

RENAULT BRIDGESTONE

THE GP SERIES™ INSIDER

ISSUE 29 TURKEY

PASTOR COURSE

Maldonado serves up a treat in Turkey and goes to the top of the standings



SAM BIRD
CORNERED



MALDONADO
ON HIS TURKEY WIN



VALERIO'S
VALENCIA PREVIEW

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RUMBLESTRIP

ALL THE NEWS FROM AROUND THE PADDOCK



BIRD SOUNDS OFF...

While Sam Bird's exploits at Barcelona last month have made him the subject of an internet campaign (see story below right), the man himself is vying for space on your MP3 player.

The Brit has started his own podcast in which you can get the full lowdown on his race weekends from the man himself (find it at www.sambird.com).

While Bird might be the first GP2 driver to have turned to audio (at least, as far as

we're aware), there's a healthy presence on Twitter. For starters, we recommend you seek out Rapax's Luiz Razia ([luizrazia](#)), Addax's Giedo van der Garde ([GvanderGarde](#)) and Sergio Pérez ([checoperez11](#)) and Coloni's Alberto Valerio ([BetinhoValerio](#)). Of course, there's also the series itself ([feeder_series](#)).

Some drivers prefer to tweet only in their native language, but consider that an extra incentive to dust off your French dictionary.



ERICSSON PUNISHED

Super Nova rookie Marcus Ericsson faces a difficult task in the forthcoming Valencia round at the end of the month after being issued with a penalty which will see him drop 10 grid places for the feature race.

Following the result of a stewards' investigation after

a crash in the sprint race at Istanbul, the Swede was deemed to be responsible for the incident which eliminated himself and Trident's Adrian Zaugg.

Ericsson will have the 10 places deducted from his qualifying position on the Saturday, leaving him with an uphill struggle.



BIRD CORNERED

When ART's Sam Bird delivered a masterclass in overtaking in the season opener at Barcelona last month, TV commentator Will Buxton decided to rename Turn 5 at the Circuit de Catalunya 'Bird Corner'.

Now one GP2 fan has gone a step further, taking it upon himself to start an online petition calling for the name change to be made official.

"I've heard about this petition – it's amazing!" Bird told The GP2 Insider. "I love the fact that there's a petition on the internet to have the corner

renamed 'Bird Corner'. I'm going to have to sign up to that... wouldn't it be amazing?" the baffled Brit added.

"To have a corner named after me would be unbelievable. At the time I was a bit disappointed to have had to come from so far back, but now I actually look back at it fondly – it was a fun race."

At time of going to press, 117 fans had put their name to the petition. If you want to join them, visit: www.gopetition.co.uk/petitions/sam-bird-corner.html

FROM THE BLOG



After a strong start to the season, Giacomo Ricci (above) has suffered a lot of bad luck lately, and racing drivers are nothing if not superstitious.

Standing around in the back of the team's truck, Giacomo was convinced that he had discovered the reason. "My mechanic is a big Inter fan, so

he is happy at the moment." For those who don't follow football, Inter won a famous treble this year by claiming the Serie A title, the Coppa Italia and the Champions League. The mechanic expressed his joy by putting Inter's black and blue colours on Ricci's brakes.

"When I saw it I thought, 'Let him do it if it makes him happy'. But since then, I have had a lot of bad luck! So last night I told him okay, enough is enough, it must come off now..."

CLICK HERE FOR THE GP2 BLOG

GOOD MONTH

RAPAX

Pastor Maldonado cracks the win in Turkey and leads the championship, while Luiz Razia is third in the standings. No shortage of reasons to smile in the Rapax garage at the moment.

DANI CLOS

The Spaniard put on a brave face when he could only manage third after starting from pole in Monaco, but there was no hiding the joy when he scored his maiden win in Istanbul's sprint race.

MICHAEL HERCK

One of the early contenders for the grid's most improved driver, Herck has carried his strong Asia Series form into Europe and scored a tidy haul of points in Turkey.

