

2005 F1 Season

Grand Prix Preview

Monaco Grand Prix - Round 6 of 19

By Alex "Zander" Keep

Race Distance: 163.176miles/261.0820km
Lap Distance: 2.092miles/3.3470km
Lap Record: Michael Schumacher, 1m14.439s
Number of Laps: 78

Last Race

Raikkonen's blistering speed on a track which puts aerodynamics ahead of almost anything showed that the McLaren is certainly the fastest car out there. Alonso held on like a hero but it was never going to be enough. Bridgestone's punctures were a worrying development and the fact that the Japanese manufacturer is now copying Michelin's tire construction shows that they are running out of ideas of their own.

Last Year

Last year the race ended in a gripping showdown between Trulli's Renault and Jenson Button's BAR as both men tried desperately to secure their first win. Michael Schumacher's coming together with Montoya's Williams in the tunnel while behind the safety car was strange in the extreme but at least it allowed someone else to come through for the win. In the end Jarno Trulli triumphed with Button fractions of a second behind.

Last Year's Results

Position	No	Driver	Team	Engine	Time	Laps	Delay/Retirement
1	7	Jarno Trulli	Renault	Renault V10	1:45'46.601	77	
2	9	Jenson Button	BAR	Honda V10	1:45'47.098	77	0.497
3	2	R.Barrichello	Ferrari	Ferrari V10	1:47'02.367	77	1'15.766
4	3	J.P.Montoya	Williams	BMW	1:46'10.808	76	1 Lap
5	12	Felipe Massa	Sauber	Petronas	1:46'58.629	76	1 Lap

6	16	C.da Matta	Toyota	Toyota	1:46'58.753	76	1 Lap
7	18	Nick Heidfeld	Jordan	Ford	1:46'58.271	75	2 Laps
8	17	Olivier Panis	Toyota	Toyota	1:46'32.220	74	3 Laps

Championship Standings

Drivers			
Rank	Driver	Team	Points
1	F. Alonso	Renault	44
2	J.Trulli	Toyota	26
3	K.Raikkonen	McLaren	17
4	G.Fisichella	Renault	14
5	R.Schumacher	Toyota	14
6	M.Webber	Williams	12
7	D.Coulthard	Red Bull	10
8	J.Montoya	McLaren	10
9	M.Schumacher	Ferrari	10
10	N.Heidfeld	Williams	9
11	R.Barrichello	Ferrari	8
12	A.Wurz	McLaren	6
13	J.Villeneuve	Sauber	5
14	P.de la Rosa	McLaren	4
15	C.Klien	Red Bull	3
16	F.Massa	Sauber	2
17	V.Liuzzi	Red Bull	1
18	C.Albers	Minardi	0
= 18	J.Button	BAR	0
= 18	A.Davidson	BAR	0
= 18	P.Friesacher	Minardi	0
= 18	N.Karthikeyan	Jordan	0
= 18	T.Monteiro	Jordan	0
= 18	T.Sato	BAR	0

Constructors

Rank	Team	Points
1	Renault	58
2	Toyota	40
3	McLaren	37
4	Williams	21
5	Ferrari	18
6	Red Bull	14
7	Sauber	7

Strategy

With tires lasting the entire race, drivers will have to be particularly careful of not brushing the arnos too closely. Add to that the complete lack of grip towards the end of races and it would be easy to see this year's Monaco grand prix as a bit of a demolition derby!

The Teams

Ferrari

(Red with Marlboro signs)

Schumi's punctures in Spain proved that the team (and their tire manufacturer in particular) still have a lot to do before they can catch up with the Michelin teams. The good news is that there is nothing wrong with the design of the car and both drivers are doing a good job. This will not be enough if Schumi continues to lose points to Alonso and, realistically, the 2005 titles must be seen as having slipped out of the Scuderia's grasp.

BAR

(White with Red Lucky Strike Roundels on it)

Serving the second half of their two race ban.

