

F1: final(ish) rule changes for 2010 season

The FIA recently released a series of amendments to the sporting and technical regulations including a re-think on the points to be awarded.

The points system that was previously announced has been changed again: the FIA says it's designed to encourage a "race to win" attitude amongst drivers - in short to penalise drivers who are consistent points finishers without winning many races. The revisions create substantial points differences between first and second, smaller differences between second, third and fourth and two points less for each place down to ninth with one point for tenth.

1st : 25
2nd : 18
3rd : 15
4th : 12
5th : 10
6th : 8
7th : 6
8th : 4
9th : 2
10th : 1

In addition, the number of sets of dry weather tyres available to each driver per event has been reduced - from 14 to 11. And a returns policy will see one set handed back at the end of Friday practice and two sets at the end of Saturday practice.

The loss of the refuelling strategy means that the previous idea that teams that take part in Q3 (the top ten) must start the race with the fuel loads they started Q3 has fallen away. Now those teams must start the race on the set of tyres that their fastest Q3 time was set. This is not the same as saying that they must start with the same set that they finish Q3 : if the fastest time was set earlier in the session and the tyres changed before the last run, then the previous set must be fitted for the start of the race.

The FIA is also looking at several other measures.

The FIA has also provided for changes to the height of diffusers and the exclusion of "double diffusers" for 2011 - they remain legal for 2010.

The FIA has today been asked to rule on the design of McLaren's rear wing: it has a channel carved out of its underside. Red Bull and Ferrari - as they did with the double diffusers last year - have asked the FIA to rule whether it is legal. As last year, the FIA is expected to say that this is not a matter for them and that it is a matter for the stewards. The teams will, therefore, have to lodge a formal protest in Bahrain - but protests cannot be lodged until the event proper starts - that's qualifying, not practice.