

RENAULT BRIDGESTONE

THE INSIDER



ISSUE 25 BAHRAIN

GAME OVER

Valsecchi and iSport sweep Asia Series titles in Bahrain



PARENTE RETURNS WITH COLINI

GP3 TESTS THE LATEST NEWS

MICHEL ON GP3 TV

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RUMBLESTRIP

ALL THE NEWS FROM AROUND THE PADDOCK

IN BRIEFS

CHANDHOK TO F1?

As this issue of The Insider went to press it was looking likely that another GP2 driver from 2009 was on the verge of stepping up to Formula 1. Speculation was mounting that former Durango, iSport and Ocean driver Karun Chandhok was on the verge of finalising a deal with the new Campos Meta1 team.

NEW SUPER NOVA

There was a new face at Super Nova in Bahrain, with former F3 Euro Series frontrunner Jake Rozenzweig suiting up alongside Josef Kral. The 20-year-old American stepped into the car previously raced this season by James Jakes and Marcus Ericsson, and will remain with the team for the season finale.

FILIPPI FAREWELL

GP2 will farewell one of its most seasoned veterans at the upcoming Asia Series round at Bahrain, with Luca Filippi having confirmed that it will be his final race in a GP2 car. The Meritus driver debuted in the main series with FMS in 2006 and has two wins to his credit, including the final race of the 2009 season at the Algarve circuit.

PARENTE RETURNS

Coloni's record of finding top veterans to fill its seats in the GP2 Asia Series continued at Bahrain, with Alvaro Parente joining regular William Bratt. Parente took over the car driven by Roldán Rodríguez and Alberto Valerio during the current series. "It was an excellent opportunity to drive a GP2 car again," he said.



PIC FOCUSES ON THE FUTURE

Arden International rookie Charles Pic says that his maiden win at Bahrain last weekend has left him even more motivated for the final round at the same track.

"We clearly have a good baseline set-up for the last two races, but that won't stop us trying to make it better," he said. "I know there is still more to come from me."

The French driver, who graduates into GP2 from World Series by Renault, has adapted quickly. He landed pole in Abu Dhabi after just two weeks in the Series, finishing in the top 10 in both races before notching up his first points with fifth and first at Bahrain last week. He currently lies in 12th place in the drivers' standings.

BUURMAN JOINS OCEAN RACING

Ocean Racing Technology welcomed back a familiar face in Bahrain when Yelmer Buurman joined for the final two rounds of the Asia Series.

The Dutch driver was part of the team's GP2 Asia Series line-up during the 2008/09 season, and was called up for an encore after Max Chilton's switch to the Barwa Addax team left an empty seat.

"I'm very happy to give Yelmer another opportunity in the GP2 Series, because he deserves it," said Ocean team owner Tiago Monteiro.



ZAUGG AIMING FOR LONG-TERM DEAL

Adrian Zaugg made his return to the cockpit of a GP2 car for the first time in two years when he joined Trident Racing for the Asia Series race in Bahrain.

The South African contested the 2007 GP2 season with the Arden team, his best race coming with a sixth-place finish in the feature race at Magny Cours.

Trident managing director, Luca Zerbini said he hoped to tempt the 23-year-old back on a permanent basis.

"We've been working on the Zaugg 'project' for quite some time. I hope this will be the first step of a longer relationship," he said. "[I'm] aiming to bring Adrian into the 2010 main series with Trident Racing."



GP3 ON TRACK

Preparations for the inaugural season of the GP3 Series get into full swing this week when the teams try their cars for the first time in a two-day test at Paul Ricard.

Series organiser Bruno Michel said that he was delighted with how the new series is coming together, with the majority of seats already having been snapped up.

"It will be a full grid for the first test," he said. "About two-thirds of the drivers have signed and there are some more coming to test the car and decide what they want to do

and whether they want to commit.

"At the moment we have some very strong future stars. It's exactly what it is like in GP2 – we generally have five or six rivals who will fight for the championship, and others who are able to possibly win races. I think we are going to have some guys who will be very interesting to watch."

