



F1 Digest - Turkey Preview

Intro

Welcome to F1 Digest from Sidepodcast, coverage of the 2008 season. Today we're previewing the upcoming race in Turkey.

Vital Statistics

Date: 11th May

Circuit: Istanbul Park Circuit

Length: 5.3km

Laps: 58

2007 Winner: Felipe Massa

Last Year

Before we start, let's remind ourselves what happened in 2007, when Turkey was the 12th round of the championship.

[Begin Montage]

Chris: In Qualifying 1, Sato went out pretty early, but he aborted his lap and came back into the pits. I think maybe he was having issues with his hard tyres. Most of the other people waited until halfway through the session. Hamilton was pretty fast but a little bit edgy. Raikkonen went quicker and was only a couple of tenths slower than last year's pole.

Me: Pretty good going.

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Chris: And also as a result of what happened in Hungary, do McLaren have two pit boxes?

Me: Ted said they do. Ted Kravitz, ITV reporter, said they have two pit boxes because the pit lane in Turkey is so much bigger than the majority of pit lanes.

Chris: Is that legal?

Me: Yea, they've got to pay twice the number of people to do the job.

[Next Clip]

Chris: Both Honda's had an engine penalty. Both of them.

Me: That's not good. This year, the year of engine homologation. You would expect some consistency and some reliability. That's a bit of a shame, really.

Chris: So they were basically at the back of the grid.



Me: Both plum last. Unfortunately Button who outqualified Barrichello was last, last of the two Hondas.

Chris: Well, that's okay, because Barrichello was last at the last race, so it's Button's turn this race.

Me: Is that right? They're taking it in turns to be useless. Brilliant.

[Next Clip]

Chris: The start was pretty interesting. Raikkonen got past Hamilton to take 2nd and both BMWs got past Alonso.

Me: Yea, Heidfeld flew off that line. He was on the dirty side the grid, he did really well.

Chris: Fisichella went in a bit too fast.

Me: Got it all wrong.

Chris: He tapped Trulli who went into a spin, that put the midfield into absolute chaos. Davidson fell to 15th from 11th. Coulthard went up to 9th from 13th. Barrichello went up to 16th, Button got ahead of Sato and Trulli, and was pushing to get past Yamamoto, which to be honest, is not something I thought I'd say.

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Chris: Everyone was diving into the pits but Kovalainen, he stayed out, and he kept on staying out. Hamilton went into the pits and then Kovalainen was leading the race.

[Sound FX: Air Horn]

Me: For the second time this year, a Renault leads a race.

Chris: Are you happy?

Me: I am very happy, yea.

Chris: It really didn't last very long. One lap.

Me: Yea, it wasn't even a lap, was it? But you know, that's the best I'm gonna get this year.

[Next Clip]

Chris: Hamilton got a puncture.

Me: What a puncture.

Chris: His tyre just fell apart.

Me: It did and it was flapping all over the place.

Chris: He managed to get back to the pits which was quite impressive, cos he was off the track at one point, and he said he was struggling to go round corners. And he couldn't slow down too much, and he couldn't go too fast.



Me: Almost hit the pit wall on the pit entry.

Chris: He seemed to be quite good at damage limitation driving.

Me: He did very well, actually, all credit to him.

Chris: And he was due a pit stop anyway, so it actually didn't harm him too much. He came out in 5th, which kind of ruined his race, but considering what could have happened, that was very good.

Me: Absolutely, good save.

[Next Clip]

Chris: The final points positions went to Massa, Raikkonen, Alonso, Heidfeld, Hamilton, Kovalainen, Rosberg and Kubica. Which leaves the drivers championship with Hamilton on 84, Alonso on 79, Massa on 69, Raikkonen on 68 and Heidfeld on 47. Whilst the constructors has McLaren on 148, Ferrari on 137, BMW on 77, Renault on 36 and Williams on 22.

