



Episode 10 – 2007 Season Preview

[Intro: Rich Reich, Keeping Up With the Race]

Chris: This is Sidepodcast, Episode 10 – 2007 Season Preview. It's only one week now.

Me: We're counting the hours already, aren't we?

Chris: I really can't wait. I saw it in my TV Guide, there's qualifying on next Friday night and I practically died with excitement. These last two weeks have been really dire.

Me: You know it's one week later than last year, don't you? That's probably why it seems longer.

Chris: I did not know that, that explains a lot. Anyway, we're going to do a quick 2007 preview. Everyone's doing it, Autosport magazine, F1 Racing magazine, all the blogs, and the teams have finally started sending their pre-race press releases.

Me: Ah, that's always a good sign. The season must almost be here, but that does mean we have to watch ITV again.

Chris: Yea, that is a problem.

Me: Oh no.

Chris: Only if you're in the UK.

Me: Yea, but don't some other countries get a syndication feed of it as well? I'm sure other people have to listen to James Allen's witterings. I swear that man's only purpose is to explain to middle aged women why Coronation Street is going to be late again this year, when it gets to the US and Canadian Grand Prix.

Chris: I'd say with his pug face, and ridiculously big hair, he is the perfect, perfect man for commentating.

Me: Do you reckon? Perfect face for commentating.

[Sweeper]

Chris: [Sound FX: Ethereal music] The year is 2007, the competition is fierce. 8 months, 5 continents, 17 races, 22 drivers...

Me: Hold on, woah, woah, woah. You're going a bit over the top here, aren't you? It's not Hollywood.

Chris: Okay, fine. This year's calendar is subtly different to last year. They've dropped San Marino but Spa is back, Germany doesn't host two races anymore, because there's no European Grand Prix, and they've moved the Japanese race from Suzuka to Fuji, which has been off the calendar for 30 years.

Me: So, what you're saying is we're one race down now?



Chris: Yea, basically. They're cheating us out of one race. It's starting later and there are less races. There are four British drivers this year. David Coulthard is the oldest man on the grid with over 200 race starts to his name. Lewis Hamilton is baby-faced but he's not the youngest.

Me: He's not the youngest?

Chris: No, Nico Rosberg still holds that title, born six months after Lewis.

Me: So Lewis is the youngest Brit?

Chris: Yea, two drivers are high up the table of Grand Prix drivers without a win. The Yeti leads the way with 117 starts, and Sidepodcast favourite Mark Webber has 87.

Me: Isn't Martin Brundle like, top of that list, though?

Chris: He's the second highest ever, with 158 starts without a win.

Me: Ah, bless him.

Chris: All the other stats I can think have Michael Schumacher on the top, so let's not go there, eh?

[Sweeper]

Chris: I believe there are also some rule changes we need to talk about.

Me: Yea, the camera colour on top of the cars has changed, so the lead car, you know on the roll hoop, over the driver's head. There's a little T shaped camera, every car carries, so the lead car the colour is now red, and second car colour is now yellow.

Chris: Why do they do that?

Me: So you can tell them apart.

Chris: Well, that makes sense I suppose. Why have you never told me that before? This whole time I thought you were being really smart. I'd go Who's that? And you'd know straight away. You were cheating.

Me: It's not cheating. It's knowledge.

Chris: Well I feel stupid.

Me: Anyway, Fridays have changed. We now have two 90 minute sessions, teams can use separate set of engines and separate set of tyres for Friday so there should be loads of racing on Fridays.

Chris: They don't count that in the two race weekend thing.

Me: Absolutely not, no. Also, during a dry race, teams have to run both types of tyre that Bridgestone supply. They've got one set of hard, one set of soft, distinguishable by a white sidewall marking. Also, safety car rules have changed. The moment the safety car message is displayed now, pit lane is closed for refuelling. Cars caught up in an accident can come in for repairs but they can't be refuelled until all the cars are stacked up behind the safety car



when the pit lane will then be open again. Once the debris has been cleared, all lapped cars, that's basically back markers mixed up in the pack, they must overtake the lead drivers and the safety car, do a whole lap around the circuit and then catch up with the back of the pack. Does that make sense?

Chris: What? Okay, hang on, so, cars that are mixed in between, they get to go to the front?

Me: They get to go to the back.

Chris: They pass round and go all the way round to the back. So do they unlap themselves then?

Me: Well, now that's a question that I don't know. Reading the FIA sporting regulations as I'm wont to do on an average Thursday evening.

Chris: Loser.

Me: It's not entirely clear to be honest with you, I've read them several times. Do you want me to read them to you? It's a bit complicated. This is what it says...

