



## THRILLING BATTLES IN CHINA AS TYRE STRATEGY IS KEY

*Shanghai, April 17<sup>th</sup> 2011* – The Chinese Grand Prix went down to a thrilling battle between Red Bull's Sebastian Vettel and McLaren driver Lewis Hamilton over the last six laps, decided by tyre strategy. Hamilton passed Vettel for the lead with four laps to go, with the German driver then forced to defend from Jenson Button in the other McLaren and his Red Bull team mate Mark Webber.

After another exciting finale, Hamilton was followed home by Vettel who maintains his championship lead. Tyre strategy proved crucial to the outcome of the race, with the McLarens opting for a three-stop strategy while Red Bull selected two stops for Vettel and three stops for Mark Webber, who started from 18<sup>th</sup> on the grid after hitting problems on Saturday during free practice and qualifying.

Webber's early exit from qualifying meant that he was able to save three sets of soft PZero tyres for the race, which he was able to use to devastating effect on Sunday. Having worked his way through the field by sprinting between his three pit stops, Webber was able to climb onto the podium by passing Button on the penultimate lap.

Vettel was able to make his two-stop strategy work right up to the closing stages but he was completing a much longer stint on the hard tyres than his rivals, setting up a thrilling finish in which the top six were covered by just 15 seconds. There was plenty of overtaking in a lively race from start to finish, thanks to some thrilling battles featuring multiple world champions Michael Schumacher and Fernando Alonso, as well as some of the new and exciting talents to emerge in the sport such as Sergio Perez and Kamui Kobayashi.

Once more this year the weather remained dry throughout the weekend, with the race starting in ambient temperatures of 22 degrees centigrade and a track temperature of 30 degrees centigrade. All the drivers apart from Webber started the race on the soft tyre, with the teams split between two and three stop strategies. A notable exception was HRT driver Narain Karthikeyan, who was classified 23<sup>rd</sup> after stopping only once on lap 23. The fastest lap of the race, set by Webber (1m38.993s) was also considerably quicker than the fastest race lap set by Hamilton last year (1m42.061s) – during which there were some periods of light rain.

Pirelli's Motorsport Director Paul Hembery said: "The races just seem to keep on getting better and better this year! I think nobody watching really knew how it was going to finish until the very end, which is exactly what we wanted to achieve when we started our Formula One project. We saw an interesting split of strategies, with McLaren managing to make three stops work for Hamilton but Red Bull coming very close to winning with just two. Compared to Malaysia we experienced a lot less degradation, with some drivers managing to get 20 laps or more out of the hard tyre. We didn't experience an excessive amount of the toffee-like 'marbles' out on track and it was clear that this race

was won and lost on tyre strategy. The end result was that all the leading runners were very close together at the finish, and the people who had looked after their tyres best took the top results. It's hard to imagine how we can top this at the next grand prix in Turkey, but we're certainly going to try to have something just as good."

**PIT STOP SUMMARY – 2011 CHINESE GRAND PRIX**

Hamilton:	S	S (15)	S (25)	H (38)		3
Vettel:	S	S (14)	H (31)			2
Webber:	H	S (10)	S (25)	S (40)		3
Button:	S	S (14)	S (24)	H (37)		3
Rosberg:	S	S (12)	S (25)	H (39)		3
Massa:	S	S (15)	H (33)			2
Alonso:	S	S (16)	H (32)			2
Schumacher:	S	S (10)	S (26)	H (39)		3
Petrov:	S	S (17)	H (37)			2
Kobayashi:	S	S (14)	H (30)			2
Di Resta:	S	S (11)	H (32)			2
Heidfeld:	S	S (18)	H (30)			2
Barrichello:	S	S (16)	H (35)			2
Buemi:	S	H (12)	H (16)	H (33)		3
Sutil:	S	S (15)	H (30)	S (47)		3
Kovalainen:	S	S (19)	H (40)			2
Perez:	S	S (16)	H (36)	DT* (48)	DT* (50)	4
Maldonado:	S	S (10)	H (25)	H (40)		3
Trulli:	S	S (20)	H (42)			2
D'Ambrosio:	S	S (20)	H (34)			2
Glock:	S	S (16)	S (28)	H (39)		3
Liuzzi:	S	DT* (9)	H (21)	S (45)		3
Karthikeyan:	S	H (23)				1
Alguersuari:	S	S (9)				1

The first column denotes the tyres the driver started the race on.

S = Soft compound

H = Hard compound

The last column gives the total amount of pit stops.

\* Drive through

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**For further information please contact:**

Alexandra Schieren      +33 607 03 69 03      [alexandra.schieren@pirelli.com](mailto:alexandra.schieren@pirelli.com)

Anthony Peacock      +44 7765 896 930      [anthony@mediatica.co.uk](mailto:anthony@mediatica.co.uk)

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Francescopaolo Tarallo      +39 334 684 4307      [francescopaolo.tarallo@pirelli.com](mailto:francescopaolo.tarallo@pirelli.com)  
(Head of Product and Motorsport Communications)

Pirelli Tyre Press Office  
Ph. +39 02 6442 4270 – [pressoffice@pirelli.com](mailto:pressoffice@pirelli.com) – [www.pirelli.com](http://www.pirelli.com)

