

The Challenge

Bridgestone Europe Motorsport Magazine - April 2006 - www.bridgestone-eu.com



TOP TRIO

Bridgestone's new teams

MASSA ATTACK

Ferrari's ace Brazilian

MOTO MAGIC

Capirossi wins Spain

ANNIVERSARY

Ten years in F1



WELCOME

2006 is a big year for Bridgestone. We are looking to 'hit back' in F1 with success for not just our long-standing world championship colleagues Ferrari and MF1 Racing but also for our new teams WilliamsF1, Toyota and Super Aguri F1.

After a winter of intensive testing, it was an all-Bridgestone/Ferrari front row at the season-opener in Bahrain with Michael Schumacher finishing the race in second place. In Malaysia the attention was on F1 newcomer Nico Rosberg, who qualified third for Williams. In the race Toyota scored their first points on Bridgestones. More success, we trust, will come soon as the F1 focus moves to Europe.

MotoGP has kicked off too and in the best possible way – Loris Capirossi winning on Bridgestone tyres at the season's first race at Jerez. Good luck to Ducati, Kawasaki and Suzuki for the rest of 2006.

GP2's second season begins in Valencia. Unlike 2005, they will be using slick tyres this season. Watch out for plenty of excitement, and don't forget to check the latest news on our new website:

WWW.BRIDGESTONEMOTORSPORT.COM

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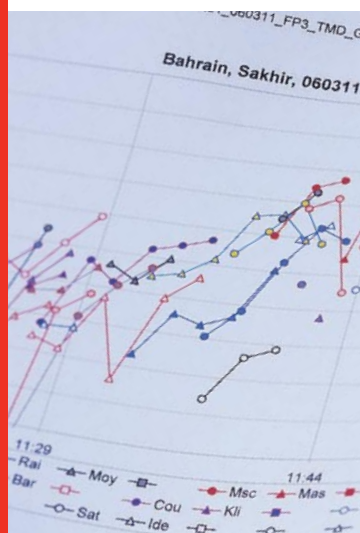


NEWS | DATA SHARING

Bridgestone has created an information flow system for its F1 teams this year. Despite the highly secretive nature of the sport, it has persuaded the five Bridgestone-shod F1 teams to share tyre test data.

"The data sharing helps us and the teams," says Hisao Suganuma, Technical Manager of Bridgestone Motorsport. "For example, if three teams are running the same test programme and one of them gets bad results, they might examine the data from the other two teams and try again. Without the data sharing, they might seek a different development direction."

Bridgestone's relentless development programme in 2006 sees its engineers take up to 10 or more different tyre compounds and constructions to every test session. It's an enormous workload for the teams,



"I'm really hopeful of even better results in 2006"

but the data collected is absolutely vital because performance trends are created for each compound and construction.

"We agreed to this initiative at last year's Chinese Grand Prix," says WilliamsF1 Technical Director Sam Michael. "It's proving useful because it gets rid of variables such as track conditions or reliability issues."

In 2005 Ferrari carried out most of Bridgestone's tyre development work - and the results are paying off this year. "We're very pleased with the way the system works," says Ferrari Technical Director Ross Brawn. "There is no data sharing at races, but at tests it's been very beneficial to everyone."

DRIVER PROFILE:**FELIPE MASSA****BRAZILIAN F1 HERO LEAPS FROM FERRARI TESTER TO FERRARI RACER**

"A lot of people forget that I have been with Ferrari before as a test driver, so the team is not completely new to me. In the same way, I know the people from Bridgestone very well, so all of this is a big help when settling into the role of race driver with a top team. When you come to a new team, you usually need to learn everything from zero in terms of who does what. But that was not the case with Ferrari and Bridgestone.

"Then, in Malaysia, things were made difficult by having to start from the back but I was very pleased with the result. Finishing fifth and scoring my first points for Ferrari gave me that extra bit of motivation because it confirmed that we really are competitive this year.

"People ask me if there is extra pressure because this is Ferrari. The answer is that there's always pressure all the way through whatever form of racing you are doing.

“I love what I do. F1 is my life”

"I feel very comfortable and really happy to be here. I knew from the first test that this was going to be a much more competitive year for me, giving me the chance to show what I can do.

"Getting onto the front row in Bahrain was a great start – in fact, I'm sure I would have been on pole position but for traffic! The race didn't turn out so well because I had a spin and then had to make a pit stop to change the right-rear tyre.

"When your career starts to grow, you have more pressure because everyone is watching your every move and this never stops. In 2005 when I was with Sauber I learned how to handle pressure. It's always there, but I don't bother about what people are thinking.

