MEDIUM-HARD-HARD STRATEGY

Sakhir, March 28, 2021

KEY MOMENTS

- The Bahrain Grand Prix turned into a tense strategic tyre battle between Red Bull's Max Verstappen, who started from pole, and Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton, who subsequently won the race after defending his advantage with more used tyres. Hamilton got in front after pitting earlier, but Verstappen was able to benefit from tyres that were 11 laps younger during the final stint. Both drivers ran different two-stop strategies.
- Mercedes driver Valtteri Bottas finished third after making a late final stop for the P Zero Yellow medium tyre, to claim the extra championship point for the fastest race lap. Sergio Perez also stopped three times on his Red Bull debut, finishing fifth after having started from the pitlane. AlphaTauri's Pierre Gasly was the only other three-stopper, following a first pit stop due to a contact.
- Temperatures were much cooler on race day than they had been previously during the weekend, with 21 degrees ambient and track temperatures of around 25 degrees, as well as gusting winds.
- There were a number of different strategies seen throughout the action-packed race, which was shortened by one lap after an extra formation lap. In total, we saw five different strategies in the top six.

HOW EACH TYRE PERFORMED

- **HARD C2:** This was one of the key ingredients to success in Bahrain, with both Hamilton and Verstappen using it for the decisive final stint. Mercedes and Alpha Tauri were the only team to keep two sets of the P Zero White hard for the race, with Hamilton completing a 28-lap stint on it at the finish and maintaining excellent performance to the finish.
- **MEDIUM C3:** Used by the majority of drivers to start the race, including the top three on the grid. Verstappen used this tyre for the middle stint, while Mercedes opted for the hard. This compound demonstrated a slightly reduced performance gap to the hard, in line with the data collected during free practice.
- **SOFT C4:** Seen only during the first stint after nine drivers started on this compound, with its wear life slightly extended by an early safety car and cooler temperatures that helped reduce overheating

FORMULA 2 – FEATURE RACE

UNI-Virtuosi driver Guanyu Zhou won the feature race after an action-packed 32 laps that hinged on tyre strategy, featuring two safety cars. Just three drivers (ART's Theo Pouchaire, Charouz's Guilherme Samaia and Campos driver Gianluca Petecof) selected new tyres for the start, with temperatures remaining consistent at around 24 degrees ambient and 41 degrees on track throughout the race. Eight of the 22 runners started on the P Zero Red soft tyre, and for a while this looked like it might be the compound to have: Christian Lundgaard (ART), Felipe Drugovich (UNI-Virtuosi) and Oscar Piastri (Prema) all used the extra speed of the red tyre to gain an advantage during the first stint – helped also by an early safety car – while polesitter Zhou dropped to fifth on P Zero White hard tyres. However, following another safety car, a shorter final stint on the soft enabled Zhou to take the lead close to the finish. In the end, the top four all adopted a hard-soft strategy, with the highest-classified driver to start on the soft tyre being

Marcus Armstrong (DAMS) in fifth at the flag, who qualified outside the top 10 and switched to hard tyres under the second safety car period.

MARIO ISOLA – HEAD OF F1 AND CAR RACING

“Tyre strategy was at the forefront of this exciting race, with Hamilton and Mercedes twice stopping earlier than Verstappen and Red Bull – meaning of course that Hamilton had to complete a longer final stint, which he managed brilliantly. All three compounds performed strongly throughout the race, with Verstappen also doing a long middle stint on the medium. We saw a number of different strategies, with five of the finishers using all the compounds during the race, and two three-stoppers in the top five as well. The strategies also reflected the tyre sets that each driver had available for the race. It was a similar story in Formula 2, where the new race format helped to put an accent on tyre strategy, delivering a brilliant weekend of racing in Bahrain throughout every category.”

BEST TIME BY COMPOUND

		
Verstappen 1m33.228s	Bottas 1m32.090s	Norris 1m36.906s
Hamilton 1m34.015s	Perez 1m33.970s	Stroll 1m37.046s
Gasly 1m34.090s	Verstappen 1m34.421s	Sainz 1m37.112s

LONGEST STINT OF THE RACE

COMPOUND	DRIVER	LAPS
HARD C2	Vettel	31
MEDIUM C3	Raikkonen	27
SOFT C4	Sainz	15

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