

# Alfa knew of front wing problem: Kimi

Kimi Raikkonen was disqualified from qualifying results in Baku and had to start from pit lane

Autosport | Baku

**K**imi Raikkonen says the Alfa Romeo Formula 1 team became aware of a front wing issue in China, but wasn't able to manufacture a replacement for the Baku race.

Raikkonen was excluded from Azerbaijan GP qualifying and consigned to a pitlane start after the front wing on his Alfa failed a deflection test, which also forced the team to make a change to the specification of the flap adjuster hook on the front wing.

Speaking to media after the Baku race, Raikkonen revealed Alfa Romeo had already encountered a problem with his front wing in China - where he finished ninth - but couldn't produce a new unit in time for the next grand prix.

"Obviously we didn't plan to start in the pitlane, but that's how it turned out to be," Raikkonen said.

"Honestly I don't know what's happened. There came a message this morning and suddenly



Alfa Romeo's Finnish driver Kimi Raikkonen steers his car during a practice session ahead of Azerbaijan GP

it [the front wing] isn't legal.

"Last race the issue that I had in the end of the race, we broke

a stay [bracket] on the front wing

and we lost the downforce, so probably it's a similar thing that

is going on.

"Unfortunately we knew the issue after last race but we didn't

Obviously we didn't plan to start in the pitlane, but that's how it turned out to be. Honestly I don't know what's happened. There came a message this morning and suddenly it [the front wing] isn't legal

KIMI RAIKKONEN

have time to produce a new one.

"This is what you get, for sure it doesn't make us faster but this is what it is. Hopefully then it's fair for everybody after."

Despite having to start from the pitlane, Raikkonen recovered to 10th place at the chequered flag, bagging his fourth consecutive points finish with Alfa Romeo since switching

from Ferrari for this season.

"We got one point, so better than nothing, but [it] was difficult, just not enough grip really," Raikkonen said.

"I don't think we really made the tyres work really well, to get the grip out of them. We did what we could."

The Finn benefitted from the call to ditch the soft tyres just six laps into the race, with the early stop allowing him to get ahead of a number of his midfield rivals.

"The soft were okay," he added.

"We only did few laps, but then obviously when everybody was behind each other [in traffic] we were driving so slow that it's better to stop and jump ahead of them."

"I think we did the right thing and I just tried to get the tyres working."

"We had to save the brakes quite a bit."

"I think one point is the best that we could do today, so we'll take it."

"I think next race [Spanish GP] should be easier for us."

## Bale '100 percent' committed to Real claims agent

AFP | London

**G**areth Bale is still "100 percent" committed to Real Madrid despite speculation over his future, the Wales star's agent insisted on Monday.

Former Tottenham winger Bale has been linked with a return to the Premier League after a difficult season with the troubled Spanish club.

The 29-year-old has had to endure claims that he doesn't have a strong relationship with his team-mates, while Real have suffered a woeful campaign on the pitch.

Bale played the full 90 minutes when Real suffered a shock 1-0 defeat against lowly Rayo Vallecano on Sunday, but Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane later questioned whether he was fully focused.

Bale's agent Jonathan Barnett has responded to Zidane's comments by telling BBC Sport Wales: "Gareth is 100 per cent committed to Real Madrid."

Referring to his past assertion that Bale wanted to spend the rest of his career with Madrid, Barnett added: "Nothing has changed."

Frustrated at a lack of starting opportunities for Real towards the end of last season, Bale had actually hinted he might consider leaving when he spoke to the media immediately after scoring twice in last year's Champions League final win against Liverpool.

Bale's Madrid contract runs until 2022, but the return of

Zidane, with whom he reportedly has a difficult relationship, has revived talk of a potential move.

Despite winning four Champions League trophies and one La Liga title in Spain, Bale has come under-fire for his inconsistent performances and injury problems from Real fans.

Zidane, who is back after quitting at the end of last season, recently warned Real stars who are unhappy with their playing time should "go elsewhere -

**YOU KNOW WHAT**

**Bale's Madrid contract runs until 2022, but the return of Zidane, with whom he reportedly has a difficult relationship, has revived talk of a potential move**

where and get more minutes". Manchester United and Tottenham are among the clubs said to be interested if Wales international Bale wants to leave the Bernabeu.



Gareth Bale

## Solskjaer must show authority by dropping De Gea - Wright

Reuters | London

**M**anchester United boss Ole Gunnar Solskjaer must show he is not afraid to make big decisions and drop error-prone goalkeeper David de Gea for the final two games of the Premier League season, former England striker Ian Wright has said.

De Gea has made a number of uncharacteristic mistakes in recent games, including one that allowed Chelsea to equalise in Sunday's 1-1 draw that dented sixth-placed United's chances of finishing in the top four.

Solskjaer backed De Gea to shake off his poor form in their final two games against Huddersfield Town and Cardiff City but Wright believes the Norwegian has to take a different approach.

"If he [Solskjaer] really wants to stamp his mark and let people know he isn't afraid to make decisions, he should take him out," Wright said on BBC Radio 5 Live.

"If the manager explains everything and tells him face to face why he's leaving him out and giving him a break, that's man-management and that's what Solskjaer has to do."

De Gea's contract was due to expire this year before

United activated a one-year extension but that has not stopped media reports from linking him with a move

away from Old Trafford.

Wright said an early end to De Gea's season would help the struggling Spaniard sort out his future at the club, while back-up Sergio Romero fills in.

"He [De Gea] needs to go on holiday and sort his contract out," Wright added. "Sometimes you have to take someone out the firing line. He's one of the best goalkeepers in the world and he needs a break."

"There's a lot going on and he's under a lot of pressure. When you look at how United are playing at the moment, putting him in that situation is putting him under more pressure."



David de Gea

## Dortmund's Reus banned for two matches, Wolf for three

Reuters | Berlin

**B**orussia Dortmund's fading Bundesliga title hopes suffered another setback on Monday when captain Marco Reus was banned for two matches and Marius Wolf for three following their red cards in Saturday's 4-2 home defeat by Schalke 04.

Reus was sent off on the hour with

a straight red card for a studs-up challenge on Suat Serdar and Wolf followed five minutes later for a foul on the same player.

Wolf's ban means his season is over as Dortmund have three matches to play while Reus will only be available for their final match at Borussia Muenchengladbach.

Reus has scored 16 goals and provided eight assists this season, making his absence a significant blow.

Dortmund coach Lucien Favre gave up the title challenge after the defeat although his side are only two points behind Bayern Munich after they drew 1-1 at Nuremberg on Sunday.



Marco Reus