



Episode 14 (Part 2) – Malaysia GP

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

Chris: This is Sidepodcast, Episode 14 (Part 2), Malaysia GP.

Me: Hello? Hello?

Chris: [crying sounds]

Me: What are you upset about? Hello? You know we have to do a podcast.

Chris: Yes.

Me: Oh, tell me you're not still upset about Jenson's girlfriend.

Chris: [more crying] I'm very happy for them.

Me: Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, anyone listening to this podcast, your host has just been informed, via BlogF1.co.uk that Jenson Button has a new girl, and her name, her name is Florence Brudenell-Bruce. That's a weird name.

Chris: I hate her already.

Me: I think she's lovely.

[Sweeper]

Me: So, the race?

Chris: It was a good one. I liked it. Yea, it was better than Australia.

Me: Worth getting up for? Tell us how it started.

Chris: Um, well, before it started, there was all sorts of talk that Barrichello and Coulthard were getting their engines changed and having the ten place penalty but in the end it was only Barrichello who had to backwards.

Me: He started from the pitlane, didn't he?

Chris: He did, yea.

Me: And Coulthard, didn't he have an engine change before qualifying, but didn't tell anyone?

Chris: It was a bit confusing.

Me: He didn't go back ten places, even though he was on a fresh engine.



Chris: The start was very exciting. Most people got round okay, but a Spyker did end up in the gravel and Sato knocked off Liuzzi's nose.

Me: We didn't see it on TV. The camera's didn't pick it up.

Chris: No, I didn't have a clue.

Me: But he wasn't happy about it after the race.

Chris: Liuzzi was complaining afterwards that Sato was being a bit stupid.

Me: Hamilton did a blinder.

Chris: His usual. Take everyone on the first corner. Both the McLaren's actually, ended up in front of both the Ferrari's. It's a good start.

Me: So, our conclusion last week that Alonso was back in the UK working on McLaren's starts? That seems to be true.

Chris: There is evidence to support that.

Me: He was certainly doing something.

Chris: Massa spent ages trying to get his position back from Hamilton, but then he made a mistake.

Me: He made a hell of a mistake.

Chris: It was quite a stupid mistake.

Me: Hamilton read him perfectly, didn't he? He knows Massa's a bit, well, he used to be a bit wild. And he knew that eventually the man was going to out brake himself and he just set him up...

Chris: Perfectly. Massa went off and he let Nick Heidfeld through as well. So, let Raikkonen through and Heidfeld, lost two places, couldn't get them back the entire rest of the race. It was quite a painful mistake, I think.

Me: While all that was going on at the front, there was Spyker having a bit of a drama in the pits. He caught fire, got covered in a load of foam. Kubica had another problem. He came in the pits and was in there for ages. I don't know what was wrong with him, but when he came out he was virtually at the back. Meanwhile, Wurz was going forward, wasn't he? Wurz.

Chris: Yea, he passed Coulthard for 11th place, so totally making up for last race.

Me: He's a good racer that guy.

Chris: He was doing very, very well.

Me: So, in the first couple of laps there was overtaking all over the place, there was overtaking at the front, overtaking at the back, quite exciting.



Chris: Yes, you can take back what you said about “Oh, I only want a one track, one car width track.” Rubbish.

Me: Although in fairness, it did rain the previous night, the night before the race, so the track was a bit green, and there was no racing line to start with, so...

Chris: Yes, but you can still take back what you said.

Me: Oh, I take it back, then. I like wide racing tracks.

Chris: The first round of pit stops was quite funny, because Ron Dennis, he started faffing...

Me: Panicking, I think it a better word.

Chris: Yea, running round like a headless chicken. Apparently, Alonso’s radio wasn’t working, and everyone was worrying that he wouldn’t come in, so it went back to the good old days of holding signs out of the pit wall.

Me: And he spotted it, didn’t he?

Chris: He did, in the end, yea.

Me: He did come in for the right pit stop. Massa was in before him though.

Chris: He was, yea, so his qualifying lap was obviously quite light.

Me: Hamilton, his was quite heavy though because he came in after Alonso, so adjusted times, I think they were probably similar.

Chris: Yea, might even be faster than Alonso. Um, Renault, they went long in the first stint, didn’t they?

Me: They did, actually, they kept going and going and going. They got quite high in the running for a little while but then obviously had to come in for their stops.

Chris: Hamilton really showed how fast he could be in the second stint. He started eating up Alonso’s lead. He never actually caught him though.

Me: No, but the times were tumbling for a moment. Alonso looked sort of out of sorts on the second, on his second set of tyres. Wasn’t too comfortable. He managed to, kinda, keep the lead static towards the end.

