



Episode 22 (Part 2) – USA GP

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

Chris: This is Sidepodcast, Episode 22 (Part 2) – USA GP. I know we're supposed to be talking about the US GP but we've actually got some photos from the Canada one, haven't we?

Me: Apologies to Darwin_Dali who sent some in. We asked after the Australian race, for anyone attending a Grand Prix to send us some photographs, he very kindly did so. And we were supposed to show them yesterday, and didn't. So here they are now.

Chris: If you're looking at the enhanced podcast, you will be able to see them on your screen now. We've got a picture of Alonso in his McLaren. We've got Barrichello.

Me: That's a nice car.

Chris: Very pretty. Raikkonen, in his red Ferrari. Then we've got the corner before Kubica span off.

Me: He had a really good seat, didn't he?

Chris: It was brilliant.

Me: Best seat in the house.

Chris: And it looked like such a nice day as well. And then we've got the corner after Kubica span off, ambulance and everything.

Me: Blimey, very dramatic.

Chris: Then we've got his BMW being towed away. There was not much left.

Me: Oops.

Chris: So there's some really good pictures in there. We liked them.

Me: Many thanks for that, much appreciated.

Chris: And so I suppose we'd actually better talk about US now.

Me: Oh yea, we're back.

[Sweeper]

Chris: Well, apparently Raikkonen used up lots of soft tyres in qualifying and so he started on hard tyres. I mean, that might not be the reason but he was opposite to everyone else.



Me: Yea, he was the only one doing it, wasn't he? I mean, he could have been banking on a first lap accident and a safety car period or he could have just been trying something a bit different.

Chris: And there almost was a first corner accident. If Alonso had had his way.

Me: It was a bit close, wasn't it?

Chris: It was really close, they almost collided but...

Me: Hamilton had it covered though, didn't he?

Chris: Yea, he kept his cool as always.

Me: There was an accident behind them, though. A little farther back.

Chris: Ralf. Again. Ralf had a bit of an incident. Banged into Coulthard at the same time. Knocked them both out of the race. He's not very good at Indy.

Me: Was this his last race? Is that it for now for Ralf Schumacher and Toyota? Have they had enough? They gave him two races to raise his game and he did score a couple of points in Canada but mostly by fluke. Had every other driver finished, he would have been nowhere. But then he didn't make it past the first corner in the US.

Chris: Well, who knows? A couple of races ago you were saying it was just a think that Toyota were doing to look like they were doing something, and it was 'of course they aren't going to get rid of him' and now you've changed your mind.

Me: I thought they were going to do something to make him look better than they did, to be honest with you. I thought they might slow Trulli down, but you know, Trulli seems unstoppable in that car. And Ralf, well...

Chris: Very stoppable.

Me: Usually into another car, like Coulthard, this incident.

Chris: Fisichella didn't get a good start either, did he?

Me: Not so good, no.

Chris: He spun off the track and I think he was one stopping so that really put a dampener on things.

Me: It made for some good racing though because he was in quite a fast car, knocked to the back, and then performed quite a few overtaking manoeuvres.

Chris: He had to charge the field a la Michael Schumacher.

Me: He did quite well, didn't he? It has to be said, muscling his way past.

Chris: Barrichello picked up a puncture so he was out as well. And for some reason that I cannot figure out, Sutil was up into 13th place.



Me: He's not a bad driver, is he, that guy?

Chris: But I don't understand. How did that happen? I mean, it didn't last for long. But it just looked very, very odd.

Me: I guess he just picked his way through the field at the beginning very well, chose his line correctly, didn't get caught up in the melee, kept his nose clean and he ended up in 13th. Very good.

Chris: Briefly.

Me: Yes. But still very good.

Chris: Like you said, Fisichella was charging through the field. He and Button were side by side through like four corners and Fisichella got him on the straight, which left Button being hounded by Davidson. Oh dear. At some point in the first couple of laps, Sato overtook Button under yellow flags, so he was being investigated by the stewards, but then he beached it in the gravel anyway. So he was out. The stewards looked into it, decided to give him a penalty, but because he was out they've given him a ten place drop on his qualifying position in France.

Me: Blimey.

Chris: That basically means he's gonna be at the back.

Me: Why didn't they just say, Sato, you're driving at the back. Cos that's what's going to happen. He's not going to get over 10th place, is he?

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Chris: A marshal dropped his flag onto the track, didn't he?

Me: Dropped it?

Chris: Well, or threw it. Whatever. Cos you said, what's that, there's something blew on the track. And I thought you said, something had blown on the track. Like from the wind but it was actually a blue flag.

