



## F1 Debrief – The FIA people are coming

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Christine: Welcome to F1 Debrief - The FIA people are coming. On this week's show we catch up on the Bahrain Grand Prix, discuss the 2010 regs and ponder Donington Park. Apologies for there not being any shows last week, someone was ill.

Mr C: I was ill the previous week, if you recall the podcast was done under a bit of a cloud and I wasn't feeling on top of the world and then I got worse and worse and worse until last week there was just no way of doing a show.

Christine: I remember it vividly.

Mr C: I feel great this week, how do you feel?

Christine: Yea, not so good.

Mr C: Wonderful. Can we not be ill at the same time?

Christine: We take it in turns.

Mr C: Right, we're running shifts on having flu now. This is a terrible business. Are you okay to do the show?

Christine: Of course.

Mr C: Is your voice gonna hold out?

Christine: Yea, see, cos I don't get man flu.

[Jingle: Good week/Bad week]

Christine: It's been a good week for Jenson's PA, Jules. We've been spotting her following Jenson around at events for the last few years, and we were worried when she hasn't been on the grid so far this year. We thought maybe she was a victim of the credit crunch. However, uber-Jenson fan Lou has been doing some detective work and found a post on JB's forums from Jules herself, she said she's still his PA but just not travelling to races this year.

Mr C: Do we follow any other PA's by the way?

Christine: I don't think so.

Mr C: It's just Jules we're concerned with. But it sounds like she's fine.

Christine: But she's always there. You can't not follow her.



Mr C: She's as famous as Jenson.

Christine: Pretty much. It's been a bad week for a Red Bull mechanic. This story is actually a couple of weeks old, because I was going to use it in the last show but it's too good not to share. Dank sent us a link to this story about a Red Bull mechanic who woke up on the Monday morning in China, put on his full race gear and went down to meet the others, saying he'd had a great dream where they'd actually won the race. They had to convince him that it had actually happened, that it was Monday and they were off to the airport and not the track.

Mr C: Bless him. That must be really weird.

Christine: How embarrassing.

Mr C: That must be one hell of a dream as well.

Christine: Hey guys, guys, I just dreamt that we won! No, we did. It's been a good week for Nick Heidfeld as he has now matched Michael Schumacher's record of finishing 24 consecutive grands prix. His last retirement was the 2007 Japanese race. That's ages ago.

Mr C: That's a long, long time ago. Do you even remember that far back?

Christine: Probably not. They don't call him consistent for nothing. Of course, he says that it's just a statistic and really there are other Schumi stats he'd rather beat.

Mr C: Well, fair enough but we didn't think he was gonna beat, or anyone was ever gonna beat that Schumacher statistic so one down, another 24 to go.

Christine: Well, he's just matched it for now, as well, so it's not actually the big party.

Mr C: Ah, oh he still has to go for one more.

Christine: But the chances are he will. It's been a bad week for Canadians as Villeneuve has set up a driving academy in Montreal. It's not just motorsport and offers all kinds of courses from defensive driving to getting started racing professionally. Good luck to all the Canadians on the road.

Mr C: Bleached hair and baggy overalls are optional.

[Jingle: News and views]

Christine: The first bit of news on my list is all about Donington Park. Um, but actually, I mean, it's really easy. Bernie gave Donington the British GP for 2010, we all said it'd never happen. They all said it would. It really won't.

Mr C: We have lots of evidence. We have audio recorded at the Silverstone Grand Prix last year when it was announced, where people said don't think it's gonna happen. We have comments on Sidepodcast.com



all throughout the past, what is it, eight, nine months? People saying it's not gonna happen. Simon and Bernie both saying 'yea, it'll be fine, no problems, and we can see this going ahead without a hitch.' And now, plenty of hitches.

Christine: It's really not going to happen, is it? To be a bit more thorough, it emerged that Donington Park owners Wheatcroft and Son are taking Donington Ventures Leisure Limited to court because they owe over £2 million in backdated rent from September last year. That's not good. They also had some issues with licensing for some of the races, but both MotoGP and British Touring Cars have been assured that they'll go ahead. The British government said they're not going to help out with any funding and Bernie said that if Donington can't do it then it's likely they'll be no British GP. Although it does look like he's changing his mind slightly, because he told the Times that it is possible Silverstone could make a return depending if they meet his demands or not.

Mr C: Right, so all this time there's no way it's coming back to Silverstone, he's not having any of it, 100% it's Donington or bust and now, well, we might have to look at it actually.

Christine: Could happen.

Mr C: Now you mention it.

Christine: It looks as though Donington Ventures are up against the council again regarding some safety documentation and on Tuesday Simon Gillette is going to ask for more time to get this sorted or else the race is off.

Mr C: So the planning permission, it's D-Day for planning permission sign off on Tuesday.

Christine: I think he's asking for an extension because it's not ready.

Mr C: So he's got till the end of the month.

Christine: They're going to say 'yes you can have it' or 'no you can't have an extension' and if they say no, then that's it, it's over already.

Mr C: Okay, there is an opportunity for Bernie to step in and be the saviour of the British Grand Prix, if he so chooses. He could afford to bail out Simon if he so desired.

Christine: Well, I think it's the only thing that he could do to make this seem in any way positive.

Mr C: Right.

Christine: Because I don't know why they would have given the grand prix to Donington, it just doesn't make any sense. They knew it wasn't gonna work, we all knew it wasn't gonna work, they kept telling us it would but it clearly wasn't. How can he have thought this was a good idea? Think of all the negative headlines they've had.



