

The Challenge

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RECORD BREAKER

Exclusive interview with Michael Schumacher

GIORGIO PANTANO

On Monza...and Martha!

SHANGHAI SURPRISE

China joins the F1 world

COMPOUNDS

It's all in the mix



NEWS

BRIDGESTONE NEWS

WELCOME

There might still be four races to run in the F1 season but already we are rejoicing. In the most conclusive way, with a one-two finish for Michael Schumacher and Rubens Barrichello in Hungary, Bridgestone has been able to celebrate partnering the Constructors' World Champions for the seventh consecutive year - the last six of those with Ferrari.

Then, to cap off an amazing year, two weeks later Michael clinched the Drivers' World Championship at Spa, the very track where he made his F1 debut.

Congratulations to everyone who worked so hard to keep the Bridgestone and Ferrari partnership on top, but there is little time to dwell on success.

Our latest Potenza F1 tyres debuted recently, providing excellent qualifying and race performance. But to ensure we stay on top the development will continue, and not just in F1.

Enjoy Issue 4 of The Challenge.

GERT MEYLEMANS

Senior Manager Corporate PR,
Bridgestone Europe



CHAMPIONS

Bridgestone top in 2004



“The championship is not over. We will help our partners score as many points as possible.”

HIROSHI
YASUKAWA

”

Soon after celebrating the partnership that led to a sixth successive World Championship with Ferrari, Bridgestone has pledged to continue giving the Sauber, Jordan and Minardi Formula One teams and their drivers all the support they need in the tussle for championship points during the final races of the F1 season.

Both Sauber drivers Giancarlo Fisichella and Felipe Massa are in a position to finish the season in the drivers' top ten. With the last races of the year in Italy, China, Japan and Brazil, Jordan is in a close fight with Jaguar and Toyota for seventh place in the Constructors' Championship.

“Winning the championship was our goal this year but we are as committed to continue giving our other partner teams all our support to help them finish the year as successfully as possible,” said Hiroshi Yasukawa, Director of Bridgestone Motorsport.



THE INTERVIEW: GIORGIO PANTANO

Jordan's Italian star heads home to Monza



Of the twenty drivers on last year's F1 grid, half of them have driven for the Jordan team. After three seasons in F3000, Italian Giorgio Pantano is the latest young gun to take the Jordan charm school route into grand prix racing.

Q. What were your initial impressions of a Formula 1 car compared to everything you had raced before?

A. You cannot compare a grand prix car to anything else, as the feeling is completely different. Braking is much better for example. At the start of the season, I had a lot to learn, including most of the circuits. I now understand more about my set-up and getting to the limit of the car more easily. Until you are on the limit you don't really understand what the car can do. What I consider positive is the experience I am getting in working with my engineers and seeing how to make my car quicker. I don't understand the mechanical side in great detail, I prefer the engineers to do their job and me to drive the car!

Q. Tyre testing is also a new experience. How have you found working with Bridgestone?

A. We don't do that much tyre testing

because of the budgetary restrictions of our team, but we still do our bit, although obviously not on the same level as Ferrari. Actually, I worked with Bridgestone a lot in my karting days with Kees van de Grint and so I talk to him when I need advice. Karting is quite complex in terms of tyre choice and at least they have slicks, which of course I would prefer in F1 because they have more feeling and are more fun to drive on.

Q. You mentioned Ferrari. Is it every Italian driver's dream to race for the Scuderia?

A. Yes, I would like to drive for them but at the moment so does everyone because Ferrari has the best car. But the atmosphere here at Jordan is fabulous. It is like being part of a family and I would like to see the day come when Jordan is able to build the best car – then I would stay with Jordan.

'You cannot compare a grand prix car to anything else'

Q. Your boss Eddie Jordan is one of the characters of the paddock. How do you get on with him?

A. Ah, Mr. EJ! I think I am the same as him. I think we have the same character and something in common which is very good. I think I am professional when I need to be, but I joke when I am out of the car. Why can't I have a laugh with the team? I think the sport and many drivers are too serious. I am not like this and I can do a good job and still enjoy myself.

Q. We are coming up to your home race, the Italian Grand Prix at Monza. What does that mean to you?

A. My family had no interest in motor sport, so actually I never went there

until I was racing myself. Of course, I used to watch the races on television and even though I admit I don't know a lot about the history of racing, I do feel the great atmosphere and sense of history in the Park. The first time I drove there was in 1999 in Formula Nissan and I must say, I really like this type of circuit. I think it is very nice because it is quick with hard braking and the car has to be set up with very little downforce, which makes it fun to drive. At this circuit the driver can make a difference and he needs to be brave which is exactly the type of track I like.

