



## **F1 Debrief – Williams have bagged them all**

---

Christine: This is F1 Debrief, Williams have bagged them all. On this show we discuss, personnel changes, all the money pouring in to Grove, and the Brazilian succession plan.

Mr C: This is F1 Debrief, but not as you know it. Welcome back Christine.

Christine: All new F1 Debrief.

Mr C: It's very new and it's very different. It's not how it used to be. We will talk about this more towards the end of the show but in the meantime we have Formula 1 to discuss and a very specific Formula 1 topic.

Christine: All you need to know about this show at the moment is that we're talking one topic for one show.

Mr C: Let's get on with it.

[Sweeper]

Christine: We thought it might be prudent to talk about Williams because they have been capitalising on all the headlines. All the headlines, all the time.

Mr C: They are the story of pre-season. The story of pre-season testing, the story of pre-season sponsorship and the story of pre-season drivers.

Christine: There are a few stories coming out of pre-season testing but really it's Williams that are the big surprise. They've just come out storming compared to last year it's like all turned around and that's because everything has changed.

Mr C: 2013 turned out to be one of Williams' worst seasons on record. They ended up with something like 5 points, they were last of the points scoring teams. It was a disaster of a season. And it's amazing to see what looks like a pretty major turnaround ahead of this year.

Christine: Yeah, well the main thing as they are not actually Williams any more.

Mr C: What? They ... they are still Williams?

Christine: Well, no. They are Williams Martini Racing, that's their official name. Everything is rebranded because one of those worst kept secret things. Martini title sponsorship, and they've got new livery, new overalls, new name, new website, new everything!

Mr C: New start for Williams. It was a terribly kept secret, I think some of the t-shirt designs leaked early, there was a lot of talk ahead of the announcement, but it is very, very, very good to see a team land a key sponsor such as Martini because money has been hard to find in Formula 1.

Christine: All we seem to hear at the moment is people losing their title sponsors, like Vodafone have ditched McLaren and they haven't found a replacement, so it's good news.



Mr C: Which is amazing.

Christine: But I did think that the new livery has various reactions, it is very, very white which is a little bit disappointing, but it's the overalls that got me because they have the Martini stripes down one side which just reminds me of when Honda did their green stripes down the overalls, but hopefully they can do a bit better than Honda did.

Mr C: It's got an Earth Dreams vibe to it, but nicer. The thing is with this livery, I know a lot of older Formula 1 fans have gone a little bit crazy because it's the return of a very retro livery, the Martini stripes are synonymous in motorsport but they don't mean anything to you, do they? I mean I showed you some pictures of some old Martini rally cars and Le Mans cars and, you know, iconic colour schemes from years gone by. But because you're such a young and new fan, such a recent convert to the world of motorsport they didn't mean anything to you.

Christine: The only thing Martini means to me is from James Bond, but I heard a quote from the chief marketing officer for Martini who said Martini will give consumers a taste of life in the fast lane, bringing a renewed sense of Italian style and glamour to the track and beyond. Which all sounds very good but it's from Andy Gibson, who's like the least Italian sounding person you can find!

Mr C: [Laughter]. Martini incidentally their logo, their branding is red and gold, which you would think would match Lotus's colour scheme better. That would be...

Christine: Red wing mirrors, there better not be!

Mr C: That would be the ideal tie in to ... Williams is an unusual choice from my point of view.

Christine: Other sponsorship announcements so far this year, they renewed with Oris official timekeepers. They announced Genworth who are a global lifestyle protection insurer, whatever that is. Esquire, men's magazine. Petrobras, Brazilian energy company. Banco do Brasil, who funnily enough is a bank in Brazil! Clearly a lot of these are Brazilian to do with their Brazilian drivers but it just seems like a lot of money is pouring in to Grove.

Mr C: Williams have signed up all of the sponsors, anyone who's anyone who may have some money for Formula 1, Williams have bagged them all! It's amazing. In terms of the Brazilian deal, obviously bringing Massa over from Ferrari is key to that and this is obviously a long term strategy and it's just about bearing fruit and you can see in their third driver who is errr...

Christine: Also Felipe Massa!

Mr C: Not Felipe Massa it's...

