



## F1 Digest - China Preview

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### *Intro*

The penultimate race of the year gets underway at China this weekend, and F1 Digest is here to guide you safely through all the action. Today we'll run through a quick preview of the event at Shanghai.

### *Vital Statistics*

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**Date:** 19<sup>th</sup> October

**Circuit:** Shanghai International

**Length:** 5.5km

**Laps:** 56

**2007 Winner:** Kimi Raikkonen

### *Last Year*

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Before we take a look at what to expect at the Chinese Grand Prix this year, let's remind ourselves what happened in 2007.

*[Begin Montage]*

**Chris:** There were two close calls in the pits, people really need to start looking, you know, mirror, signal, manoeuvre, don't drive out into someone else. It looked like the Ferrari's had it in the bag, but then Hamilton pulled out a stunning lap.

**Me:** Superb.

**Chris:** And got pole.

*[Next Clip]*

**Chris:** Following on from Alonso's fourth place qualifying, three places behind his team mate, he had a bit of a tantrum.

**Me:** A bit is an understatement though.

**Chris:** He threw his helmet down on the floor, he kicked a door.

**Me:** He kicked a door off its hinges.

*[Next Clip]*

**Chris:** Everyone got away well, when it got to the first corner, Alonso went all the way round Massa, and had the position but then Massa got it back. There was contact and everything.



**Me:** Alonso almost had Raikkonen, if it weren't for the contact from Massa.

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**Chris:** Hamilton pitted on lap 15, so Raikkonen was leading the race. They didn't change Lewis' tyres, he came out ahead of Coulthard, so once again, he beat the traffic.

**Me:** Good strategy.

[Next Clip]

**Chris:** Hamilton tried to lap Trulli, but he couldn't do it. He kept unlapping himself. It definitely appeared he had issues with the tyre and he tried to make it back to the pits, but he couldn't turn the corner and he ran into the gravel. He waved at the marshals to come and push him out, and they did try, but I don't think it was possible. They ran off, and he got out of the car and looked at them, like "Where are you going? Get back here and push the car." But they brought the tractor and his race was over.

**Me:** They didn't look like they tried that hard.

**Chris:** Well, the guy at the front pushed the wheel a bit and it didn't move, so...

**Me:** It was a bit beached. Before he came in, you could actually see the canvas coming through on the rear tyre, so he was running them for way too long, and that was his downfall on the day.

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**Chris:** The final points positions went to: Raikkonen, Alonso, Massa, Vettel, Button, Liuzzi, Heidfeld and Coulthard.

[End Montage]

### *Insider's View*

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This week we'll hear from three paddock insiders about the challenges to expect in China. First up, ex-driver Christian Danner tells us one of the problems we'll see this weekend:

**Christian:** Once you're behind another Formula 1 car, you end up in dirty air. Dirty air decreases your own downforce, therefore your car is sliding around a little bit more quickly, and you can't catch up enough to actually overtake him.

Meanwhile, Alex Wurz disagrees with this sentiment:

**Alex:** The super high speed chicane which is just flat if you do it right with a bump. You know, some guys just spin off at the little bump, so they have to be very accurate on the steering. Of course, at 280k/h at the time. The only thing I don't enjoy much is the super long straight at the back, but that creates a great overtaking opportunity in the race.

Finally, Nico Rosberg is more looking forward to the off-track activities.

**Nico:** China is a very impressive place, the city is great. There's a lot of areas which are really fun, even in the evening, nice restaurants, nice bars, everything.



## Team Thoughts

We'll start this week with Honda, and Button says he's looking forward to the challenge of the track: "I like the layout of the Shanghai International Circuit as it is quite demanding and technical for the drivers but also fun to drive. There are a lot of high-speed sections which I enjoy and you need good straightline speed for the pit straight and the long straight which stretches for over a kilometre between Turns 13 and 14." Barrichello says Shanghai holds special memories for him as he won the first race there, and for this weekend, he's keeping an eye on the weather. Toyota will be getting over their disappointments from Japan, and hoping to do better in China, although Trulli thinks things will be against him: "I have never enjoyed a lot of luck in China but I do enjoy racing there and I hope this year will finally see me score my first points at the track. We have been pushing really hard all season and we are still very motivated to finish the year on a high in these last two races." Glock is happy that this circuit is one that he has raced a Formula 1 car on before, which gives him an added boost.

Alonso is still flying high from his back to back victories: "I am gradually realising what we have achieved because a few weeks ago winning a grand prix seemed totally out of the question. In Singapore, we were very disappointed with our qualifying, but in the race we had some luck and won. At Fuji, it was a completely different story. We totally deserved this victory; we were quick and our strategy played out perfectly. It's simply unbelievable and I am extremely happy." He adds that he doesn't think they'll make it a hat trick, but he'll try his very best. Piquet, meanwhile, gives us an insight into how he wants the car setup: "Once again I think that we need to concentrate on getting a well-balanced car that has good change of direction and that is stable under braking so that I can feel confident and able to attack the circuit."

Sutil is looking forward to the race as he enjoys some of the trickier corners, although he does say the wide run off areas are a bit off-putting. Fisichella is looking to keep up his record of finishing in every race at Shanghai since it was introduced to the calendar in 2004. He also has grand ambitions for the last two races: "I think now we have to keep pushing until the end of the year. I've gone too long without points now and I don't want to get to the end of the year without any on the board. It would just mean so much to everyone at the track and at the factory."

For McLaren, Hamilton isn't going to let memories of last year haunt him, he says: "Sometimes I've been on YouTube and seen a video clip or a picture of me in the gravel last year and thought, 'Damn! That shouldn't have happened.' But it was a learning mistake. I can still move forwards from it; things like that happen for a reason and it taught me a lot." Kovalainen says he has taken some positives from Fuji, overall speed and what would have been a strong result. He's just going to keep fighting for points for the team.

Raikkonen spends 99% of his preview quotes rehashing what happened in Fuji, that he can't understand the McLaren's at the first corner and he believes it cost him the win. Regarding China, he simply says their goal is a 1-2 finish, and he'll be helping Felipe as much as he can. Massa agrees, but has had some work to do before even getting to the track: "I fly to Shanghai on Wednesday and then, the following day I will be attending the Chinese launch of the new Ferrari California road car: it will be the third race in succession that I've done this. And then it will be time to get down to work again."

Heidfeld gives the track a hearty thumbs up: "On the whole, I quite like this circuit. The first three corners are among the best on the calendar. You come in with a lot of speed, and the first corner remains pretty fast initially. But then it tightens up more and more and you have to change down into second gear. Getting out the other end in good shape will be just a bit more difficult this year with the absence of traction control." Kubica is worried that he hasn't had much luck at this circuit before, and is just hoping to pick up any points that are on offer.

Both Williams boys are hoping to do well at the weekend. Rosberg wants to imitate some of his Fuji performance, as he says he had fun overtaking, but the car was a little bit off the pace. Nakajima thinks it might be slightly harder as the track doesn't suit their car particularly well anyway, but he will be doing his best.



As ever, I have no Red Bull or Toro Rosso quotes, however, we know that Bourdais is still thinking about the Massa penalty, as he and his team are adamant they did nothing wrong. He's also worried about his future within the team, although Gerhard Berger says they'll be making no decisions until the season ends.

That's it for this preview edition of F1 Digest. Live Commenting will be available for both Free Practice sessions, so please join me on Sidepodcast.com if you are free on Friday. I hope to see you there but if not, I'll be back with a full roundup of the days happenings.

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