



## F1 Digest - Bahrain Preview

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### *Intro*

This is F1 Digest, Sidepodcast's dedicated race coverage. After a three week break, and four test days with very mixed results, our teams are back to hit the track for another weekend's racing, this time in Spain.

### *Vital Statistics*

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**Date:** 27<sup>th</sup> April

**Circuit:** Circuit de Catalunya

**Length:** 4.6km

**Laps:** 65

**2007 Winner:** Felipe Massa

### *Last Year*

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During the last race in Bahrain, all eyes were on Felipe Massa. He needed the points and based on his form there last year, he was expected to do well. And he did. Therefore, it's always worth looking back at last year to see if it provides any insight into what we should expect.

[Begin Montage]

**Chris:** Barcelona's track has changed from last year. It used to be a long curve, towards the end of the lap, and now it is a chicane thing, and it looks really awkward.

**Me:** A chicane thing? Is that a technical term in F1 podcasting?

**Chris:** Yea. The pit entrance is right on the corner, it just looks wrong. It just feels like they've squeezed it in without thinking about it too much.

**Me:** Have they been trying to bunch up the pack? Cos I mean, Barcelona circuit is notorious for lack of overtaking. So I think what they're trying to do is bunch up the cars before the last corner of the circuit.

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**Me:** That... man... returned.

**Chris:** Oh yea, Michael Schumacher turned up in Spain to help out his friends at Ferrari.

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**Me:** Well, it was quite exciting because it looked, throughout the whole of qualifying it looked like Alonso might have taken a bit of fuel out to be on terms with the Ferrari's. And the question was had he taken enough out and had he burnt enough fuel off in the fuel-burning laps to do it. And he just didn't have enough at the end.

**Chris:** And the answer is no.



**Me:** It was so close though.

**Chris:** Massa took pole, with Alonso behind him, it was three hundredths of a second between them.

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**Chris:** They just finished their formation lap, lights are about to go on and then out and Trulli has stalled.

**Me:** Yes, hands are waving.

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**Chris:** Alonso tried to overtake Massa on the first corner. It didn't work.

**Me:** No. It almost did. What's your take on it?

**Chris:** You can see why, because he had less fuel and obviously he wanted to get in front and make a lead. It was his home Grand Prix, lots of pressure, all that stuff. And I think that he did get in front of Massa.

**Me:** I think it was his corner, wasn't it?

**Chris:** It did look like he had his nose in front when it came to the corner.

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**Chris:** There was an incredible amount of retirements this race. That's only half of them. The most important one was next though, Kimi Raikkonen.

**Me:** Broken Ferrari.

**Chris:** He started slowing down and it was obvious there was a problem. He made it back into the pits and he was going painfully slowly down the pit lane, but thankfully there was no one else around. It's a long time since I've seen a Ferrari with mechanical troubles.

**Me:** Yea, it's not something that would have pleased Mr Schumacher in the pits, either.

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**Chris:** Yea, Massa caught fire. It was brilliant.

**Me:** You like a good fire.

**Chris:** Yea, I liked to see the man with the fire extinguisher who was trying to reach the car but it had already gone off into the distance.

**Me:** Yea, it's got a range of about 5 metres and the car was about 30 metres up the road.

**Chris:** It was quite funny.



**Me:** Shhhh, fire, spray, shhhh, no.

**Chris:** It went out quite quickly. Massa, later on, he said he didn't even know his car was on fire, which I find a bit weird.

**Me:** Not with those wing mirrors. He can't see anything out of them. I'm not surprised at all.

**Chris:** You'd think he might go: "Cor, that's a bit hot. My back's getting a bit warm."

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**Chris:** So, the final results were Massa, followed by both McLaren's, Kubica, Coulthard, Rosberg, Kovalainen and Sato picked up a point!

**Me:** One point for Super Aguri.

**Chris:** Fabulous.

**Me:** First point ever. Blinding result.

*[End Montage]*

### *This Year*

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Catching up to current events now, the teams have been testing in Spain this past week, but the results were not really indicative of any level of performance. One of the significant events though was for Toro Rosso, as Sebastien Bourdais debuted the new STR3, and subsequently crashed it into the wall. This will have delayed work on the new car and probably pushed back it's race debut as well. Either way, Toro Rosso are feeling quietly confident about the future.

Also at the test, Honda debuted some new aerodynamic parts that should have helped them somewhat. Ross Brawn is convinced that the developments and tweaks over the four days of testing in Barcelona will raise their competitiveness even more. Barrichello agrees, saying that: "We saw a significant lap time improvement with the new upgrades which is very pleasing, but as ever, we need to wait until the race weekend to determine how this will impact our position on the grid." Jenson, meanwhile, has been planning ahead for the race, looking at the best corners on track. "Overtaking can be a real challenge here and one of the best opportunities is going into the first corner after the start. You can squeeze by there once the race has settled down but it is very difficult." Let's hope Coulthard isn't anywhere nearby when he tries that.

Renault also made best use of their test by trying out the engine cover fin, as introduced by Red Bull a while ago. Whether they intend to keep it or not, we don't yet know. Technical chief, Bob Bell said: "The purpose of the test was to verify that they were all fit for purpose and then to pick the best parts for the Spanish Grand Prix because some of those upgrades are circuit dependent." And when asked about how the drivers are, he said Alonso was focused and determined although slightly disappointed by the performance of the car, and Piquet has had a difficult debut but is impressing everyone in the team.

And finally, it's worth mentioning that Super Aguri have made it to Spain. That's really all there is to say though. Their long term future looks bleak at the moment, and with a significant lack of testing, their performance in Spain is likely to be the same. Always good to end on a happy note, wouldn't you say?



So, that should set things up nicely for Spain, I'll be back tomorrow with all the action from Free Practice. If you're near a computer while it's on, don't forget to visit Sidepodcast.com and join in the live comment discussions. The best quotes get featured on this show. See you tomorrow.

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YOUR WEEKLY F1 FIX