

# Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile

## BMUNIS'25 BACKGROUND GUIDE



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# LETTER FROM THE CHAIRS

Dear Delegates,

We are pleased to welcome you to the BMUNIS'25 conference, representing your countries and perspectives in this unique forum. Over the course of this council, you will have the opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions on the challenges and opportunities facing motorsport today.

At the heart of this council, just as at the core of the FIA, is a commitment to collaboration, fairness, and the pursuit of solutions that ensure the safety, sustainability, and integrity of motorsport. While rules and regulations provide structure, it is your dialogue, critical thinking, and shared ideas that will drive progress.

We encourage you to contribute confidently and respectfully, advocating for your positions while remaining open to the perspectives of others. Thoughtful debate, collaboration, and collective action are essential to advancing motorsport in a way that reflects the values of safety, innovation, and fairness that the FIA upholds.

We look forward to a productive and engaging session, and to the solutions and insights that your discussions will bring. Your participation is vital to the continued growth and integrity of motorsport, and we are confident that your contributions will make this council a valuable and memorable experience.

Please feel free to contact either one of us if you've got any doubts or questions you'd like to ask us!

Sincerely,

Dushyant Ravichandran & Joshua George

Chairpersons,

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# ISSUE 1 - TYRE TEST CONTROVERSY – “TYREGATE”

## INTRODUCTION

The 2013 Formula One season was overshadowed by a controversial dispute which was later termed “Tyregate”, which was centered around a secret, in-season tire test conducted by the Mercedes-AMG Petronas Formula One Team and Pirelli. This incident ignited a firestorm of controversy, raising fundamental questions about FairPlay, the enforcement of regulations, and the very integrity of the championship. The urgency of the debate arose from its immediate impact on the championship standings. Mercedes’ rivals accused them of gaining an unfair competitive advantage. Historically, F1 has a long tradition of pushing technological boundaries, but the line between innovation and rule-breaking is often blurred. This controversy forced the governing body, the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), to confront the complexities of regulating a multi-billion dollar industry where every fraction of a second matters and stakes, reputational, financial, and sporting, are immense.

The central issue revolved around the legality of an in-season test conducted by Mercedes and Pirelli with a 2013 car, a practice explicitly banned by the FIA regulations. While the tire manufacturer, Pirelli, claimed the test was necessary for safety reasons, rival teams, notably Red Bull and Ferrari, argued it was a secret opportunity for Mercedes to gain crucial data on their car’s performance with the problematic 2013 tires. This event highlighted the fragility of trust between competitors and the immense pressure on the FIA to maintain a level playing field.

## GENERAL OVERVIEW

The 2013 F1 season began with a major challenge for all the teams: the new Pirelli P Zero tires. Designed to degrade rapidly, which in turn forced drivers to stop for new tires and encourage unpredictable racing, these tires were met with criticism from drivers and teams alike. There were concerns over their fragility and a high number of failures, including the British Grand Prix where several tires exploded, only worsened their case. This prompted Pirelli

to request a private test to address the safety concerns and develop more durable compounds.

Pirelli, with the authorisation of the FIA, approached teams to conduct a 1,000 kilometer test. The teams would provide a car and a driver, and in return, Pirelli would get the data it needed to improve its product. While most teams were willing to participate, they were wary of the competitive advantage such test might offer and thus rejected the invitation. Mercedes, however, agreed to the test, which took place at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya, on May 15-17, 2013, immediately after the Spanish grand Prix. The test was conducted using Mercedes' 2013 car, the W04, and its two drivers, Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg.

What made this test so controversial was the secrecy and the use of the current season car. The F1 Sporting Regulations explicitly prohibited in-season testing, with a few exceptions. While Pirelli argued the test was not a "sporting test" but a "technical test for safety", rivals like Red Bull and Ferrari countered that any test involving a current season car would inevitably yield performance data, giving Mercedes an unfair advantage. The situation came to a head at the Monaco grand Prix, where Red Bull's Christian Horner and Ferrari's Stefano Domenicali were made aware of the test and lodged a formal protest with the FIA.

