



## F1 Debrief – Massa is super quick... to judge

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Christine: This is F1 Debrief, Massa is super quick ... to judge. On this show we discuss the sound of silence, who lost their cool under pressure, and Australia's magic number. If you thought the opening F1 weekend was going to be all about reliability you were wrong.

Mr C: It's all about the flow, you have to go with the flow.

Christine: It's not like F1 to be controversial, is it?

Mr C: [Sarcastically] It's unlike F1 to jump feet first into a controversy when the eyes of the world are on the sport on their opening weekend– no.

Christine: There was some racing taking place in amongst all the angst and we thought it would be good to have a quick run down of the things that we learnt from Australia compared with what we thought was going to happen.

Mr C: What do we know now then?

Christine: First that Mercedes were expected to be fast, and they were pretty fast.

Mr C: They were, very fast.

Christine: They were also expected to be reliable and that still remains to be seen.

Mr C: Mmmm, that was a surprise was it not that the first car on track on Friday to break down was a Mercedes. Was it like five minutes into the session, Lewis Hamilton barely got going and he came to a stop.

Christine: And it was a similar story in the race, one of the very first to pull to a halt, and yet Rosberg was strong, won the race, disappeared off into the distance, he had a feisty little start to nip into the lead and never looked back. It will Vettel-esque. And then on the flip-side of that Hamilton couldn't even get past five laps. It's a shame too because it could have been a really good battle at the front. Some of the complaints after the race were that Rosberg's dominant performance took away from, you know, some of the action but I don't think it was all his fault, I think it was because some of the big players retired early on.

Mr C: What we need is for Mercedes to be pushed because now we know there is a certain amount of fragility in that package they just need to be put in a position where, you know, the teams force breakages upon them and you don't want to let Rosberg scamper off into the distance and never be challenged because that's not going to bring on those breakages, they can nurse the car all the way and it does look like they've got a pace advantage on the rest of the field, somewhat Vettel-esque, but at least you know that Hamilton can take the fight to Rosberg unlike last year where it was Mark Webber versus Vettel and Webber never really had a chance.

Christine: Williams had the Mercedes engine on board and were looking very promising, we've been building them up for weeks. But we learnt this weekend that they are rubbish in the rain.

Mr C: That's harsh. They don't have the drivability that they have in the dry and because teams never really had a great opportunity to practice in the wet you can't fault them for that. I mean there was maybe one day of wet testing when Pirelli dampened the track but in Bahrain it didn't rain and therefore there was no data on that kind of



running so it's not entirely Williams's fault but I think the team knew that, or know that they have to capitalise on their early season pace. They need to get the points in before the rest of the field catch them up and there was a lot of tension at Williams because they really felt like this weekend could be their weekend and it was over pretty much in qualifying. But then when Kamui Kobayashi careered into the back of Massa in the opening corner that was obviously something that was out of their control and then when Bottas clipped his rear wheel on the wall, more disaster befell the team and they didn't make the most, Williams did not make the most of their early early season pace at this race. But there's another one in a week and a bits time so maybe they can do better there.

Christine: We also learnt this weekend that Massa is super quick to judge other drivers.

Mr C: He was, yeah, he was calling for Kamui Kobayashi to be banned for a race when he only had a fraction of the evidence available to him. Now I understand why he was annoyed because he never goes well in Australia and he always manages to spin it on the first corner, and this time he obviously didn't want that to happen and it happened to him anyway.

Christine: Yeah, well he was comparing him to Grosjean and how Grosjean got a one race ban and, you know, I like Romain as much as the next person, more than the next person, but even I can see that one crash in your first race that wasn't even his fault in the end is not comparable to what Romain did to build up to his one race ban.

Mr C: No, Massa was slightly rash there but he thought, well he thinks this year could be this year you know, he's moved away from Ferrari and he's in a faster car unbelievably! And therefore he doesn't want to squander these chances either and the thing is Massa was where he was because his qualifying didn't go to plan. Had it gone to plan he would have been farther, you know, he probably would have been out of Kamui's way and off in the distance. Sadly that didn't happen. The Williams was like a rocket ship of the line, it was really, really quick. They've got a really got car in, you know, in normal conditions which they had on race day for the brief moment that Massa was in the race.

