



Episode 11 (Part 2) – Australia GP

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

Chris: This is Sidepodcast, Episode 11 (Part 2) – Australia GP.

Me: We made it through the night then. Yea, I like the idea of Bernie's plans to have night races, I'm quite exhausted.

Chris: It is quite tiring. It was worth it though.

Me: It was worth it to see lots and lots of people up on the forums though.

Chris: Staying awake.

Me: Absolutely. Dedicated people. Anyway, good race?

Chris: Yea, I thought it was alright. It wasn't as exciting as it could have been. But it was a good start.

Me: Exciting first corner?

Chris: Yes.

Me: Nobody crashed.

Chris: Nobody crashed. Davidson didn't get off the line well, and then he got hit by a Spyker. He wasn't having a good day.

Me: Good start to his career.

Chris: Hamilton did something groovy round the first corner, didn't he?

Me: He did. He ducked to the left, surprised Alonso, who wasn't expecting that. I tell you what else he wasn't expecting, he wasn't expecting a fast start from the BMWs, and he probably wasn't used to not getting off the line in the McLaren.

Chris: No, cos the Renault's are usually so quick at the start.

Me: Yes, he probably wondered what was going on.

Chris: Kind of like in my car, I put my foot down, nothing happens.

Me: What happened to Massa?

Chris: Well, he started at the back, and he was doing well, overtaking everyone, I think he got up to 16th, which is where he would have qualified in like, two laps, which is pretty impressive.



Me: So it was a good call to change his engine then. Didn't hurt him at all.

Chris: Yea, but then he got held up by Honda's.

Me: Jenson was having his own race with Barrichello and holding Barrichello up.

Chris: And Barrichello in turn was holding Massa up. Barrichello hit the wall or something, didn't he?

Me: He did brush against a very solid piece of concrete but managed to get away with it.

Chris: And then he went on to overtake Jenson, so it wasn't all bad.

Me: No, and it turns out Jenson was holding him up quite severely.

Chris: Yea, he disappeared off into the distance. Albers wasn't quite so lucky, he did hit the wall. He spun off and hit the wall quite hard.

Me: Wasn't he messing around with his earpiece?

Chris: They said that he hit the wall because he was trying to fiddle with his radio.

Me: I've no idea why he does that. You imagine driving around with these huge gloves on, then trying to fiddle around inside your helmet, trying to find... I don't know how on earth he thought he was going to achieve that.

Chris: No, it's not a surprise really.

Me: That was always going to end in disaster.

Chris: The majority of people started on a medium tyre, didn't they? Except for Heidfeld who was on a soft tyre.

Me: And I think Massa because he was right at the back, and a bit of an exception. But the majority seemed to go for a medium.

Chris: And then in the first round of pitstops, they just switched to a different medium.

Me: Yea, medium again the tyre to be on, in the majority. Nothing major happened in the first round of pit stops. Alonso basically came in first and retained his position behind Hamilton. Presumably at that point he wasn't expecting to be behind him, so he couldn't change his strategy, but he did try and take on a bit more fuel than Hamilton, for his second stint.

Chris: He did seem to be in there a bit longer.

Me: Didn't Button have an issue?

Chris: Yea, you say nothing exciting happened, well, you know, Button got a drive through penalty for speeding in the pit lane. You'd think he'd know better by now. By that time we'd pretty much lost sight of Kimi, miles out in front.



Me: Fastest lap, fastest lap.

Chris: Exactly. Alonso started catching Hamilton in the middle, but then he let him get away again.

Me: Was he looking after his tyres?

Chris: I'm not sure what he was doing, but I'm sure there's a reason.

Me: I'm sure he was playing a smarter game than Hamilton who was trying to drive the wheels off his car almost every single lap, and I think maybe Alonso was looking after his engine and his tyres for a bit.

Chris: He obviously had a plan. Scott Speed was the second driver to retire. He careered off into the grass, apparently it was caused by some slow punctures.

Me: Slow punctures, plural?

Chris: Yea, apparently. One in each at the front, I think. Kubica drove into the pits and never came out again.

Me: He was stuck in 5th gear, wasn't he? BMW reliability problems recurring, gearbox issues.

Chris: And Kovalainen, he had just got himself up into a points position and then he just span on a corner for no apparent reason.