Renault

(Dark & Light Blue & Yellow with Mild Seven on it)

A great race from Alonso at home in Spain wasn't enough to prevent the Spaniard from being beaten for the first time this year. The Renault simply lost out in terms of balance and aerodynamics to the slippery lines of the McLaren. Fisichella's great comeback drive showed that the car lacks nothing in terms of out & out speed and both drivers have to be favorites for a win around the Principality this weekend.

Williams

(Dark Blue & White with Compaq & Allianz signs on it)

With rumors of a split with BMW surfacing almost every day the question of how has it all gone wrong for the team seems to be as prevalent as the question of whether it will ever start going right. This year's car has been worked on non-stop since it first raced in Australia with more than 60 aerodynamic modifications made since then. The trouble is that all the teams are working at the same pace (over a second a lap is estimated to have been found since the first race this season) and even the team's latest reshuffle seems unlikely to impress the boys from Bavaria in their dealings with the team.

McLaren

(Gray with West signs on it)

Montoya's slightly iffy form aside, Spain was a top weekend for McLaren. Raikkonen is finally starting to deliver on the promise of the mp4/20 and the team must be hoping for great things for the rest of the season. There seems little doubt that the silver arrows are once again the fastest things out on track but whether the team can solve the car's reliability problems remains to be seen. Raikkonen and Montoya will have to take one win at a time and see where they stand in the championship towards the end of the season.

Sauber

(Mid Blue with a yellow airbox & white nose & front wing with Credit Suisse & Petronas written on it)

Now talk of Villeneuve's imminent departure seems to have abated, focus on the team has shifted to their increasingly close relationship with BMW. Peter Sauber has been saying for some time that he would sell the team to the right partner. In the mean time the relationship between BMW & Williams has been getting steadily worse. Should BMW buy Sauber it would give the manufacturer the prestige of providing both chassis and engine and move the entirety of the racing development in house. Although this is still seen as conjecture the announcement that BMW will be supplying Sauber with engines is known to be coming out soon and this could well be the first step to a full scale buy out.

Toyota

(Red & White with Toyota & Panasonic logos)

Another decent race result for the team and at last Ralph seems to be finding his legs in the team. Jarno Trulli won this race for Renault last year and great things will be expected of the Italian. Trulli has put some blistering performances in around the streets of Monaco in the past and there seems little doubt that he can win if Toyota give him the machinery. Ralph has to keep on improving his form if he is to continue racing next year.

Red Bull Racing

(Dark blue with yellow airbox & thin red and white stripes down the side)

Although the team's pace has certainly slipped back since their blistering start to the season, Coulthard and Liuzzi are still highly capable of some giant killing. Monaco is probably the last circuit where the driver can make as much difference as the car and Coulthard's winning here in the past should set him in good stead. A podium is possible if DC is given a decent qualifying performance. Liuzzi has impressed everyone with his charm as much as his speed and it will be interesting to see how easily he takes to the extra power around the track.

Midland Jordan

(Yellow with Sobraine on it)

With performances so disappointing that the team have decided to improve the car for Silverstone, Jordan's last Monaco is going to be a bittersweet affair. The team are already planning on testing their interim racer over the summer ahead of the team's full scale changeover this winter. Until then Monteiro and Karthekeynian are going to have to soldier on at the back of the grid. Both drivers have done a superb job and hopefully their reward will be in a better car next year.

Minardi

(TBC black, white & red - OzJet on the sidepods & engine cover)

Being unable to get off the line in Spain, many observers had to ask why Minardi felt the need to introduce a new car when they did not have the money to get the old car working properly. That said the team seem to be making great strides with the car and the improved engine is allowing the team to at least catch up with Jordan even if they seem unlikely to better them. As happens almost every year the Minardis will be a liability around Monaco.

Predictions

Qualifying	Race
1. Fisichella	1. Trulli
2. Trulli	2. Fisichella
3. Alonso	3. Montoya