Q. Finally, tell us a secret about Giorgio Pantano

A. Well, at home in Padua, I have three brothers, so when I was born, my parents were hoping for a baby girl. I was supposed to be a girl called Martha. But along came Giorgio. It was good news for me not to be a lady!

Pantano and Bridgestone. Long term partners





No driver has ever dominated a season in F1 like Ferrari's Michael Schumacher

The Moon landings. Mandela's release. Mohammed Ali's Rumble in the Jungle. You know when you are witnessing history in the making.

Remembering every time World Champion Michael Schumacher made history this year would require a near-photographic memory.

Almost every time he climbed aboard his Bridgestone-shod Ferrari this year, points were scored, a pole secured, a win taken and another record tumbled.

Michael has often said he does not race to add numbers to his already impressive statistics. His continuing motivation is success, being the best in the world. The bad news for his rivals is that he plans to continue racing. For now.

Without putting the likes of Fangio, Nuvolari, Senna and Stewart in the same car as Michael in the same era, it is impossible to tell which driver can be regarded as the best racing driver of all

time. One thing is for sure, despite winning more titles than anyone else, Schumacher would never lay claim to such a moniker. In fact, like many geniuses, Michael finds it hard to dissect his driving skills and explain why he is so good at what he does.

Michael, how does winning the 2004 title compare to previous ones?

You know it may sound odd but you can never compare the different titles to each other. Each title has its own specialty, its own memory, its own quality.

You have made winning look easy this year. But just how difficult have some of the victories been? Canada, for instance, from sixth on the grid.

The difficulty of Formula 1 to the outside very often is that you cannot see the real drama, and most of the time you don't want even to show it. That makes winning look easy sometimes indeed, but just take the race when my exhaust was broken, in Barcelona: Ross told me over the radio that

I wouldn't finish, but in the end I did. But be sure that I was much more exhausted than it looked from outside.

Ferrari's reliability is unbelievable at the moment and when there have been problems over the past few years they have more usually happened to your teammates. Do you think you are particularly gentle on your cars? Does it have anything to do with your karting days when you were physically involved in their preparation?

I think very often it is down to what you feel in the car, and, yes, maybe my passion for karting helped me in developing that feeling. But then Rubens is karting a lot, too, and I don't think I am more gentle on my car than he is on his.

Describe the improvement in this year's Bridgestone tyres.

Very easy: they are good under any circumstance because they are extremely consistent.

ALL F1 PHOTOS - DARREN HEATH



Winning takes team effort



Fast on the track. Fast in the pits

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

has in 2004

How much of your success over the years is down to the partnership with Bridgestone?

Success is not about exact percentages, in my view it is about factors coming together to optimize themselves. The tyres naturally have a great influence in the performance, so they play a very important role in the success. But even if I won't be able to tell you exactly how much, I am more than confident telling you that Bridgestone is a wonderful partner to have as they share the same passion, sense of innovation and depth of knowledge as Ferrari does. The way Ferrari and Bridgestone are cooperating is impressive, and that's just about it: don't forget that F1 is a team sport.

Mika Hakkinen is talking about coming back to F1. He is one of only a few real rivals of the last decade. Does it frustrate you that for the past few years you have not had anyone of your own level to race

against?

You think [I haven't had anyone of the same level]? I don't!

[As for Mika] if he really wants to come back I am happy for sure. I always appreciated his quality both as a man and as a driver.

Tell us the one day in F1 you would like to live again...either because it was so fantastic or because you would have changed what you did on that day?

No doubt: the day of the final race in 1997 [when Michael clashed with Jacques Villeneuve]. I have said this often by now and I can say it more often again...that if I could undo that situation I'd immediately do it.

When people look back at the history of F1, what would you like them to say about this period of your domination?

The Ferrari Team at that time really was a

family and that it was nice to see harmony proving to be vital to success.

How is your age making what you achieve now any different to winning the title a decade ago?

I think it is normal that when you grow older you get more relaxed and more at ease with yourself. I know that some people even argue about being able to enjoy things more, but I wouldn't agree with this.

Nevertheless in my case it sure helped that

'Bridgestone is a wonderful partner to have'

I am more self-confident now as a person than I was ten years ago.

You must have thoughts about life after F1. Give us an insight into your plans. Relax? Stay in F1? Help work on cars like the Enzo some more?

No plans, I am sorry. Just that I do not want to stay in F1. The rest is open to anything – and far, far away still!



Suits you, Sir



The best racing driver ever?





TECH TALK

Key to compounds

In both road and racing tyres, the part of the tyre in contact with the road surface is known as the tread. The tread can also be referred to as the compound. Since this provides the grip, the choice of the correct compound to match the track surface is all-important. There are many aspects to consider, as Hisao Sukanuma, Bridgestone Motorsport's Technical Manager, explains:

"We take into account the roughness of the track surface, the type of corners the circuit has, its average speed, plus the sort of track temperature we can expect. Each track has different characteristics, which is why the correct choice of compound requires a lot of consideration.

