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19 SEPTEMBER 2008

GP2 SERIES Spa/Monza



Campos crowned

Adrian Campos talks exclusively about his team championship win

Champion!

Pantano secures drivers' title ahead of Senna and di Grassi

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Top of the pile

Once again, the battle for the GP2 Series drivers' went down to the last event of the season. As the dust settled on a thrilling weekend's racing at Italy's historic Monza circuit it was Giorgio Pantano whose name was being etched on the driver's trophy.

Giorgio Pantano, GP2 champion 2008. I like the sound of that - it's great! I am very happy with the title, although it was a bit of shame about the race that clinched it at Monza, because I was leading and very much wanted to win on my home track. But the championship was the main aim, and that's what we've achieved.

I have to say a great thank you to everyone on my team, especially my mechanics, who did an exceptional job on my car this year. We didn't have one mechanical failure, and it's the first year I have ever experienced that.

The reliability is what made the difference for me this year and the way the team worked together. They made the difference and worked seriously hard, so they deserve this as much as me. They knew what they wanted to do, and they did it.

Hitting the ground at pace

The good work started right from the beginning of the year when the team got the new chassis and put it in the windtunnel and the suspension rig. They did a very good job with that, which I realised when we tested at Paul Ricard because the car was already in very good shape. So we started with a very good car and only made little changes to make it even better.

The result was clear, if it had gone better for me in Valencia, Spa and Monza, then maybe I would have won seven races this year!

Big moments

Everyone before me who has won this title has gone to Formula 1. As far as my future is concerned, people have always said to me "win the championship first, and then we will talk about the opportunity". So, I am just waiting now. I will not wait long, I will wait a bit and then I will focus on my career elsewhere.

The biggest moment in winning this title was actually way back at the second race of the year, in Istanbul. After qualifying and the first race, I said to myself: "I have never driven a car like that. It is my perfect car. A title winner." This was the first year I've scored a point in the first round, and from then on, we made result after result.

There was a problem in Monte Carlo, when I was pushed out, and in Budapest I was P7 in qualifying but besides that we were on the top all the time.

My best race of the year was Silverstone. It was totally perfect for me and the team. The way we set-up the car and used the Bridgestone tyres to their best was perfect.

And I guess the low point was Valencia, because I still can't believe what happened. I dominated that race, only to run out of fuel in the final metres. That was difficult to deal with.

This year, the others called me the granddad. But the granddad is still winning the races and now he's won the championship. I am still hungry and I want to keep showing what I can do.



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WWW.GP2SERIES.COM

ADRIAN CAMPOS ON WINNING THE TEAM TITLE



Campos was celebrating its first GP2 Series title in Italy. Team principle Adrian Campos discusses trophies, plans and how the resurrection of a GP2 force helped them along.

How important is winning the teams' title for Barwa International Campos Team?

"For us, and for me, it's very important. Winning in GP2 is something very special, because it's the biggest and most important championship outside Formula 1. To win this title after four years of trying is a huge accomplishment for this team. Now we have won every championship in which we have competed over

12 years, which I am very proud of. I think it shows we have done our job in the correct way."

What has the key to success been?

"Four years ago I decided, based on my experience of 25 years in racing, that some people can't work together. For instance, Italian and English people are quite impossible to work together because they are so different. But I was convinced that the British method work in motorsport could work with the Spanish. My technical director is Chris Murphy, and he has done a great job along with my engineers and mechanics, most of whom are Spanish. It is the way they work together that is the key."

Bringing Lucas di Grassi back to GP2 was a masterstroke, wasn't it?

"Of course. I have to admit Lucas surprised me. His personality, his speed and his professionalism have been so much more than I expected. He knows exactly what he wants, and the way he caught Pantano and Senna, overtaking everyone else in the championship, was unbelievable."

What is the future plan?

"To continue in the same way, to win races and do our job next season like we did this year."

GOOD MONTH



CAMPOS

Just three rounds ago, the Campos outfit was third in the team standings, a full 29 points adrift of leaders iSport. But, a perfectly-timed surge of form from Vitaly Petrov saw them snatch the team title on the last weekend of the season.



