

United States

October 23rd, 2016

PRACTICE 1	FRI	11AM
PRACTICE 2	FRI	3PM
PRACTICE 3	SAT	11AM
QUALIFYING	SAT	2PM
RACE	SUN	3PM

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Paddock Pointers

Dear Pals,

I have a major problem that I hope you can help with. I am marrying the man of my dreams this weekend, but it just so happens that our wedding falls on the same weekend as the US Grand Prix. I really want to watch the race, but I don't want to upset my future husband by making the race a priority. Can I possibly celebrate our nuptials and watch the race this weekend? Am I a wife, an F1 fan, or both?

Sincerely,

Between a race and a hard place

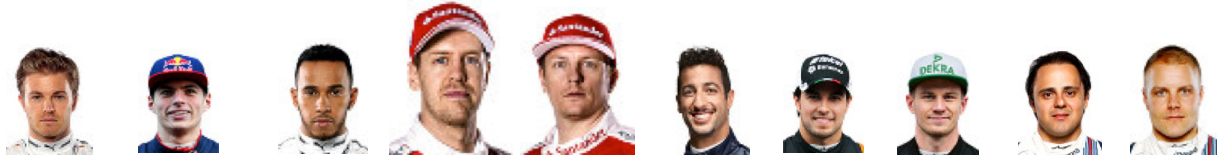
Hello,

Well this sounds like no problem at all. Yeah, you may miss qualifying on Saturday. Guess what? Hamilton-Rosberg will be 1 & 2. Are you worried about staying up too late and missing the race on Sunday? You are in luck, this race is televised at a normal time because we are in America, 1:00 PM ET, I think you can wake up by then. Honestly, I cannot think of a better wedding gift than seeing the lights go out at the US Grand Prix on your wedding weekend. Brings a tear to this petrol head's eye. It is your weekend, enjoy it.

Your Pals,

The Newsletter Staff

Rewind with Rob



Rosberg | Verstappen | Hamilton | Vettel | Raikkonen | Ricciardo | Perez | Hulkenberg | Massa | Bottas

“I’m sorry.”

F1’s biggest Belieber stole the words out of his favourite singer’s mouth as he radioed his apology to his team for his horrendous start. Lewis Hamilton’s bad start was one of the critical storylines from the last race in Japan. Hamilton went into the race only 23 points behind his Mercedes teammate Nico Rosberg for the Drivers’ Championship. Hamilton had won at this race course in 2014 and 2015. Hamilton qualified 2nd this year with a qualifying pace estimated to be only 82 cm slower than Rosberg’s. Even though the P2 start put Hamilton on the wet side (right side) of the track, he had guys out there with blow dryers cleaning up his starting spot. All was set for Hamilton to match Rosberg off the line and then muscle him out as they made the right hand turn into Turn 1. But it was not to be.

Hamilton got off to one of his slowest starts of the year. Ricciardo in P4 and Vettel in P6 nearly ran into the back of Hamilton because his car was so slow off the line. By the time the field got to Turn 1, Hamilton was back in P8. Mercedes has struggled with the single-clutch this year. The team has acknowledged that its system is not the easiest to use, but they have been unable to fix it. Instead, they gave their drivers new gloves, which were perhaps supposed to help with feel of the clutch bite point.

Hamilton eventually worked his way back up to P3, thanks again to some dumb strategy calls from Scuderia Ferrari. Towards the end of the race, Sebastian Vettel was able to put Hamilton under some pressure, but Hamilton received permission to turn his engine up and that, combined with Vettel’s fading Soft tyres, allowed him to pull away. Hamilton was involved in one last bit of excitement as he caught Max Verstappen and almost passed him for P2 in the closing laps of the race. Hamilton dove for the inside of the chicane and Verstappen moved right to block. Some say Verstappen moved to the right under braking. In any event, Hamilton was forced left to avoid a collision and went off the track. After the race, Mercedes put in a protest regarding Verstappen’s move, but they withdrew it when their driver put them in an awkward position and said there was no protest lodged because “[protesting is] not what we do.”

In non-Hamilton news, Rosberg started P1 and finished P1 in an uneventful race. Rosberg’s lead in the Drivers’ Championship is up to 33 points with only 4 races remaining. With 25 points for a P1 and 18 points for a P2 finish, Rosberg just has to keep it close in the last races of the season.

Verstappen was another of the biggest beneficiaries of Hamilton’s start. He got to Turn 1 in P2 and wasn’t under serious pressure until the end of the race with Hamilton. Vettel was able to close to within a few seconds during both the first stint, when they were both on Softs, and the second stint, when they were both on Hards. In each case, however, Verstappen was able to pit first and relieve the pressure.