Christine: We should have had Massa on our last show because he accurately predicted the number of race finishers there would be. They asked him in the press conference how many they thought would get to the end of the race and he said fourteen. Fourteen was the magic number.

Mr C: Obviously reliability was the question mark before the race. But I think all the teams excelled themselves. Red Bull managed to complete a full race distance, Lotus got farther into the race then they ever have at any point during testing, even you know Caterham who couldn't get any, or barely got going during practice managed to get at least half way into the race. So I think all the teams stood up and put in a good performance in terms of bringing these new cars out into the public.

Christine: I think there was a little bit of panic beforehand though. I mean we had people asking Charlie Whiting what would happen if no one got to the end of the race, would they stop it or would they just allow the two hours to run. And I did think that was a bit over the top. Fourteen seems like a good number. One of the unlucky few that didn't make the end of the race, we've talked about Lewis Hamilton and also Sebastian Vettel was out in the first five laps as well. I think they both had similar issues, the cars not running on all cylinders or something like that. But it was quite a shock to see both of them out at such an early point of the race.

Mr C: In the last show I think that I voiced an opinion that Hamilton would be the man to watch in terms of having a rollercoaster of a season because he's...

Christine: He's an emotional guy.



Mr C: Yeah, he's emotional. I thought if something went wrong with Hamilton's race he would be down and, you know, he'd be moping and depressed.

Christine: We've seen it before.

Mr C: But actually he was very zen about being out of the race so early and taking a ... having his championship campaign take a knock so early into the season. But it was Vettel who was on the radio and he was the guy who was stressing out because he had no power. Squealing at his team to do something because his car wasn't operating to its maximum.

Christine: Yeah, I was quite surprised to hear that radio – I have no power, do something! And, you know, this is a quadruple champion, keep your head man!

Mr C: Absolutely, it's a long, long season. But it looks like Hamilton understands that and, you know, he's in it for the long haul and yes Nico Rosberg scored 25 points and he didn't. But he knows he's got a good car and he knows that he can stage a comeback. Vettel also has a good car, or his teammate has a good car. He's got a decent chassis but it looks like the panic was setting in early.

Christine: We assume the Red Bull is a good car. Is it not hard to tell because they were sort of cheating.

Mr C: Well they were cheating which is why they got thrown out of the race. Red Bull were asked to adjust their fuel flow speed and they refused to do so. They decided that they would run to their own regulations, make up their own rules as they were going along.

Christine: Ok, and fuel flow for anyone that doesn't know is the amount of fuel that's allowed to flow...?

Mr C: Well it's a new regulation for this year...

Christine: That's my amazing explanation!

Mr C: I should get you to explain this actually. What does Christine think F1 fuel flow is about?

Christine: I should explain all the technical things I think.

Mr C: Please do!

Christine: It's sort of like the amount of fuel that's allowed to flow into the engine power unity thing!

Mr C: And it's new this year because...?

Christine: Because they have only got a limited amount of fuel.

Mr C: No!

Christine: Arrrghh.

Mr C: Close though! You are correct, there is a limited amount of fuel for the race. The teams are allocated...

Christine: 100kg.



Mr C: But the fuel flow is an additional regulation.

Christine: Also 100kg per hour, which is nice and confusing.

Mr C: There are two measurements of similar events which do different things. The reason for the fuel flow regulation is so that .... Well firstly in qualifying there is no limit because obviously the amount for the race is for an hour and a half race and qualifying doesn't last that long. So you need an additional restriction to put a cap on costs and production. You know, you don't want to develop a race and a qualifying engine because that would be an eternal waste of money. So you want to make sure the teams don't go out, go crazy during qualifying when they're not limited by a maximum amount of fuel. So that's partly what the flow limit does. But the other thing I think it was designed to do was to put an emphasis on efficiency. Formula 1 is, you know, the new world in which we live in it's not all about wasting resources and wasting gas and wasting fuel. It's about making efficient engines and making Formula 1 a modern championship for the world in which we now live in with a finite amount of resources and all that stuff. And therefore by putting a limit on how much fuel you can pump through an engine you put that focus on making really, really efficient engines. And that's why it's important, it's new for this year because it comes in with the V6 and what it essentially does is focus engineers minds on getting the most out of a very small package instead of pumping as much fuel as they can through the system to get the best performance.