Christine: Close enough.

Mr C: Nasr?

Christine: Felipe Nasr, yeah.

Mr C: Felipe Nasr who is essentially Felipe's, other Felipe's, understudy and you can see there is a succession plan in place because Massa hasn't got that many years left in Formula 1. He is currently one of a few Brazilian names who are currently in the sport and obviously that is a major, major market for Grand Prix racing and I think didn't Bernie



Ecclestone step in to make sure that Massa stayed in the sport this year because losing him would be too greater loss.

Christine: Well he does like to meddle!

Mr C: For marketing purposes. So he's obviously the right guy from the right country in the right place at the right time, but they do need a succession plan and I guess that's what Nasr is there for. He's the young, he's the young Brazilian with a long term future in Formula 1 who the sponsors can get behind. So the current plan is let's sponsor Massa now and then in the future we will bring in Nasr and he will be our man.

Christine: But it's not just about, you know, let's keep Massa in just because he's Brazilian...

Mr C: It mostly is that.

Christine: Yeah, but he can also, I mean, compared to Pastor Maldonado who went before him he can provide quite a lot of experience and development talent, I mean Frank Williams said he liked working with pure racers and Felipe is firmly in that category, able to develop and push the car forward which is exactly what they need. And when you've got Valtteri Bottas who appears to be a talent but he's still got a way to like refine it. He's only been in one season so he's got a way to go yet. Between the two of them they could really push Williams on this year.

Mr C: I think it's a great line-up. It is. Massa is arguably just past his peak as a driver. I mean I still rate him, I think he's great but he's in danger of becoming Rubens Barrichello and seeing out his Formula 1 career at Williams until it's time to finally leave. And then Bottas, you know there's a lot more to come from him. He outscored Maldonado last year.

Christine: He did.

Mr C: And you can expect more from him this year. He's the guy who's in the right car at the right time too, so expect great things from Bottas this year.

Christine: And of course they're retaining Susie Wolf as development driver and this year she's going to get two practice session opportunities and a full test day, I think. So that makes her the first female driver in about twenty years to participate in a race weekend proper.

Mr C: Fantastic. That means Williams have two reserve drivers and they're both going to get seat time this year.

Christine: Apparently so. Yeah.

Mr C: That is unusual and all credit to them. Because I think Nasr when he was announced, within a few hours of being announced he was in the car and testing it. That's how fast Williams are working you know, here's our new guy, welcome to Formula 1. Also get in that car and put some laps and put some miles on it because we need to give you some seat time. So they are working really quick, I'm very impressed by how fast this is turning around. It would be good to see Susie and see what Susie can do in Free Practice. Because she'll be, you know, the spotlight will be firmly on her those days, there's a lot of pressure. Testing at Silverstone came with a bit of pressure in terms of will she bin it, will she make it to the end, will she go fast enough, but that's nothing like having the audience, you know, people in the grandstand...

Christine: its someone else's car as well that they need for that weekend, you can't bin it.



Mr C: No, absolutely. I mean Williams need the data and it will be televised. That's a huge step up.

[Sweeper]

Christine: It's not just sponsors and drivers that have been chopping and changing. We've also got lots of new people in the engineering department. Williams seem to have been nabbing people from all over the paddock. They've got Jacob Andreassen from Force India he's their new head of engineering operations coming directly under Pat Symonds. Craig Wilson comes from Mercedes to be head of vehicle dynamics and Rod Nelson joins the team from Lotus to become chief test and support engineer, and of course Rob Smedley as head of vehicle performance, which is a new position, he'll be working trackside and back at the factory. Not directly with Felipe Massa, which is the only saving grace I think. I was quite disappointed when I heard this news.

Mr C: You didn't want Rob to follow Massa around the paddock. That wasn't what you were looking for?

Christine: Well it's like...

Mr C: They make a great team.

Christine: Yeah, they do make a great team and I can see that he doesn't want to be a race engineer all his life and he was looking for a step up and that's all very well and good and a new challenge fine. But it just felt like Massa's gone over there do you really need to follow him, couldn't you try and do something by yourself. But seeing as though he's not going to be talking him around laps anymore I think its ok. It's acceptable to me.