Chris: Is it any more complicated than what you just said?

Me: It might make it a bit clearer. I quote: "When the clerk of the course considers it safe to do so, and the message: Lapped cars may now overtake, is shown on the timing monitors, any lapped cars which were between the cars running on the lead lap at the time the safety car was deployed, and also remain in that position, will be required to pass the cars on the lead lap and the safety car. They must then proceed around the track at an appropriate speed, without overtaking, and take up position at the line of cars at the back of the safety car."

Chris: What's an appropriate speed?

Me: Well, that isn't clear. But what it doesn't tell me is if that back marker gains their lap back or not. I presume they do because they've done one extra lap than everyone else.

Chris: They'd still be in the same position, they'd just have unlapped themselves, wouldn't they?

Me: Yea, absolutely. Presumably that's true, and I guess you're not going to end up with a Super Aguri ending the race four laps down.

Chris: That is very confusing. Please tell me that you have some simpler ones.

Me: Under Article 31.6...

Chris: What a geek.

Me: Don't be mean. You asked me, I'm telling you. It says: "When imposing penalties, stewards may drop drivers a specified number of grid positions instead of a number of seconds penalty."

Chris: Didn't they do that already then?



Me: No. Last season, when they applied a two second penalty to Michael Schumacher, he dropped less positions than anybody else they applied a two second penalty to. So basically, stewards can now say you will drop this number of positions, regardless of how fast your lap time was.

Chris: So they're just saying, go to the back of the class.

Me: Yea, they're saying go ten places back instead of two and a half seconds back.

[Sweeper]

Chris: Well that's how the season set up, what about how the teams are gonna shape up? I would like to do a little quiz now, for each time, I would like you to give me one sentence to sum up how you think they're doing and how they will do, and no comments about Honda's livery, please. First up, Super Aguri. It's their second year on the grid having survived and well, excelled, in their debut season. No one thought they would do very well, but Sato claimed tenth in the last race so things to be looking up. Plus this year they've got Anthony Davidson who is small but drivers fast. What do you think?

Me: With a combined height of 3.2 metres, let's hope they're not short on luck.

Chris: Oh my god, you're not on Blind Date now, you know, are they all gonna be like that?

Me: No.

[Sound FX: Blip]

Chris: Next up, Spyker MF1 Racing. Having changed three times in a very short period of time, from Jordan to Midland to Spyker, the team are probably looking forward to having a bit of consistency. Consistently slow? Only time will tell.

Me: Uh, a little less Russian, a little more action please.

Chris: All this aggravating ain't satisfacting me.

[Sound FX: Blip]

Chris: Scuderia Toro Rosso. Supposedly, Gerhard Berger has a three year plan to get Toro Rosso to the top. They're in their second year and I'm not sure if it's going to plan or not, but with arguments over chassis buying and delayed driver announcements, there's never a dull moment for the Red Bull B team.

Me: Yea, I preferred it when they were at the back and called Minardi.

[Sound FX: Blip]

Chris: Williams F1 has suffered a lot since splitting with BMW, and it really seems to be their heritage that is keeping them going. However, they've got a young go-getter and a younger experienced guy so this may be their year to get some balance.

Me: I can't wait for them to beat Toyota with their own engine.



[Sound FX: Blip]

Chris: Red Bull Racing have splashed out and coaxed Adrian Newey away from McLaren. It'll be nice for David Coulthard to see a familiar face from his McLaren days, especially as his team partner is Mark Webber. Nothing against Mark, but he and the team will need some reliability to get anywhere this year.

Me: I quite like their magazine, Red Bulletin.

Chris: Okay, nothing about the team then.

Me: No.

[Sound FX: Blip]

Chris: Toyota seemed to be lacking drive and enthusiasm last year. Trulli and Ralf Schumacher, both veterans of the sport with well over 150 race start each. But wins are few and far between for the pair and they'll both be hoping a bit more oomph.

Me: They're gonna need a lot more than a bit of oomph this year.

[Sound FX: Blip]

Chris: BMW Sauber must be laughing into their boots after a really good display in testing over the winter. They're outpacing their ex-partner's Williams at every stage and with the Yeti and startlingly quick but yet-to-prove-himself Kubica, these guys may be the ones to watch.

Me: Replacing Honda as best of the rest.

[Sound FX: Blip]

Chris: Talking of Honda, they've caused shockwaves amongst fans and foes alike with their new colour and sponsorship schemes. Last year, they oozed confidence and didn't really do too well. This year, they're not so cocky, so it might be that karma does them a favour for once.

Me: ...