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Christine: Another thing we assumed before the Australian race weekend was that we'd enjoy the Alonso-Kimi fight.

Mr C: Did we? Did we do that then?

Christine: Actually they really didn't have the machinery to do it any justice.

Mr C: No.

Christine: I don't think they were anywhere near each other.

Mr C: Massive disappointment Ferrari were.

Christine: Yeah. The headlines have all been about Alonso urging the team to stay calm. I'm pretty sure he's been doing that for the last two years.

Mr C: Since he joined Ferrari.

Christine: Yeah, that's all he ever seems to do. But Ferrari have even had to drag Kimi out of his shell to say there's nothing wrong with the car, it's all fine.

Mr C: It's not fine. Well it's functional, it's just not very fast.

Christine: He said "if we can run a weekend without any issue and a race without problems I'm sure we can be much stronger." Which is kind of true of everyone. "On the car side and the engine side we probably have to improve, but



putting things exactly right throughout the race weekend, making no mistakes, that will already make a big difference.”

Mr C: Go Kimi.

Christine: Other things we learnt this weekend. They are some well trained rookies this year. I mean Magnussen was obviously awesome.

Mr C: What a legend.

Christine: But even Kvyat followed his far more experienced teammate to the flag, didn't make any major mistakes, he was very good.

Mr C: He did more than just follow him, he was harassing the guy. On the radio – I am faster than Vergne, get him out of my way. He was on the radio, this is a rookie, this is a rookie driver in his first Formula 1 race. Already he thinks Vergne is slowing him down!

Christine: Yeah, two rookie drivers in the points. And Marcus Ericsson, he didn't really get a chance to shine in the Caterham, but he didn't embarrass himself either, so I'm impressed with all three.

Mr C: I think they did very, very well and Magnussen with the current provisional result actually had a better debut than Lewis Hamilton. Lewis Hamilton on his McLaren debut managed to get on the podium, but he followed his teammate over the line. Whereas in Magnussen's case he managed to get himself a podium but he was ahead of his more experienced teammate.

Christine: Yes, but Hamilton followed it up with like eight other podiums, do we think Magnussen is going to do that?

Mr C: Yes.

Christine: Really?

Mr C: I think ... well I'll tell you what. The one thing I will say about Magnussen, it could have been so very very different. You know off the line he had an amazing snap when the chassis sort of speared to the left and he just managed to catch it off the line. Luckily because of where he was positioned and how he qualified there was empty space there and if the start of his race, you know, once he caught that the rest of his race was sublime. If for any reason the car had speared in the other direction there were at least four cars to his right. He would have caused a calamity, Grosjean-esque calamity. You know, something akin to the kind of disaster that Kamui caused and then it would have been an entirely different race for Magnussen. He didn't cause the snap specifically it's just the new cars are a bit like that and luckily it went left instead of right but I think if it had gone right you would have had ... we'd have been talking about a totally different race for him and we'd have a totally different opinion of him. So it's too early to say but, you know, the guy did very well and Jenson Button couldn't challenge him.

Christine: The final thing that we learnt from this weekend is that people really care about the sound of Formula 1.

Mr C: Some people, a quantity of fans care about the sound of Formula 1.

Christine: I did not know it was such a big deal.

Mr C: We have a voicemail actually from Davin. I think he sums up the thoughts of many.



Davin [voicemail]: Hey guys this is Davin and I'm just giving you my thoughts on the Melbourne race. You know I like the fact that we're going to a new engine formula. I think that's really cool. But I've always thought that Formula 1 cars should be like really sexy like a bespoke, you know, almost unobtainable thing that's supposed to just sound amazing and look amazing and just be this all-encompassing experience. But these new engines, it's not that. You know I kind of felt like the Australian race was a carbon copy of a lot of 2012 races, sorry, 2013 races, you know, one car just took off in the distance, so just insert Rosberg for Vettel. You know two cars were second and third were fighting for all of our attention so we can just take Webber and Alonso from the old days and replace Ricciardo and Magnussen. And then everyone just kind of shuffled behind. I'm excited to see that Williams are coming back, I'm excited to see that McLarens got their act together and I think that's really great. But just watching the on boards of these cars was just kind of boring. I mean, and I race stuff too so I like a good race, I like a good onboard, I like a good battle. But watching, just the sound was, it sounded like an old GP3 car.

