

The 2005 Tyre War

Article pertains to the tyre war between Michelin and Bridgestone for the 2005 Formula One Season

([PRWEB](#)) March 4, 2005 -- Former Ferrari Driver, Eddie Irvine, once said, "The only one that can beat Michael Schumacher is the Michelin Man". Irvine was totally right in stating this at the time. Since then, Bridgestone Motorsport has lost contracts with supplying tyres, to top teams such as British American Racing and now Sauber Petronas. The loss of Sauber Petronas is vital in 2005, reason being, Sauber takes with them Felipe Massa who used to focus on Bridgestone tyre testing with Ferrari just two years ago. In addition, Sauber was considered a top 5 team to which provided vital data to Bridgestone that would have been compared to Ferrari's data in search of the correct solutions. With this loss, Bridgestone has to rely on Ferrari, and two teams who seem to be at the end of every pack, being, the Jordan Midland F1 team and the Minardi team as well. Top team data is at a total loss to compare to in this regard. On a good note, Ferrari, who, think a step ahead at all times hired Marc Gene from the BMW Williams team who you are one of the pioneers of the Michelin movement. With this, Marc brings tonnes of data and knowledge of its competition for valuable comparison purposes.

There is no secret to anyone that Bridgestone works with Ferrari in the design process of its suspension to meet the correct tyre threads and increase the car's optimal performance. With this, Ferrari gains a huge advantage over its competition due to the tight and great synergy these two share unlike any other. Michelin, has, to worry about meeting various large teams' requests such as Renault, BAR, Williams and McLaren and now even Sauber. With this, Michelin has twice the amount of work that normally leads them to take a substantial amount of time to make changes as opposed to Ferrari.

Testing times have been a worry for Ferrari and tyre thread is an issue due to the new regulations in 2005 which state the following :

1. Tyres can no longer be changed during the race unless they are punctured, damaged or the race is declared wet.
2. As in 2004, on Friday, each driver has the chance to assess two different types of dry weather tyres and decide which compound he would prefer to use. This leaves three sets of that specification for the remainder of the weekend. With these two things factors involved, The new tyre regulations put more emphasis on pit stop strategies and the performance of the tyres in a long distance affair, both proving to be the most important issue. With this, drivers such as Schumacher has to find ways to preserve his tyres as in order to last a whole race. With this, Rubens had the following to state: "We shall have to learn how to deal with this rule, said Barrichello. One thing is for sure, we won't be able to drive like last year. You cannot flatten a tyre. Races will need to be handled in the head as well as feet in 2005". The same was shared from Bridgestone "The new regulations for 2005 will leave drivers needing to take good care of their tyres more than ever before, according to Bridgestone Technical Manager Hisao Sukanuma." Ironically, Ross Brawn stated that this favours Rubens Barrichello's driving style who is known to preserve this tyres and may hurt Michael's driving style.

For the F2005 model, a completely new suspension design was set with Bridgestone Motorsport to optimize the tyre usage for both the qualifications and race to abide with the new regulations. This has been an area to where Ferrari is being criticized thus far. Testing results have shown the tires to consume rather quickly and the areas of testing were not in warm weather to which can be another larger obstacle, reason being, the opening races are

in areas to where heat is at the maximum level. Also, it has been noted that the Bridgestone tyres lack durability as per Michael Schumacher and Rubens Barrichello to which Bridgestone is working on correcting on the F2004M. Ross Brawn seems to be pleased with the F2005 tyre and suspension portions stating the following "It is stiffer, lighter, more stable, and, most importantly with the new tyre regulations, it should be less stressful on the tyres."

Rubens, in reference to the new qualification system, stated the following, "We need to understand if there is any need to preserve the tyres on any of the qualifications in term of taking the best out of them. It's part of the game. "Sometimes it might work in your favour because of temperatures or weather, anything like that and sometimes it goes against you, so I'm cool about that," he added. "I like the challenge of going out cold and go for it on one lap."

Michelin's Boss, Pierre Dupasquier had the following to state about the Australian Grand Prix, "The new regulations have posed a very difficult situation for the tyre manufacturers, in that drivers now have to do all of qualifying and the whole race on the same set of rubber. This makes compound selection very tricky," he explained.

"In Melbourne as with the other circuits we need a tyre with lots of grip but it also has to be very durable, a hard compound to last the distance. This is something that Michelin and Williams have been working on very diligently."

Bridgestone is sending five dry weather specifications of Potenza Formula One tyre to Melbourne by air freight direct from its Tokyo based production factory. Each one of these dry weather specifications, which have been tailored specifically for the new regulations, is new and has therefore never been raced before.

Bridgestone will also be sending one wet weather tyre and one extreme weather tyre specification to Australia, both of which are new specifications.

Will Bridgestone be Ferrari's biggest strength or obstacle in 2005? Time will tell in getting a strong understanding of this in both the qualifications and racing sessions. One thing for sure, if the tyres are not up to par for the initial races, you know there will be a lot of testing and rubber burning coming from Marc Gene and Luca Badoer to where they will get it right. Knowing the professionalism of Bridgestone and the dedication to Formula One as I have seen through their Canadian Operations through Mr. Robert Vetter, I can only confirm, that you would rather have Bridgestone with you as opposed to against you.

By Carm Sciglitano
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