



## 2011 KOREAN GRAND PRIX

### Pirelli puts the P Zero supersoft tyres through their toughest test

#### What's the story?

*Milan, October 10th 2011* – Pirelli heads straight to Korea from Japan for the second long-haul back-to-back race of the season, following Malaysia and China at the start of the year.

The tight confines of the Yeongam circuit located in Mokpo, 400 kilometres to the south of Seoul, present a stark contrast to the flowing profile of Suzuka. But despite the severity of the circuit, Pirelli is bringing one of its most bold tyre choices yet: P Zero Yellow soft and P Zero Red supersoft.

These tyres will face an exceptionally tough challenge at the Korean circuit, which was new to the Formula One calendar last year. There are several low-speed and technical corners, as well as some faster bends, which require the tyres and the car set-up to be extremely versatile. In its second year of use, the surface asphalt in Korea is also likely to have worn away, exposing the aggregate in its full sharpness before the stones have worn down. This will lead to an abrasive surface, which accelerates tyre wear – particularly as there are a number of places on the track that require optimal traction.

The fast corners mean that Korea has the highest lateral loading of all the circuits where the soft and supersoft combination has been used: Monaco, Hungary, Canada and Singapore.

Just like Canada, Yeongam is a semi-permanent track, with the section that runs alongside the harbourside using normal roads. This means that there are variable levels of grip, affecting the set-up. The long straight before the first proper sequence of corners does not help the tyres to warm up effectively, and when they are suddenly subjected to severe bends when cold, the risk of cold tearing and graining is increased.

The weather in Korea is another important variable, with Mokpo's coastal location making it susceptible to frequent isolated rainstorms. Last year the start was delayed and the race then interrupted for 45 minutes due to a downpour.

#### Pirelli's Motorsport Director says

**Paul Hembery:** "Korea presents the supersoft tyres in particular with their toughest test of the year, but with the championship decided this is a valuable opportunity for us to try out some alternative nominations in order to have some more information for next year. Because of the abrasive surface and comparatively high lateral loading in Korea we might expect a higher number of pit stops than usual from the drivers basing their strategies around the softer tyre. Some may prefer to concentrate on the harder compound, so it's going to be another very interesting race tactically. But all this speculation could come to nothing if it rains, which is quite possible too."

Whatever happens, historically it will be an important event for us as it's the first race we come to with a Pirelli-equipped Formula One world champion for more than 50 years."

### **The men behind the steering wheel say**

**Heikki Kovalainen (Team Lotus):** "Korea is an interesting track in that you go from one sector with large run off areas to another that's more like a street circuit, with close walls and no margin for error. Maximising outright pace is pretty critical as the long straight out of Turn 2 with the very tight right at the end is a good chance to overtake, but then the rest of the lap is a mix of low and medium speed corners so we have to find a balance that gives us the best of both worlds.

One obvious difference to a lot of the circuits is the fact that it's anti-clockwise. That doesn't really affect the set-up but it can have an effect on some of the drivers. We all train our neck muscles to cope with the demands of racing, but as most of the tracks run clockwise we have to work a bit harder on making sure we don't have any problems, like you can do through the triple left-hander of Turn 8.

From a tyre perspective I think it might be similar to Japan. We have the softs and the supersofts and as degradation is high in Korea, particularly from Turn 10 to Turn 17, I think strategy and tyre wear will play a critical role. Last year it was obviously soaking so we didn't see the tyre strategies play out, but I think if it's dry this year we will, and it'll make for a fascinating race."

### **Technical notes**

- \* The set-up for Korea is not dissimilar to the one used in Japan, with quite high levels of downforce. Getting good turn-in, balance, and traction is vital, particularly for the slower and more technical corners towards the end of the lap where the most time can be gained and lost.
- \* While the downforce pushes the car and tyres onto the track with up to 800 kilograms of force per wheel, the surface can be quite slippery; particularly at the start of the weekend as the circuit has not been used extensively since last year. When the surface is slippery the car slides more, consequently increasing tyre wear. This will be a significant factor on Friday especially.
- \* As a rough guide, the cars are expected to be on full throttle for around 53% of the lap and the brakes for 20% of the lap in Korea. The average speed will be in the region of 195kph while the top speed is approximately 315kph. The fastest corner is taken at 235kph, the slowest at around 65kph.

### **Pirelli in Korea**

- \* Pirelli Korea forms part of Pirelli Asia-Pacific but it is not yet a major market for the Italian firm. The Korean premium tyre market however is on the increase, with Pirelli establishing its presence particularly in motorbike tyres: one of the most rapidly-expanding segments in the country.
- \* Korean carmakers include Hyundai, Kia and Ssangyong, to which Pirelli supplies a variety of aftermarket tyres throughout the world. Pirelli's rally tyres are still seen

on the Hyundai Accent WRC – the Korean manufacturer’s factory entry on the World Rally Championship from 2000-2003 – on a selection of national championships.

- \* South Korean replacement car tyre sales of over 8.6 million units were worth in total US \$800.9 million last year, with tyre spend ranging from \$87-\$99 per unit on average. This is in line with Korea’s consistent recent growth in domestic car sales, which have increased by 6% so far this year.

### The tyre choices so far

	<b>PZero Red</b>	<b>PZero Yellow</b>	<b>PZero White</b>	<b>PZero Silver</b>
<b>Australia</b>		<b>Soft</b>		<b>Hard</b>
<b>Malesia</b>		<b>Soft</b>		<b>Hard</b>
<b>Cina</b>		<b>Soft</b>		<b>Hard</b>
<b>Turchia</b>		<b>Soft</b>		<b>Hard</b>
<b>Spagna</b>		<b>Soft</b>		<b>Hard</b>
<b>Monaco</b>	<b>Super Soft</b>	<b>Soft</b>		
<b>Canada</b>	<b>Super Soft</b>	<b>Soft</b>		
<b>Europa</b>		<b>Soft</b>	<b>Medium</b>	
<b>G. Bretagna</b>		<b>Soft</b>		<b>Hard</b>
<b>Germania</b>		<b>Soft</b>	<b>Medium</b>	
<b>Ungheria</b>	<b>Supersoft</b>	<b>Soft</b>		
<b>Belgio</b>		<b>Soft</b>	<b>Medium</b>	
<b>Italia</b>		<b>Soft</b>	<b>Medium</b>	
<b>Singapore</b>	<b>Supersoft</b>	<b>Soft</b>		
<b>Giappone</b>		<b>Soft</b>	<b>Medium</b>	
<b>Corea</b>	<b>Supersoft</b>	<b>Soft</b>		

\*\*\*

Follow us on Twitter @ Pirelli\_Media or Facebook on [www.facebook.com/Pirelli](http://www.facebook.com/Pirelli)

### 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)

\*\*\*

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  
 Tel. +39 02 6442 4270 – [pressoffice@pirelli.com](mailto:pressoffice@pirelli.com) – [www.pirelli.com](http://www.pirelli.com)