Me: It didn't blow on the track, it got thrown. Which is quite weird behaviour and it'll be interesting to see what the FIA have to say about that. I presume somebody was messing around and ended up tossing his flag into the middle of the clouds. Because it was right in the way, I forget which car it was, but it was right in the way of an oncoming car and it got sucked around and battered to pieces.

Chris: A lot of people ran over it, didn't they?

Me: Yea, and I think it was still on the track at the end of the race. Somebody's going to be in trouble for that.

Chris: Heidfeld made a mistake, missed a corner and then he had to fight both Massa and Kovalainen for his place back.



Me: It was a bit of a spin he had there, he was way in front of them which was lucky from his point of view because he could have lost two places. Did a full 360 and then had to get it back on track.

Chris: He did a good job though, he came back between them both, so he only lost the one place. Hamilton and Massa pitted first. Alonso came in one lap later, so he was heavier. I thought he was heavier.

Me: He was. I believe I said in yesterday's show that I thought he was lighter. But he was heavier and it was possible that McLaren bought them both in a little bit early, just in case, the problems they had with the safety car in Canada. They didn't want to see a repeat of those. So they made sure they had... they had a bit of a good margin to third place, so they brought both cars in a bit early.

Chris: And it left Kovalainen leading the race. A Renault. Kovalainen leading the race.

Me: I'm sorry, did I just go back to 2006?

Chris: It's the first time Renault have been in front this season.

Me: Goodness me, I don't even think they led last year when they had a decent car. How'd they manage to lead this year?

Chris: Raikkonen was next in the pits and we had some great helmet cam stuff. Wheel comes off, wheel goes on.

Me: Yea, they've done that before but it's very, very good. They should do it more, they should do it for all teams, I think.

Chris: Continuing his overtaking frenzy, Fisichella got past Wurz on the outside of the corner and then he got past Liuzzi as well. Who says there's no overtaking in Formula 1, really?

Me: Send the fast cars to the back, make them overtake the slower cars. Perfect.

Chris: Exactly. Traffic was a bit of a problem today though. After the pits, Alonso lost time behind Trulli and then both he and Hamilton caught up to about six cars who were all fighting each other. And they weren't really that bothered about letting the leaders past.

Me: They probably didn't know because the marshal had thrown his blue flag on the track.

Chris: That's true. They all did a good job, no one seemed to hold anyone up there until they got to Liuzzi. It's not the first time Liuzzi's been called on holding people up, is it? He held up Hamilton which let Alonso get right up behind him on the straight. Alonso tried to get him, side by side, in the slipstream.

Me: Wasn't that close?

Chris: Hamilton did some great defensive driving, held him off. Which made Alonso a bit angry.

Me: Upset Alonso, possibly. The next lap he did a bizarre swerving manoeuvre across the pit lane, didn't he?

Chris: He got right up close to the pit wall, didn't he?



Me: Yea, not the pit lane, sorry, across the pit wall. He came right across the track on the main straight, a rather unusual manoeuvre. I guess he was trying to tell the team something.

Chris: The Ferrari's were about 12 seconds behind, still off the pace.

Me: Only 12? They're not very happy at the moment, are they? It has to be said that at this point in the season, given the pace that those cars have got, what chance have those cars got of really overhauling McLaren now? They're falling further and further back each race, aren't they?

Chris: In the second round of pit stops, Alonso came in first this time, and Hamilton came in a lap later. He kept his position at the front though. Heidfeld suffered power steering failure, so he retired. Trulli and Webber were fighting for 7th place, and I was so sure that Webber was going to go off, because, you know, it's Webber. But he didn't. He did cut the corner and he had to go back on the track and give the place back to Trulli. But...

Me: He got away with it?

Chris: He got away with it. And he carried on to the end.

Me: Wow. He made it to the finish.

Chris: He did. Raikkonen seemed to be fighting Massa right to the end, whereas the McLaren's just sort of, gave up.

Me: Well, he had a better tyre. Because he obviously started on the wrong tyre, he had a better tyre than Massa and it looked like he had a pretty good chance of getting round him but in the end, it wasn't to be, was it?

Chris: Anthony Davidson overtook Jenson Button.

Me: That's going to go down well at Honda.

Chris: Oh my god. I bet Jenson was really annoyed at that.

Me: I don't know, I think he's kind of come to expect it, hasn't he? I think he's probably, you know, it's just waiting for the inevitable.

Chris: I tell you someone who was annoyed. Rosberg. His engine caught fire, he had to leap out of the car, because you know, it was quite hot. And he was like kicking the car, and waving his fists in the air.

Me: What position... he was in a pretty good position when that happened though.

Chris: He was about 5th or 6th.