"All I know is that it was a huge opportunity for me to come to Ferrari. I may have been the test driver before but I was also at the races, looking and learning

all the time. I was going to every meeting, listening on the race radio to everything that Michael Schumacher and Rubens Barrichello said to the engineers, watching how they worked with everyone on the team, all of which is very important.

"You need to learn how to be a leader inside the team. You need to have respect – to achieve that respect you always need to say what you think and what you want. It's important to never be shy because, if you are shy inside F1, you won't get very far!

"I moved from Switzerland to Monaco at the end of last year. It was – and still is – a fantastic thought to be travelling the world as a Ferrari driver. I'm still young and love what I do. F1 is my life and I really could not ask for more than this."





WILLIAMS F1, TOYOTA AND SUPER AGURI LINK WITH BRIDGESTONE

These are exciting times for Bridgestone. This year the company celebrates its tenth year in Grand Prix racing and welcomes three teams to join Scuderia Ferrari Marlboro and MF1 Racing. The arrival of Toyota, Williams F1 and Super Aguri has presented a challenge that Bridgestone Motorsport Technical Manager Hisao Sukanuma has welcomed.

"It can be tough getting to know a new team but we have had no problems at all," says Sukanuma. "We have very capable personnel to match the high standard of engineers and designers within the teams and everything has gone smoothly."

"We certainly have an advantage compared to last year. In 2005, our main test team was Ferrari and, despite doing all they could, one team cannot do everything. Having three strong teams,

with Toyota and Williams as well now, will mean we make much faster progress."

"Their demands are very high but we have been able to adapt to provide for them. Both sides have been growing together as we learn more about the tyre-car package. If one team gives us some feedback, we can now confirm it with the other two teams to make sure it's correct and that it works for all of them."

Williams' star Mark Webber has been hugely impressed with the Bridgestone team's performance this season.

"It's amazing to discover how you alter your driving style to suit whatever tyres you are on. I immediately found that I was able to easily adapt to driving on Bridgestone tyres. It's been no problem and I'm looking forward to the rest of the year."

Sam Michael, Williams' Technical

Director, handles much of the technical liaison between Webber's team and Bridgestone. And he has no doubt about the collaborations immediate success.

"The relationship with Bridgestone is fantastic," says Michael. "When we first changed over, we were pleasantly surprised how fast the tyres were. But, more importantly, the development programme has been at such a massive pace and Bridgestone is very receptive to all our ideas. They are a really good company to work with."

"Operationally, the Bridgestone engineers that we have on the race team and the test team are fully integrated within Williams. They work inside our offices; we have no secrets from them. They are involved in our chassis debriefs - they know about how our cars work from



Toyota on
Bridgestones



WELCOME TO THE CLUB

an aero and mechanical point of view. You could say that it's risky but we had complete trust in them straight away and that generates the trust back from Bridgestone. It's working really well."

This will be the last year of competition with a rival before Bridgestone is expected to become the sole F1 supplier in 2007. The intention therefore, is to win the last major battle, a point that has not gone unnoticed by Jarno Trulli as Toyota makes the switch to Bridgestone for 2006.

"I've been really impressed," says Trulli. "Bridgestone had a difficult year in 2005 but they have shown great motivation to fight back. They proved it straight away with the competitive range of new tyres they brought to winter testing.

"But what has impressed most is the way Bridgestone reacted after the first few

races we had in the season. They have been totally committed to helping us. Having made the switch, so many things have changed for us. We were able to share the data with the other teams and that helped confirm the areas in which we were lacking."

While Toyota brought with them much experience and high expectation, the

been close friends for 40 years.

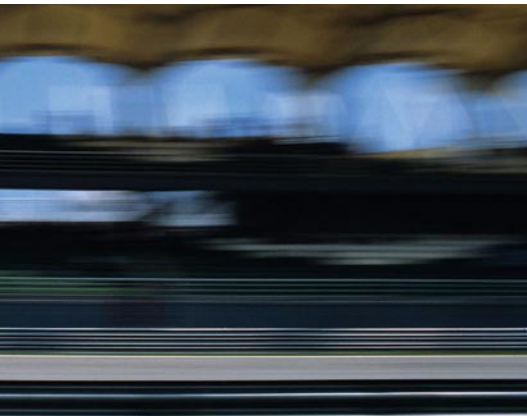
"It's been fantastic," says Suzuki. "Yasukawa has been a mentor and given me advice on so many things at a time when there is so much to learn."