Vettel drove well, but didn’t get the result that he deserved because of strategy calls. Starting all the way back in P6 because of the grid spot penalty from the crash in Malaysia, Vettel was in P4 after Turn 1 and then passed Perez for P3 within the first few laps. Vettel stayed in P3 well into the second stint on Hards. But while Rosberg and Verstappen went into the pits for the final time after 17 to 18 laps on the Hards, Vettel stayed out for 22 laps. Apparently he wanted to stay out long enough so he could do the final stint on Softs. That was problematic for several reasons. First, Hamilton was able to close in on Vettel as Vettel’s lap times slowed on the heavily used Hards (Hamilton ran a longer first stint, so his second stint tyres were fresher). Second, the Softs weren’t even a great race tyre, as they suffered from high degradation. So Hamilton closed the gap and then he pitted before Vettel. On his fresh Hard tyres, Hamilton was able to run a fast out lap and undercut Vettel, which meant that by the time Vettel came out of the pits after his stop, Hamilton was already ahead of him. On the fast fresh Softs, Vettel was able to put Hamilton under a bit of pressure, but then the tyres wore out and Hamilton turned his engine up and Ferrari’s podium position drove off in the Mercedes livery. Classic Ferrari.

A race recap wouldn’t be complete without a shout out to Force India for “best of the rest” by finishing in P7 and P8 and a resurgence of sorts for a struggling Williams, which took the last two points-paying positions. We’re onto Austin.



Track Talking

Well her we go folks, time to show the world how the US of A puts on a race. Yeah, we race around oval tracks every weekend, going 200 mph, but how about we open up the cockpit, limit our fuel consumption, and give the F1 fans a show.

Sebastian Vettel, great driver. Fernando Alonso, tough as nails. Those guys drive hard and fast, and they race the right away, leaving it all out there on the track. But I will tell you this, if Dale Jr. gets behind the wheel of an F1 car, he is never getting off of that podium. These current F1 drivers grew racing little go-karts, Dale Jr. was behind a Chevy since he could walk. You do the math.

Ferrari can keep stealing young drivers from Red Bull; go for it. If they want a championship, go tailgate a NASCAR weekend for me once. You will find more talent in the grand stands at Talladega than you will find in the entire Ferrari driver development program.

These current F1 drivers grew up in cities where bicycle lanes are king. Give me Dale Jr. with a Mountain Dew in his belly any day.



Charlie's Chatter

- Red Bull have denied reports that they are trying to sign former Ferrari technical director James Allison.
- Ferrari are no longer a team but a "group of frightened people" who are scared of being "fired in disgrace", according to former chief track engineer Luca Baldisserri.
- Force India have confirmed Nico Hulkenberg will leave the team at the end of the season. Hulkenberg will be joining Renault for the 2017 season.
- Manor driver Pascal Wehrlein says he is in talks with Force India over its vacant seat for the 2017 season.
- Kevin Magnussen has dismissed suggestions that he is in line for an IndyCar deal with Andretti Autosport, insisting he is focused on retaining his Renault seat in F1.



Fantasy Focus



(P1) Scuderia Drew | (P2) JBone | (P3) Sauber Alfa Romeo

From first to last and back to first, that's the stunt that Scuderia Drew has pulled over the last three races. JBone pulled a similar act, going from second to last to P2. Sauber Alfa Romeo F1 rounded off the podium in Japan. Scores were fairly high across the board, as there were no major accidents or retirements to unexpectedly shuffle the order. There were a few adjustments in the overall standings, which are quite important with the season coming to a close. More on those in a minutes.

- There were seven P1 predictions and seven P2 predictions; of those 14, 13 were for Mercedes drivers -- there was little thought about a dramatic underdog win.
- The top two squads, Scuderia Drew and JBone, were the only two to predict Rosberg to win; everyone else had Hamilton winning
- The top 3 squads had Vettel in P3, Verstappen in P4 and Raikkonen in P5; have we seen a turn so that drivers, instead of constructors, are the dominant issue?
- Vettel was expected to best his teammate by 6 of the 7 squads, poor Kimi

Scuderia Drew (74)

There weren't too many missteps here as Scuderia Drew received 10+ points for each of Rosberg (P1), Raikkonen (P5), Ricciardo (P6) and Bottas (P10). If fact, Kyvat (P8) was the only prediction that didn't yield points. Scuderia Drew used DRS to zoom past Schweizer F1 in the overall standings and now sits in 4th place.