Mr C: You'd have to assume Rob really wanted to move back to the UK because obviously he has been based in Italy for however long since he last worked for Jordan I guess. So he was probably looking to make a move back to this country, and so that works out well for him. What was more, of more concern to me was that they had to create his position, head of vehicle performance, something that a lot of teams have, seems like a very important position, you know, a key position to have within a team, and Williams didn't even have that, and so I guess this is Pat Symonds experience sort of coming to the fore because firstly that guy is a talent magnet and the reason that Williams are able to bring in so many of these employees from all ... from elsewhere on the grid is because Pat is the man you know, people are keen to work with him. But also he must be looking round Williams and thinking how are these positions, how come these positions don't exist. So, you know, he needs Rob. It seems Rob will be playing a key part with Williams's season this year.

Christine: He will. He doesn't get to join them until just before the Bahrain race which, I assume is a contract thing. So Massa will be race engineered by Andrew Murdoch who was previously Pastors race engineer and Bottas keeps Jonathan Eddolls. The other announcement was Richard Lockwood who comes from Marissa as head of race strategy which is probably going to be a key thing this year as well...

Mr C: Massive.

Christine: ... with tyres and fuel and all sorts of things.

Mr C: Fuel strategy will be one of if no the stories of this year. It's all new, it's very complicated, it's going to be incredibly hard for fans to follow along with at home. But let's see, let's see how well Williams play that card.

[Sweeper]



Christine: So far we've talked about all the changes they've made and how these could impact their performance this year but we've also seen some performance. We've had three weeks of pre-season testing with, as I mentioned before, a lot of surprises. But Williams were really quite strong. They've got the right engine and they switched to it at exactly the right time. They must be so glad they ditched that Renault.

Mr C: Renault have failed to impress.

Christine: That's a polite way of putting it!

Mr C: There have been troubles. Fortunately for Williams they got out of there. They had the Renault last year, it's not the engine to have this season. Mercedes is the package that you want to be running, certainly in the earlier part of this season. They've obviously got a fast car, they've got a decent, you know, they've got a decent development program, it's not a slow Williams. But it is powered by the best engine on the grid at the moment and that will be key.

Christine: Lap times from testing are, you know, you have to take them with a pinch of salt, etc., etc., but there are...

Mr C: Especially this year.

Christine: Yeah. There are quite a few facts from the testing that just speak volumes about how Williams could do this year. Felipe Massa posted the fastest time of the last week, the second Bahrain test. He had two Mercedes drivers behind him and then teammate Bottas, so the Mercedes works team and then Williams they were the fastest drivers in that final week. Williams also completed the most laps in that second week in the desert, 438 altogether. They were second overall if you count all three weeks just behind Mercedes, way up near 5000 kilometres compared to Red Bull who did 1700 and Lotus who missed the first test so they only managed nearly 1300. That is just, it's a staggering difference in terms of being prepared for the season ahead. And it's worth saying that Mercedes as an engine supplier had almost the same amount of mileage over the three weeks as Ferrari and Renault put together.

Mr C: That is huge. Logic would suggest that Mercedes still, the Mercedes works team still are in the box seats. They are, they obviously have the most experience with developing the package. They had a better base line to start with because their chassis last year was mighty, whereas Williams obviously had a lot of ground to recover. So I would still expect the Mercedes works team to finish in front of Williams but I wouldn't be surprised if places three and four were filled by Williams drivers and perhaps you could be looking at a Williams podium in the first race of the season of the season.

Christine: Well reliability is going to be key. Especially in Australia and it's just, I think Williams only stopped out on track in testing once, which just seems really good compared to everyone else.

Mr C: That would be great on a normal traditional Formula One pre-season testing schedule without all of the changes this year just the one stop would be an incredible achievement and to do it with so many changes its amazing. The only thing we haven't really seen is out and outpace from any cars and so it could be that Williams are incredibly reliable but maybe have gone rather safe on cooling whereas someone like Red Bull have gone aggressive on cooling, they can't keep their car on the road but when its going it's obviously a very fast car.

Christine: We don't know anything about fuel loads or what was going on in the test.

Mr C: Many, many unknowns still to be confirmed from testing.