The first test will be run on 4/5 March, with two further tests scheduled for Paul Ricard and Barcelona prior to the opening round of the series in Barcelona on 8/9 May.

GOOD MONTH

iSPORT

By winning both the drivers' and the teams' titles last weekend with one round of GP2 Asia to come, Valsecchi and iSport have left everyone else fighting over the scraps.

ARDEN

A maiden GP2 win in the sprint race for rookie Charles Pic and two podiums for veteran Javier Villa signalled a great return to form for one of GP2's proudest teams

GIACOMO RICCI

Italian improved over the weekend and finished with a podium in the sprint race. He's shown good form in the Asia Series, but is still to firm up his plans for the year.

JULES BIANCHI

Began on the right foot by taking his first GP2 pole, only for a bad start to cost him a shot at victory. His misery was completed in the sprint race when he was forced out by accident damages.

DAMS

That Edoardo Piscopo's fifth in the sprint race was DAMS' best result of the weekend made DAMS' Asia Series title success of last season seem like a long time ago. But the French team has proved it can bounce back before.

BAD MONTH



Q&A

CHAMPION: DAVIDE VALSECCHI

Q: You're the GP2 Asia Series champion... congratulations from The Insider!

DAVIDE VALSECCHI: Thanks so much! It was an incredible weekend for us. It's a really great emotion. Our car was incredible. It's an important result for me, because both of the drivers who have won the Asia Series in the past have gone into Formula 1 – Romain Grosjean was with Renault last year, and this year we have Kamui Kobayashi at Sauber. But for now, I hope we can do a similar performance in the main series. We'll have to see how we go with the main series car, but in this Asia Series, everything was perfect.



Q: It was an amazing feat to win with three races left...

DV: Oh, it was unbelievable. We did a really good job in the test before Abu Dhabi – we found something in the set-up that felt really good to me – we were able to get a lot of front grip, which I love, so it helped a lot. It might not be so easy to do the same thing in the main series, but we'll try.

Q: Does it make you more confident about the main series this season?

DV: Last year was disappointing, but it was my fault. I had the chance to be at Addax and it didn't go well. But it wasn't the same atmosphere, but here at iSport, the team loves me! Everything now seems perfect, so I want to keep that feeling for the rest of the year and we'll be okay.

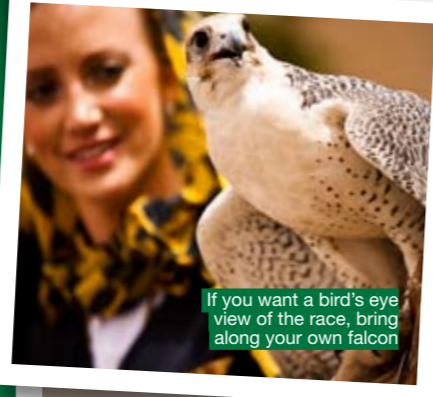
THE GALLERY



Arden's Javier Villa wonders what might have been after finishing third in the feature race



No beating about the bush for Arden's Charles Pic, who scored his maiden win in Bahrain



If you want a bird's eye view of the race, bring along your own falcon



Alexander Rossi of Meritus and Coloni's William Bratt get a bit closer than planned



Daniele Zampieri and Edoardo Piscopo chat during a shorts, sorry, short pause in the action



In the Bahrain heat, no wonder Sam Bird is a little hot under the collar

BAHRAIN STATS

1m47.035sec
JAVIER VILLA'S
FASTEST LAP
IN THE BAHRAIN
FEATURE RACE

TOTAL LAPS LED BY
33 DAVID
VALSECCHI
THIS SEASON

19
DRIVERS HAVE
SCORED POINTS
IN GP2 ASIA
2009/10

Q&A

GP3 TV COVERAGE: BRUNO MICHEL



Q: It's the week of the first GP3 group test. How are things coming together?

BRUNO MICHEL: It's getting quite exciting. We've been on time for everything, the team have received their cars, their engines and I think they are all quite excited about it.

Q: Is the GP3 grid full for the start of the season?