"Monza, for instance, has a very smooth surface which means the wear is very small. But, because of the high-speed nature of the track, the tyres generate a lot of heat, so we consider the heat durability of the compound for Monza while providing maximum possible grip."



THE A-Z OF BRIDGESTONE: F1

Words by which we race

P. Panis. Olivier Panis gave Bridgestone their first podium when the Frenchman brought his Prost-Mugen home third in the 1997 Brazilian Grand Prix at Interlagos, Bridgestone's second F1 race.

Q. Qualifying. The second most important goal of a race weekend after a win, qualifying establishes the

order on the starting grid with the fastest driver taking pole position.

R. Rubber polymers. There are two types: natural and synthetic. These are one of the main ingredients in a Bridgestone tyre compound. Natural rubber has harder tendencies than synthetic.

S. Schumacher. Arguably the greatest driver of this or any other era, Michael

Schumacher has provided many championships and victories since Ferrari began working with Bridgestone in 1999.

T. Trucks. Three articulated trucks carry approximately 1,400 Bridgestone tyres, weighing 14,000 kgs, to every Grand Prix in Europe. Between 1,800 and 2,000 tyres are taken to every test.



BRIDGESTONE'S GREATEST WINS FRENCH GRAND PRIX 2001

Fifty degrees Celsius and Michael reaches his own fifty

VICTORY IN THE 2001 French Grand Prix could not have been sweeter. Apart from being on the doorstep of Bridgestone's rival, this win for Michael Schumacher and Ferrari had gone against expected form.

Concerned about the heat experienced in July, the Bridgestone technicians produced a new tyre which was introduced at Magny-Cours for the 10th round of the championship.

Schumacher qualified on the front row, ran second behind the Williams of his brother, Ralf, and took a lead he would never lose at the first of two pit stops.

On a day when track temperatures exceeded 50 degrees Celsius, rivals were stunned and speechless. Instead of struggling in the heat, as had been the case at earlier races, Bridgestone turned the tables and Rubens Barrichello had

backed up the brave strategy by finishing third for Ferrari. While Schumacher enjoyed his 50th win, Bridgestone celebrated an important technical breakthrough.





ROUND 15: ITALY

**EMOTION AND DRAMA.
BETTER WEAR RED**

The quickest track in the F1 calendar, the average speed of a Monza qualifying lap is in excess of 250kph.

Last year's Italian Grand Prix, won by Michael Schumacher's Ferrari using Bridgestone tyres, was the fastest race in F1 history. Schumacher covered the 53 laps (307 kms) in just 74 minutes for an average speed of 247.54kph.

The track has four long straights (where the cars hit over 335kph) three chicanes and just three proper corners, including the daunting Lesmo, a double right hander. The extremely high speeds cause a lot of heat build-up in the tyre and durability is always an issue. But wear is not, so the challenge for tyre makers is to balance out grip with durability. For this reason a Monza tyre is a unique tyre which will not be used at any other track.

High speed



ROUND 16: CHINA

**NEW TO F1, SHANGHAI
WILL SURPRISE**

This is a new track for 2004 so there is no data from previous years on which to base preparations. As such it presents an exciting challenge for tyre makers, chassis engineers and engine builders. Bridgestone's record on new tracks has been good. At Bahrain in April, Ferrari scored an emphatic one-two victory.

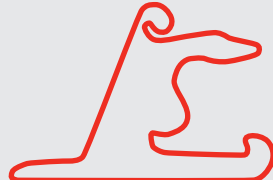
Shanghai appears to be a medium speed circuit, with a number of tight corners.

'From our simulations and analysis,' says Bridgestone's Hisao Suganuma, 'My feeling is that we will need a tyre from the middle to soft range of compounds. But we will need to know the texture of the track surface before making our final choice.'

Suganuma's hunch is that the tyre is likely to be similar in characteristics to one used at Imola. Bridgestone and Ferrari plan major tests at Jerez and Valencia to finalise the compounds for Shanghai.

China is an extremely important race for Bridgestone as the potential market there is enormous.

**The
unexpected**



ROUND 17: JAPAN

**SUZUKA IS HOME TO
BRIDGESTONE**

Suzuka is the home race for Bridgestone and the company's results there have been very good. Bridgestone has only lost once at Suzuka during its seven years in F1 and four drivers' world championships have been clinched there on Bridgestone tyres; two each for Schumacher and Mika Hakkinen.

Suzuka is one of a number of tracks where no F1 testing is allowed before the race weekend.

The key part of the track in terms of lap time is the medium speed esses in sector one. Tyres must give good change of direction and the stability of the tyre is very important. Another key corner is the high speed 130R, where again stability is crucial. Suzuka is more about the construction of the tyre than the compound. The track surface is quite abrasive so a compound from the harder end of the range is used.