Christine: So it's all looking good for Williams. I mean at this point it would be good to say what isn't looking good for them, what's the flip side to that but I just can't think of anything. It all seems to be pointing in the right direction, everything seems really strong.

Mr C: There don't seem to be too many flaws in this year's strategy, they've got to pull it together, they've got to get it right. Anything could go wrong at a race weekend. You have an engine problem or an electrical problem in free practice 3 you're going to miss the whole of qualifying. You know, the new cars are so complicated they take so much time to make an engine change or make a component change this year that you could end up losing masses of time with a very, very tiny and silly problem. So there's no guarantees, absolutely no guarantees. There's obviously so many questions over things like fuel flow and getting to the end of the race. But as it stands, as it looks right now you have to be, if you are in the Williams team I think you'd be smiling. You'd be a happy person heading on that plane to Australia right now.

[Advert: Are you looking for the definitive guide to the 2014 Formula 1 season, the pocket F1 handbook is exactly what you need. Packed with driver bios, team profiles, circuit statistics and all the regulation updates, the guide to the 2014 F1 season has everything you need to know about Formula 1 this year. Search Amazon or iTunes for Pocket F1 handbook and download your copy today.]

Christine: So the new look F1 Debrief is a lot shorter than its predecessor, it is focussed on one topic and I am quite excited about it.

Mr C: I think it solves a number of problems that we've had. Namely that our current primary discussion show is Feet Up Friday and as I think anybody who caught the last one may have noticed it was recorded on a Tuesday or a Wednesday.

Christine: Yeah, Friday is not always good.

Mr C: Friday's not necessarily, certainly for the last six or seven weeks we've been trying to record a show on a Friday and we haven't had a free one and that's been causing problems.

Christine: Pinning ourselves down to one day wasn't a smart idea.

Mr C: Well it is a fine idea if what you're looking for is an end of the week discussion, a bit of a relaxing chat and a time to catch up on news in general, but it isn't a great show if you've got stuff to discuss now. And that's what F1 Debrief is now designed to solve. It's talking about Formula 1 news when it breaks and when we're in the mood to discuss it when there are things that need to be said, on the fly. Really short shows, no more... I mean if the show goes on for more than twenty – twenty-five minutes we've probably got something wrong, it's going to be really punchy, very direct and to the point, as this show hopefully was.

Christine: What it's meant to be is when things happen and you and I are talking about it, we'll just switch the microphones on instead of us just rambling and going – yeah we could probably talk about that when we do a Feet Up Friday which is never!

Mr C: Yeah. We'll save it for the following Friday is not really useful. There will be, it's worth mentioning that this show probably won't go out live, it's too short to even bother setting up the live stream but Feet Up Friday will continue to be the live community get together.



Christine: Yeah, Feet up Friday is not going away, we think it would serve better as a – the live Friday thing that happens when we're in the mood for a chat, relaxed as it was always meant to be and less about timely information and more about F1 as a whole.

Mr C: We should discuss feedback for this show because we obviously rely heavily on feedback from the community, from comments from...

Christine: We want to know what you've got to say.

Mr C: We do want to know what you've got to say, but because of the nature of this show what you may need to do is just keep an eye on things like Twitter and Facebook where we'll ask in advance for any feedback for any thoughts and discussion and we'll bring that into the show.

Christine: Or if there's a breaking news topic that you think is likely to be a show from us then send it on. You can get in contact with us many, many ways. You can call us 01212 887225.

Mr C: Please do that we love voicemails.

Christine: Email Christine at Sidepodcast dot com [[christine@sidepodcast.com](mailto:christine@sidepodcast.com)] we're on Twitter at Sidepodcast [[@sidepodcast](https://twitter.com/sidepodcast)], and the very handy sidepodcast dot com forward slash contact [[www.sidepodcast.com/contact](http://www.sidepodcast.com/contact)].

Mr C: Always a favourite. That's us, that's F1 Debrief, that's how it's going to roll. Let us know your thoughts in the comments, anything we can improve, anything we can enhance, anything you'd like to see change completely. Do let us know. Umm, welcome back F1 Debrief, and goodbye!

*[Transcript by Robyn]*