BM: It will be a full grid for the first test. I think that, of the drivers who are doing the championship, about two-thirds of the drivers have signed and then there are some more drivers coming through to test the car and to assess what they want to do and whether they want to commit.

Q: Will the series have television coverage?

BM: Yes, there will be television coverage. The distribution of

TV is left with FOM, as it is with GP2, and we are expecting the same sort of TV coverage as GP2 is currently having. We are expecting television coverage to be alongside GP2 and Formula 1 because the races happen on the same weekend.

Q: It sounds like it is all going pretty well then?

BM: It's going fine! It's never easy, but it's moving on. And for us it was easier to organise GP3 because we had been through the same difficulties when we were starting out with GP2. But because of the success of GP2, and because GP3 and GP2 are going to be next to each other in the paddock, it was not such a massive problem this time. So we are on the right track.

AWAY FROM THE TRACK

GP2 Asia drivers took some time out from their on-track duties to lend their support to Bahrain's 'Go Green' campaign last week. The drivers helped 75 school children plant shrubs and seeds around the Bahrain International Circuit to help encourage wildlife.





THREE WAS THE MAGIC NUMBER FOR DAVIDE VALSECCHI – HE WON THE THIRD ASIA SERIES TITLE, IN THE THIRD RACE, WITH THREE RACES TO GO

BAHRAIN

SAKHIR (13-14 MARCH)

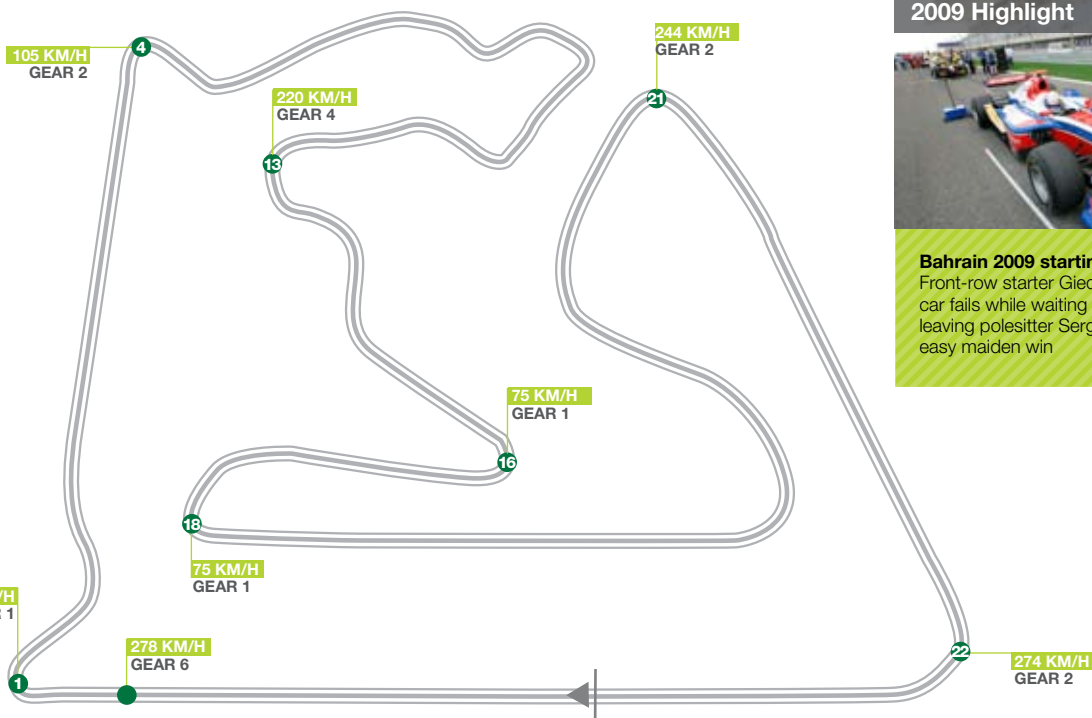
TRACK LENGTH
6.299KM

2009 FEATURE RACE WINNER
DIEGO NUNES (iSPORT)

2009 SPRINT RACE WINNER
LUIZ RAZIA (ARDEN)

2009 track temp
47°C

2009 race weather
36°C



2009 Highlight



Bahrain 2009 starting line

Front-row starter Giedo van der Garde's car falls while waiting for the formation lap, leaving polesitter Sergio Perez to take an easy maiden win

DRIVER'S EYE VIEW

LUCA FILIPPI
MERITUS

We've only just returned from Bahrain, and in a few days we'll get back on plane and return there for the last round. But we'll be using a different version of the track this time – GP2 Asia is supporting the Bahrain Grand Prix so we'll be racing on the longer version of the track, which F1 is also using for the first time.

