



F1 Digest - Britain Preview

Intro

This is F1 Digest for the British Grand Prix, and today we're previewing the race. We'll recap what happened last year, hear from inside the paddock, and catch up with how all the teams are feeling ahead of the weekend.

Vital Statistics

Date: 6th July

Circuit: Silverstone

Length: 5.1km

Laps: 60

2007 Winner: Kimi Raikkonen

Last Year

Before we delve further into what we should be expecting from this weekend's race, let's take a quick trip back to 2007 and see what happened last year.

[Begin Montage]

Chris: They left Hamilton until the very last possible second. He was the last man on track. He had been slowest out of the four up until this point. So, of course he got pole. The crowd went mental.

Me: Absolutely crazy.

Chris: They roared.

[Next Clip]

Chris: Massa stalled on the grid. There were two formation laps. I thought it was so sweet, he was waving out of his little car. "Help me, help me, it's me." Even though the marshal was right in front of him with the flag, like, "Yea, we know it's you." Both Massa and Sato started from the pit lane.

[Next Clip]

Chris: Massa started working his way from the back of the field as far as he could. Sato? He stayed at the back.

Me: Massa did a really, really good job, didn't he? Sliding through the field. Each lap, he took a car a lap for the first couple of laps. Really enjoyable.

[Next Clip]



Chris: Anyway, Raikkonen managed to get out in front of Hamilton. Very important. You could feel the whole atmosphere in the grandstands...

Me: Sink. Yea, it wasn't only on the fact that he fluffed his pitstop, I mean, Raikkonen had put in some blinding laps. No matter what happened he was pretty much coming out behind him, wasn't he?

[Next Clip]

Chris: Much to everyone's disappointment, Hamilton didn't win. Raikkonen came first, with Alonso second, and Hamilton third. So, he's still on the podium. Kubica was fourth, Massa 5th, Heidfeld, Kovalainen and Fisichella makes the top eight.

[End Montage]

Insider's View

Our paddock insiders this week are Nico Rosberg and Mark Gillian from Toyota. First up Nico tells us his favourite part of the track.

Nico: Becketts and the corner before and after Becketts are very, very special at Silverstone, just because they are so quick and flowing. It's really great to go through there with an F1 car, especially nowadays, because the G is so high from one side to the other side, back to the other side, that it's really great to go through there.

Next up Mark, head of aero at Toyota, gives us a more technical idea of what Silverstone requires.

Mark: It is quite a difficult complex, particularly when the wind gets up as it often does around Silverstone, in that you're obviously trying to balance the car in those very high lateral G corners. So you've got to make sure you have the balance all the way through the corner. When we go to Silverstone we're really bringing an ongoing development of the package through the season. In terms of other items, it's quite easy on the brakes, so in terms of brake cooling you can shut the car down quite heavily, so you see quite small brake ducts front and rear.

And finally, the last word to Nico again, sharing why the race is extra special for Williams.

Nico: The team won their first ever Grand Prix on that track with Clay Regazzoni in 1979, I'm not sure if I'm right on this one, but I think so. I remember seeing the pictures in the factory, on the walls of them crossing the line. So, it's always great to go back there and England is still the home of motor racing, so it's important to do well at that race.

Team Thoughts

Let's catch up with the rest of the teams, then. First up, Renault, who are feeling the disappointment from France. Alonso says that he wanted and expected more after qualifying well, and that the car just didn't have the pace. He says: "I scored a point, which is something, and I'm determined to do better this coming weekend." Piquet, for his part, is still riding high on his first points score in France, and wants the momentum to continue. Presumably, the extra practice he's had at Silverstone will work considerably in his favour.

For Toyota, Trulli is looking forward to driving on what he calls "one of the most historic circuits we visit", and although he finds the lap challenging, he says it's one that all the drivers enjoy. Glock says the circuit is definitely fun, but his main concern is the climate. He says: "The weather is always a question mark at Silverstone; I was in England in May for a short trip and it rained every day! If you have changeable weather over a race weekend it can be a bit tricky because you don't know what's going to happen in the next hour or so."



Whilst Button does have about a million home races, or, maybe three, the British GP is always special for him. “Whatever position you are in and regardless of the performance of your car, the fans are always so supportive and the atmosphere from the grandstands over the weekend is fantastic.” Barrichello remembers winning in the UK in 2003, and says he’s spent so much time testing at Silverstone, it almost could be a home race for him.

We heard from Rosberg earlier, so now let’s see what Nakajima thinks about the race. “We spent last week testing at Silverstone and managed to cover a lot of preparation for the race, which was important for us after Magny-Cours. For the first time this year, I’ll hopefully bring some friends from Oxford with me to this race. That, and being able to drive home and not contend with an airport for once, will make a nice change!” Yes, it is a hard life being an F1 driver, isn’t it?

Hamilton says the support of the crowd gives him an amazing boost, and there’s something he can’t quite explain about being in your home country that gives you more confidence. Kovalainen points out some of the pitfalls to watch out for: “You need to have enough confidence to attack the faster corners; the high-speed change of direction needs to be positive but shouldn’t be too sharp or too understeery. And in qualifying, the tyres start to degrade towards the end of the lap.” Is understeery a word?

BMW have been from one extreme to the other over the past few races, and boss Mario Theissen says that both drivers have been working hard on setup so they can improve for the British fans. Heidfeld says the crowd at Silverstone are great: “The British fans are really into racing; they’re very informed and enthusiastic. I hope we can put on a good show for them.” Kubica agrees with Glock about the weather being a concern, but says he’s been to Silverstone for a few years and escaped without rain.

Force India are hoping Silverstone will be a turning point for them. Fisichella gives us a recap on what we should expect: “We’ll be introducing our new aero package for this race. We tested it at Silverstone last week and although my day of testing was pretty much cut in half by the accident, up to that point the car felt better than it has done in a while. Even though we know Silverstone is going to be tough too, any step forward will be a big help.” Sutil says his target for this race is to have a car that works well so he can pass some cars. Keep your eye out for that.

Ferrari go into this weekend leading everything, both constructor and drivers title, and two out of the three days of testing last week. Massa says that although he is the championship leader now, he’s not going to be doing anything different. He says it doesn’t mean that much at this stage in the competition so his concentration will be elsewhere. Raikkonen sees the upcoming battle to be between Ferrari and McLaren and no one else. Not even BMW.

Finally, our good friends Red Bull and Toro Rosso who don’t feel it necessary to release preview press releases. So, what can we gather from recent news stories? Toro Rosso shouldn’t be worrying too much about their long term future, as although there is no buyer for the team just yet, Dietrich Mateschitz isn’t going to cast them aside any time soon. Coulthard seems less certain about his future. Without revealing too much, he says he’s well aware that this race could be his last British GP. With that in mind, let’s hope it’s a good one.

That’s all for today’s show. Stay tuned to F1 Digest for all the action from the weekend, including Free Practice, Qualifying and the Race, and don’t forget to visit Sidepodcast.com during any of the sessions to join in the Live Commenting threads there. Your words could get featured on the show. See you there.