



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L' AUTOMOBILE

PRESS INFORMATION

2005 UNITED STATES GRAND PRIX

Formula One is a sporting contest. It must operate to clear rules. These cannot be negotiated each time a competitor brings the wrong equipment to a race.

At Indianapolis we were told by Michelin that their tyres would be unsafe unless their cars were slowed in the main corner. We understood and among other suggestions offered to help them by monitoring speeds and penalising any excess. However, the Michelin teams refused to agree unless the Bridgestone runners were slowed by the same amount. They suggested a chicane.

The Michelin teams seemed unable to understand that this would have been grossly unfair as well as contrary to the rules. The Bridgestone teams had suitable tyres. They did not need to slow down. The Michelin teams' lack of speed through turn 13 would have been a direct result of inferior equipment, as often happens in Formula One. It must also be remembered that the FIA wrote to all of the teams and both tyre manufacturers on June 1, 2005, to emphasise that "tyres should be built to be reliable under all circumstances" (see correspondence attached).

A chicane would have forced all cars, including those with tyres optimised for high-speed, to run on a circuit whose characteristics had changed fundamentally – from ultra-high speed (because of turn 13) to very slow and twisting. It would also have involved changing the circuit without following any of the modern safety procedures, possibly with implications for the cars and their brakes. It is not difficult to imagine the reaction of an American court had there been an accident (whatever its cause) with the FIA having to admit it had failed to follow its own rules and safety procedures.

The reason for this debacle is clear. Each team is allowed to bring two types of tyre: one an on-the-limit potential race winner, the other a back-up which, although slower, is absolutely reliable. Apparently, none of the Michelin teams brought a back-up to Indianapolis. They subsequently announced they were flying in new tyres from France but then claimed that these too were unsafe.

What about the American fans? What about Formula One fans world-wide? Rather than boycott the race the Michelin teams should have agreed to run at reduced speed in turn 13. The rules would have been kept, they would have earned Championship points and the fans would have had a race. As it is, by refusing to run unless the FIA broke the rules and handicapped the Bridgestone runners, they have damaged themselves and the sport.

It should also be made clear that Formula One Management and Indianapolis Motor Speedway, as commercial entities, can have no role in the enforcement of the rules.

To read the correspondence between the FIA and all of the teams and both tyre manufacturers on June 1 & 2, 2005, please click [here](#).

Paris, June 20, 2005

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www.fia.com