JBone (62)

The picks here were strikingly similar to those from the squad run by the similar looking team-owner. But JBone made a few more missteps in the midfield, adding a zero for predicting Alonso in P9 and leaving Williams out of the top 10 entirely. JBone got by the now-shuttered FO Racing and is only 28 points behind Schweizer for 5th place overall.

Sauber Alfa Romeo (49)

This squad was the best placed of those that predicted Hamilton would win the race. Despite the swap of the Mercedes drivers, Sauber Alfa Romeo F1 gathered quite a few points for Raikkonen (P5), Ricciardo (P6) and putting Perez as best-of-the-rest in P7. But it was not all sunshine, this squad also predicted that McLaren and Toro Rosso would have strong races.

Tonka BMW (39)

It was a mixed race for the squad -- on the one hand, it made up a handful of points on O'Brien Red Bull Audi, which sits in first place overall, but on the other hand, Sauber Alfa Romeo F1, currently in third place, closed its gap by 10 points. Perez (P7) was the only correct guess here and Tonka BMW missed out on additional points by

putting both Ferraris behind the Red Bulls (the Ferraris out qualified both Red Bulls).

FO Racing (38)

This now-shuttered squad continues to put up the points, lest any other teams get too complacent.

O'Brien Red Bull Audi (36)

It was a good race for this squad as it maintained its near-death grip on the GP Predictor Championship and got to take another race off the calendar. O'Brien Red Bull Audi correctly put the Force Indias and Williams at the bottom of the top 10, but critically predicted Ricciardo would best Verstappen and Raikkonen would finish ahead of Vettel, which, of course, was the opposite of what happened.

Schweizer F1 (19)

It was a day to forget for Schweizer F1, as it made 5 predictions that failed to result in even a single point. The most glaring issues were Raikkonen all the way down in P8 and Alonso up in P6. Schweizer is now 5th overall, 30 points behind Scuderia Drew.

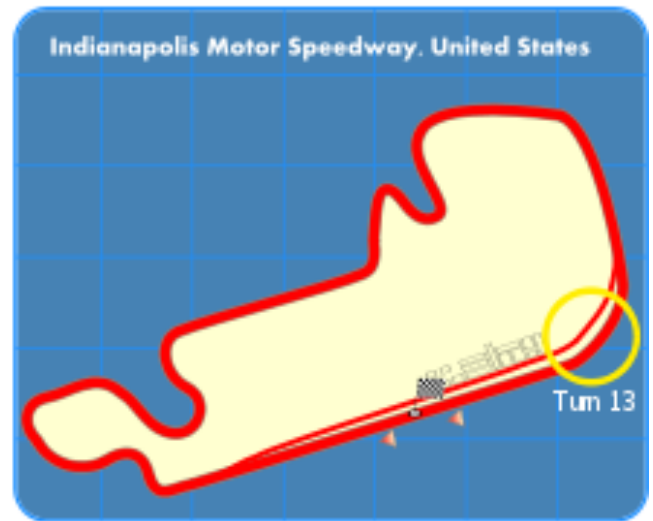
Pit Road Hooligans (6)

With only 6 points, this squad, which long ago stopped making engine upgrades, shows that new lows are always possible.

Moment in History

As an avid F1 fan, I am sure you know that this week's grand prix is being held in Austin, Texas at the Circuit of The Americas. The United States Grand Prix was not always hosted by Austin, however, and as recently as 2007 the race was held at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway (IMS). This week's moment in history takes you back to the 2005 United States Grand Prix in Indianapolis.

The differences between the 2016 and 2005 United States Grand Prix were not limited to the venue either. Unlike today where there is a single tyre manufacturer, Pirelli, the 2005 regulations allowed Formula One teams to choose between two manufacturers, Bridgestone and Michelin. Three teams contracted with Bridgestone (Ferrari, Jordan-Toyota, Minardi-Cosworth) while the remaining seven teams contracted with Michelin (Toyota, McLaren-Mercedes, BAR-Honda, Renault, Williams-BMW, Sauber-Petronas, Red Bull-Cosworth). That is where the controversy begins.



During the Friday afternoon practice session, Ralf Schumacher, sporting Michelin tyres, crashed in the high speed banked turn 13 due to left-rear tyre failure. Michelin, flummoxed by the failure, contacted FIA Race Director Charlie Whiting to explain they could not guarantee the tyres' safety unless the cars could be slowed down in turn 13. Michelin representatives suggested a number of alternative solutions including flying in new specification tyres and the placement of a chicane in the turn. Whiting quickly declined these offers and suggested the Michelin teams limit speeds through turn 13, change tyres repeatedly, or drive through the pit lane.