Mr C: Bernie doesn't care about negative headlines. He only cares about money, and he also, by the look of it, cares a little bit about scoring points off the BRDC, which he has successfully done because he timed the announcement in order to hurt them as much as possible and since then he's done everything in his power to knock them and to diss them and to complain about them. So, he has gained a lot of positive PR if the kind of PR you're after is knocking the BRDC. That part of the plan has gone through. He hasn't lost any money, and because he doesn't care what anybody thinks, he probably hasn't lost any face either.

Christine: Gillette is still adamant it's gonna happen though, even in the last few days he's been saying 'oh, all the British people, they're just doubters and if I had a pound off of every person that didn't think it was gonna happen, I could fund the GP all over again.' Yea, you might want to try that actually. It's the only way it's going to happen.

Mr C: There's an argument to say that possibly he is wrong and all the doubters and everybody who disputes his claims might have a point.

[Jingle: Sweeper]

Christine: This week, McLaren got the results of their hearing to do with the lying scandal. Obviously there's no need to rehash everything that happened.

Mr C: Seems like it was a long, long time ago this kicked off.

Christine: It does. Which is weird because actually not that much has happened.

Mr C: No. But it was the first race of the year and we've had three races and in that time, I kinda forgot about it.

Christine: Yea. It was just not important anymore. Martin Whitmarsh turned up by himself, which is a completely different approach to what McLaren have been used to in the past.

Mr C: Oh yes. That is a first. No lawyers in tow.

Christine: Usually they turn up with a whole entourage of people, but this time he was all by himself, he only stayed in there for an hour. Basically apologised again in person. And I think they took that on board.

Mr C: The FIA? Or Max specifically. Max has won the battle that Max wanted to win which is Ron Dennis has now fully stepped away from the company. He's set up, is it McLaren Automotive? He's now gone his own way with that project. From that point of view, Max has achieved his aim, and I do believe he gets on a lot better with Martin Whitmarsh.

Christine: Well, on, I think it was James Allen's blog, he said, he had an interview with Max and Max said that he never hated Ron but did find him to be quite obstructive, whereas Martin is at least, you know, open to suggestions.

Mr C: At the moment, he's doing his best to bend over backwards and help out the FIA which is a wise decision, and something McLaren haven't done for a very long time.



Christine: Well, actually it seems like the team are changing all over the place because in the Bahrain paddock, they were playing music, giving out free cocktails, they are opening up their motorhome to the journalists and that in Europe.

Mr C: I fear for Red Bull in this because Red Bull has always been the place to go for a party and a cocktail and some music and they pride themselves on not being like McLaren, and now McLaren have gone all Red Bull, what are they supposed to do?

Christine: It did work for them though, because the FIA said: "Having regard to the open and honest way in which McLaren team principal Mr Martin Whitmarsh addressed the World Motorsport Council and the changing culture which he made clear has taken place in his organisation, the World Motorsport Council decided to suspend the application of the penalty it deems appropriate." So it worked out for them, they got the three race suspended ban which basically means nothing happens unless they do anything bad in the next twelve months.

Mr C: Yea, I do wonder and I do worry if this hasn't set a bit of a precedent from the FIA, because what they've essentially said is 'it's okay to lie and cheat as long as you've got a scapegoat and a fall guy ready.' That's effectively the vibe I'm getting from them. As long as you've got a Davey Ryan who you can fire and put all the blame on, then go ahead, lie and cheat and we'll just give you a suspended sentence and say no more about it.

Christine: Well there is that way of looking at it, I suppose. I just think that the FIA had to be seen to be doing something, they couldn't let them get away with lying especially... I mean, a lot of people have said 'oh lying happens all the time, it doesn't matter' or, you know, how come it's never been a problem before.

Mr C: Sure.

Christine: But at the moment things are going very open and honest and that's just the way F1 is going. So they had to be seen to do something.

Mr C: The FIA were stuffed by Mercedes and some of McLaren's sponsors because I believe they got in contact with Max and said if the fine is heavy handed, we may walk away from this sport. I do believe it's the manufacturers actually that they're putting their foot down and saying that's enough now, we've got our eye on you and you need us to remain in the sport. Mercedes now supplying six teams.

Christine: Quite important.

Mr C: You don't want that team walking away from Formula One. And Max was a little bit screwed, he couldn't do much in the face of that kind of talk.

Christine: I don't think they would have wanted to mess around with the points or anything happening on the racing action. I know they say it was gonna be a three race ban, but I don't think they would have made that happen.



Mr C: No, one thing which is disappointing is we're actually none the wiser as to whether or not it was a team decision and whether or not it was Davey acting entirely on his own. And that's a bit of a shame because we never really got to the bottom of it and in other times, in previous years, I think there would have been more of an investigation and we would be more wiser as to what happened. Because at the moment we basically have Charlie's word, we haven't heard from Davey, we've heard from Lewis and we've heard from Martin. And that's as much of the story as we're ever going to know.

Christine: Do we need to know more though? I'm not that interested, to be honest.

Mr C: I guess not.

Christine: They lied, it happened. That's it, it's over with.

[Jingle: Sweeper]

Christine: Following the McLaren hearing, which was all done and dusted nice and early on Wednesday, the World Motorsport Council continued to chatter into the afternoon, and released their findings the next day all about the regulations for 2010.

Mr C: Hmm. Yes.

Christine: More changes.

Mr C: Yea, just what we needed actually. Just after the new introductions for 2009.

Christine: I mean, god forbid you make a set of changes and then see whether it works.

Mr C: You know, four races in, we know everything we need to know about 2009 regulations. We've had one, what two weather affected races. One...

Christine: One Australia which is just crazy anyway.

