



Chinese Grand Prix From A Tyre Point of View: Shanghai, 13-15 April 2012

SOFT AND MEDIUM TYRES FOR THE FAST TURNS OF CHINA

What's the story?

Milan, April 6, 2012 – Tyre strategy will be at the forefront of one of the most technically demanding races of the year, as Pirelli returns to Shanghai for the Chinese Grand Prix. Last year, the top three finishers all used different strategies at a race that was not decided until the final lap – and with Pirelli having closed up the performance gaps between the compounds this year, the accent on strategy will now be even stronger.

Pirelli is bringing its P Zero White medium compound and P Zero Yellow soft compound tyres to China: a circuit is well known for its fast and sweeping corners, as well as some long straights and heavy braking areas.

All these factors make tyre strategy extremely important, with a three-stop strategy having provided the pure speed needed to win the race last year. The medium and the soft tyres guarantee the best compromise between grip and performance on this circuit, but rain is a common occurrence as well, so the Cinturato Green intermediates and Cinturato Blue full wets could also make an appearance. Unlike Malaysia, where the showers tend to be short and heavy, the rain in China is frequently light but long-lasting, making it ideal territory for the intermediate.

Pirelli's motorsport director says:

Paul Hembery: “China proved to be one of the most fascinating races in our first year, with tyre strategy at the heart of it, so we have a tough act to follow. However, the philosophy we have adopted this year actually extends the window of peak performance on the slick tyres, which means that the drivers should be able to race harder and closer. Although ambient temperatures can be quite low in China, tyre degradation is traditionally high due to the unique track layout. So although we have the same nomination as we saw in Australia – medium and soft – our P Zeros will face a quite different challenge next week in Shanghai.”

The men behind the steering wheel say:

Sergio Perez, Sauber F1 Team: “For the tyres in Shanghai it is very important to get the car's set up right, especially for the front axle. The long high-speed corners, in particular turn one, put a lot of load on the front tyres and you have to make sure you don't lose them too quickly. This is what is most important in terms of tyres for the Shanghai International Circuit. I am very much looking forward to that race. We have proven that the Sauber C31-Ferrari can be competitive. Now we have to keep our head down and work hard for further improvements.”

Pirelli's test driver says:

Jaime Alguersuari: “China is a circuit where the tyre use and strategy makes a real difference. If you want some examples, just look at last year's race: Lewis Hamilton won by making one stop more than Sebastian Vettel, while Mark Webber had a bad qualifying but made good use of the tyres that he had saved to end up third.”

- “Two corners in particular stand out, where the tyres make a real difference: the key to getting the best of out them is to properly understand how the two different compounds behave: to begin with, the first corner, turn one. This right-hander feels like it is going on forever when you drive it and the radius gets tighter and tighter, until it turns back on itself completely. The tyres have to work really hard here in order to maintain the ideal line.”
- “The other key corner is turn 13: the long right-hander just before the main straight. It's a fast corner, which is slightly banked, where the tyres are increasingly loaded as you accelerate towards the straight and the DRS zone. Getting good traction out of this corner is vital – particularly in qualifying – so that you can carry plenty of speed onto the straight, which is crucial to your lap time.”

Technical tyre notes:

- Pirelli will bring the same tyre combination as was nominated for Australia, the P Zero White medium and the P Zero Yellow soft, but this time they face a very different challenge.
- The circuit layout in China tends to be more demanding than Albert Park, with a braking area at the end of the main straight for example where the cars go from 320kph to 68kph in less than 130 metres: a deceleration of 6G, which is one of the heaviest that the tyres face all year.
- The lateral forces on the tyres, in the flowing mid-section of the lap, are the equivalent of 3G.
- The heavy braking that is a characteristic of China tends to put more strain on the front tyres than the rears. The fronts are also worked during turn one – which is almost a full circle – as the cars are relying purely on mechanical rather than aerodynamic grip.
- The surface is medium-grip but less aggressive than Malaysia. The banking on turn 13 increases the strain on the tyre structure, as the contact patch can increase to three times its normal size.
- Lewis Hamilton is the only two-time winner in China. Apart from him, there has been a different winner every year since the inaugural race in 2004, underlining the varied challenges of the Shanghai circuit.
- Last year, Sebastian Vettel set the fast-ever lap in qualifying at the Shanghai circuit: 1m33.706s, using the 2011 P Zero Yellow soft tyre.

The tyre choices so far:

	PZero Red	PZero Yellow	PZero White	PZero Silver
Australia		Soft	Medium	
Malaysia			Medium	Hard
China		Soft	Medium	

Pirelli in China:

- Pirelli has two major factories in China, both situated in the Shangdong province: one for car tyres and one for truck tyres. The latest factory has been designed with capacity to expand to 10 million units per year. Production of both car and truck tyres doubled last year.
- China has a seminal importance in Pirelli’s motorsport history. Pirelli’s first major international win was on the epic 1907 Peking to Paris road race, won by Prince Scipione Borghese in a seven-litre Itala.
- Pirelli’s activities in China last year included events such as BMW Destination X, Ferrari Challenge Asia, the China Rally, and the Subaru Driver Championship. The Italian tyre firm also sponsored the ‘Festival Italiano’ and a karting competition organised by the Italian Chamber of Commerce.
- Pirelli won two awards last year from China Automobile News: one of the most prestigious automotive publications in China.

Other news from Pirelli:

- Pirelli recently launched a new Formula One application for the iPhone and Android phones: Pirelli Autodrome. The app offers users a virtual Formula One experience, with a host of interactive features and is available free of charge from iTunes and the Android market.
- The 2012 FIA WRC Academy, which runs exclusively on Pirelli tyres, was launched in Portugal. Up-and-coming Northern Irishman Alastair Fisher won the opening round.
- Reigning Italian Rally Champion Paolo Andreucci won the first round of this year’s championship, the Rally del Ciocco, using Pirelli’s asphalt rally tyres.

- Pirelli launched its 2012 motorsport programme last week to Italian media at the Pirelli Institute in Milan. These other activities include the FIA GT Championship, as well as the Italian Endurance Touring Car Championship, Ferrari Challenge, Lamborghini Super Trofeo and Maserati Trofeo.

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