Unhappy with Whiting's suggestions, the Michelin based teams called a meeting between the team principals, IMS president, Michelin representatives, and then president and CEO of Formula One Management, Bernie Ecclestone. The only team principal absent was Jean Todt, the boss at Bridgestone based Scuderia Ferrari. The group that did meet, including two Bridgestone based teams, soon agreed that Whiting's proposals were either unfair or dangerous and decided to install the chicane and risk running a non-championship sanctioned race. Ecclestone volunteered to present the plans to Todt and the president of the FIA, Max Mosley. Ecclestone soon returned to the group to explain that Todt had refused to agree to the chicane, maintaining that it was an FIA and a Michelin problem and not his. Mosley

meanwhile threatened to cancel the Grand Prix entirely if any attempts were made to alter the circuit.

Frustrated and out of options, the Michelin based teams decided to withdraw from the race. This was not clear at the start of the race, however, as the full field of twenty cars started the formation lap. It was not until the controversial banked turn 13, the entrance to the pit lane, that all teams running Michelin tyres returned to their garages leaving only the three Bridgestone teams to start the race. The fans were furious, and the majority of pundits blamed Todt and Mosley. The race itself was uneventful, but the 2005 US Grand Prix is always remembered as one of the darkest moments in Formula One history.



Wag of the Week

Welcome back to “Wag of the Week”, your favorite source of Formula One romance and intrigue! A few weeks ago we examined the personal side of our good friend, Bernie Ecclestone. This week we will peer into the love life of another International Automobile Federation (FIA) bigwig, Jean Todt. Yes, that Jean Todt. The Jean Todt that you carefully read about in this week’s “Moment in History” column. After a stints as General Manager, CEO and Special Advisor to Scuderia Ferrari, the French motor sport executive became the President of the FIA in 2009. His second, four-year term ends late next year.



Todt’s business accomplishments are neither here nor there. We are really interested in who he is dating. The answer is 54-year-old actress Michelle Yeoh. If her name does not ring a bell you may recognize her from the movies *Tomorrow Never Dies*, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and *Memoirs of a Geisha*. Todt and Yeoh first met in 2004 and have been engaged since 2005. Despite being asked numerous times what their marital status is Yeoh maintains that she and Todt are “significant others.” Last time she was asked about it, Yeoh said, “Many events have taken place in our lives in recent years and we have not been able to find an appropriate time. We will certainly not get married secretly, we will publicly announce it.” Only time will tell if these two lovebirds get married.