Me: Yea, into Turn 1. It was a hell of a recovery, shame he got there in the first place.

Chris: Yea, not sure what happened, but he drove off quite well, although he did drop the place. The second round of pit stops had the teams going from medium to soft tyres, except for Heidfeld and Massa who went the other way round. What difference does it make?

Me: Well, new tyre rules state that teams must use both types of specified tyres during a race, and the medium was the better tyre, so everybody decided to save their soft tyres until the end when they would know where they were and they could just consolidate the advantage that they've built up on the medium ones.

Chris: The soft tyres are quicker, aren't they, but they don't last very long.

Me: I think they're quicker over a single lap, so probably good for qualifying. They tend to go off after about five laps.

Chris: Alonso's plan worked, didn't it?

Me: He stayed out longer than Hamilton which gave him two laps to extend an advantage which Hamilton couldn't keep up with, so Alonso basically took his place.

Chris: Hamilton was held up by Sato, was it, when he was going into the pits, but I don't think it made that much difference.

Me: It made almost no difference, Alonso was almost Schumacher-esque in the way that he punched in a couple of quick laps before his in lap, and that gave him the advantage.

Chris: And he came out in front.



Me: It would be interesting to see actually, what would have happened if Hamilton hadn't got in front of Alonso in the first lap, and maybe he could have chased Kimi a bit more. He probably couldn't have caught up with him, but he might have been able to force an error or maybe force some kind of mechanical failure on the Ferrari.

Chris: Yea, because Kimi did do a bit of an error towards the end because he was pushing so hard, so if Alonso was chasing him, it could have been...

Me: It could have been slightly different.

Chris: Webber spun going into the pit lane.

Me: Did he? Oh, interesting. That's quite an achievement.

Chris: That's embarrassing.

Me: And later on, Coulthard in the other Red Bull, didn't he have an issue with Wurz.

Chris: Yea, that was weird, because Coulthard just came barrelling down and didn't seem to stop to go round the corner.

Me: I remember that happened last year to Rosberg, I think. Somebody was going round the same corner and another car came flying down and took them out.

Chris: He just flipped right over his head.

Me: Nearly took his head off with the rear well.

Chris: The footage from onboard Wurz's car was quite scary.

Me: Yes, it was. I thought it was quite good, the Super Aguri, looking over it's rear wing as it happened, that was a great shot too.

Chris: Coulthard was immediately out of the race, and admitted to the blame straight away, which is unusual for a driver, they usually like to blame other people.

Me: I think he was clearly in the wrong at that point.

Chris: And then Wurz carried on, but not much further, and then he had to pull over as well.

Me: He was probably in shock.

Chris: I don't think he was very happy about it. Somehow, without anyone noticing, Massa manage to claw his way up to sixth. Raikkonen was the top Ferrari on the day though, taking first place easily, much too easily, if you ask me.

Me: Alonso came in second, Hamilton took a podium on his debut race.

Chris: Yea.



[Sweeper]

Chris: So very quickly, the top 8 were Raikkonen who gets 10 points, Alonso with 8, Hamilton with 6, Heidfeld gets 5, Fisichella 4, Massa gets 3, Rosberg gets 2, and Ralf Schumacher gets 1.

Me: So the Williams customer team beat the Toyota works team.

Chris: Absolutely. The top three fastest race laps were from Raikkonen, obviously, Alonso and then Hamilton, so Alonso was actually faster than Hamilton.

Me: And McLaren lead the constructors championship now with 14 points, with their 2-3 finish. Ferrari are second, 13 points, BMW have 5, Renault with 4, Williams with 2 and Toyota with a single point.

Chris: I don't understand how McLaren get a 2-3 and Ferrari get a 1 and some ridiculously low number, and they're still only 1 point ahead.

Me: Yea, the points system regards consistency over the season rather than outright race wins. Technically, in an ideal situation, Ferrari should be at the top, because they won the race.

Chris: But they're not.

Me: That's the way the points go.

[Sweeper]

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Chris: In conclusion, what are your thoughts?

Me: It was a good start for Ferrari.

Chris: Best start they could have really, except for Massa.

Me: Yea, the Massa issue in qualifying hurt them but McLaren, that was probably the best they could have hoped for, given the performance deficit they currently have.