Chris: Okay, you don't want to talk about Honda.

[Sound FX: Blip]

Chris: McLaren have done a good thing by poaching Alonso. They've got some really good talent in the double world champion, and new kid on the block Hamilton. I wonder if he's sick of being called a Rookie yet. Anyway, if they can improve reliability, they'll be on top form for the season ahead.

Me: Constructors champions 2007.

Chris: Wow.

[Sound FX: Blip]



Chris: Ferrari will be feeling the loss of Michael, there's no doubt about it. But they have some consistency in Felipe Massa and they have a fantastically quick driver in Raikkonen, even if he doesn't quite fit the image they're looking for. Testing has been pretty positive for the reds as well.

Me: WDC 2007.

Chris: Ooh, get you, WDC.

[Sound FX: Blip]

Chris: And lastly, Renault. They suffered a bit of a setback in testing when Kovalainen smashed into the barriers at Bahrain. They weren't exactly on Sterling form previous to that though, with mid-range times. Neither driver seems to have the whole package, although there could be flashes of brilliance from either or both.

Me: Uh, Kovalainen's crash damaged their early season chances, expect them to play catch up for the rest of the season.

Chris: I think that might be two sentences, but I'll let you off.

[Sweeper]

Chris: Okay, so the first race of the season is next weekend. 18th March at Albert Park in Australia. The track is 3.3 miles long and there'll be 58 laps. Previous three winners at this race were Alonso, Fisichella and Schumacher.

Me: Now I know this track really well because it's usually the first course on the Playstation game, which I usually play and get bored quite quickly. I also like that they paint the gravel traps different colours. Yellow.

Chris: Purple.

Me: Yep, absolutely. And there's usually lots of crashes.

Chris: Which will be good for seeing whether the safety car rules that you tried to explain earlier, whether they work or not.

Me: Yea, it's a shame we have to get up at midnight. I liked last year, when we could watch it in the middle of the afternoon.

Chris: That was good, year. Because, you know, staying awake is hard.

Me: And also this year, the race isn't sponsored by Fosters, it's sponsored by ING.

Chris: No Foster's girls?

Me: No Foster's girls.

Chris: Are you kidding? But that's what made it worthwhile staying up that late.

Me: Sorry.



[Sweeper]

Chris: Not many hours to go now, what are we gonna do next week?

Me: I was thinking, because there's a lot of news and all kinds of things going on. It's all quite exciting. Maybe we should do a podcast after qualifying on the Saturday, and then another one after the race on Sunday. What do you think?

Chris: Two podcasts?

Me: Yea, it's a lot of work.

Chris: It's a lot of talking.

Me: It is a lot of talking. Maybe we'll try it and see how it goes.

Chris: We'll try it and then you guys can let us know what you think.

Me: Do check back and have a listen.

Chris: Before we go though, I just have to say, Daily F1 Blog is no longer. Aw. But good news, it's all gone to Sidepodcast now instead, the posts will be over there.

Me: Or over here, if this is where you're listening. Depending on where you are.

Chris: Yes, not sure of the grammar on that.

Me: Why have you done that then?

Chris: It just seemed to make sense to have everything in the same place, plus I've expanded some of the pages on Sidepodcast to include links, and also a photos page where you can get to all our Formula 1 photographs.

Me: Do we have any Formula 1 photographs?

Chris: Yea, you know, things like Autosport and stuff. Plus there'll be plenty more in the future.

Me: Okay, so it's all under one roof.

Chris: That's the idea.

Me: Fair enough, you've been busy then. I like to see that you're putting the effort in. What else have we been doing this week?

Chris: Well you've been quite busy this week, forging links with the people over at Forumula1.net.

Me: Those good people. Well, you say I've been forging links but aren't you now an official guest writer for them?

Chris: Yea, well, I've signed up, I haven't actually written anything yet.



Me: But you're going to.

Chris: It's on my to-do list.

Me: We promised we'd give them a shout-out during the show.

Chris: Very good forums, obviously. Formula 1.

Me: Do you see what they did there?

Chris: Yea, it's very clever.

Me: We kind of did a similar thing, didn't we? Sidepodcast.

Chris: Formula 1, fantastic.

Me: So, if you're into chatting about Formula 1, you want to find some like-minded people to have a chat with, get on over there. What's the URL?

Chris: Formula1.net

Me: There's a link on the homepage.

Chris: Okay that's it for now, join us next week when we'll be doing two podcasts apparently.

Me: Doing the double.

Chris: Don't forget to tune in to all the coverage of the race for yourself next weekend and let us know what you think.

[*Out: Rich Reich, Keeping Up With The Race*]