[End Montage]

This Year

Things are a little bit different this year. Super Aguri have pulled out of the championship this week, their financial difficulties too much to overcome. Unfortunately this leaves Davidson and Sato without a race drive, so we'll be keeping our fingers crossed that they can find something F1-related as soon as possible. Nevertheless, there are still ten teams raring to go, so let's have a quick run through how they are all feeling ahead of the race in Turkey.

Technical Director of Williams, Sam Michael, introduces us to the track nicely, saying: "Istanbul has a couple of overtaking opportunities per lap and a good mixture of high, medium, and low-speed corners. The circuit has a great layout and always produces something exciting during the race. The Turkish Grand Prix normally takes place in August, when it's always really hot. With the race falling earlier this year, the temperatures are likely to be much cooler which will have an impact on bodywork configuration and tyre selection."

Rosberg, as ever, is looking forward to the race and thinks they will be competitive there, whilst Nakajima is slightly more reserved saying he doesn't know the track very well except for his GP2 drive last year.

Both boys at BMW mention they are looking forward to Turn 8, the famed multiple-apex and high G corner that can make or break a race. Kubica, also, is looking to put bad memories to bed, as the last two years at Istanbul have not been kind to him.

Lewis Hamilton has outlined some of the work he's been doing with his trainer over the past week or so, to ensure his neck is strong enough to last the entire anti-clockwise weekend. Kovalainen needs to be extra careful with his neck, however, after his high speed crash in Spain. He says the stiffness has mostly gone from his neck, he has restarted training again and has his fingers crossed for the FIA medical test today. Unfortunately this show is released before we'll know whether he's driving or not, but everyone seems to be quietly confident that he'll be okay to get back in the car.

For Honda, Button is looking forward to capitalising on his points finish in Spain, and keeping the momentum up for this race. Barrichello is also hoping for a good weekend, to celebrate his 257th Grand Prix start – the one that tips him



over the edge of the current record. Barrichello says this record means the world to him, and his first race, way back in 1993, seems like only yesterday.

Alonso seems to have much more spirit going into this weekend than he has so far this season, and that can be attributed to the fact that the Renault is now much more competitive. Alonso says: "It was clear from the beginning of the weekend that we had made progress in Barcelona and I said that this was thanks to the efforts of the whole team who have worked very hard in the last few weeks to get us closer to the leading pace. This is only the first step and we will have an aggressive approach for the races to come with further new developments. I know it will not be easy, but I am sure that we will now be able to have some exciting races, and as a driver I want this more than anything." There's always two sides to every story though, and Piquet was disappointed with the Spanish Grand Prix, so he is looking forward to Turkey more than anything. He's also pretty handy round the track, scoring pole, fastest lap and the win when he raced there in GP2.

Glock also remembers good times from GP2, saying he doesn't think he's finished outside the top four, so he's got something to prove. Trulli has pointed out that aside from Turn 8, it's not really too demanding a track, so he's determined to pick up some good points this weekend.

The Toro Rosso boys will be praying for some good results. Vettel hasn't managed to finish a single race so far this season, and is starting to attribute it to bad luck, something he doesn't even believe in. "Usually I don't believe in luck, I only believe in hard work. We worked hard the last four races, and all winter, and it did not yet pay off. So we have to keep waiting I guess."

Force India are still pinning their hopes on getting a good qualifying result, with Mallya saying that is the key to a successful race weekend. There seems to be some discrepancies within the team though, as Fisichella believes they are doing better than expected, whilst Sutil says they have been dogged by mechanical problems and need a strong weekend.

The last team to cover is Red Bull, but they have actually been very, very quiet. Barely any news since the last race, and neither Red Bull team releases preview quotes. So, I guess they're either feeling confident, or they're not. Hope that helps.

We'll find out soon enough, anyway, when the action gets underway in Free Practice 1 and 2 tomorrow. Don't forget to visit Sidepodcast.com and join in the live comment threads for each session. I'll be choosing a selection of comments for tomorrow's show. See you then.