Mr C: Well it was a dusk race, so the late sun did affect the drivers towards the end of the race. And you've had one, what you would call, normal race with which to look at how the changes for 2009 have worked out. And on that basis, the World Motorsport Council feel happy enough to go ahead and make yet more changes for next year.

Christine: So if you're a team and you want to take part in the 2010 world championship, you have to submit your entry between the 22nd and the 29th May. That's this month!

Mr C: Right. That's very quick.

Christine: That's a week.

Mr C: Really short notice.



Christine: This month.

Mr C: Okay dokey, and not only that, you have to decide when you submit your entry, whether or not you're going to continue along the lines of free spending and the rules that have shaped the past god knows how many years in Formula One, or whether or not you're going to sign up to the new FIA budget cap.

Christine: Ah yes, the budget cap. £40 million which is a bit more than what the FIA wanted.

Mr C: Not much more, actually. I thought there would be an awful lot more leeway. The teams were talking of \$100 million and then a sliding scale, which would be their ideal and Max's pretty much capped it where he wanted it to be.

Christine: It covers everything bar marketing, driver salaries, all driver salaries actually so your main two and anyone else that tags along.

Mr C: Your test drivers.

Christine: Fines from the FIA, engines, dividends and anything the teams can prove has no effect on performance.

Mr C: Right. I tell you what I would do, if I was a team and I was signing up to this. I would make sure everybody is a test driver in my team, I would make sure all the pit mechanics...

Christine: Get them all superlicences.

Mr C: Yea, get them all a superlicence, get a couple of miles under their belt, get them out there testing. The teams who sign up to this, they've got unlimited testing mileage in the winter, so I'd make sure every single person in my team was going round that track and putting mileage on the parts, making sure they're all drivers and then exempt from any kind of budget caps. Adrian Newey would almost certainly be a driver in my team.

Christine: So, like you just said, budget cap teams are allowed unlimited out of season testing and unrestricted wind tunnel usage but the costs of that still count towards the budget cap, don't they?

Mr C: They do.

Christine: So you can do as much as you want but it's still got to come in within the 40 million.

Mr C: If you want to spend all your money on wind tunnel testing, I guess you can do that.

Christine: The restricted teams also have more technical freedom including a movable rear wing to go with the movable front wing, unrestricted engine, which is gonna make quite a difference.

Mr C: There's no rev limits on the engine. I would say, just on the movable rear wing, that does sound a little bit crazy. Because, I mean, they're pretty big wings and they obviously provide downforce for the car.



They make sure the cars do, there's a safety requirement for a rear wing, and if you're suddenly going to make that movable, it does strike me that you're going to have drivers going straight on when they get to a corner, because either they forgot to flick the switch to move the rear wing back into position, or the switch failed and it got stuck in a previous position, and therefore, you're just going to get drivers going straight on with zero downforce as they hit the corner.

Christine: Pitlane Fanatic also noted the regulations have been changed to allow the budget cap teams more than two wheels to be driven.

Mr C: There has been much talk of this in the comments this afternoon and I haven't totally managed to follow all of it because it's a little bit technical and a little bit complicated, however, it does look like KERS can be recovered from all four wheels next year, which is good because it's something we said should have happened already and it's a shame you don't get the energy braking recovery from the front wheels. So that's good. However, no one's really convinced that four wheel drive will return to Formula One because it's too complicated and it's too heavy and it puts the weight in all the wrong places.

Christine: All the teams, whether they go for the budget cap or not, they are not allowed to refuel in 2010 and tyre blankets are banned as well.

Mr C: Refuelling has, or will be... it was talked about this before.

Christine: It comes up quite often.

Mr C: And the FIA... obviously the tyre blanket rule came out, was it last year, for 2009 it was supposed to be banned, and then it turned out Bridgestone couldn't actually make tyres that were safe if they weren't pre-heated.

Christine: The teams weren't happy about it, were they?

Mr C: The drivers thought it was crazy. Presumably, there's been time to fix this problem, although we haven't actually seen any tyres working within that temperature window.

Christine: Some of the teams were testing 2010 tyres but I presume they had tyre warmers as well.

Mr C: They may have been using tyre warmers, I don't know. That's a good question. Bridgestone seem to think that it's going to be fine and so they are gone. And refuelling will also be gone next year, which is something I was going to put a post about on the blog, however the comments have been a little bit controversial already this week.

Christine: Yea, well, when it first got announced, we had a discussion about it.

Mr C: Yea, there was a raucous discussion in the comments, and I have a lot more to say on the concept of banning refuelling and what a stupid idea it really is. But that will come next week I think, because it's probably too much to get into here.

Christine: We need time to let it settle a little as well.



Mr C: Yes, I think the FIA are complete idiots. I tell you what's more concerning, is because the budget cap is such a big deal, all of the teams are concentrating on whether or not, the merits of the budget cap and whether or not they're interested in being involved in it and no one is heeding much attention to the refuelling issue, which is a little bit concerning.

Christine: I can understand why they are worried about the budget cap thing though, because it means there are two types of cars.

Mr C: It fundamentally changes what F1 is and what F1 has always been. It's probably the most significant rule change in F1's history.

Christine: And I don't like it.

Mr C: Now someone's gonna correct me on that, but I would say this is a massive shift in what Formula One is about and what it's trying to do and what it's trying to be. Why don't you like it?

Christine: I mean, I don't... I have absolutely nothing against the budget cap idea, when that was first mentioned, we were all for it. But I do not want to see two different types of cars.

Mr C: Right, two different types of championship.

Christine: Yea. It becomes like Le Mans, you've got to watch the different drivers...

