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mission would be fit to race on Sunday. In-car footage showed that the right front wheel moved slightly before the accident, and the tire was cut by part of the body (probably the brake duct) causing immediate deflation and the ensuing trip into the tire wall. It was found that there was a fault on the air gun, which regis-

tered that the wheel was fully tightened when it wasn't. The same gun had been used on the car of Alonso, and upon checking his car, it was seen to have the same problem.

As the accident had happened late in the session, when it was restarted the drivers only had time for an installation lap

and one flying lap. So the battle for pole was effectively between the two Ferraris and the sole remaining McLaren of Alonso. It wasn't to be McLaren's session as Alonso was pushing extremely hard and had bettered the Ferrari time of Raikkonen in the first sector, when he went a little wide through a turn in the mid-

dle of the lap and for a hundred yards or so the car was weaving wildly as he tried to maintain control and momentum, which to his credit he did, but it cost him pole position. Thus, Raikkonen captured his second pole position of the year, followed by Alonso and teammate Massa, with Hamilton starting from tenth



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Above left, above, and left, Kimi Raikkonen enjoys a moment of unqualified victory at the French Grand Prix. His great promise at Ferrari was slow to materialize, with second driver Felipe Massa soon overshadowing the veteran. But victories here and in Great Britain soon brought him back into the title chase.

slot on the grid.

As the cars left the grid on their installation lap, heavy black clouds were rolling in, and there were a few spots of rain, which prompted the Spyker team to bring in their debutant driver, Markus Winkelhock, to change to intermediate tires, and to start from the pit lane. Virtually immediately the race had started, the mother and father of all rain storms unleashed itself with a