FIM Grand Prix World Championship

Decision of the Grand Prix Commission

The Grand Prix Commission, composed of Messrs. Carmelo Ezpeleta (Dorna, Chairman), Paul Duparc (FIM), Herve Poncharal (IRTA) and Takanao Tsubouchi (MSMA), assisted by Carlos Ezpeleta (Dorna), Mike Trimby (IRTA) and Corrado Cecchinelli (Director of Technology), in an electronic meeting held on 20 May 2018, made the following decisions:

GRID PROCEDURES 2018

BACKGROUND

At the Argentina GP, when Pit Lane opened for the MotoGP™ race, the track was wet and slowly changing to dry conditions. Only one rider, Jack Miller, remained on the grid with the “Dry Bike” - meaning that 23 riders were on the grid with the “Wet Bike”.

At the end of the sighting lap, rider Franco Morbidelli entered Pit Lane to switch bikes. The penalty for this is clear in the rules: the rider will start the Warm Up Lap from Pit Lane and the race from the back of the grid. The riders who line up at the back of the grid do so in the order in which they qualified. Morbidelli was instructed by IRTA that he must start the race from 25th on the grid.

After several minutes, the rest of the riders, with the sole exception of Jack Miller, exited the grid to switch bikes and started to line up at the Pit Lane Exit. At that moment, the organisers were presented with 23 riders to line up at the back of the grid in new positions, without anyone to indicate the riders where to position themselves and no grid row marker panels. This was untenable, and for this reason the ‘Start Delayed’ board was shown.

Following instructions given last year after the Qatar GP, the organisers summoned a representative of each team to the front of the grid. It was agreed by all that since the penalty for the riders that had exited the grid was clear - “Back of the Grid Race Start” - this would be have to be upheld, but that the exact regulations would be altered to allow for an extra sighting lap (ie. a Quick Start procedure). This was for logistical reasons, with time to prepare a new grid needed - and mechanics also needed on the grid to signal to the riders where their new grid positions were.

The race demonstrated that the advantage afforded to the one rider who chose to stay on the grid with the correct bike choice was negligible. After the race, there were also complaints about the delays on the grid.
DECISION OF THE GPC

For the benefit of all and to make the start procedure safer and clearer to all teams, as well as to avoid delays due to operational problems and to give a fairer advantage to the riders making the correct choice, the following changes have been agreed:

EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY

Riders changing bikes before the Warm Up Lap:

If a rider doesn’t go to the grid or leaves the grid to the Pit Lane and changes tyre type (dry/wet):
The rider will start the Warm Up Lap from Pit Lane, start the Race from his Qualifying Grid Position, and serve a Ride Through penalty during the race.
This means the rider can still change bike (eg. for a technical problem), and exit on the same type of tyres and not get a Ride Through penalty. Only the current penalty would apply: Back of the Grid Start.
In this way it is not necessary to position many riders in new grid positions, thus avoiding a Start Delay.

Riders changing bikes after the Warm Up Lap:

If a rider enters the Pit Lane after the Warm Up Lap and changes type of tyres (dry/wet):
The rider will start the Race from Pit Lane and serve a Ride Through penalty during the race.
This means the rider can still change bike (eg. for a technical problem), and exit on the same type of tyres and not get a Ride Through penalty. Only the current penalty would apply: Race Start from Pit Lane.

Mass Pit Lane Start:

As agreed with the riders, it is not safe for more than 10 riders to start the race from Pit Lane.
In the case of more than 10 riders lining up at Pit Lane Exit for the Race Start, the race will be delayed and a new start procedure will take place (Quick Start).
If less than 11 riders are starting the race from the Pit Lane, they will follow the procedure set out in the ‘Pit Lane Exit Protocol’. In effect, this states that riders arriving at the pit lane exit will be directed to line up in single file in the order that they arrive, and may not overtake until the dotted line. (Modifications will be made at circuits where the pit boxes are too close to the Pit Lane start light).
Currently, MotoGP riders can change bikes during the race in changing weather conditions, and such a change involves riding through pit lane. These regulation changes are designed to ensure the same disadvantage (ride through) to riders who leave their grid place to change tyres, compared to those riders who make this change during the race. In addition, grid positions stay the same and race starts from Pit Lane are largely avoided - increasing safety.
A rider still has the opportunity to switch bikes without any penalty after seeing the track conditions during the first Sighting Lap, because the Pit Lane is open for 5 minutes.
These regulations only impact very rare situations such as that of the Argentina GP, where there is a wet track which is drying. In the opposite scenario when a dry track is getting wet, Race Direction will invoke the ‘Rain on Grid’ Procedure, giving everyone time to change bikes and settings for safety reasons.

Modifications to the Rain On Grid Procedure:
The ‘Rain on Grid’ regulations have also been amended, requiring a Quick Restart procedure on all occasions (in the MotoGP class only). The ‘Rain on Grid’ regulations have also been amended so that the ‘Start Delayed Board’ will now be replaced by the ‘Rain on Grid Procedure’ board.

A regularly updated version of the FIM Grand Prix Regulations which contains the detailed text of the regulation changes may be viewed shortly on:


About the FIM (www.fim-live.com)
The FIM (Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme) founded in 1904, is the governing body for motorcycle sport and the global advocate for motorcycling. The FIM is an independent association formed by 113 National Federations throughout the world. It is recognised as the sole competent authority in motorcycle sport by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Among its 50 FIM World Championships the main events are MotoGP, Superbike, Endurance, Motocross, Supercross, Trial, Enduro, Cross-Country Rallies and Speedway. Furthermore, the FIM is also active and involved in the following areas: public affairs, road safety, touring and protection of the environment. The FIM was the first international sports federation to impose an Environmental Code in 1994.