Super Aguri driver Takuma Sato has a similar feeling of once again working with old friends. "We worked together in 2002

“Having three strong teams means we are making much faster progress”

reverse was true for Super Aguri, a brand new team starting from scratch and facing a massively steep learning curve. It has been a huge help for team principal, Aguri Suzuki, to know that he has the full support of Bridgestone and, in particular Hiroshi Yasukawa, Bridgestone's Director of Motorsport. Yasukawa and Suzuki have

and in 2003 when I had a testing role in F1," says Sato. "It's interesting to see how much Bridgestone have moved forward. Even though I was competing against Bridgestone during the past two years, the top personnel have personally been very supportive. It's a great feeling to be back with old friends."



Rosberg: F1's new star



TRANS EUROPE EXPRESS



AFTER THREE NAIL-BITING RACES, F1 ROCKS INTO EUROPE

With three Grands Prix in four weeks, the start of the European season will be fast and frantic. Imola, Nürburgring and Barcelona present quite different challenges to the teams and their tyre suppliers.

The Italian circuit of Imola is essentially a 'point and squirt' track, with longish straights punctuated by first and second gear chicanes. The emphasis here is on braking stability and having a supple enough suspension to ride the kerbs. It's difficult to overtake at Imola, as Michael Schumacher discovered when stuck behind Fernando Alonso in last year's race.

One of the key decisions the teams have to make this year is when best to use their tyres – during qualifying or during the race? With only seven sets of new tyres available to them over the race weekend and the new qualifying format easily capable of using up to four sets of new tyres, teams may well decide that grid position is the highest priority at Imola. In which case, opting to use an extra set of new tyres in qualifying, rather than holding them over for the race may be the smart move.

"Qualifying is getting tougher and tougher," says Hisao Suganuma, Bridgestone Motorsport's Technical Manager. "It's very competitive." You want proof? In Bahrain the performance margin between the seven fastest cars has dropped

from 1.4 secs in 2005 to just 0.4 secs.

Of the three circuits, Imola calls for the softest tyre compounds and they must be able to cope with lower track temperatures, as it is still quite chilly in late April.

After Imola the teams move on to the Nürburgring, a track that calls for tyres which are more or less in the same range as those used at Imola, although grip is harder to find. Therefore braking at Turn One will be crucial here. With fewer chicanes than Imola, but a majority of low speed corners, it is the third slowest track of the

“Imola, Nürburgring and Barcelona present quite different challenges”

year. Finding good traction out of the slow corners is the name of the game here. This year's race will also take place almost a month earlier than in 2005 so cooler weather could also affect tyre choice.

After a single season of 'endurance' tyre rules, tyre changes during pit stops are back this year. It is amazing how much more consistent the tyres are now, compared to 2004, the last time tyre stops were allowed. Over a long run the tyres are on average half a second per lap faster, which quickly adds up over three 20-lap stints.

A week after Nürburgring the F1 circus moves to Barcelona, now one of the best

attended races thanks to the popularity of the new world champion, Spaniard Fernando Alonso. Barcelona is often described as a 'complete' circuit, because it tests all aspects of a car's performance. It has a mixture of slow, medium and fast corners and is also extremely tough on tyres, because of the huge loads put through the tyres in the long fast corners. Take Turn Three, for example – through this long right-hander, an F1 car will hold 155mph in sixth gear for over four seconds on every lap, which is incredibly hard for the

tyres on the left-hand side of the car.

The holy grail this year for tyre makers is consistency over the long stints in the race and keeping the wear under control. And there's no better test than Barcelona.

Teams who save an extra set of new tyres for the race could be in good shape here and the injection of pace a new set gives could well gain drivers some places in the race. Over the out-lap and the first flying lap after a tyre change, a new set is worth around two seconds. In a fiercely fought F1 race that could be the difference between a champagne soaked victory and solitary walk back to the motorhome.

F1: APR 23 SAN MARINO, MAY 07 NÜRBURGRING, MAY 14 BARCELONA, MAY 28 MONACO



US RACING CCWS AND IRL KICK OFF

The IRL kicked off America's open-wheel racing year with last year's champion Dan Wheldon picking up where he left off - winning at Homestead near Miami.

Sadly, Wheldon's victory was overshadowed by the tragic death of Rahal Letterman Racing driver Paul Dana who was involved in a race warm-up crash.

The IRL IndyCar Series has undergone a makeover during the winter. All the cars are running on Firestone Firehawk tyres and Honda now powers all of the entries.

The series looks to be wide open. Dan Wheldon and teammate Scott Dixon paced the pre-season tests, along with Penske's Helio Castroneves and Sam Hornish.

And you can never discount the giant-hitters at Andretti Green Racing either. Tony Kanaan, Dario Franchitti, Bryan Herta and Marco Andretti, the family's third generation of racing driver, all have a big point to prove.