GIORGIO PANTANO

After 23 podiums and nine wins in his four years of GP2 racing, 29-year-old Pantano finally has his name on the drivers trophy. It didn't come easy though, the Italian picked up just five points from the last four races.



DAVIDE VALSECCHI

The Italian Durango driver has had a painful, staccato season. Ruled out through injury after a heavy crash in Turkey, and briefly hospitalised for a second time after the Spa feature race, his sprint race win on home soil at Monza was the perfect tonic.



ISPORT

Having arrived at Monza capable of taking the team and driver titles, iSport left Italy second in both. Bruno Senna bagged just six points from the last four races, while Karun Chandhok has fared even worse, not scoring since the Hungarian feature race.



SAKON YAMAMOTO

While team-mate Romain Grosjean picked up a feature race win in Spa followed by fourth and third in Italy, Yamamoto was forced to retire from three of this month's four races.

BAD MONTH

Q&A

ROMAIN GROSJEAN

Having won the inaugural GP2 Asia title in April, ART rookie Romain Grosjean continued an impressive year with victory in the Spa feature race.

To win a GP2 feature race at Spa must have felt fantastic?

"Oh yes, finally we won one. We should have won so many more races this year, but I had bad luck or made a mistake. It was a really long time without winning a race, so for me and the team it was a great feeling."

Was it a hard race to win with the changing track conditions?

"It started wet, then it dried and... it was typical Spa – the most difficult track in the world for so many reasons. It's also the most beautiful as well, so to win there felt brilliant."

Did the conditions come to you?

"Yes. We set the car up for the dry conditions that we knew would come at the end. That was very hard on wet tyres early on, but it was the right decision. The car was fantastic as the track dried. We had a really bad free practice, P16, because I hadn't driven at Spa since 2004 in Formula Renault. So it was great to come back from that position."

How important is your championship position?

"For sure, the target was always to finish on the podium at the end of the year. We had bad weekends in Hungary and Valencia, and lost 15 points, which would have made my life so much easier. I just tried to do my best and not feel the pressure to perform."

Romain Grosjean was one of GP2's most impressive rookies in 2008

[CLICK HERE FOR ROMAIN'S PROFILE](#)

Top-class drivers unite

Formula 1 drivers Nico Rosberg, Mark Webber, Heikki Kovalainen, Nelson Piquet and Kazuki Nakajima came together with the entire GP2 grid at Monza in support of the Gonzalo Rodriguez Memorial Foundation (GRMF).

The drivers were all present in the GP2 paddock on Thursday of the race weekend to sign a painting created by Canadian artist Bill Patterson.

The piece was then auctioned on Sunday night, with the proceeds going towards a range of good causes that the GRMF supports in Uruguay.

"It was great to have so many top F1 and GP2 drivers here to lend their support," explained GP2 press officer Alexa Quintin. "The Gonzalo Rodriguez Foundation is a very worthy cause and today highlights the strong links between the GP2 Series and F1 racing."



NAVARRO NAMED AS WINNING E-REPORTER

French student Guillaume Navarro was crowned winner of the 2008 Bridgestone e-reporter competition at the GP2 season-end prize-giving ceremony at Monza.

This year marked the fifth anniversary of the competition, which gives a platform to aspiring motorsport journalists. Bridgestone celebrated the anniversary by inviting all previous e-reporter finalists to Monza.

A total of 31 graduates were present in Italy to watch Navarro collect his award.

"Being the winner of the 2008 Bridgestone e-reporter contest gives me a great sense of achievement," explained the 23-year-old Navarro.

"In the same way GP2 is

Formula 1's strongest feeder series, the Bridgestone e-reporter competition represents a unique chance for young, aspiring motorsport journalists to make their way to the paddock."

Navarro was chosen from nine finalists based on his written work and interview technique.

"It is a great honour to crown yet another talented Bridgestone e-reporter," said Franco Annunziato, director of Bridgestone's European technical centre.

"As we celebrate five years of the competition this year, we look forward to the future by continuing our commitment to education and supporting young talents."