ART GRAND PRIX

Sam Bird has shown plenty of pace but until Turkey he was unable to convert that into a podium. Team-mate Jules Bianchi is having an even more torrid time, but there's every reason to expect a turnaround in form soon.

SERGIO PÉREZ

From the highs of a Monaco win came the lows of disqualification in Turkey. A weekend without points is not what the Mexican needed, but he has no shortage of pace and plenty of races still to come.

BAD MONTH



Q&A

PASTOR MALDONADO RAPAX

Q: You've been fast all season, but it must be nice to have finally turned that into a win?

PM: It's incredible. We were quick in the winter test, but then we had some problems in Barcelona, and in Monte Carlo I made a mistake in qualifying that compromised my weekend. Yesterday I was on pole until the last lap, but in the race we were on top.

Q: Both you and Luiz Razia have looked strong – Rapax seems to be doing a good job at the moment.

PM: The championship looks good, and I think we are very strong now. We'll see what happens in Valencia, but it could be one of our circuits.



Q: You were one of the pre-season favourites because of your experience, but are you surprised at how strong the rookies have been?

PM: For sure, the rookies are always quick. Just look at Nico Hülkenberg last year. Now Sam Bird is quick, Jules Bianchi is quick, Oliver Turvey... all the new guys are very quick. And they have plenty of experience, too. Bianchi is often testing the Ferrari Formula 1 car. GP2 is not easy!

THE GALLERY



Not a drop of rain in sight, but Max Chilton brought along his umbrella anyway



F1's Bruno Senna popped down to the starting grid to give Alberto Valerio some tips



Staying cool was a hard task, but Giedo van der Garde seems to have managed it



He may be riding high in F1, but that didn't stop Vitaly Petrov passing by the Istanbul paddock



The grid was the place to be for the best view of the action



After being disqualified from the feature race, Sergio Pérez has probably had better weekends



Racing Engineering's Dani Clos celebrates sprint glory on the Istanbul podium

TURKEY STATS

19.531s
PASTOR MALDONADO'S
FEATURE
RACE VICTORY MARGIN

0.015sec
THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
VALSECCHI
AND MALDONADO
IN QUALIFYING

1m36.770s
OLIVER TURVEY'S FASTEST LAP IN THE SPRINT RACE

AWAY FROM THE TRACK

FABIO LEIMER FOOTBALLER



"In the past few months I haven't been doing a lot other than racing! After Turkey I went straight to Italy for a training camp, and after that I had to go to Cologne to use the Toyota F1 simulator.

But when I'm at home I just like to relax and do a lot of things with my friends, like playing football. I played in

a team for six years – I used to do both football and racing, but I had to make a decision about which one to focus on. I was a forward and there were better players, but I wasn't bad!

It's also important to be with your friends and family so I try to do that – they can really help motivate you."

Q&A

SAM BIRD ART GRAND PRIX

Q: You've been quick since the start of the season but it took until Turkey to finally get on to the podium.

SB: It's nice to get a reward after a lot of hard work that's been put in during the Asia Series and the start of the European campaign. It does feel like it has been a long time coming in Europe – I had the speed in the first couple of rounds, and it didn't happen. There's still a bit of work to do, but this is just the start.

Q: Do you feel settled now?

SB: Very much so. I'm very happy with ART; they really push me hard to improve, so it's very good.

Q: You have a lot of experience in the junior formulae. Does GP2 feel like a step up in terms of the level of competition?

SB: It's super-tough here. This is where all the top guys in the world come to get into F1. Everybody's hungry, everybody wants to be in F1 next year, so it's extremely tough and very competitive.



