



F1 Debrief – Infamous for Predictioning

Christine: This is F1 Debrief - Infamous for Predictioning. On this show we discuss Stefano's toughest task, the best placed rookie and avoiding committing to anything. This pre-season I failed to make a predictions megamix show which I was quite disappointed about because it's one of my highlights of the pre-season, but something had to give and that was it. I kind of thought it would be okay though because this season must be too hard to predict.

Mr C: You are not one for making predictions when the answer is obvious. In this instance I should think this must be your worst nightmare.

Christine: Yeah. We put up a post for predictions from the community and so far I haven't put what I thought in there. And I'm hoping throughout this show in which we focus on predictions from there and other places that I'm going to get away with bombarding you with facts and comments so that I don't have to say what I think.

Mr C: We shall see. What facts do you have to bombard us with?

Christine: I have in front of me a very useful infographic from Compelo, who are a sort of press release aggregating company for all kinds of motorsport series, but they've gathered together lots of information about the pre-season testing and the first race in Australia and they've gathered it together in a lovely infographic.

Mr C: Infographics not something that traditionally work well in audio, this should be fun!

Christine: Well now I'll try and extract the best bits for you. It's got all kinds of data on there. Some useful, some less so, some self-explanatory and some less so. But they say Rosberg had the most productive testing, he averaged 92 laps per day and completed 2,813km which is 4.1% more than Alonso, I'm not sure why they've picked on Alonso there. So Rosberg very well prepared for this season ahead.

Mr C: Ok, lots and lots and lots of laps. But does it say how far ahead he is. Is Alonso the next guy, is that what they're trying to say?

Christine: I don't know it didn't say.

Mr C: Ok.

Christine: But it was 4.1% more, so it must be good. The most useful bit to me was their assessment reliability which was based on the red flag record from all 12 days of testing. They list the drivers in order of who is most likely to see the finish line in Australia which is something which is a huge hot topic.

Mr C: Vital for predictions I should imagine. Go on, what have you got?

Christine: Starting with Massa and Bottas, 'cause I think in the last show we mentioned that Williams had only seen one flag red in testing so that's very good. Bianchi and Chilton are up next so Marussia had some very good reliability as well. And then Kobayashi and also Ricciardo. So of course what this doesn't show is the times drivers didn't make it out of the garage in the first place!

Mr C: [Laughter] So Red Bull didn't cause many red flags because they didn't get much track time at all.



Christine: They weren't out there.

Mr C: Interesting.

Christine: At the wrong end of the reliability spectrum we've got Vergne, Rosberg and Sutil who all stopped four times, and the worst of the worst, surprise surprise, Pastor Maldonado with five red flags!

Mr C: So, is it better to be out on track but breaking down frequently or in the garage unable to get out on track.

Christine: It's a good question, it's hard to say.

Mr C: I guess the best thing is obviously to be on track and not breaking down, a la Williams.

Christine: Compelo also note that Magnussen is the best prepared rookie by almost twice as much as the other two. And there's some interesting data in terms of the gap between teammates. So Ricciardo was 1.7 seconds faster than Vettel, again Red Bull not really focusing on lap times anyway. Alonso was 1.1 seconds faster than Kimi, but at the other end just 0.047 between Button and Magnussen. So again Magnussen, right up there very well prepared rookie.

Mr C: A huge surprise actually from a rookie. Do you think Jenson's taking it easy or Magnussen is keen to impress and therefore he's just on it all the time?

Christine: Maybe both.

Mr C: So now you have that information you should be able to make a prediction right? Who do you think is going to do well in Australia? Let's start with the simple questions, not the full big picture who's going to win the world championship but just who's going to do well in a few days' time at the first race.

Christine: I think that the bigger picture is easier to address really. Who's going to do well in a few days time? I have absolutely no idea, it could be anyone, literally.

Mr C: Weather could play a part too. It's predicted that Sunday could see damp conditions.

Christine: Just what we need as another variable!

Mr C: Ok, so you won't give us a prediction for Australia. If the big picture is so much easier who is your prediction for the World Championship this year?

Christine: Well it's got to be a Mercedes driver.

Mr C: Why has it got to be a Mercedes? Well there's quite a lot of those. You haven't narrowed it down very much there at all. There's a lot of Mercedes engines out on the field this year.

Christine: You didn't say I had to be specific.

Mr C: Pick a driver. Who's going to win the World Championship, Christine?

Christine: Ummm, let's go with Hamilton.