[Click here for more information](#)

GP2 SERIES AWARD WINNERS 2008

Karun Chandhok won the 2008 best driving style award at the GP2 Series 2008 prize-giving. The title was decided by a public vote through the GP2 website (www.gp2series.com) and was part of the series' end-of-season roll of honour, which recognises a number of driver and team achievements across the season.

Other winners included iSport's Bruno Senna, who was named most improved driver, ART's Romain Grosjean, who picked up the best rookie title and Racing Engineering's Giorgio Pantano whose pass on Grosjean in the Silverstone feature race won best overtaking manoeuvre. For the teams, Piquet Sports won best race strategy, and iSport best engineered team.

FROM THE GP2SERIES.COM BLOG



It was not long afterwards that we found out about Giorgio's exclusion from the event, and the paddock was in uproar. Except for the man himself, who had left the circuit for the casino in Spa in search of a change in his luck, and Zuber, who had lost a hard fought podium because of illegal repairs to his nosecone carried out by the team, handing third to Maldonado. It's hard to know what he was

more upset about: the loss of the podium, or the recipient.

The next morning Zuber was still upset, playing the martyr card to anyone who would listen: "Look, there's only 25 guys in this race, but they've put me 26th on the grid!" he laughed when the official grid was released, and sure enough he was right.

See blog.gp2series.caradisiac.com

PADDOCK PASS GP2 NEWS YOU CAN'T GET ANYWHERE ELSE



The stewards have been kept busy recently, handing out no less than 10 penalties in the last four rounds of racing. So when a couple of GP2 staff got hold of the press conference radio mic and decided to have a bit of fun with Spa feature race winner Romain Grosjean the choice of material was obvious. "Paging Romain Grosjean, Romain Grosjean to the steward's office please. This is the last call, Romain Grosjean to the stewards office please." The Frenchman looked around frantically before spotting the pranksters and replying with an unprintable hand gesture...



From what Paddock Pass heard after race one in Valencia, half the GP2 drivers were rather disappointed as they lined up on the grid. Not with their starting positions, but with their grid girls...who were actually grid boys. A commendable move toward equality by the event organisers but not one that was entirely appreciated by GP2's finest "They better have a girl for Bruno!" laughed Bianca Senna. They didn't and Bruno suffered one of his worst results of the season...



The GP2 drivers came together at the last race of the season to sign the pictured print. Along with their autographs they each penned their thoughts on "solidarity", the theme of this year's charity auction, before the canvas was put up for sale with a 2000 Euro reserve.

AWAY FROM THE TRACK

SÉBASTIEN BUEMI, CLUBBING IT

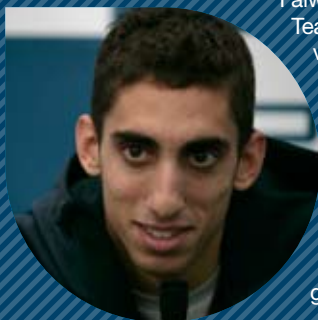
I've been living in England since January in Milton Keynes, near the Red Bull Racing factory, so I decided to take up golf.

I always play with another Red Bull Junior Team driver, Brendon Hartley, who is racing very well in British Formula 3 this year.

To hit the ball well and constant is very difficult - I always hit it to the right when I tee off!

We also play a bit of tennis together, because that is good for co-ordination and keeps you on your toes.

The golf is a harder game and in between training sessions I find it's very good for the concentration.



Competition between Brendon and I is always good, and it's like that when I go back to Austria for fitness tests at the Red Bull centre.

I have to push hard on that front, because when you're up against guys racing in the lower categories, you've got to be on top. I can't have anyone from F3 or Formula Renault beating me!

It's a good life being a racing driver for Red Bull and I get to do a lot of the F1 shakedowns as well as race GP2. It means I'm quite busy, but in between that and the training sessions, this is where the golf fits in.

Hopefully, by the beginning of next year, I will be good enough to have an official golf handicap. I really need to improve my tee shots. But it's a good release to go on the golf range and hit some balls as hard as I can if I've had a bad race weekend!