The FIA's response was to take the matter to the International Tribunal for investigation. The Tribunal was tasked with determining whether the test violated the F1 Sporting regulations and if so, what sanctions should be imposed. The core of the legal argument lay in the interpretation of the rules, specifically **ARTICLE 22.1 OF THE F1 SPORTING REGULATIONS**, which stated that "Track testing shall be considered any track running time not part of an Event undertaken by a competitor entered in the Championship, using cars which **CONFORM SUBSTANTIALLY WITH THE CURRENT FORMULA ONE TECHNICAL REGULATIONS** in addition to those from the previous or **SUBSEQUENT YEAR**. The only exception is that each competitor is permitted up to eight promotional events, carried out using tyres provided specifically for this purpose by the appointed supplier, to a **MAXIMUM DISTANCE OF 100KMS PER EVENT**," And **ARTICLE 22.4(B)** which states that "**NO TRACK TESTING MAY TAKE PLACE WITH MORE THAN ONE CAR PER DAY AT ANY SUCH TEST.**" In addition to the alleged breach of the F1 Sporting regulations, Mercedes was also accused of

breaching the FIA International Sporting code (2013), specifically **ARTICLE 151(C)**, Which states that “**ANY FRAUDULENT CONDUCT OR ANY ACT PREJUDICIAL TO THE INTERESTS OF ANY COMPETITION OR TO THE INTERESTS OF MOTOR SPORT GENERALLY.**” The key debate was whether Mercedes’ test met the “equal opportunity” criteria, and whether it was truly a “tire test” or an illegal “sporting test.”

The fallout from “Tyregate” was significant. It led to a deterioration of relationships between teams and highlighted the need for clearer, more robust regulations. The FIA, under pressure to demonstrate its authority and impartiality, had to navigate a complex legal and political landscape. The controversy also brought into question the role of the sole tire supplier and the balance between safety and sporting fairness.

## KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

- **TYREGATE:** The informal name for the 2013 F1 Tyre Test Controversy.
- **PIRELLI:** The official tire supplier for Formula One.
- **IN-SEASON TESTING:** Any testing of Formula One cars or parts that takes place during the Formula One season, which is generally prohibited by regulations.
- **F1 SPORTING REGULATIONS:** The rules and regulations that govern the conduct of Formula One racing, set and enforced by the FIA.
- **INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL:** A judicial body within the FIA established to hear and rule on matters of alleged rule violations.
- **SPORTING ADVANTAGE:** Any benefit gained by a team that isn't available to its competitors, which can unfairly provide an advantage in terms of performance and/or results

## MAJOR PARTIES INVOLVED

- **FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE (FIA):** The governing body of motorsport. Its role was to investigate the allegations, enforce the rules, and uphold the integrity of the sport. The FIA president, Jean Todt, and Race Director Charlie Whiting were key figures. The FIA had to balance the need for safety with the principle of a level playing field. Its official policy was to

investigate the matter thoroughly and impartially, culminating in the International Tribunal.

- **MERCEDES AMG PETRONAS F1 TEAM:** The team that participated in the test. Team Principal Ross Brawn and team manager Toto Wolff maintained that they had acted in good faith, having received permission from Pirelli and believing the test was permissible. They argued the test was for tire development and safety, not for performance gains. Their actions were to cooperate with the FIA's investigation and defend their position at the tribunal.
- **PIRELLI:** The official tire supplier. Its primary mission was to improve the safety and performance of its tires. Director of Motorsport Paul Hembery insisted the test was for safety purposes and that the information was generic and not shared with Mercedes. Pirelli's official stance was that the test was a necessary step to address the ongoing tire related safety concerns.
- **RED BULL RACING:** The party that lodged the initial protest. Team principal Christian Horner and Advisor Helmut Marko were insistent that the test was a clear violation of the sporting regulations and gave Mercedes an unfair advantage. Their position was that the FIA had failed to enforce the law and that sanctions were a necessary step to prevent future rule breaking.
- **SCUDERIA FERRARI:** The co-complainant in the protest, Team principal Stefano Domenicali and Technical Director Pat Fry shared Red Bull's concerns about the fairness and transparency of the test. Ferrari's official position was that any in season testing with a current car was a violation of the spirit and letter of the regulations.

#### TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS:

| Date            | Event             | Description                                                                                                              |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MAY 15-17, 2013 | The Secret Test   | Mercedes and Pirelli conduct a 1,000-kilometer tire test at the Circuit de Catalunya, Barcelona, using the 2013 W04 car. |
| MAY 26, 2013    | Monaco Grand Prix | Red Bull and Ferrari become aware of the test and lodge an official protest with the FIA after the race.                 |

|                      |                                |                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>JUNE 1, 2013</b>  | FIA Referral                   | The FIA refers the case to its International Tribunal after an initial investigation, deeming it a potential breach of regulations.                                           |
| <b>JUNE 20, 2013</b> | International Tribunal Hearing | The hearing takes place in Paris, with representatives from the FIA, Mercedes, and Pirelli presenting their cases.                                                            |
| <b>JUNE 21, 2013</b> | The Verdict                    | The International Tribunal delivers its verdict. Mercedes is reprimanded but not banned, while Pirelli is also reprimanded. Both are ordered to pay the costs of the hearing. |
| <b>JUNE 28, 2013</b> | Post-Verdict Statements        | Red Bull and Ferrari express disappointment with the verdict, while Mercedes accepts the ruling and moves on. The FIA reiterates its commitment to fair play.                 |

## APPLICABLE FIA LAWS

The primary legal text at the heart of the “Tyregate” controversy was the 2013 Formula One Sporting regulations. Specifically:

- **ARTICLE 22.1:** Track testing shall be considered any track running time not part of an Event undertaken by a competitor entered in the Championship, using cars which conform substantially with the current Formula One Technical Regulations in addition to those from the previous or subsequent year. The only exception is that each competitor is permitted up to eight promotional events, carried out using tyres provided specifically for this purpose by the appointed supplier, to a maximum distance of 100kms per event.
- **ARTICLE 22.4(B):** No track testing may take place with more than one car per day at any such test.
- **ARTICLE 1.2:** This article states the purpose of the regulations is to ensure “fair and equitable competition.
- **INTERNATIONAL SPORTING CODE, ARTICLE 151(C):** Any fraudulent conduct or any act prejudicial to the interests of any competition or to the interests of motor sport generally.

## THE DEBATE

The core argument for allowing the test was safety. Pirelli had genuine concerns about the durability of their tyres and the potential for serious accidents. A disastrous failure could not only harm a driver but also jeopardise the future of the sport. Advocates argued that regulations shouldn't prevent efforts to ensure the safety of all competitors. They also pointed out that Pirelli had received permission from the FIA for a "development test." Mercedes argued they were acting in good faith, under the understanding that the test was approved and solely for the purpose of tyre development, not to gain a competitive edge. The test was a significant financial undertaking for Mercedes, suggesting it wasn't a casual or nefarious act but a serious attempt to assist Pirelli in a legitimate and necessary task. The defence also pointed out that other teams had been offered the opportunity, even if they hadn't accepted it, thus meeting the "equal opportunity" clause in spirit, if not in practice.

The opposition's arguments revolved around the fairness and integrity of the sport. The F1 sporting regulations clearly prohibited in-season testing to prevent teams from gaining an unfair advantage. However, the test, by its nature, allowed Mercedes to gain crucial data on how their car interacted with the 2013 tyres, specifically how tyre wear affected performance, a key area of struggle for the team. Rivals argued that the secrecy of the test and the use of the current season car were clear violations of the spirit of the rules. The use of a 2013 car, rather than a two-year-old one as some regulations suggested for private tests, was particularly damning. Opponents also argued that if the test was truly about safety, it should have been conducted in a transparent manner, with all teams present or at least fully informed of the details. The lack of transparency reduced trust among the teams and suggested a clandestine effort to circumvent the rules.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- **ESTABLISH A FORMAL PROTOCOL FOR IN-SEASON TESTING:** The Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) should establish a clear and transparent framework for any in-season testing requested by the official tyre supplier. This protocol would mandate that all teams be formally and equally invited to participate, with a defined timeline for their response. The test's parameters, including the car, drivers, and purpose, would be pre-approved by the FIA and communicated to all competitors.