Mr C: The slow cars and the fast cars, and the slow cars are gonna get in the way of the fast cars and there's gonna be more blue flags, there's gonna be problems in qualifying. There's gonna be huge problems. My issue is, Max says that he thinks in the first year there will be a split, and then he believes all the teams are gonna come round to the budget capped idea if they don't sign up to it originally. The problem is, for me, is not the fact there's going to be a two-tier championship, because eventually one way will be favourable and all the teams will end up going that way. So you're probably looking at one bad year, possibly two, until everybody figures out which way they're going to go. My problem is I don't believe the budget cap is enforceable. I'm sure we covered this at the end of 2008?

Christine: We did, we talked about the budget cap idea extensively when it was first proposed, but Max has said they're setting up a new Cost Commission and they think that it will be enforceable, but then he goes on to say "People cheat the revenue but the revenue can't put one tax inspector into each business on a permanent basis. We can, we can put several in."

Mr C: Is that legal?

Christine: So he's gonna have people in the teams?

Mr C: Is this not the FIA getting involved commercial activities? Something they're explicitly banned from doing by the EU, and can they even insist that a number of people can be moved in to a company for a period of time to have a look in the books and see what's going on?



Christine: Like auditors.

Mr C: Basically, what they're saying is, we're going to put people in to keep an eye on your books permanently, if we have to. So if we think you're cheating, we're gonna send our FIA people, FIA accountants into your company, and they're just going to rifle through your stuff.

Christine: The FIA people are coming!

Mr C: I cannot believe that any company in their right mind would advocate this, and encourage this!

Christine: But you know what the other thing is, they haven't said what happens if you spend too much money. They don't know what the penalty is going to be.

Mr C: Well that...

Christine: They just haven't decided yet.

Mr C: There was a point, I think Maverick pointed out in the comments this week that the... one of the things that is excluded from the budget cap are fines and penalties. Which is ludicrous, because that doesn't encourage you... if you're a very, very rich team, you can afford to cheat more than the poor teams.

Christine: Yea, pay the fine which doesn't count towards the budget cap.

Mr C: The fine has to be within the budget cap, and I guess the problem with that is, Max's reasoning is you can't fine someone \$100 million when the team is supposed to exist for 20 or 30 million.

Christine: No, but then if they exceed their budget cap and then you fine them money and that falls within the budget cap, then they're just exceeding the budget cap more, then you'll just fine them some more and it just keeps going round like that. A big circle. It's impossible.

Mr C: I don't know. I'd love to know what Formula One fans think of this, and please, if you're listening to this show, do let us know in the comments. It's the kind of thing, if you've never commented on Sidepodcast before, you must have an opinion on this, because what you're looking at is the FIA changing Formula One. Now, you know, it depends on your point of view whether you think this is necessary, because of the way the economy is. Whether you think that Max is just taking an opportunity and he's blaming the economy in order to force his beliefs and his opinions on the racing, or whether or not you think it's actually genuinely quite good for Formula One and you're looking forward to it. Personally, I'm really, really not looking forward to it in any way, shape or form.

Christine: What we need to see is comments on Sidepodcast.com, emails to me [christine@sidepodcast.com](mailto:christine@sidepodcast.com) or voicemails 0121 28 87225.

Mr C: We haven't had many voicemails.

Christine: I haven't had any voicemails this week.



Mr C: But I think this is a subject that we need voicemails on, and we'd love to hear your opinions before next week because again, it literally affects all of us.

Christine: Some of the teams have offered their opinions. You'd expect the smaller teams to be behind it because it will save them money. Force India and Williams, for example. Vijay Mallya was kinda cautious, he said: "In principle, Force India welcomes the cost cutting and the budget caps" but they're reviewing it internally and FOTA are meeting next week so they'll no doubt discuss it there. Williams are in favour of the budget cap but not in favour of the two-tier championship and they want to see all teams operating under the same set of regulations. Martin Whitmarsh came out and said something, although basically it was nothing, cos he doesn't want to offend anybody ever.

Mr C: I love this guy. Martin Whitmarsh is my hero, he doesn't want to step on anybody's toes ever.

Christine: What I like is he says massive long sentences that mean nothing.

Mr C: It's just noise.

Christine: He just said: "Whatever the solution is, it's most likely to be arrived at by measured negotiation between all parties." Which just means, we'll talk about it.

Mr C: Well, you've got to credit him for common sense, he has a point there. That is the best way to come to any decision in any walk of life, however what a rubbish quote.

Christine: It doesn't tell us anything.

Mr C: What do you actually mean, Martin?

Christine: Ferrari, they didn't hold back, though.

Mr C: Well, they did. No, originally, Ferrari said 'we will make no comment, the Ferrari team are gonna say nothing about this at all to anyone. No comment until our FOTA meeting on May 6th.' Then what happened?

Christine: Then, well, they wrote a letter to Max.

Mr C: Right. Doesn't that constitute lying?

Christine: Maybe actually. Then we read the letter to Max. It got leaked.

Mr C: Any guesses for who might have leaked it?

Christine: Max?

Mr C: No one's saying but one would assume that it must be someone within the FIA with an agenda.



Christine: Ferrari aren't happy about the budget cap because they want to spend more money, basically.

Mr C: They have lots and lots of money.

Christine: And they want to start winning again.

Mr C: Fiat are the only car company that's actually making money at the moment, and they get oodles more from Bernie than all of the other teams.

Christine: Max wrote a letter back, his was actually public, so he made it public from the start, there was no leaking. He basically said 'tough, this is the future of F1 and I've got lots of teams lined up to take your place so!' Ferrari don't matter anymore.