[CLICK HERE FOR BUEMI'S PROFILE](#)

RACE REPORT

[CLICK HERE FOR RACE IMAGES](#)



Diego Nunes of DPR exits the famous Eau Rouge corner

BELGIUM

SPA (September 6-7)



First GP2 Series feature win for Grosjean as title rivals Pantano, Senna and di Grassi all stumble

Reigning GP2 Asia champion Romain Grosjean secured his first GP2 Series feature race win in a chaotic weekend at the Spa-Francorchamps circuit. Meanwhile, drivers' championship front-runner, Racing Engineering's Giorgio Pantano, was excluded from both races.

ART rookie Grosjean went ahead of Alvaro Parente and into first with five laps remaining before pulling out a 4.1s lead Piquet Sports Andreas Zuber came in third – a position he would later be stripped of due to a technical infringement.

Behind the trio, advantage in the title chase swung back and forth between Pantano and iSport's Bruno Senna. Starting on pole, Senna had been leading the race before

he was handed a drive-through penalty for an unsafe release from the pits, leaving Pantano in first. But, the Italian's luck abandoned him when his engine reverted to safe mode dropping him back to eighth. An over-zealous fight-back from the Italian ended in a crash with Lucas di Grassi, which in turn led to an unprecedented exclusion from the sprint race.

However, Senna failed to capitalise on Pantano's absence in race two, spinning out on lap nine. Third overall, di Grassi closed the championship gap with fifth place, but it was Pastor Maldonado who took the sprint race spoils overtaking race leader Jérôme d'Ambrosio with just half a lap left. Campos' Vitaly Petrov finished third.

Feature race (26 laps)

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| 1 Romain Grosjean | (ART) |
| 2 Alvaro Parente | (Super Nova) |
| 3 Pastor Maldonado | (Piquet) |
| 4 Vitaly Petrov | (Campos) |
| 5 Sébastien Buemi | (Arden) |
| 6 Andy Soucek | (Super Nova) |
| 7 Mike Conway | (Trident) |
| 8 Jérôme D'Ambrosio | (Dams) |

Fastest lap Romain Grosjean
Pole position Bruno Senna

Sprint race (18 laps)

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| 1 Pastor Maldonado | (Piquet) |
| 2 Jérôme D'Ambrosio | (Dams) |
| 3 Vitaly Petrov | (Campos) |
| 4 Sébastien Buemi | (Arden) |
| 5 Lucas di Grassi | (Campos) |
| 6 Davide Valsecchi | (Durango) |
| 7 Karun Chandhok | (iSport) |
| 8 Javier Villa | (Racing Eng.) |

Fastest lap Pastor Maldonado
Pole position Jérôme D'Ambrosio

ITALY

MONZA (September 13-14)



Di Grassi keeps winning, Valsecchi lands dream home victory and Pantano and Campos secure titles

Campos' Lucas di Grassi won a frantic wet/dry race one at Monza as Giorgio Pantano of Racing Engineering secured the drivers' title without scoring a point in his home feature race.

Starting from pole, the Italian led for the first 26 laps and looked odds-on for a comfortable podium finish before he was given a drive-through penalty for exiting the pitlane illegally.

With just five laps left, di Grassi held off a strong challenge from Piquet Sport's Pastor Maldonado for his third win of the season. Sébastien Buemi rounded off the podium in a distant third.

Pantano meanwhile could only manage 10th, but with iSport's Bruno Senna scoring just four points, the Italian's overall lead was secure regardless of what happened in the sprint race on Sunday.

But one man race two certainly did matter to was Davide Valsecchi. Driving for the Italian Durango team, and in his home event, Valsecchi secured his maiden GP2 victory with a convincing nine second cushion over second placed Roldán Rodríguez of FMS.

Valsecchi's win marked the perfect end to a tough year during which he has been hospitalised by two big shunts.