CLICK HERE FOR FABIO'S PROFILE

CLICK HERE FOR SAM'S PROFILE



VITALY PETROV, WHO NOW RACES FOR RENAULT IN FORMULA 1, WAS GP2'S RESIDENT VALENCIA SPECIALIST – HE WON THERE THREE TIMES

RACE PREVIEW

EUROPE

VALENCIA (26-27 JUNE)

TRACK LENGTH
5.419 KM

2009 FEATURE RACE WINNER
VITALY PETROV

2009 SPRINT RACE WINNER
NICO HÜLKENBERG

2009 track temp
43°

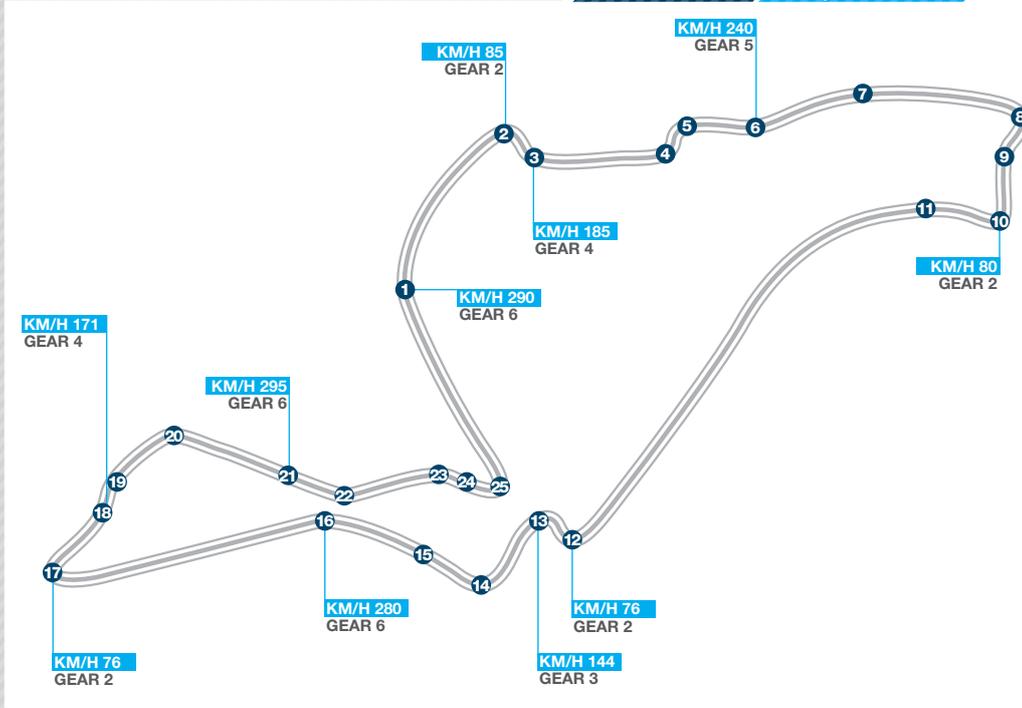
2009 race weather
28°

TYRE CHOICE: VALENCIA



Hirohide Hamashima,
director of
Bridgestone
Motorsport Tyre
Development

“For Valencia, Bridgestone has allocated the soft compound GP2 dry tyre as it is better suited to hotter temperatures. Though we are using the same compound as last year, this race is two months earlier than in 2009, so it will be interesting to see the difference in track temperature and how that affects tyre degradation. The best opportunity for overtaking at the circuit is at turn 12. Due to the heavy braking experienced, drivers need to be careful not to flat spot their tyres.”



DRIVER'S EYE VIEW

VALENCIA ALBERTO VALERIO

“The Valencia street circuit is very quick, and you have to concentrate a lot on the brakes. It sometimes feels like it’s just straight, brake, straight, brake.”

It’s a very technical track, and also one where you have to really lean on the brakes in order to get a good lap.

In terms of speed it is like a normal track, but it’s a street circuit so you also have walls everywhere, which makes for an extra challenge. You have to really pay careful attention so that you don’t make a mistake and end up in the barrier.

I had some sort of qualifying problem there last

year, but in the race I had the third fastest lap behind Nico Hülkenberg and Vitaly Petrov. They have both moved into Formula 1 now, so I fancy my chances!”



VALENCIA STATS

1m45.025
NICO
HÜLKENBERG'S
POLE TIME
LAST YEAR

0.396s
VITALY PETROV'S
WINNING MARGIN
IN THE 2009
FEATURE RACE

CLICK HERE FOR
ALBERTO'S PROFILE



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