Mr C: We have so heard that one before, we've heard of 14, 15 teams signing up. Wasn't it, for the 2009 World Championship, there was 21 teams signed up? Of which none of them, not one single team actually emerged as someone who might put a car on the grid.

Christine: In part of the regulations that they did release this week, the maximum number of cars has gone up to 26, so that's at least three new teams they're expecting. And also, they said that they'd let the unsuccessful teams know in writing. So they must be expecting more than 13 teams.

Mr C: I think we should submit an entry. We've got three weeks.

Christine: Yep.

Mr C: And all we'd need is a logo.

Christine: 40 million?

Mr C: And a logo.

Christine: 40 million though.

Mr C: Yea, but focus on the logo.

Christine: Okay, logo first.

Mr C: Absolutely.

Christine: Logo first, funding later.

Christine: That's enough of looking to the future, we'll be back after this short break with a recap of the last race.

[Jingle: "Drop.io is a place for people to get together and share links, files, images and audio. Visit [drop.io/sidepodcast](http://drop.io/sidepodcast) for Formula One submissions gathered by us and you to share with other like-minded



individuals. If you've found something you think we should see, be it an Excel spreadsheet, pdf document, or an embed from another site, post it to [drop.io/sidepodcast](https://drop.io/sidepodcast). And while you're there, take a look around, there's always something new."]

[Jingle: The race]

Christine: So clearly we missed out talking through the Bahrain race at the time, because someone was ill. It wasn't necessarily the best race we've ever seen.

Mr C: I did enjoy it, although admittedly I was under the influence of medication, but I found it quite compelling.

Christine: It was probably the best race for you to be ill on.

Mr C: It didn't require that much in the way of concentration.

Christine: No. At the time I said it was a snoozefest, which I actually think was probably a bit harsh now.

Mr C: Before though, we get to talk about the race, there was one thing I really have to mention and that happened on Saturday, and that was one Mr Adrian Sutil. And his blocking on Mark Webber, which was atrocious behaviour and it shows the problem with the penalties system as it currently is because Sutil qualified, what was it, 18th, 17th or something, and the best they could do was send him to the back of the grid which was about three places.

Christine: He qualified 16th, he got a three place grid drop to 19th, I think.

Mr C: Personally, I thought it was bad enough that he shouldn't have been allowed to race, because Mark Webber was coming round on his hot lap. Sutil saw him, didn't want Webber to get in the way of... Sutil was obviously doing his warm up lap, his slow lap. He saw Webber coming and he deliberately tried to block him. It looked like he tried to run him off the track, and Mark Webber's race was screwed as a result of Sutil's actions, and Sutil basically got no penalty at all, because he just got moved back three places from where he was which was nowhere.

Christine: And not an unusual place for a Force India to be, either.

Mr C: No, not at all. He didn't qualify that high, and the penalty to me didn't fit the crime, and I thought Sutil got away with it far too much. And also what was really weird, was the Force India podcast after the race spent a good ten, fifteen minutes defending the actions of Sutil and I disagreed with every single point of them. They were completely, for some reason Force India really felt wronged by this three place grid drop, which I thought was just getting away with it scot free, and suddenly there was Ian Phillips saying 'no, I think that really hurt us.'

Christine: It's not often you disagree with Ian Phillips.

Mr C: I just thought, I genuinely believe the way that Force India defended themselves in the podcast, and you should listen to that podcast. It's quite a good one, it's a new one from Force India this year, always



worth a listen, and I felt that in this instance, they got it completely and totally and utterly wrong, and at times they were, I think one of the arguments was Mark Webber didn't mind being blocked anyway, it was the Red Bull team who complained, which was just rubbish!

Christine: He seemed completely fine about it afterwards, didn't he?

Mr C: I think he was down with having his race completely ruined by that muppet who pulled out in front of him, and I genuinely don't think Sutil should have raced and I think Force India were wrong to defend him.

Christine: We'll just go through some of the key points of the race then. Trulli had a terrible start and I think the Toyota's lost it on basically the first lap of the race.

Mr C: Yea, if they couldn't win this race, what race are they ever going to win? It's going to be a fluke when Toyota win now, isn't it?

Christine: From pole position, a nice dry race, they had some speed.

Mr C: They locked out the front row. They had the fastest car on single lap pace... excuse me... did you hear that? Sorry. That was supposed to be quiet.

Christine: Nice.

Mr C: They had the fastest car on single lap pace and somehow managed to throw away a certain win on a track that doesn't really allow overtaking even with today's regulations, and somehow by picking the wrong tyre choice for both cars, they managed to completely screw both drivers' races.

Christine: I wonder if the team are lacking of bit of winning experience. I mean, Trulli has won a couple, but not for a while.

Mr C: Yea, you mean someone within the team who knows how to go out there and win a race? They have Dernie, though, don't they? Frank Dernie's part of the team now.

Christine: Renault are struggling but Alonso knows how to get it done.

Mr C: Yea, and so does Pat Symonds and so does Flav. There's no one in Toyota who really has that, I guess that winning approach and it looks like they suffered. Seriously, if they didn't win Bahrain, I cannot see any other race they're going to win this year.

Christine: Talking of Renault, one of my favourite bits of the race was actually Piquet. Never thought I'd say that.

Mr C: Go on, why was Piquet good?

Christine: When he was holding up Barrichello, now obviously it wasn't good for Barrichello and it was a bit cheeky because the pair weren't really racing for position.



Mr C: Sure. They were racing on the track, though. He wasn't a backmarker.

Christine: No, it was legitimate position but in the race long... in the big picture.

