



F1 Digest - Australia Free Practice

Intro

Welcome to F1 Digest from Sidepodcast, a new show dedicated to bringing you full coverage of race weekends. Thursdays we preview the upcoming event, Fridays cover Free Practice and Saturdays and Sundays look at qualifying and the race respectively. Today is Friday, so that means Free Practice.

Free Practice 1

The first official 2008 session got underway in Australia, with the weather hot and dry but slightly windy.

Heidfeld and Kubica were out on track first, they almost looked like they were racing each other, but both completed only one lap before heading back into the pits.

Glock was out by himself for a lap or two, then he was joined by Trulli and both Honda's. Everyone looked a little bit tentative, and the track was very green.

Bourdais put in the first full lap of all the drivers, and it was, of course, his first official lap as an F1 driver.

Ferrari and Williams stayed in the garages, but after half an hour, Rosberg and Nakajima emerged. Rosberg was not out for long though, and soon limped his way back into the garage. Nakajima soon joined him. It turns out they were both suffering with gearbox problems.

When the Ferrari's did take to the track, Raikkonen and Massa traded taking the fastest time, until eventually, Hamilton topped them both.

We started to see lots of wobbles, Raikkonen struggled round a corner, Fisichella ran wide, and a Toyota just managed to hold it out of the wall.

Coulthard returned to the pits with smoke pouring out the back of his Red Bull. A gearbox problem.

With 22 minutes to go, Piquet spun on track and brought out a red flag. Heidfeld stopped on track at the same time, suffering an electrical power cut.

When the session restarted, the Super Aguri boys eventually came out on track, and held up both of Massa's attempts at a flying lap.

In the dying minutes of the first session, Raikkonen managed to squeeze out a fast lap.

The top five were: Raikkonen, Hamilton, Massa, Kovalainen, Webber.

Your Comments

Dank said: "I know it's been a while since we've seen F1 cars properly, but I don't quite remember them being this slow and 'jumpy'?!!"



Out_Reach said: "Boy those Ferrari boys are fast, straight out of the packet!"

And Lou said: "Barricello seems to be doing better than Button, no what i expected at all!"

Free Practice 2

Both Williams were out early after their problems in the first session. After ten minutes, everyone else had joined them except for Piquet, Coulthard and the Super Aguri's.

Mark Webber posted a fastest lap, presumably on a very low fuel run, as everyone struggled to beat it until the very end of the session.

Again, lots of people were running wide. When Coulthard finally emerged, he ran across the gravel, Rosberg went wide, Massa spun into the gravel but managed to continue, whilst Trulli spun into the gravel and had to stop.

Both Super Aguri's came out on track, but they limited their testing mileage, running few laps. Piquet left the garage with 20 minutes to go and ended up side by side with Alonso on track. Alonso had run wide, so Piquet disappeared into the distance.

In the last few minutes, Hamilton managed to pip Webber's time by almost an entire second.

The top five were: Hamilton, Webber, Massa, Kovalainen, Coulthard.

Your Comments

Journeyer said: "Williams making up for lost time, but can they make up for lost setup time? They're off the pace so far."

Jordan said: "What the..... Webber in first???? Oh, wait, he hasn't crashed yet....."

And Steven Roy said: "The F1F1 car looks evil. Sutil was sawing away at the wheel like Massa in a Sauber."

Conclusions

Great stuff from Webber, although he admits it was a low fuel run, and he's played down expectations for the rest of the weekend.

Super Aguri are happy that Sato completed his planned running, whilst Davidson's run was cut short in the afternoon. They're experiencing the usual new car issues, especially with overheating.

Force India are happy with what they achieved and are heading into qualifying with the aim of getting through to the second round.

Vettel bemoaned the fact that the track was quite green, and questioned how the tyres would hold out once the track starts to come together during the race.

Both Honda boys mentioned how they were trying to get the best out of the car in the hot conditions. The car was notorious last year for struggling in the hotter climates.

Nelson Piquet said his first day of work was not exactly as he'd imagined it. The red flag he brought out in the first session actually resulted in some damage to the gearbox, which limited his time to get used to the track.



Despite leading the way in the first session, Kimi Raikkonen isn't happy with his practice session. He found Free Practice 2 harder than the first, struggling to find the right setup again.

He said that if they can get the setup right, as they did, then things will be much brighter for the race.

Our next show will cover Saturday Practice and Qualifying. If you can't wait until then, join us at Sidepodcast.com, where we will have a thread open for live commenting throughout the session. Say something excellent and you might get mentioned on tomorrow's show. See you there.

sidepodcast.com
YOUR WEEKLY F1 FIX