Mr C: Ok, that's not a bad shout. At least you've committed to something. I think Rosberg will actually do better this year. I think it's going to be a season when drivers can be easily destabilised so a couple of problems will send somebody off the track. You need a lot of mental focus to get through Formula 1 in 2014. I don't think mental focus is Hamilton's strong point but I think Rosberg could shine in that area. So he's my tip for World Champion.

Christine: Gary Anderson, who was cruelly ousted from the BBC, he's writing for Autosport at the moment, but he wrote up his testing review and hinted what he thinks it means for the year ahead. Of Mercedes he said "It has probably as strong if not stronger a driver line up than any time. Although that might just take a bit of managing as the season progresses." Which I thought was interesting because I wouldn't have put those two down as a pair that needed that much managing. We had a brief thing in Malaysia last year but apart from that they seem to get on really well.

Mr C: Ooooha. But what did we have in Malaysia that Mercedes do not have this year?

Christine: [Silence]

Mr C: Ross Brawn. Ross Brawn kept those drivers in their place.

Christine: Ah yes.

Mr C: And this year there is no Ross Brawn. Who is going to be on the pit wall? Who is going to make the call to the number 2 driver and tell him to hold station because they've got to protect the cars to get them home because that will happen. And I think that is going to be the first time and not the only time that Ross Brawn will be sorely missed by Mercedes because, you know, which driver will listen to whoever is calling the shots.

Christine: Anderson says the same of Ferrari. Obviously they're the team that everyone thinks is going to need to manage their drivers and we also had a voicemail from Lukeh who had a similar thought process.

[Voicemail]: I think Alonso and Kimi is going to... I don't think it's going to kick off but I think it's going to get a bit kind of heated where Alonso has obviously got his team now, it's Team Alonso. It's not Ferrari, it's Team Alonso. That should be the hash tag, Team Alonso. I just said hash tag out loud, oh dear. Ferrari have a good car and they're going to be storming, but Ferrari don't need to give a good car because Alonso's that good and Kimi is on his day up there with Alonso easily. I want to see Magnussen do well, I want to see him and JB do well. I think they're going to get on really well. Pérez was a bit anonymous in that terrible, terrible car last year. Magnussen, he might be a great driver, but it depends if he does or not. And JB is JB, you can't get anyone more kind of reliable in your team than good old Jenson and it would be nice to see him get a couple of wins again.

Christine: On the subject of Magnussen we ran a couple of polls in that predictions post that we mentioned earlier on Sidepodcast and one of them was which one is going to be the best rookie. Kevin Magnussen came out on top with 93% which is understandable because he's in a McLaren and the others are in a Toro Rosso and a Caterham but I did think it was fascinating that Marcus Ericsson had 4% to Kvyat's 3% which means Caterham on top of Toro Rosso.

Mr C: I wonder how much preparation Kvyat has had. That would be my one concern. He knew early that he would be taking Ricciardo's place but I don't know how much time, how much seat time, Toro Rosso have been able to give him. So yeah he could be, maybe he is the least prepared rookie this year, that could be an interesting one to watch.

Christine: We also did a poll about which Ferrari driver would come out on top and 64% said Alonso so that's about 2/3 of people favouring the Spaniard.



Mr C: It is his team. I think Luke is on to something there, it is his team. Kimi Räikkönen, well clearly bringing in Kimi Räikkönen was designed to wrestle some of Ferrari back from Alonso. I think he's been calling too many shots and the team were too reliant on him. Obviously Alonso was keen to keep Massa around as his number two, bestest buddy. But Kimi is being brought in to shake it up a bit. Poor Stefano Domenicali he's going to have to ummm, he's going to have to manage this, I don't envy him one bit this season.

Christine: No but then I haven't envied him for the last two seasons really having to deal with all the pressure from all the fans and Alonso. Alonso can't be easy to manage even when he's got a nice subservient driver in the other seat. Let alone with someone like Kimi it's going to be really interesting to watch.

Mr C: Ron Dennis incidently, is coming back to Formula 1 this year. I wonder if he hasn't come back specifically to get a ringside seat to watch how this unfolds!

Christine: Yeah.

Mr C: I'm sure he's expecting fireworks.

Christine: We mentioned Caterham briefly there and one of the things that people are looking for this year is whether Caterham or Marussia can get their first points.

Mr C: God help us. Please, please, please can one of them?

Christine: We really want them to just so we can stop saying that, but also for Caterham it's key because Tony Fernandes has said he's kind of bored of not getting any results and this will be there last attempt.