Chris: Um, Coulthard, he had a bit of a brake problem, and he was heard over the team radio, wanting, basically wanting to give up. Last race, Davidson didn’t give up and he practically had a broken back and this week, Coulthard was like “Oh, I don’t feel comfortable, my foot hurts.” Like, for goodness sake man.

Me: He’s a bit of a wuss, isn’t he? Oh dear.

Chris: So, he retired.

Me: Yup, unsurprisingly.



Chris: They did say, he still had his helmet on and he was going to try and get back in, but that never happened. I don't really see the point of that.

Me: Um, maybe they wanted him to get back in but he talked them out of it. "It's a bit dangerous. There's lots of fast cars out there."

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Chris: In the second and last round of pitstops, most people changed to the hard tyres, didn't they?

Me: They'd been running... most teams seemed to run soft, soft, hard strategy, except for maybe some guys in sort of the middle to the back area, um, yep. Third stint was hard tyres.

Chris: The line on the soft tyres was starting to rub out on a few of them though, so it get a bit confusing.

Me: On the rears.

Chris: Some of them looked like they had hards on the back and softs on the front. That wouldn't be clever.

Me: No, that wouldn't be possible.

Chris: Rosberg retired from sixth place. He was doing so well, so that was quite a shame.

Me: Yea, that was gutting. Uh, the Williams was quite racy, it was good in qualifying, wasn't it? And it had been really strong in the race. And just maybe a couple of laps from the end...

Chris: When he's got the car underneath him, he could do really well, couldn't he? We don't know what happened to Ralf but suddenly he turned up in 18th place.

Me: Where did he qualify? He qualified, you know, reasonably well. For a Toyota.

Chris: Yea, normal. And then he just went backwards, obviously.

Me: His team mate, kind of, his team mate was pretty much holding station where he was so it wasn't particularly a problem with the car, but yea, 18th place. And that was out of 18 runners at one point. Terrible.

Chris: Hamilton seemed to struggle on the harder tyres, and Raikkonen found some pace on the harder tyres.

Me: Towards the end of the race, it was looking almost like he was going to catch him.

Chris: Yes, James Allen, he was trying to do some maths.

Me: Right, that's always a bad sign.

Chris: Yea, he said "Raikkonen is catching Hamilton at half a second a lap, he's 6 seconds behind him, and there are 12 laps to go, so he could catch him up... soon." Nice maths there, James.

Me: I suspect what probably happened was, he realised with only 12 laps to go...



Chris: Probably couldn't catch him.

Me: Actually wasn't gonna catch him, but if he said that, it would suddenly become quite boring. So he had to stop himself.

Chris: Bless him. And he didn't catch him. Hamilton held out.

Me: He didn't in the end. It was close.

[Sweeper]

Me: So, what was the finishing order?

Chris: The final finishing positions were Alonso, then Hamilton, Raikkonen, Heidfeld, Massa, Fisichella, Trulli and Kovalainen.

Me: Wow, so that was two Renaults in the top 8?

Chris: Considering how badly they qualified, that's very good.

Me: Yea, bit of a save. And first points for Kovalainen.

Chris: It's worth noting that Wurz made it to 9th from 20th position.

Me: Wow, that is a race.

Chris: So that leaves the driver's championship with Alonso in the lead, obviously, with 18, Raikkonen 16, Lewis 14 points and Heidfeld with 10.

Me: That's very cool. That's a very close top three for the second race of the season. And the constructor's gives us McLaren with 32 points, Ferrari with just 23, BMW have 10 and Renault have 8.

Chris: Such a big gap, isn't it?

Me: That is a huge gap really.

Chris: I mean, it's a big gap between Ferrari and McLaren and then BMW is even further behind.

Me: That is, yea. They're quite spread out.

Chris: Um, an important thing to notice was that the best placed customer car was Sato in 13th, he was behind Button. So all this row is pointless.

Me: It kinda diffuses the whole customer car row, doesn't it? I mean, I think this happened last year, didn't it, with the whole V8, V10 issue. Whereby in the first race the Toro Rossos were really, really, sort of, up there, and everyone was going "Ah, can't have that, gonna have to put some kind of restriction on it." And then they fell way down the field.



Chris: And it just didn't matter in the end.

Me: And we've almost had exactly the same thing happen in this race.

[Sweeper]

Chris: So what did you think?

Me: It was a better race than Australia. Plenty of overtaking at the beginning, shame it didn't last all the way through the race.

Chris: But it looked like there might have been some opportunities at the end. I'm still upset that it's mostly the main two teams and no one else can reach them. McLaren and Ferrari just seem so much better than everyone else.

Me: Yea, they are leaps in front aren't they? I think it was a good week for Williams. They still had reliability problems. Again, after last year and then this year saying reliability would be their top priority, still...