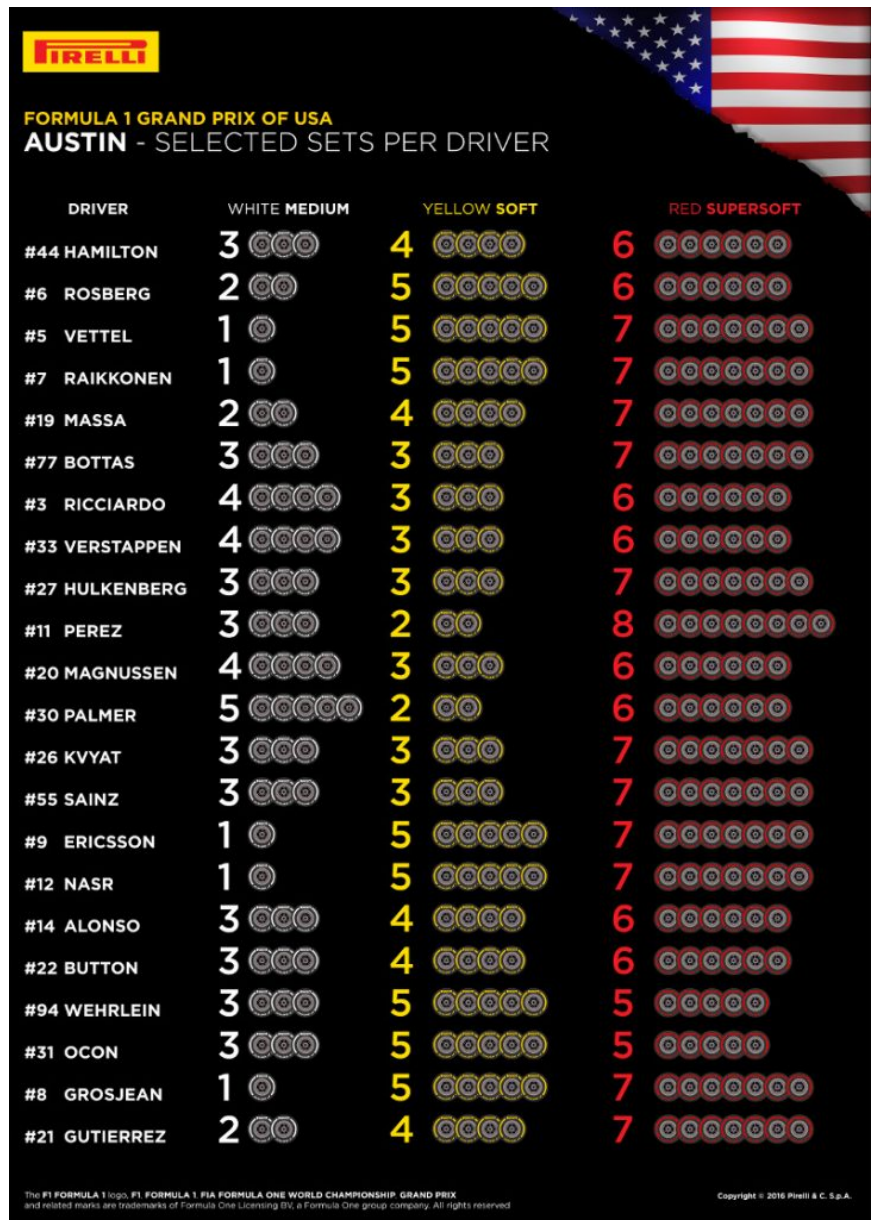


Tyre me out

In 2015, Pirelli brought Medium and Soft compound tyres to Circuit of the Americas (COTA) in Austin. The teams barely got to spend any time on the slicks, however, as the remnants of a hurricane blew through on Friday and Saturday. The track was still wet when the race began on Sunday afternoon and all cars started on the intermediate wet tyres. As the track dried out, most drivers switched to the Soft compound and ran that twice (two pit stops total). On a cool, damp track, with the benefit of a Safety Car and a Virtual Safety Car, Verstappen was able to pull 28 laps out of his Softs and Hamilton got 25 laps. That was an aberration. In 2014, the teams ran about 15 laps on the Softs, although admittedly the cars and the tyres were much different back then. The Medium compound lasted about 25 laps in 2014.

So what does all of this mean in 2016? Pirelli has added the red SuperSoft (SS) compound into the mix with the white Mediums and yellow Softs. The teams will have to figure out the fastest strategy to complete the 56 laps. Expect most of the top 10 cars to be starting on the SS that they used in Q2. There is no data to tell how long those tyres will last. Even if the Softs last for 20 laps, one would expect to see at least two, and probably three, or even four, pit stops. Overtaking is reasonably easy at COTA, so teams may elect to gamble with a “faster” strategy with more pit stops knowing that they won’t get held up in lap traffic the same way they might at Monaco or Singapore.

The teams’ chosen tyre allocations seem to suggest some will be pursuing a fairly aggressive strategy. SS is the preferred compound for every driver, and some are taking 8 of their 13 sets of the red SS. As we’ve come to expect from Ferrari, they’ve gone aggressive with 7 sets of SS and only 1 set of Medium. Both Mercedes and Red Bull have opted for a slightly more conservative strategy: although both teams took 6 sets of SS, Red Bull favoured the Medium over the Softs (4-3), while Mercedes favoured the Softs over the Mediums (5-2 and 4-3). The variety of tyre elections suggests that the strategists are quite unsure about the optimal racing strategy. We’ll see what it is when the lights go out.



DRIVER	WHITE MEDIUM	YELLOW SOFT	RED SUPERSOFT
#44 HAMILTON	3	4	6
#6 ROSBERG	2	5	6
#5 VETTEL	1	5	7
#7 RAIKKONEN	1	5	7
#19 MASSA	2	4	7
#77 BOTTAS	3	3	7
#3 RICCIARDO	4	3	6
#33 VERSTAPPEN	4	3	6
#27 HULKENBERG	3	3	7
#11 PEREZ	3	2	8
#20 MAGNUSSEN	4	3	6
#30 PALMER	5	2	6
#26 KVYAT	3	3	7
#55 SAINZ	3	3	7
#9 ERICSSON	1	5	7
#12 NASR	1	5	7
#14 ALONSO	3	4	6
#22 BUTTON	3	4	6
#94 WEHRLEIN	3	5	5
#31 OCON	3	5	5
#8 GROSJEAN	1	5	7
#21 GUTIERREZ	2	4	7

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Circuit City

CIRCUIT OF THE AMERICAS

FIRST
GRAND PRIX

2012

NUMBER
OF LAPS

56

CIRCUIT
LENGTH

5.513
KM

RACE
DISTANCE

308.405
KM

LAP
RECORD

1:39.347
SEBASTIAN
VETTEL
(2012)