Mr C: That's a crazy, crazy statement to make. I'm sure he is regretting that already given that his car's got a Renault engine. Of all the years to say this is our year, this is the time when you've got the right tools and the right equipment to go out and get your first lot of points, but they've got a dull engine in the back of that car.

Christine: Yeah, but this is the fifth year for those teams that we can no longer call 'new teams'. And they still have no points. Every year I write in that book that the top ten things to look forward to, one of them is which is going to get their first points and they never do!

Mr C: Yeah. With the so many unknowns going into the first couple of races that is their best chance, especially a wet Melbourne Grand Prix. If they can't score points there god knows when they will.

Christine: I think, here's a prediction for you, I think that one of other of them and probably Caterham will, score some points at some point during the year but it's still not going to be enough to satisfy Tony.

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Christine: Let's take a look at what some of the Sidepodcast readers have been predicting. F expects it to be a dull straightforward title for Mercedes but there to be a highlight win for Bottas. Ediglo, excuse my pronunciation, predicted Rosberg and Mercedes for champions and that Maldonado might quieten down, or as they put it, is going to shut up mouth. Will predicts the Lotus combination will get crashing again dragging each other down presumably. He puts Hamilton and Mercedes as champions. Steven also tips Lewis for champion and is looking forward to seeing



Vettel have to fight for results rather than cruising to victory. He also said that Renault might have the better power unit overall, so that's assuming that they get their problems sorted.

Mr C: I think that's a very good shout. Renault ended up with one of the best engines of Formula 1 because during the initial period of homologation they had one of the worst engines and I think Flavio managed to wangle an awful lot of updates to their engines so the Renault engine got better and better and better whereas the competition remained static, so with Renault going into this year with such a poorly performing engine no-one can begrudge them updates, but the updates they make will obviously, you know, make a big difference long-term, three or four years down the line. So, yeah I wouldn't bet against Renault for, you know, to improve dramatically once they get past this initial, this initial set of problems.

Christine: Ryan, who is infamous for his predictioning skills he says this will be the last season for Caterham and Lotus, that Pastor Maldonado will get 12 penalty points this season, that there will be three wet races and one safety car start, that the double points rule would change nothing and of course, nobody will notice Sauber. Awwwww.

Mr C: You cannot get more accurate than Ryan's predictions.

Christine: Jack also picked up on the wet races thing saying the racing will start chaotic and calm down as the season progresses but when we have a wet race he says "it will be one of the most tense races in a long time as these cars have way more torque than last year." He also picked out ten DNFs each in Australia and Malaysia.

Mr C: Massive.

Christine: Pat has promoted Marussia to his lower mid-field classification with Williams in the upper-midfield but it's the same teams at the top, Mercedes and McLaren with early success and Ferrari and Red Bull catching up as the season progresses. He says "the summer, maybe before the summer break, or maybe after we'll see the order shaken up. I see Red Bull having sorted their problems by then and putting in a charge in the many many races after August to cut down Mercedes lead. I still can't get my head around that from September 1st there are still 8 races left. That changes everything compared to what we are used to."

[Voicemail]: Hi Sidepodcast this is Giggles. I'm very excited at 2014, who wouldn't be given how exciting even just those numbers are. There's engines that don't work, there's cars that don't work, it's all very exciting and it could be a big bluff by Red Bull, could they actually be sandbagging? Or is it actually just that they're really really really rubbish? Who knows. It's all very exciting. So my big prediction is that actually out of all the season Taki Inoue is going to come back and he is going to be the champion. Don't be silly. I don't know, I think it could be a less change over that at Mercedes and maybe if Ferrari, maybe they're going to do very well so look for Alonso being pushed by Kimi and look for Lewis being pushed by Nico to do very well. You can't count Seb out either. But a very boring and, you know, not very useful wishy washy answer, but I come up with something very very concrete, let's go for, err, [pause], [laughter]. Lewis Hamilton, 2014. Ok. I have come to my conclusion. I didn't really think about it before hand but Mr C made my phone up right now and he said I had five minutes to do it and now I've done it. So hopefully some of this is usable. Anyway, enjoy the rest of the season and we're really glad to have Sidepodcast back. See you later, love you, Bye!

Christine: John thinks Force India have a good driver line up and could be a dark horse this year but they won't have the consistency to be an overall contender, which has kind of been Force India's problem always. Janice Marie has her money on Rosberg saying he will outperform Lewis and he will be fighting for the championship by Abu Dhabi. She also focuses in on Alonso who will outperform Kimi in qualifying but will be outperformed by Kimi on race day. Also Alonso will be the first to run out of petrol.



