

## F1 Circuits Past and Present – Adelaide

Hello and welcome to F1 Circuits - a mini series from Sidepodcast that focuses on the tracks that make Formula One what it is. We're looking at the good, the bad, the current and the former, and we're travelling across the globe as we do it. Today, we're going to look at the Adelaide Street Circuit.

Set in the East Parklands area of Adelaide, and owned by the local council, the track wound through the streets for eleven years. As a temporary circuit, the buildings and grandstands were put up and taken down as the season progressed. It was right in the heart of the Victoria Park horse racing track, so the buildings had to be temporary, otherwise people wouldn't be able to see the horses for the rest of the year.

Adelaide was on the F1 calendar from 1985 until 1995, and took up its place at the very end of the season - the complete opposite to Australia's current position. When it was first proposed that Formula One might descend upon the area, a lot of residents were up in arms about it. They had some environmental concerns - particularly about how local wildlife would be affected - but eventually the deal was done and the race was set.

The track itself is pretty wide, and it has an enormous long straight - which is unusual for a street circuit. The rest of the track makes up for it though, with several 90 degree corners, taking the cars round the street corners.

Although it was only on the calendar for a relatively short 11 seasons, the circuit was host to some of the more memorable moments in F1. In 1991, Adelaide held the shortest race in Formula One ever - as the wet conditions saw the Grand Prix halted after just 14 laps. Ayrton Senna was leading the race, and was seen waving at the stewards frantically, to try and demonstrate how dangerous the conditions were.

In 1994, Adelaide was the scene of the controversial collision between Michael Schumacher and Damon Hill - in which a change of direction by the leading Schumacher cut off Hill's attempt to overtake and both of them were knocked out of the race. The double DNF allowed Schumacher to take his first World Championship.

The following year, 1995, the final Grand Prix weekend at Adelaide took place. The Friday practice sessions were underway, and in the afternoon, Mika Hakkinen's McLaren picked up a puncture. He crashed heavily, and had to receive serious medical attention at the side of the track. He was given an emergency tracheotomy by the track medical team before being airlifted to the nearest hospital. It was pretty serious, but Hakkinen pulled through to be back in time for the 1996 season. In fact, even though he had had to miss out on the Australian Grand Prix, that was still the next race on his list.

For the 1996 season, Melbourne outbid Adelaide for the Grand Prix, and the change in location meant a change in calendar position as well. Moving right up to the start of the season, the new date meant we had two Australian races back to back, albeit with a winter in between. It was a tough transition, from the great end-of-season party atmosphere of Adelaide, to the more uptight and jittery opening race, but things soon settled down - both in Melbourne and at the track left behind.

After a few years, things were becoming a bit too quiet. The local government decided they wanted a race back in the area, and so they put on a couple of smaller, touring car races. These days, they're also the location of the popular annual V8 Supercar race - although it is on a slightly shorter version of the track. The long, long straight has been curtailed, cutting off a portion of the original circuit.



Although plenty of fans miss the party atmosphere of Adelaide, Melbourne certainly holds it's own in terms of atmosphere during a race weekend. It's clear that wherever the Grand Prix is held in Australia, the fans make it what it is.

That's all for this episode of F1 Circuits. We have just two more tracks to investigate now, and tomorrow we're looking at... well, no, I don't want to spoil it for you. While you're waiting, you can head on over to Sidepodcast.com and join in the discussion. See you there.

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