Mr C: In the overall scheme of things, sure.

Christine: And I just thought it was a really good display of KERS and non-KERS and good defensive driving.

Mr C: And what KERS can do. Yes. I mean, Piquet was in a slower car but a KERS-enabled car and he had the boost button. He knew when to use it, he used it at exactly the right points, which isn't a given, especially when it's Piquet, you know, the chance of him missing a push.

Christine: He didn't spin off.

Mr C: No, he didn't. He didn't hit the KERS going into a corner. He managed to hit it every time going out of a corner. I thought it was a great, you're right, it was a great display of what KERS is capable of and you can bet your money, you can bet your bottom dollar that Barrichello went back to Brawn and in the debrief that evening said 'we need KERS, because that's unacceptable.'

Christine: He wasn't happy about it.

Mr C: There's no... 'I had absolutely no chance of overtaking Piquet because we don't have this button.'

Christine: It also possibly bought Piquet a little bit of time, as well.

Mr C: Do you think he saved himself?

Christine: For a little bit. Not forever. But I think he might go on a bit further. After the race, Toro Rosso put out a news piece on their site that explained why Buemi was slow. He had a piece of BMW stuck in his car apparently.

Mr C: Okay, and he was outraced by Bourdais.

Christine: He was, so Bourdais finished ahead of him and Toro Rosso felt the need to put a news piece...

Mr C: Ah interesting.

Christine: ...to explain why Buemi was so slow.

Mr C: That's unusual. So they are backing one driver?

Christine: It does seem that way.

Mr C: At the expense of the other, that's a different take from those guys. Although, having said that, that's exactly what we saw with Scott Speed and Liuzzi.



Christine: Yea. I mean, they didn't put out any news as to why Bourdais was still quite slow, or has been slow ever. It's almost like they want Buemi to beat LeSeb, as much as we do. I don't know which part of a BMW was caught up in the Toro Rosso, but it probably wasn't the front wing. When we first saw that BMW, we said the front wing was gonna be really slow.

Mr C: It's boxy. It always was boxy.

Christine: It didn't look fast.

Mr C: And it hasn't changed since the day they debuted that car back in December, I think it was, of last year. It looks heavy, and fat and chunky.

Christine: When we saw, first saw the Renault, we thought that front wing and nose was gonna be slow. And it kinda was.

Mr C: To be honest with you, I think we thought it was a joke. That massive wide, heavy front wing, it didn't look fast at all, and thus far, pretty much we've been proven to be correct.

Christine: I mean, not just us, everyone in the comments. We've all thought that those two didn't look the prettiest of things.

Mr C: They didn't look racy.

Christine: Why can't these aero guys that are paid millions of pounds, why can't they figure that out?

Mr C: Well, that's true. Maybe they're believing the computers too much. I'll tell you what we did say, when we saw the Red Bull. We said that car looks fast, and thus far...

Christine: It was.

Mr C: Yea, it's been a quick one.

Christine: I think the only one that's fooled us is McLaren, because their's looked quite fast and hasn't been.

Mr C: It turned out to be rather slow. It didn't look fast when it was covered in green paint though.

Christine: No, that's true.

Mr C: So we knew they were gonna have problems. But you're right. The Renault always looked like it was going to be a handful, and always looked like it was never going to be dominating. And the BMW looked like it was never gonna achieve anything, and in Bahrain, goodness me...

Christine: It really didn't. They were right at the back.



Mr C: That was rubbish, beaten by the Force Indias, absolutely on pace and on merit. Now, Force India did term up with a new diffuser so they are improving their car, but BMW have not brought a single new piece at all.

Christine: You know it's bad if Force India are improving their car better than you are.

Mr C: Yes, and this is BMW who redirected their efforts midway through last year to concentrate on this year, and Force India who have nothing like the budget that BMW have.

Christine: Kubica must be banging his head against a brick wall right now.

Mr C: [laughs]

Christine: At the end of the race, the podium was Button, Vettel and Trulli. Trulli didn't look particularly impressed as you can imagine, he ended up third from pole. But Button, he was much happier to have finished without the aid of a safety car, or rain.

Mr C: Button did good. Button did very good in that race.

Christine: Ferrari also picked up three points thanks to Kimi.

Mr C: Thank the lord.

Christine: Not a great race for them, but some points. Woohoo!

Mr C: I think credit to Luca di Montezemolo who flew in at the last minute and we were worried was gonna start throwing his toys out of the pram. I thought he handled himself very well, it's exactly what the Ferrari team need right now.

Christine: Spurred them on a bit.

Mr C: Good to see him on the pit wall, and paying attention and showing an interest, because he could easily turn up in his suit and hide in Bernie's office and never be seen again. However, he was out there and he was interested in what was going on. He had his headphones on, on the pit wall, and getting involved.

Christine: There was only one retiree and that was Nakajima who snuck off into the garage again, barely noticed him. I think it was more a precautionary retirement, some kind of temperatures were spiking or something.

Mr C: If you were Frank Williams...

Christine: Yea?

Mr C: And you started the year with your triple diffuser...



Christine: Super duper diffuser.

Mr C: Mmhm. And you won the right to use that triple diffuser, which gave you an advantage over the rest of the field, you'd be slightly miffed if you were heading in to Europe and the European leg of the Formula One season with how many points have they got now? What, two?

Christine: Three and a half.

Mr C: Three and a half points, having one of the fastest cars on the grid. I think they've thrown it away.

Christine: It definitely doesn't look good for them, especially because pre-season we were all 'they're really ahead with their KERS, they're going a different way, it looks like they could make the big step up to start being competitive again.' They haven't brought KERS in.

