



German Ferrari driver Michael Schumacher celebrates on the podium of the Nevers Magny-Cours racetrack after the Grand Prix of France, 16 July 2006 in Magny-Cours, center of France. He won the race ahead of Renault Spanish driver Fernando Alonso and Ferrari Brazilian driver Felipe Massa.

FORMULA 1

Schumacher crashes record

REUTERS, Magny-Cours, France

Ferrari's Michael Schumacher made Formula One history in France on Sunday, becoming the first driver to win the same grand prix eight times.

Schumacher's commanding victory, from pole position on a sweltering afternoon at Magny-Cours, left the seven-times champion 17 points adrift of Renault's Fernando Alonso with seven races remaining.

Spaniard Alonso, the runaway winner in France last year on his way to becoming the sport's youngest world champion, took second place.

Schumacher crossed the line 10.131 seconds clear of the field, lapping all but the top seven, for his 150th appearance on the podium.

"Looking at this race...we clearly have made up ground," said Schumacher. "It (the championship) is far from being over."

"Obviously it's going to be a

battle in development but it's a great result when you see this weekend and how difficult it has been at times."

Brazilian Felipe Massa was third for Ferrari, with both Ferraris making three pit stops -- one more than Alonso -- in a race without major incident.

It was the 88th win in Schumacher's career, his fourth of the season and eighth at Magny-Cours.

"We had a great start and we drove our race from there," said Schumacher. "We were not sure how the race would go because we didn't do any long runs (in practice).

"So it was a little bit of a guess how the race would go but I have to say that the car, the tyres, the whole package really worked perfectly."

The German thanked his mechanics for a great job after his car caught fire in Saturday's free practice, an incident that the team played down at the time as they

raced to make repairs before qualifying.

Schumacher's history-making achievement was not the sort that the yellow-and-blue-shirted fans crowding the grandstands had hoped to see, 100 years after Renault won the first French Grand Prix at Le Mans.

After Italy's World Cup final success over France in Schumacher's native Germany last Sunday, an Italian team had once again dashed French hopes with Ferrari dominant in Renault's home race.

Alonso put the result into perspective, however.

"To be second, on a difficult weekend for us, is a perfect result," said the Spaniard, who pushed Massa hard into the first corner but then had to wait until the pitstops to go past.

"It was close, I was nearly on the grass at one point so I had to back off," he said.

Schumacher, already far and away the most successful driver in Formula One history, punched the air with his fists as he crossed the line for his second win in a row after Indianapolis on July 2.

Out of the car, the 37-year-old French team boss Jean Todt with the Italian flag in his hands.

Schumacher's younger brother Ralf was fourth for Toyota, after leading for two laps at the first stops, ahead of McLaren's Kimi Raikkonen.

Italian Giancarlo Fisichella was sixth for Renault, with Spaniard Pedro de la Rosa seventh and back on the scoresheet for McLaren after a year's absence.

Test driver de la Rosa was replacing Colombian Juan Pablo Montoya, who announced last weekend that he was leaving Formula One for the U.S. NASCAR series next year.

Germany's Nick Heidfeld took the final point for BMW Sauber.

Youngsters

FROM PAGE 17

cement a place in the national side.

"I think the scenario has changed in last one year. It is not an easy task to cement a place in the senior side because one has to perform in regular basis to keep his place intact. That's why there is no scope to be over excited with the national call-up," observed Sakib.

"I know my domestic performance was considered for the selection but there is a gulf of gap between domestic and international cricket. We both know that we have been chosen as all-rounders, so we have to be successful in both departments," said Forhad, a BBA student.

Venables not

FROM PAGE 20

Venables confirmed McClaren has approached him about a possible role, adding: "My potential role with Steve is very exciting. He is offering me the freedom to take on as much as I want."

"I will obviously be involved around the matches and checking on players and he has already given me areas of the team he thinks need looking at."

Revenge

FROM PAGE 17

home conditions. We definitely have an edge over India and South Africa." The off-spinner is also looking forward to renew his on-field rivalry with Sachin Tendulkar, who he hoped would be fit in time for the contest.

"Sachin is a great player. He knows how to recover fast from an injury. I hope he would be fit to play the tri-series." On his chances of breaking Shane Warne's record of taking highest number of Test wickets, Muralidaran said, "ultimately, one who plays more Test matches will be the world record holder".

Advantage England

FROM PAGE 17

Yousuf, known as Yousef Youhana before his conversion last year from Christianity to Islam, had also matched the 2003 achievement of South Africa's Graeme Smith (27 at Edgbaston and 259 at Lord's) in making double centuries in successive Tests against England.

However, Yousuf was still six short of the landmark when last man Kaneria came to the crease.

But after Kaneria had been dropped on a wicket by a diving Liam Plunkett at square leg after fending at a Matthew Hoggard bouncer, Yousuf edged four off the Yorkshireman saw him to 200.

Yousuf then kissed the pitch, just as he'd done upon reaching his hundred.

But five balls later his innings ended when he edged Stephen Harmison to Gernot Jones for the wicketkeeper's fifth catch of the innings.

In all Yousuf batted for 10 minutes short of six hours, facing 330 balls with one six and 26 fours after arriving at the crease with Pakistan in trouble at 28 for two.

Harmison, in the absence of injured fellow Ashes-winning quicks Simon Jones (knee) and Flintoff

(ankle) had been an anonymous figure Saturday while Yousuf and Inzamam (69) shared an elegant fifth-wicket stand of 173.

He did though show more venom Sunday, hitting Afridi a painful blow on the right thumb, and finished with four for 94 from 23.3 overs.

Afridi's injury was a fresh worry for a Pakistan side missing injured pacemen Shoib Akhtar (ankle), Rana Navedul Hasan (groin) and Mohammad Asif (elbow) as well as batsmen Shoib Malik (elbow) and Younis Khan (knee).

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea on the fourth day of the first Test between England and Pakistan at Lord's on Sunday:

ENGLAND: First innings 528-9 dec (Collingwood 186, Cook 105, Bell 100 no; Kaneria 3-119)

PAKISTAN: First innings (over-night 409-7)

Butt c Strauss b Harmison 10 Farhat b Plunkett 33 Iqbal c Collingwood b Harmison 0

Yousuf c Jones b Harmison 202

Sami c Jones b Hoggard 0

Inzamam b Plunkett 69

Razzaq c Jones b Harmison 22

Akmal c Jones b Pietersen 58

Afridi c Bell b Hoggard 17 Gul c Jones b Hoggard 0 Kaneria not out 1

Extras: (b-7, lb-14, w-7, nb-5) 33

Total: (All out in 119.3 overs) 445

Fall of wickets: 1-28, 2-28, 3-65, 4-

68, 5-241, 6-300, 7-399, 8-435, 9-

436, 10-445

Bowler

O M R W

Hoggard 33 3 117 3

Harmison 29.3 6 94 4

Panesar 27 3 93 0

Plunkett 21 3 78 2

Collingwood 7 1 31 0

Pietersen 2 0 11 1

ENGLAND: Second innings

Trescothick c Gul 18

Strauss not out 74

Cook c Yousuf b Gul 4

Pietersen st Akmal b Afridi 41

Collingwood c Butt b Kaneria 3

Bell not out 4

Extras: (b-1, lb-4, nb-5) 10

Total: (For 4 wkt in 42 overs) 154

Fall of wickets: 1-38, 2-64, 3-141, 4-

146

To bat: Jones, Plunkett, Hoggard, Harmison, Panesar.

Bowler

O M R W

Sami 6 1 23 0

Gul 10 2 38 2

Kaneria 12 2 34 1

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