- **IMPLEMENT AN INDEPENDENT MONITORING SYSTEM:** To ensure impartiality, the FIA could appoint a neutral third party or an independent team of engineers to oversee any future tests. This body would be responsible for collecting and analysing the data, ensuring that no competitive advantage is gained by the participating team and that the information is shared equally among all competitors.
- **CATEGORISE TESTS BY PURPOSE:** The FIA could introduce different categories for tests, such as “Safety Test” (tire development) versus “Sporting Test” (performance development). Strict rules would govern each category. A “Safety Test” might be mandatory for all teams to attend to ensure no single team gains an advantage, with the data being made publicly available to all competitors.
- **INTRODUCE A FINANCIAL PENALTY SYSTEM:** Instead of a sporting penalty like a ban, which can be highly contentious, the FIA could implement a system of financial penalties for breaches of testing regulations. This would serve as a deterrent without disproportionately affecting a team’s championship chances. A tiered system of fines could be established based on the severity of the violation.

## APPENDIX

- **FIA INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL DECISION:** The full text of the decision by the tribunal on the “Tyregate” case is a foundational document for the legal arguments and final ruling
- **2013 FORMULA ONE SPORTING REGULATIONS:** The official rulebook is essential for identifying the specific articles and clauses that were allegedly breached.
- **TEAM STATEMENTS:** Official statements from Mercedes, Red Bull and Ferrari, particularly after the protest and the verdict outline their respective positions.
- **MOTORSPORT.COM, AUTOSPORT.COM, BBC SPORT F1 COVERAGE:** These sports news outlets provided detailed, realtime coverage of the controversy.

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# **ISSUE 2 - LE MANS 2016 – TOYOTA'S FINAL LAP**

## **BREAKDOWN**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The 2016 24 Hours of Le Mans provided one of the most dramatic and heartbreaking finishes in the history of motorsport, entered around the failure of the leading team Toyota Gazoo Racing prototype on the final lap. This event, while not a conventional “controversy” in the view of rule breaking, sparked a major debate about the nature of endurance racing, the fragility of technology and difference between the law and the essence of the law. The debate stemmed from the sheer, gut wrenching cruelty of the moment in question. After a 23-hour and 57 minute flawless performance, it all came undone in a matter of seconds. Historically, the Le Mans is a race defined by survival as much as speed. Toyota’s collapse highlighted the unique and brutal demands of this iconic race, where a minor mechanical failure caused a catastrophic outcome. The stakes were immense, Toyota was on the cusp of its first ever overall win at Le Mans, A triumph that had eluded the Japanese manufacturer for decades. Its loss not only crushed the team but also raised questions about whether the rules, particularly the time limit to complete the final lap.

### **OVERVIEW**

The 84th edition of the 24 Hours of Le Mans which took place on the 18th through 19th of June, 2016, was a nail-biting showdown between the top their LMP1 class teams of Porsche, Audi and Toyota. The race was a close battle till the end, with the lead changing hands multiple times. As the final hour approached, the No. 5 Toyota TS050 Hybrid, driven by Kazuki Nakajima, was comfortably in the lead with a one minute lead over the No. 2 Porsche 919 Hybrid. The entire world, and the Toyota pit wall watched in anticipation of a historic victory.

Suddenly, the No. 5 Toyota began slowing down, its engine losing all power. Nakajima immediately reported to the pit wall saying “I have no power!” The car crawled to a halt on the main straight, just after the start finish line, as

the Porsche flashed by to take the win. The No. 5 Toyota car was eventually able to coast to the finish, but it did so in over 11 minutes, well outside the 6 minute time limit required by the regulations. As a result, the car was not officially classified in the final race results.

The team later revealed the cause of the failure was a defective air line connector between the turbocharger and the intercooler. The small, seemingly insignificant part had failed after the gruelling 24 hours, leading to a catastrophic loss of power. While the team was able to recover some power by changing the cars settings, it was too late.

### KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

- **LMP1 (LE MANS PROTOTYPE 1):** The top tier class of cars competing at Le Mans, Featuring the most advanced hybrid technology
- **TS050 HYBRID:** The name of the car entered by Toyota Gazoo Racing in the 2016 World Endurance Championship
- **24 HOURS OF LE MANS:** A prestigious endurance race held annually in France, requiring cars and drivers to race a full day.
- **RACE CLASSIFICATION:** To be officially included in the final race results at Le Mans, a car must cover 70% of the winners distance and complete the final lap within 6 minutes to be classified in the final results.
- **FORCE MAJEURE:** Unforeseeable circumstances that prevent someone from fulfilling a contract or an obligation.

### MAJOR PARTIES INVOLVED

- **AUTOMOBILE CLUB DE L'OUEST (ACO):** The organiser of the 24 Hours of Le Mans. The ACO was responsible for upholding the race regulations.
- **TOYOTA GAZOO RACING:** Led by Team president Toshio Sato and the drivers of the No. 5 car, Anthony Davidson, Sébastien Buemi, and Kazuki Nakajima. Their official stance was one of deep disappointment, but they accepted the rules and vowed to return stronger. They did not contest the unclassified result but focused on understanding the mechanical failure.

- **PORSCHE TEAM:** The unexpected winners of the race with their No. 2 car, driven by Neel Jani, Romain Dumas, and Marc Lieb. They were beneficiaries of Toyota's misfortune and acknowledged the win with a sense of sympathy for their rival.

## THE DEBATE

The 6 Minute final lap rule, while seemingly harsh, was put in place for a crucial reason: Safety. Historically, cars that had completed the required race distance would sometimes stop on the track before the finish line to wait for the checkered flag to cross in a group, creating a very dangerous situation for faster cars still on their final lap. The rule was designed to prevent this exact behaviour and ensure that the race is safe until the very end. The ACO argued that a mechanical failure, while unfortunate, was a foreseeable risk in endurance racing and did not constitute *Force Majeure*. To make an exception for Toyota in this case would have undermined the integrity of the rules and set a dangerous precedent.

From a sporting point of view, the penalty was seen as cruel and a disproportionate punishment. The No. 5 Toyota had clearly earned its victory leading for the majority of the race with a dominant performance. The failure was a minor component breaking after 24 hours of extreme stress, a testament to the brutality of the coveted race, not a deliberate attempt to circumvent the rules. Opponents argued that the rules original intent did not apply to genuine mechanical failures. The car was not intentionally stopped but was struggling to move due to a broken part. The penalty effectively erased a near-perfect race, turning a second place finish into an unclassified result.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- **REVIEW THE SIX-MINUTE RULE:** The ACO and the FIA should evaluate the strictness of the rule. A revised rule could differentiate between intentional stopping and a genuine mechanical breakdown, maybe even allowing for a more lenient final lap time in cases of document component failure.
- **IMPLEMENT A "FORCE MAJEURE" CLAUSE:** The regulations could be amended to include a clear "force majeure" clause that would apply to a car that suffers unforeseeable failures in the final minutes of the race. This would allow

officials to use their discretion to classify the car based on its position at the time of the incident, rather than its final lap time.

- **ESTABLISH A “TECHNICAL COMPLETION” STANDARD:** An alternative approach would be to classify a car once it has completed a certain percentage of the final lap.
- **CREATE A DEDICATED SAFETY CAR PERIOD:** In the final hour of the race, if a leading car suffers a failure, a short safety car period could be introduced to neutralise the race and allow marshals to address the stranded vehicle safely, while also preventing a last lap scramble that could lead to more incidents.

## APPENDIX

- **OFFICIAL LE MANS REGULATIONS:** The full text of the 2016 sporting and technical regulations of the 24 Hours of Le Mans, specifically the sections related to classification and the final lap.
- **TOYOTA GAZOO RACING TECHNICAL REPORT:** A post-race technical analysis released by Toyota detailing the specific cause of the mechanical failure and their investigation into it.
- **ACO PRESS STATEMENTS:** Statements from the race organizers in the days following the event, defending the application of their rules.
- **MOTORSPORT JOURNALIST ARTICLES:** Detailed accounts and analysis from publications like Autosport, Motorsport.com, and Racer, which provided a deep dive into the incident and its aftermath.
- **YOUTUBE VIDEO OF THE FINAL LAP:** The video footage of the final lap is a critical resource for understanding the sequence of events and the sheer emotional impact of Toyota's failure.

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