Then there is the Bridgestone Presents The Champ Car World Series Powered By Ford. Sebastien Bourdais has an almost 50% start-to-win rate in his three seasons in the championship, and his rivalry with Paul Tracy will run and run. A third successive title this year will rocket the talented young Frenchman in to the record books.

Bourdais' Newman/Haas teammate Bruno Junqueira (returning from injury) will also want to get an early upper hand over his teammate.

But Bourdais will have his work cut out - former F1 driver Justin Wilson, and RuSPORT teammate AJ Allmendinger will be pushing hard all the way.

GP2: SLICK DRIVERS

WHO WILL FOLLOW ROSBERG FROM GP2 TO F1 GLORY?

Every driver in this year's GP2 Series will have been watching the reigning series champion Nico Rosberg and his meteoric rise to the top echelons of F1 in only his first two GP races.

In Valencia on April 8th, the dreaming will stop and the action will begin when over 20 of the world's top young drivers line up for the GP2 series opener. Between April and September, there will be eleven rounds across Europe from Silverstone to Istanbul.

As in F1, winter testing has been crucial for the GP2 drivers - all of whom now run on Bridgestone's new slick tyres. Nelson Piquet Jr finished the official two-day test session at Paul Ricard on top of the timesheets, but the competition was fierce - the top eighteen drivers were covered by just one second.



"I'm pleased with my times over the two days, but there is still a lot of work to do," said Piquet, son of former world champion Nelson Piquet. "It's always good to put in some quick times because it gives us confidence."

At just two hundredths of a second behind Piquet was Lewis Hamilton - the reigning F3 champion and protégé of McLaren F1 boss Ron Dennis.

This year's GP2 series winner will, as in 2005, take home the \$100,000 Bridgestone Prize.

TEN YEARS OF BRIDGESTONE BRIDGESTONE'S OWN TEST TEAM

In the summer of 1995 the board of Bridgestone announced the company would enter F1 in 1998 - following a two-year test programme. But the exhaustive test schedule in Japan and Europe - using Bridgestone Potenza F1 tyres fitted to an Arrows F1 car - proved such a success that the board changed its mind and 1997 became Bridgestone's first F1 season.

"The tests with the Arrows in 1996 were the first time our F1 tyres had been seen in public although our engineers had been working on F1 tyres as far back as 1989. Prior to then any work on F1 tyres had been purely technical with no actual plan

to go racing," says Bridgestone's Hirohide Hamashima, Director of Motorsport Tyre Development. "The test programme showed our 'underground' work was correct. We tested at many circuits, often right after Grands Prix. In some cases our cars were faster than the actual race cars."

The driver who did the majority of the thousands of test miles in Bridgestone's F1 car was Aguri Suzuki - now team principal of the Super Aguri F1 Team, Grand Prix racing's newest outfit.

"It was a physically challenging schedule," recalls Suzuki. "We tested different compounds, configurations, grip tests, durability and so on. The development was massive. I think it was one of the most meaningful testing programmes I took part in."

As rumours of the fast lap times being set by the test team started to circulate, F1 teams such as Prost and Arrows contacted Bridgestone for supplies of race tyres for 1997. The rest, as they say, is history.





CAPIROSSI WINS ON BRIDGESTONES AT JEREZ DUCATI KICKS OFF 2006 WITH A SPANISH FLYER

Bridgestone made the perfect start to its MotoGP season in the Spanish GP at Jerez, when Ducati rider Loris Capirossi stormed to a clear victory – Bridgestone's fifth win in Moto GP and its first in the European heartland of the World Championship.

"We knew the tyres were very good – both wet and dry, but it takes a race to prove it," said the veteran Italian rider.

A winter of successful development and testing culminated in a clean sweep for Capirossi – pole position, fastest lap of the race, and then the win. Bridgestone also

claimed all three front-row positions.

Second Ducati rider Sete Gibernau missed his chance at glory with an electronic problem on the second lap while lying second – robbing the team and Bridgestone of a possible one-two finish.

Two weeks before, the Ducatis and a Kawasaki (all on Bridgestone tyres) dominated the final round of pre-season tests at the same circuit. Previously they set fastest test times in Malaysia and Australia.

Bridgestone's Motorcycle Racing Manager Hiroshi Yamada reflected the

pride and pleasure of his staff. "This proves we have taken the correct direction with development of the tyres from 2005," he said. Bridgestone claimed back-to-back wins in the latter part of last year.

Bridgestone's teams – the factory Ducatis, Kawasakis and Suzukis – will face the rival factory Honda and Yamaha teams in 15 countries this year, including China and the USA as well as Japan, Australia, Turkey and the traditional Pan-European events. The 17-round MotoGP season finishes at Valencia at the end of October.



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