Mr C: It was exactly the start they needed. When the KERS will debut is still unknown. We still don't know whether they've got it sorted, and they've failed to impress.

Christine: Does this mean they went the wrong way choosing a different style of KERS?

Mr C: No, I think... No, not at all. That's not the problem. The problem is when the opportunity presented themselves, they failed to grab them. Much like Toyota did but to a much larger extent, and I believe they're going to suffer, come the end of the year and when all the monies are dished out, the team who need it most are Williams, and they are going to get less than they should have.

Christine: The only other thing of note was after the race, Alonso collapsed because his drinks bottle hadn't been functioning all race so he was super dehydrated.

Mr C: Know who I blame for this one? Well, actually, I probably blame the person who broke the drinks bottle, but really it's Bernie's fault.

Christine: Okay.

Mr C: It's Bernie's fault because he's moved the calendar on by a couple of weeks, the season's started later.

Christine: So it's hotter.

Mr C: We were in Bahrain later, and I think, and I'd argue, we were in Bahrain much too late. I don't think Bernie... Bernie needs to take heed of the heat. The problem is, he's not going to. He's not going to give a damn because he's not going to be out there driving those cars in those conditions. It's not good for engines but most of all, it's not good for drivers. And I admit, in Alonso's case, it was a drinks bottle. And also he is a little bit lighter this year, he's lost a bit of bulk, and therefore he may not be as fit as he once was, however it's not good to be putting drivers through those kind of conditions unnecessarily, and Bahrain should really return to its previous timeslot.



Christine: There were pictures released of a distressed looking Alonso being picked up. But he was fine. I thought it was interesting that Renault had to put out, at the bottom of their post-race press release, a note saying 'he is okay, don't panic.' In this age of news getting out really quickly, they had to put that in there.

Mr C: It's a good plan, because you never know which news agencies are going to pick up on that and spin it.

Christine: It's almost like the plane crash thing.

[Jingle: Fantasy Racers]

Christine: In fifth place, Pedal on the Left with 2903, in fourth High Fives and Downloads with 2985. Third is Team Super Emu with 3004. Second Brawntastic with 3062 and first Couch Potato with 3109.

Mr C: And where does that leave you?

Christine: I am 21st, which is still not first but it's not too bad I think.

Mr C: That's rather incredible. I'm still... I cannot hide how impressed I am about how well you're doing.

Christine: It happens. Sometimes I do things right. Do you want to know where you are?

Mr C: Yea, I do actually this week. I'm motivated...

Christine: Well, I'm 21st so what we'll do is we'll add another number to that, and you are 219.

Mr C: That's, that's, that's a small gap really. You're bound to fall and I'm bound to climb from this point.

Christine: It's very true, and it will happen. It's early days yet, but I'm still leading. In driver prices new, Jenson remains on 14 million, so I'm assuming that's actually a cap because it would be weird for him to stay on the same price for three races.

Mr C: Yes, didn't we talk about this last time that basically no one else can afford him now and that's it?

Christine: But I think it might actually be a cap.

Mr C: Oh really?

Christine: Because you'd think maybe one or two more people might have bought him.

Mr C: Or somebody might have sold him.

Christine: It's the same for the last three races.

Mr C: That's an interesting one.



Christine: I don't know if that's a fact or not though. Hamilton is on the way up again, as is Trulli. Meanwhile, Bourdais continues to fall as does Kovalainen and Massa. There are a couple of rule changes to note before the next race. A team will be permitted no more than nine drivers at any one time, budget permitting. And the amount of points awarded for unspent budget will be capped at 200 points per race. See, I didn't even realise that you could get points for money you hadn't spent. I didn't know that was a rule.

Mr C: No, but I know somebody who did, and if I'm not mistaken...

Christine: I think both these rules have been introduced for Kathi.

Mr C: Who is currently leading.

Christine: She's leading our league and she said her plan was to get rich enough to basically buy all the drivers and just keep winning.

Mr C: Yea, I don't.... there's a worrying thing and I clearly should have paid way more attention to this at the beginning of the season but just after Fantasy Racers got going, there was a secret little subtle dent from Kathi on Identica saying something along the lines of 'don't tell anyone but I've started a spreadsheet.' Now at the time I laughed at her for being really geeky and clearly paying too much attention and taking it far too seriously. It's already looking like it's paying off for her, and now Dan has changed the rules in order to stop her running away with it, which I really, I love that. I love that you know, we're what, four races into the season and it's like, uh oh, hold on, there's a problem here.

Christine: The only thing I will say is that so far, she's not running away with the lead, she's just taken the lead and it's a reasonable sized gap.

Mr C: I wonder...

Christine: It could happen.

Mr C: I wonder what will happen. I'm gonna watch this one closely because I wonder if she can maintain that advantage or whether it will now drop back. On the plus side, I do wonder if anyone else in any other leagues have figured this out, because we are still ahead of all of the other private leagues, so on the one side, I'm thinking, boo to Kathi for cheating.

Christine: But Kathi is leading, so yay!

Mr C: Yay for keeping us ahead. It's a mixed bag.

Christine: Mixed feelings.

Mr C: And one other thing to promote, talking of geeky stats and people who have too much time on their hands. Gavin has been working really hard on Fantasy Racer stats, which he's put in drop.io in the last couple of weeks. I think he's gonna keep that up, he was even talking about starting a blog purely based on



F1 stats, and hopefully, I haven't seen any more about that in the comments since he mentioned it a couple of weeks ago, but hopefully he'll keep that going. So if you're really interested in the movers and shakers in the Fantasy Racers world, do take a look at drop.io. We'll put a link to it in the show notes, and Gavin's stats are rather excellent.