I haven't actually seen the new section yet, but I've heard that it is a bit of a mix – we join the new part of the track after turn 4, and from what I understand there is a fast bit at the beginning followed by about three slower corners before we rejoin the regular circuit. Apparently it's quite narrow, so I'm not sure whether it will create any new opportunities to



overtake, but we'll see when we get there. Whatever the case, it is always nice to race on a layout that no one has seen before, and it will make the first part of the weekend a bit more interesting when we're all trying to learn it!

1m46.954s
JERMOE D'AMBROSIO'S
FASTEST LAP
IN APRIL 2009

11.494s
LUIZ RAZIA'S
VICTORY MARGIN
IN LAST YEAR'S SPRINT RACE

187.585 km/h AVERAGE
SPEED OF KAMUI KOBAYASHI'S
POLE LAP LAST YEAR



CLICK HERE FOR
LUCA'S PROFILE



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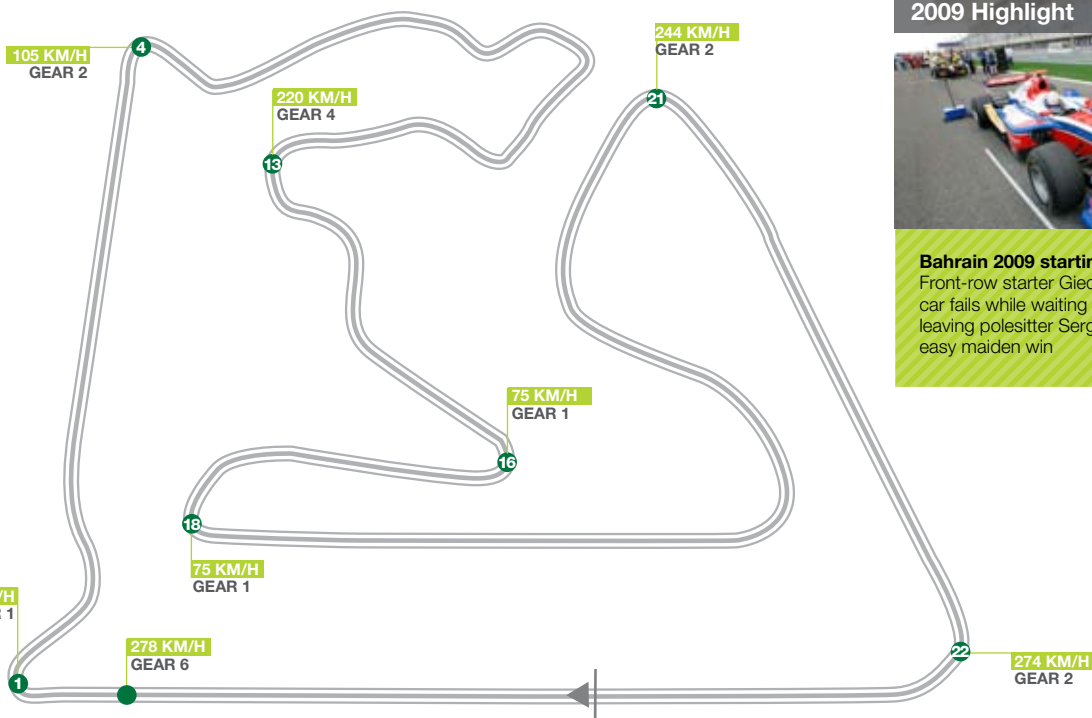
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