No testing



ROUND 18: BRAZIL

**RUBENS? IN BRAZIL?
PARTY? FOR SURE!**

This year's Brazilian Grand Prix may be taking place at a very different time of year – October instead of March – but the weather is likely to be similar. And that means hot with the possibility of sudden rainstorms. To date 2004 has been unusually light on wet races so perhaps Brazil will provide a dramatic finale.

The Interlagos circuit is unusual in that it runs anticlockwise and the majority of the corners are left handers. The track is always tough on the rear tyres and minimizing degradation in the rears is vital for a successful weekend.

Interlagos presents an interesting challenge for tyre makers as the surface is smooth, so medium to soft compounds are called for, but finding soft tyres which also have good heat durability is tough.

Ferrari's Rubens Barrichello has come close to winning this race a number of times and has targeted this year's event as a must-win. Will he make it?

**Anti-clockwise
racing**



CHAMP CAR WORLD SERIES CALENDAR

Apr 18	Long Beach
May 23	Monterrey
Jun 5	West Allis
Jun 20	Portland
Jul 3	Cleveland
Jul 11	Toronto
Jul 25	Vancouver
Aug 8	Elkhart Lake
Aug 15	Denver
Aug 29	Montreal
Sep 12	Monterrey
Sep 25	Las Vegas
Oct 17	Seoul
Oct 24	Surfers Paradise
Nov 7	Mexico City



MOTOGP WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP CALENDAR

Apr 18	South Africa
May 2	Spain
May 16	France
Jun 6	Italy
Jun 13	Catalunya
Jun 26	Dutch TT
Jul 4	Brazil
Jul 18	Germany
Jul 25	Great Britain
Aug 22	Czech Republic
Sep 5	Portugal
Sep 19	Japan
Oct 2	Qatar
Oct 10	Malaysia
Oct 17	Australia
Oct 31	Valencia



CHAMP CAR WORLD SERIES

Bourdais and Junqueira down to the wire

D. ASHLOCK



SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS strengthened his grip on the Bridgestone Presents The Champ Car World Series Powered by Ford with his fifth, and undoubtedly best, win of the 2004 season at

Denver.

The Frenchman started from pole position, but was squeezed into a spin at the first corner by teammate Bruno Junqueira, rejoining in last place.

The Newman-Haas driver set about fighting back, charging through the field, and taking the lead from champion Paul Tracy with 10 laps to go, despite damaging his front suspension mid-race when passing Mario Dominguez.

"It is my most beautiful win, for sure," said an ecstatic Bourdais after the victory. He now has a

commanding points lead in the series.

The previous race, at Wisconsin's challenging Elkhart Lake, saw the first win for Alex Tagliani and the Rocketsports Team, helped by a gamble with strategy, and a fortunate series of yellow flags.

It's a busy part of the season for the Champ Car series, and the teams headed from the altitude of mile-high Denver to the Grand Prix track in Montreal, where Bruno Junqueira took victory, while Bourdais kept his lead in the championship.

MOTOGP WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Bridgestone runners in the action

K. FRIEDEMANN



BRIDGESTONE'S FIRST MOTOGP win at the Rio GP was followed by more strong results at the races either side of the summer break.

Although a top-three finish proved elusive in Germany, 2000 World Champion Kenny Roberts put his Suzuki up front in qualifying for a second successive front-row start at the tight and twisty Sachsenring.

The American finished eighth in the race, behind two other Bridgestone runners; Brazil

winner Makoto Tamada (Camel Honda) was sixth, and Shinya Nakano seventh, achieving Kawasaki's best MotoGP result.

The British GP gave second Suzuki rider John Hopkins his turn as the best Bridgestone runner, with a season-best eighth position after powering through the field from 16th place on the grid.

Success continued after the summer holiday. At Brno, for the Czech round of the championship, Tamada finished fourth and Roberts tenth.

Rapid tyre development is taking place against the backdrop of a thrilling season, with the title still wide open.

Defending champion Valentino Rossi won in Britain but honours went to Sete Gibernau at Brno, allowing the Spaniard to close the gap to Rossi at the head of the championship table. Also still in the title fight is Max Biaggi.

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Correspondence should be addressed to:

Gert Meylemans
Senior Manager Corporate PR
Kleine Kloosterstraat 10
1932 Zaventem, Belgium
Tel: +32.2.714.68.40
Fax: +32.2.714.68.89
gert.meylemans@bridgestone-eu.com

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The One Stop Word Shop.

Vine Court, Portsmouth Road,
Milford GU8 5HJ England
Tel: +44 1483 419822
Fax: +44 1483 419823
Email: inc@incword.com
Website: www.incword.com