[Jingle: Housekeeping]

[Audio clip, BBC Tees:

Lisa: Your radio conversations seem to have a little bit of a cult following. I've actually, well I haven't dug it out, one of our guys Ian Smith, dug out a bit of a parody song this morning, relating to that clip. I don't believe you've heard it, have you?

Rob: No, I haven't. No.

Lisa: I'm gonna play you a little quick clip, listen to this, it's quite funny, okay?

Rob: Right.

[Audio of Felipe Baby: Felipe Baby, we're bringing the white visor to you, it's new, you'll be able to see, Felipe Baby, now hurry up and score us a point.]

Lisa: What do you think? That's classic, that's genius.

Rob: I think it's really nice!

Lisa: It really is! The whole song continues the same way, I said to you earlier on, and I will send you the full song later on, because it is very, very funny.

Rob: Thank you.]

Christine: So I wrote this parody song, you might have heard of it?

Mr C: Yea, are you sick of hearing it?

Christine: I am, I can't actually listen to it anymore.

Mr C: I think we should possibly mention to the subscribers of the podcast that a song would have appeared in their feed in the middle of the week, and it was included because...

Christine: Out of the blue.

Mr C: Completely unannounced and unexplained, because it basically turned up in the comments we should put it, it was suggested in the comments we should put it in the feed so we did, but we made no attempt to bother to explain it or anything.



Christine: So I wrote a parody song about Felipe Massa, and it's in the feed if you haven't heard it already. I'm sure you have because it's basically gone everywhere.

Mr C: We should explain that was Lisa McCormick from BBC Tees. Now, I'd never even heard of BBC Tees before this, however it was pointed out in the Autosport forums that the song had been played to Rob on the radio because he happened to be involved in an interview on that particular day.

Christine: Now, um, everyone seems to be very, very excited about the song and I am flattered. I really, really am, and I'm, you know, quite proud that everyone likes it, and I'm glad that everyone has listened to it, however...

Mr C: There was an outbreak, I should say, there was an outbreak of smilies in the Autosport forums which is unusual.

Christine: Doesn't happen very often.

Mr C: Normally it's just vitriol and hate but with your song people just went smiley crazy.

Christine: I won over the Autosport forum. However, Rob has heard it and he said 'yea it's nice' which I think is all we need to know and I think that basically puts an end to it.

Mr C: No, I think...

Christine: 'Yea, it's nice.'

Mr C: I genuinely think he did like it. I do believe that Lisa said on Twitter afterwards that she played it to him, she spoke to him and he really liked it. We should thank her immensely for playing it...

Christine: Really?

Mr C: Yea, no, we really should.

Christine: She played it to Rob! Ah, I want to die.

Mr C: Yea, I still remember the day when you first decided you quite liked him and still deny you like him.

Christine: I don't like him, shh.

Mr C: Was it the French Grand Prix?

Christine: Hush now.

Mr C: It was certainly last year and now he has heard your voice. Whether or not you like it, whether or not you approve of it, and whether or not you can deal with it, as that kind of circumstance, that has happened, so thank you to BBC Tees for playing it. It's now on the BBC.co.uk/F1 page.



Christine: It's not, there's a story about the fact that the Felipe Baby phenomenon has grown. It's not just about me.

Mr C: No, not about you. But the interview, the full interview with Lisa is available if you go to the site and you should have a listen to it because it's a really good... the thing we didn't, the thing I really like about this situation, apparently these conversations with BBC Tees, between BBC Tees and Rob have been going on for a long time. I believe they've spoken to his extended family.

Christine: Yes, she said she talks to the family quite a lot.

Mr C: Which is cool.

Christine: Friends of the show.

Mr C: That's good, and as Formula One fans, we didn't know this, and that's a good thing so hopefully, with any luck, more conversations with Rob, without your song, will occur in the future and as Formula One fans we'll be able to listen to those, and we're aware of those, and that's something new and that's cool. I'm still trying to get hold of the backdated interviews and see if we can maybe hear some of those as well because Rob's a good guy, he's got some interesting things to say. They were calling him directly in Italy, so he was there on the scene.

Christine: He was in his office, with cars whizzing about in the background.

Mr C: And presumably the less well that Ferrari do, the more free time he has, because there's less interview requests and stuff, and I think we need to hear more from engineers, so if BBC Radio are conducting interviews with him, we should hear it. So if any good comes out of it, that's something to be proud of.

Christine: So what we've learned this week is there's only one famous PA and there's only one famous engineer and we want more.

[Jingle: Sweeper]

Christine: I think that's it for this show, we are all caught up now.

Mr C: Oh yes.

Christine: It's been quite a quiet news week this week, I think everyone, all the teams and that are having a rest, and I don't blame them.

Mr C: We need one. Yea, no, we do need that. That's not to be complained at. It was a hectic start to the beginning of the season. Four races in, what was it, five weeks, something mental like that. A little bit too crazy and it's good to have a rest and sounds like you're going to need another one.

Christine: I'm not doing too bad. It's the Spanish Grand Prix next week so we'll be back with all the usual good stuff.



Mr C: Yes, we might do some more questions for Joe in the comments this week, because I think that worked out quite well before our last conversation, so if you do keep an eye on the comments and we'll put a shoutout at some point prior to the Spanish Grand Prix.

Christine: Usually on the Friday somewhen, isn't it?

Mr C: Yea, and we'll put a shout out for comments, so if you've got anything you'd like to put to Joe before the next podcast, please do let us know.