Chris: I'm happy that Alonso managed to outsmart Hamilton.

Me: You're not a big fan of Hamilton?

Chris: Um, no not really.

Me: I said on the forum that I liked his dad. His dad seems like a real racer and he stands in the pits with a lump in his throat and his heart in his mouth, and he's gunning for it all the way and he's really into the racing thing. I think Hamilton's been affected by Ron a bit much.

Chris: Seems a bit sanitised, and diplomatic.



Me: He's a bit corporate.

Chris: I don't like him because I think 95% of winning is the car, and everyone's like "Oh my god, he's the best driver ever, greatest British new thing," but really, if you stuck Adrian Sutil in a McLaren, he could win too.

Me: Well, you say that but Kovalainen couldn't have.

Chris: Well, no, not according to Briatore. He wasn't happy.

Me: He had some classic quotes. Some choice words to say about Kovalainen after the race, didn't he?

Chris: Yea, he said: "I think everybody was watching on TV, I don't need to protect anybody, it was rubbish."

Me: We like honesty on this show.

Chris: He also said: "When you start like that, you don't have any problem getting better, you have plenty of space to improve." And he finished with: "Because his performance was so bad, it was not him, maybe it was his brother. We'll try to get the real Heikki for the next race." That's some support for you, isn't it?

Me: I love Briatore. This is why I loved Renault last year, because Alonso and Briatore were a great combination, I'm really worried that Alonso at McLaren, McLaren are just going to sanitise the man. It'll be interesting when Alonso presumably wins a race this year, if he's allowed to still do his celebration thing. Because Briatore's just great, isn't he?

Chris: It's the fiery Latino thing, isn't it?

Me: It's the way it should be, isn't it? It's the way racing should be.

Chris: I think the less said about Honda the better, really, don't you?

Me: Are you a bit upset about that?

Chris: It was kind of expected.

Me: And now Button's been usurped as top Brit.

Chris: Yea, what are you gonna do, eh? After the race, Davidson was doing an interview with Louise Goodman for ITV, and he was saying how frustrated he was at running almost last. He said it was really, really bad because he'd hurt his back, and I thought, oh my god, he's getting old. One race in and already he's hurt his back. It turns out that he'd actually properly hurt himself, got taken to hospital and everything.

Me: Yea, I think that jump, when he got hit by the Spyker right at the beginning, might have put some bits out of place, and then he continued to do the rest of the race.

Chris: Big props to him for that. But we don't know how he is. Presumably he's fine.

Me: No one's said, but I'm sure it was just for precautionary checkups.

Chris: So there's not a race for another three weeks.



Me: There isn't. There's testing. The next race is at Malaysia and they're testing, I think, at the Malaysian circuit in two weeks time. You hate testing.

Chris: Not a fan of testing. I can't believe they give us one race and get us all excited and then don't do anything for three weeks.

Me: I'm not sure what that's about.

Chris: It because there's less races, isn't it?

Me: I guess so, I guess they've messed up the calendar slightly. But I think Honda need it, desperately.

Chris: Yes, they've got a lot of work to do.

Me: Renault are gonna maybe have to do a lot of catching up. They didn't look as good as they secretly hoped they might be.

Chris: They didn't do too badly considering, but not as good as they want.

Me: Fisichella didn't set the world alight, did he? Kovalainen's in deep trouble. Red Bull Racing, they could do with a bit more testing. I think it's probably well timed for the teams, just not for us.

[Sweeper]

Me: That just about wraps up our coverage of the first Grand Prix of the season.

Chris: Our second podcast of the week.

Me: Did you enjoy doing two a weekend?

Chris: I quite like it.

Me: I'd be interested to see what people thought about it, because technically it's more work for us, so that's a bad thing, but it keeps the shows a bit shorter.

Chris: Yes, because I didn't think we'd talk that much about qualifying but we seemed to have a lot to say, so if we put them all together it might get a bit long.

Me: It's designed for the MTV generation, with a short attention span. We don't want to listen to a 25 minute podcast. Do let us know what you think, we can always change it, we're just trying stuff out.

Chris: But we're back to our usual one podcast format next week, and until then we'll be in the forums.

Me: Yay.

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