Christine: That was a truncated version of Davin's voicemail you can hear the full thing there will be a link in the show notes where he talks more on that topic and some other subjects. On the engine sounds thing I genuinely couldn't tell the difference until we saw the video of the 2013 cars off the start line compared to the 2014 ones I really didn't know there was a difference. I could hear the high-pitched thing turbo noise over the top and I could tell we could hear a lot more tyres squealing out of the pit boxes but aside from that it just sounded the same.

Mr C: I think fans get a better deal with this new engine. You can hear the crowds over the engines. You can hear when there's a problem with the car or if a driver has made a mistake. I think when Bottas had his accident you could hear the tyre deflating over the engine which in the past would have been more tricky because of the noise, the wail and the scream. The engine took precedence over everything else and now you get to learn more you can hear, you know, what the driver's doing in a corner. The radio messages are much clearer. Some of that will be down to new technology that is used, but a lot if it is the fact that the engine isn't screaming into the microphone and that makes a big difference. The pit lane is quieter, pre-race discussion, pre-race coverage is more enjoyable because every time an engine fires up, it doesn't drown out whatever people are talking about and generally I think it is much better. Within a couple of races it will be a lot of fuss about nothing. Bernie Ecclestone has been vocal, probably the most vocal in his complaints and I suspect part of that is because the crowd is now such a large part of the coverage when you get to races where there's not a lot of audience to be found I think it will be more obvious. When you get to Bahrain and there's not a huge crowd cheering because nobody's in the grandstands I think it will be harder to mask than in the past and I suspect that Bernie's a bit wary about that.

Christine: I can sort of understand some of the emotional reaction to it because sound is a very personal thing, you know, like the kind of music you like and all that sort of thing and there is a big difference being at the track versus watching it on TV. But having said all that it just doesn't bother me at all and it's another thing where everyone seems to be going wild about it just like double points and I'm sitting back thinking – well if that's what they want to do that's fine, I'm just going to enjoy it anyway.

Mr C: There's definitely a difference between older fans, traditional fans and maybe newer fans and people without, you know, the investment in Formula 1 of years gone by. Personally I think it's brilliant I really like the new sound I'm looking forward to hearing more about it and, you know, it will be soon be forgotten, the old engine noise will be, you know, history. It won't matter any more and the modern sound will be the new sound and the only sound that anyone will care about.

Alex [voicemail]: Giggles here. I loved the first race of the season, thought it was incredibly exciting and lots happening and, yeah, I loved the new sound, I know that's probably very unpopular. Even less popular than double points in the last race and all that jazz. But I thought it was kind of fun because I could hear the tyres squealing and the crowd roaring and all that kind of stuff and I think that's really good fun. I know it's different but different isn't



necessarily bad. And to be perfectly honest over the TV the volume isn't the main factor. People have been getting hung up on that. I actually think that while it really really exciting because there's so much turbulence in the rule changes. My biggest worry is actually how far Mercedes are really ahead and we didn't see it because Lewis got problems, reliability problems and maybe have reliability problems in the next couple of races but I think that they are a long way ahead and maybe they won't be caught up too soon. Perhaps we will see a completely dominant Brawn-style season and so while we might have a very exciting next few races on our hands we may have a boring end to the season.

*[Sweeper]*

Mr C: So that was the opening Grand Prix of a new era of Formula 1 and I very much liked it. I think there were more positives than there were negatives. Do you think it was worth getting up for?

Christine: I think so, I really enjoyed it. I did think the racing wasn't at its best but I think as we've mentioned we were robbed of the potential good battle at the front because of reliability and I think a lot of the drivers were still finding their feet, being a bit tentative, not trying to push their cars too much so I think it had great potential and it signifies a good season ahead.

Mr C: And Malaysia could be another wet race, it's known for its monsoon conditions so we may not know the order even after the second race. We may have to give the season just a bit longer.

Christine: It's tough on the cars isn't it, Malaysia cooling. Red Bull might struggle.

Mr C: Many people could still struggle in Malaysia. They are not out of the woods yet. They do have a bit of breathing space now. They've got a lot of mileage and a lot of data. They've got the chance to regroup and see what they can bring to the next race. I'm very much looking forward to it.

*[Transcript by Robyn]*