Chris: Yes, it's obviously not. But, it's good, McLaren seem to have fixed theirs. Because, last year was very dodgy, but this year they've done two races where both cars have finished, so that's pretty good.

Me: Yep, Heidfeld did well in the BMW.

Chris: A lot of people are saying Massa is going back to his old, erratic ways, rather than the strong character he was showing at the end of last season.

Me: His head dropped last race, didn't it? In the qualifying, it almost, the second his engine broke and he got back to the pits, and his face just dropped, and he looked down as Raikkonen went on to pole and went on to win. And you almost thought he'd got it under control in this qualifying and then it just went awry again.

Chris: I mean, he's nine points behind Raikkonen in the driver's championship, so really, there's no question who the number one driver is in that team.

Me: No, very, very soon that team are going to have to turn round and start supporting one driver, as they normally do, and no question it's going to be Raikkonen, isn't it? This race also put pay to the theory that Kimi Raikkonen is a car breaker because he nursed a very sick engine all the way home.

Chris: And I mean, he was pushing hard, in some places, so it wasn't just like he was creeping round. On the podium, I thought that Alonso and Hamilton were much more buddy, buddy than they were before. Obviously when things are going Alonso's way, he's happy to look after his little friend.

Me: Yea, maybe he's just had time to think about the whole situation. Last race it was a bit of a shock, wasn't it? To find himself following his team mate. And he's obviously had a think about it and sorted a few bits out in his head. I wasn't sure that it wasn't maybe a bit... forced.

Chris: They did seem to be showing a lot of affection. Ron Dennis was there hugging and aw, very cute and stuff.

Me: It's kinda like two fingers up to Ferrari cos you know, Raikkonen's not gonna hug anyone.

Chris: Especially because Raikkonen was there and Ron Dennis turned his back on him. Like, how very childish?

Me: Did he? Oh dear. Well, he had just left his team though.

Chris: Yea, I suppose. But I thought it was quite sad really, because Raikkonen was there by himself. No Ferrari people in sight. But then, maybe that's the way he likes it. You just don't know with him because he's so cool.

Me: It's hard to tell. He didn't look cool, he looked exhausted.

Chris: He did, he looked very hot.

Me: Quite worn out.

[Sweeper]

Chris: Bernie's obviously been listening to my complaints and we have another Grand Prix next week. No big gap this time. 15th April at the Bahrain International Circuit. It's 3.36 miles, 57 laps, and the last three winners, and well, the only three winners, because it's only been three years, Alonso twice and Michael Schumacher before that. It was first on the calendar last year and it's at a sensible time, so I'm quite happy.

Me: The teams have tested there, they tested there not so long ago during the winter, so it shouldn't be a new circuit for any of the teams. They should be pretty hot from the off, shouldn't be any surprises. Most of the drivers should know, sort of, what it's all about.

Chris: It will be hot, like you say, hot and dusty.

Me: Yea, engines are gonna suffer. Who's on a two race engine? Coulthard must be.

Chris: Barrichello.

Me: Yea, so they're gonna get a lot of dust in there and it's another, sort of, hard circuit for the engines.

Chris: I bet Raikkonen's thanking his lucky stars.

Me: That he made it round, yea.

[Sweeper]

Me: Uh, one final thing to mention before we go, something else that turned up on BlogF1 this week, is that Spyker have announced they're going to start selling advertising on eBay, so I went along and had a quick look, and you can buy some advertising for about a million dollars, should you be that way inclined. And apparently if you do they call you cutting edge and forward thinking. I'd call you stinking rich, personally. Um, but the other thing I did notice on that page, is they have a book. You know how much we like the Red Bulletin.

Chris: Definitely.

Me: Online magazine, download it during the Friday... I think it's a printed magazine as well at the circuit.

Chris: There isn't enough time to read it all but it's fantastic.



Me: Yea, but I mean, if you're not at the race circuit, you can download it on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Well Spyker have a similar concept but this one comes out just after the race, so at the moment they've only got the Australian one available. But it's an online magazine, loads of useful information on there, loads of really good pictures and insightful kind of stuff. It's a multimedia magazine rather than a paper based magazine. There's lots of interesting videos and sounds and all sorts of cool stuff. It's a bit hard to navigate.

Chris: You do have to register but it's nothing too intrusive, just a name, an email address, and it's definitely worth it.

Me: Absolutely, what's the URL?

Chris: It's spykerf1magazine.com.

Me: Okay, worth checking out.

Chris: That wraps up our Malaysia coverage. There's no rest for the wicked, so we'll be back with Bahrain qualifying next Saturday.

Me: Bring it on.

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

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