



F1 Digest 2009 – Brazil Preview

Welcome to F1 Digest 2009 – Brazil Preview.

Brazil has played host to the championship decider for the last five years – will it repeat that feat this weekend?

Vital Statistics

The Brazilian Grand Prix will be on the 18th October 2009 at the Sao Paulo circuit. The track is 4.3 kilometres long which will mean 71 laps and a total race distance of 306 kilometres. The lap record is held by Montoya in the BMW Williams who posted a 1:11.473 way back in 2004. Last year pole position went to Felipe Massa in the Ferrari, with a 1:12.368, whilst the fastest lap was a 1:13.736, also from Massa. Early weather forecasts look to have rain throughout the weekend. Every session could be affected. We shall see.

2008 in 30 Seconds

Where to begin with last year's race? Coulthard was punted off the track on lap 1, meaning he barely started, let alone completed his last ever Grand Prix. Piquet also spun off bringing out the safety car. The majority of laps were completed without further incident – Massa was holding off Vettel for the lead, whilst Hamilton just managed to cling on to the fifth place he needed. With about ten laps to go it started to rain, tyres were changed, Hamilton ran wide allowing Vettel to take his fifth. On the very last corner of the last lap, Glock struggled up the hill on his tyres, allowing Hamilton back through to secure the points he needed to take the championship. Massa won the race, joined on the podium by Trulli and Raikkonen.

Team by Team

Today we'll start with Toyota, as they confirmed in the week that Timo Glock won't be driving for them in Brazil. The German missed out on the last race in Japan due to a crash in qualifying that saw him with an injured leg. Further checks have revealed he also has a cracked vertebrae, so he is remaining at home to recover, hopefully in time for Abu Dhabi. Meanwhile, Kamui Kobayashi is standing in and he says: "This is an incredible opportunity for me to make my Grand Prix debut but of course it is a pity for Timo as I know how much he was looking forward to getting back to racing. Fortunately for me I had some time in the car on Friday in Suzuka and, even though that was in the wet, it will be very helpful for me this weekend." Trulli echoes what I am thinking by saying: "This season has flown by so quickly; it's hard to believe we are already at the penultimate race of the year!" He also adds: "The track is quite unusual because it is anti-clockwise, but also because half of it is extremely fast and the other half is very technical, so you need to compromise to find the right set-up."

Brawn GP have two drivers fighting for the title, and are defending their lead in the constructors championship as well, and Rubens is really looking forward to it: "The Brazilian Grand Prix is always a special weekend for me and I am very proud of my home race. I was born very close to Interlagos and used to visit the circuit as a young boy and began my karting career there when I was six years old. I really enjoy having my family and friends around for the weekend and it's fantastic to race in front of the Brazilian fans and receive so much support over the weekend." Button also says: "This year will be the first time for a while that we've been to Sao Paulo for the Brazilian Grand Prix when it hasn't been the final race of the season but it's still going to be such an exciting weekend. There's always a great atmosphere at Interlagos and the Brazilian fans are so passionate about motor racing and particularly Formula One." Neither of them say too much about the championships, so perhaps they are trying to keep their minds off it.

Meanwhile, over at McLaren, Hamilton is looking forward to being in Brazil without having a championship to worry about. Of the track he says: "My highlights are Turn One, braking into the long left-hander which bends right and takes you out onto the back straight; Ferra Dura, which is a fast right-hander where you body is squeezed hard into



the side of the car, and the main straight: you accelerate hard uphill and you can even hear the crowd and the Brazilian drums playing in the grandstands." Kovalainen is hopeful they might do well: "Interlagos hasn't traditionally been a circuit where we have excelled, but we feel that we've resolved quite a few of the issues that affected us at this race last year, and using KERS Hybrid – particularly up that long hill out of the final corner – should be a considerable benefit both in qualifying and the race."

As always, the Williams boys share what they have been up to since the last race. Nakajima says it was work, work, work, but when he finished his marketing duties, he spent time with his family in Japan. Rosberg also returned home: "I went straight back to Monaco after Japan. As it was a back-to-back with Singapore, it was a long trip away so it was nice to get back home." But he adds he's heading to Brazil early for his driver duties as well.

Ferrari driver Kimi Raikkonen is hoping to get on the podium in Brazil, he says: Traditionally the Interlagos circuit has always been favourable to Ferrari and we really hope that this will be true also this year, although we know that it will be difficult. My goal is to gain a place on the podium, which might not be easy. Every race things are more and more difficult for us, because the other teams continue improving their cars, while we have been using the same car for a couple of months. We have to be perfect and benefit from eventual weak moments of our competitors." He's also celebrating his birthday on Saturday, turning 30 years old. Fisichella, meanwhile, spent his two week break getting married to long time partner Luna. Perhaps Brazil is their honeymoon.

For BMW, Kubica is keeping an eye on the weather forecasts: "In Brazil we drive anti-clockwise, which is physically quite tough as we are used to driving the other way round. If it rains in Interlagos, driving will be very tricky as there is lots of standing water on the track. So I'm hoping for good weather." Heidfeld talks about life outside the car though: "I'm in two minds about São Paulo. The churrascarias are really special, and I guess the city has a great deal to offer. On the other hand you hear about all these muggings year after year, which puts you off any major excursions. I'm looking forward to seeing Felipe in the paddock again."

Sutil is hoping to improve on his performance at the last race: "Japan was a bit of a missed opportunity so I'm definitely looking forward to getting to Brazil. Interlagos is a great track, not that long, but with a lot of camber and undulation that makes it a bit like a rollercoaster - particularly with the bumps." Liuzzi is also feeling very optimistic: "I like the circuit and I've been pretty fast there in the past so with the combination of this confidence and the car performance I think we could be really competitive. I'm looking forward to being in a strong position."

Toro Rosso have been quiet over the past two weeks, but Alguersuari has spoken about his race in Japan, and for some reason, he seems to forget that he crashed out of it: "Today, I think it was my dream race - the race that I was dreaming all year, which I thought I could never make this year. Really, I saw it was possible, and I felt today that it was my real first day in Formula 1. I had the pace, everything was found more easy on the car, I was more comfortable, and I was driving in another way." I know what he's trying to say, but is it really his dream race?

Over at Renault, Alonso has good memories of Brazil: "Interlagos is a circuit that will always be very special to me because I won both my world titles with Renault there. It's one of the most enjoyable races of the year because the fans are so passionate about Formula 1 and there is an amazing atmosphere all weekend." Grosjean lets us in on some of his training: "There are two aspects to my preparation for Brazil. Firstly, because Interlagos is anti-clockwise, I have done lots of training, especially on my neck, to prepare for the physical demands of the track. Also, as I have never driven there before, I have been watching lots of videos to learn the circuit layout. I plan to arrive in Sao Paulo at the start of the week so I can walk the track and experience it for myself."

Finally, we turn to Red Bull and whilst there is no word from the drivers, team boss Christian Horner is keeping things realistic: "Kimi came from further back two years ago, but we have only one eye on the championship. Our main focus is on trying to win the races, then the pressure is on Brawn."



That's all for this preview episode of F1 Digest. The sessions are on at a later time in the UK but we will still be covering them all on Sidepodcast.com. Join us for live commenting if you can and I will see you there.

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YOUR WEEKLY F1 FIX