Mr C: Ahhh. Now that is a prediction, ooh, I liked that prediction. We should, yeah. Who is your prediction for the first to run out of fuel? Who will get the strategy so wrong?

Christine: Well now that you mention it, wasn't it the Mercedes drivers that were always running out of fuel last year?

Mr C: Yes, yes, yes.

Christine: So they have a particularly thirsty engine and yet I have also predicted that one of them will win the championship! I don't know how they're going to manage that if they're always running out of fuel. See this is why I don't do predictions. They're too hard.

Mr C: You've already backed yourself into a corner within ten minutes of recording. Brilliant.

Christine: I don't like it.

[Voicemail]: Hi Sidepodcast, this is Steven Roy here with some forecasts for the forthcoming season. I'm doing this at short notice so I've no idea what I'm going to say. I guess the first thing is it looks like it's going to be a Mercedes season so anyone with a Mercedes engine is in a good position. I'm going to go for Lewis for World Champion. I think given the fact that these engines and power units as we have to call them now have so much power that the back end slides about a lot. I think that plays into his favour and maybe cancels out the disadvantage of Nico being a bit more engineering street wise. I expect McLaren to be close. I expect Williams to be, I was going to say a surprise this season, but it's not going to be a surprise for this season because everyone's expecting it. But I think they're going to do really well and finish in the top five or six positions in the constructors. It seems that Ferrari's got fuel consumption problems from what I've been reading so far. So they may be very quick in qualifying and struggle thereafter. I'm sure Red Bull will do well but Newey being Newey the first season of new regulations the cars going to overheat. So I think the best thing we can all do for a good exciting season is hope for a really hot summer everywhere they go, and overheat the Red Bulls and give everyone else a chance. I've given my predictions, but I've given them fifteen seconds thought. Thank you. Goodbye.

Christine: And finally Lou says that the title will be decided in Brazil. The Bahrain night race will be no more special than the day time event ...

Mr C: [Laughter].

Christine: ... and that no one will get used to seeing Éric Boullier at McLaren, not even the McLaren crew themselves.

Mr C: He could do a Hamilton and turn up at the wrong pit box. Do you think he might, you know, turn up at the wrong garage by mistake.

Christine: Yeah. I think it would be slightly less embarrassing than driving in through the wrong pit box, 'cause he can just turn around.

Mr C: It would be less public.

Christine: Yeah. He can turn around and go back out again. So that's the thoughts of the people who have already made their predictions. We want to know what you think so make sure that you head over to sidepodcast dot com [www.sidepodcast.com] and leave your predictions for this season, there's not long to do it now.



Mr C: There will be a link in the show notes I'm sure.

Christine: There always is. You haven't said very much young man.

Mr C: Moi? No I haven't.

Christine: You've been pressuring me to come up with answers and I don't hear much coming from you.

Mr C: Ok. What do you want to know?

Christine: Who is going to be champion?

Mr C: Nico Rosberg.

Christine: Who is going to run out of fuel first?

Mr C: Adrian Sutil.

Christine: Will all the drivers that start the year be in the car at the end of the year.

Mr C: Nope.

Christine: Do you want to name any names?

Mr C: If Max Chilton doesn't get a move on and is still in the car in Abu Dhabi I will cry.

Christine: And who is going to win in Australia?

Mr C: Massa.

Christine: Well it's not long until we find out, just a couple of days until Australia anyway, a little bit longer until we find out who the champion is.

Mr C: Oooh, I have one for you, one more.

Christine: Okay.

Mr C: One more prediction from you. You know that stupid little pole trophy they're going to give at the end of the year?

Christine: Yeah.

Mr C: Who is going to get that?

Christine: Vettel.

Mr C: You think he's going to be on pole more than anybody else?

Christine: That's what he does. He just takes pole position.



Mr C: Yeah, not any more.

Christine: He doesn't put any effort in and the pole positions just come sweeping towards him.

Mr C: Pole trophy for Vettel, I can't believe it.

Christine: I'm going to wrap this up before you ask me for any more predictions. Make sure you go to sidepodcast dot com [www.sidepodcast.com] to leave your thoughts and check out the show notes while you're there. We will put in lots of notes in the post and also the full voicemail from Lukeh where you can hear which driver he misses the most.

[Transcript by Robyn]