[CLICK HERE FOR RACE IMAGES](#)



Chicanes - GP2 style

Feature race (32 laps)

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| 1 Lucas Di Grassi | (Campos) |
| 2 Pastor Maldonado | (Piquet) |
| 3 Sébastien Buemi | (Arden) |
| 4 Romain Grosjean | (ART) |
| 5 Bruno Senna | (iSport) |
| 6 Roldán Rodríguez | (FMS) |
| 7 Jérôme D'Ambrosio | (Dams) |
| 8 Davide Valsecchi | (Durango) |

Fastest lap Mike Conway
Pole position Giorgio Pantano

Sprint race (21 laps)

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| 1 Davide Valsecchi | (Durango) |
| 2 Roldán Rodríguez | (FMS) |
| 3 Romain Grosjean | (ART) |
| 4 Pastor Maldonado | (Piquet) |
| 5 Giorgio Pantano | (Racing Eng.) |
| 6 Jérôme D'Ambrosio | (Dams) |
| 7 Sébastien Buemi | (Arden) |
| 8 Bruno Senna | (iSport) |

Fastest lap Andy Soucek
Pole position Davide Valsecchi

SHANGHAI, CHINA PREVIEW

Dates 18-19 October
Track length 5.451km (3.387 miles)
Website www.icsh.sh.cn

The Shanghai event is one of three F1 support races on the new calendar



STAY

As one of the tallest buildings in the city, the ultra-modern Royal Meridien Shanghai (www.starwoodhotels.com) is still a landmark in this increasingly populated skyline. The interior is equally as impressive.

EAT

Shanghai offers an increasingly diverse choice in food, but perhaps the best option is still local Sichuan cuisine or simple dim sum and tea. Din Tai Fung (www.dintaifung.com.tw/eng/) has great examples of both.

SEE

For many, the Bund is Shanghai's biggest attraction. The west embankment of the Huangpu River, and part of the old town, it is steeped in history.

The GP2 Asia season 08/09 roars into action on October 19 with a debut event at the Shanghai circuit in China.

ART driver Sakon Yamamoto offers up his lowdown on what promises to be an exciting first outing in the six race calendar.

"I have raced at Shanghai twice in Formula 1, for Super Aguri in 2006 and Spyker in 2007, and it's a perfect addition to the GP2 Asia calendar.

There is always a great atmosphere at the Chinese Grand Prix, and I think the racing will be very good, there are two long straights where the cars will get up to a very high speed. There are a couple of quick

corners, including the banked one before the back straight – not many circuits have one of these!

Turn one is also very unique, because it is not a straightforward hairpin. The entry speed is very high, and you have to take the speed off as you corner, but it is important how much speed you carry through there for the next sequence of corners.

I think there can be a lot of overtaking with the GP2 car, and it's a big circuit that I think will suit the car very well. I am hoping to be on the grid, although it is not finalised yet, and I am expecting a very interesting race. It will be a great way to start the second season of GP2 Asia."

GP2 Asia calendar

Oct 18/19 - Shanghai
Dec 5/6 - Dubai
Jan 23/24 - Bahrain
Feb 27/28 - Dubai
Apr 4/5 - Sepang
Apr 18/19 - Bahrain

GP2 SERIES FINAL STANDINGS

Drivers' Championship

01 Giorgio Pantano	76	14 Andy Soucek	14
02 Bruno Senna	64	15 Davide Valsecchi	11
03 Lucas di Grassi	63	16 Kamui Kobayashi	10
04 Romain Grosjean	62	17 Javier Villa	8
05 Pastor Maldonado	60	18 Ho Pin Tung	7
06 Sébastien Buemi	50	19 Luca Filippi	6
07 Vitaly Petrov	39	20 Adrián Vallés	5
08 Álvaro Parente	34	21 Diego Nunes	3
09 Andreas Zuber	32	22 Sakon Yamamoto	3
10 Karun Chandhok	31	23 Alberto Valério	0
11 Jérôme D'Ambrosio	21	24 Carlos Iaconelli	0
12 Mike Conway	20	25 Marko Asmer	0
13 Roldán Rodríguez	14	26 Michael Herck	0

Team Championship

01 Barwa International Campos Team	103
02 iSport International	95
03 Piquet Sports	92
04 Racing Engineering	84
05 ART Grand Prix	70
06 Trust Team Arden	56
07 Super Nova Racing	47
08 Dams	31
09 Trident Racing	27
10 FMS International	15
11 Durango	11
12 BCN Competición	5
13 DPR	4



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