Me: So that was some good points down the drain after a long race. And that was what, four laps from the end?

Chris: It was not far from the end, he was so annoyed. Liuzzi retired as well, and no one said why, and we couldn't figure out why, and it took you a little while searching on the internet, didn't it?

Me: Well, apparently it was water pressure.

Chris: Not very exciting.



Me: It wasn't very exciting and no one could be bothered to report it. They couldn't be bothered to put out a press release and couldn't be bothered to say what the problem was.

[Sweeper]

Chris: The final points positions were, Hamilton took first, Alonso in second and Massa finishing up the podium. Raikkonen was next, then Kovalainen, Trulli, Webber and Vettel.

Me: That's quite good, on his debut.

Chris: Trulli did well, because we wouldn't expect that of Trulli.

Me: Well, we did say yesterday that he's never finished out of the top ten at this race.

Chris: That's true. He's always finished in the top 5, so he just missed it but still not bad. Webber, he finished, that's great. And Vettel on his debut.

Me: Pretty good going. Must be pleased with that. And still BMW in the points every race this year.

Chris: The driver's championship sees Hamilton extending his lead to 58 with Alonso on 48. Massa behind on 39, Raikkonen on 32, with Heidfeld on 26. And the constructor's championship sees McLaren well out in front with 106 points, with Ferrari only on 71. So that's quite a big gap they've got there. BMW on 39, Renault on 25 and Williams on 13. I mean, why do we bother saying that anymore?

Me: You just want to do the top three now, in the championship? That is a hell of a gap between McLaren and Williams, isn't it? Goodness me, and also Ferrari, they are going to be struggling now. Rest of the season, that's a heck of a lot to catch up.

[Sweeper]

Chris: I thought it was interesting that more cars seemed to choose the one stop strategy.

Me: There's a couple of reasons. The pit lane is quite long at this race but also because it's along the main straight, and the main straight covers the whole of the pit lane, you effectively have a larger disadvantage because cars are much faster than they normally would be around other types of circuit where it comes off a corner and there's a slow section and stuff.

Chris: It's the fastest point of the circuit that you're missing out.

Me: And it's not only the fastest point of the circuit but it's a really, really fast circuit. So I think it's a bigger penalty to pay here than another circuit. So a one stop strategy would normally pay dividends except for the tyre problems whereby you have to run both types of tyre.

Chris: If you're one stopping, that means you have to run half the race on one tyre and half the race on the not so good tyre.

Me: In essence, yes, and that not so good tyre is pretty bad. So that's quite a gamble. It obviously paid off for some people, but basically, given the current tyre rules it's a two stop race. So we've still got a huge gap between the front



two cars and the rest of the field. They seem to have absolutely everything going for them at the moment, don't they?

Chris: Yea, I mean, the gap between McLaren and Ferrari seems to be getting bigger and bigger, and then the gap between Ferrari and BMW is getting bigger and bigger, and the gap between them and everyone else is like a big ocean.

Me: BMW were a little bit off-colour, this race, I thought. They did qualify well, high hopes for them, not much pace in the race.

Chris: I think Renault have picked it up.

Me: Yea. Renault were pretty quick, if it wasn't for Fisichella's mistake, I think he would have been in a really good position right at the end. It was a really fast car, he had quite a lot of pace under him, as he was overtaking those other guys.

Chris: And the Red Bull did well. Because if Webber was driving it and he finished, that's really good, and obviously with Coulthard, we don't know. But, it seemed to be good reliability at last.

Me: Especially seeing as their chief aerodynamicist was tanking it round Le Mans at the time.

Chris: That's true.

Me: So you enjoyed the race?

Chris: I liked the first half of the race.

Me: Bit of a quiet second half?

Chris: I liked the first bit because there was lots of overtaking, and it was like exciting for the right reasons, whereas Canada was exciting because everyone kept crashing which is not good.

Me: So it was exciting for racing.

Chris: Exactly.

Me: I think it's a blimmin' good job that Alonso and Hamilton are having a go at each other and taking points off each other and a bit of inter-team competition because if it wasn't for those two, there really wouldn't be too much to watch this year, would there?

Chris: It would be like the Ferrari's were when they were dominant because that would just be, you know Michael Schumacher was going to win all the time, whereas nowadays you wonder whether Alonso's going to pull something out of the bag.

Me: Yea, so that's good, that's the only thing that's really keeping this year alive but it was a good race.

[Sweeper]



Chris: While we're watching a race, we have the Formula 1.com numbers up, and I'm keeping an eye on anyone that's live Twittering it, whilst you are in the forums.

Me: Well, Formula 1, they have a live chat, so we tend to keep an eye on the chat window. There was a great joke, can I give you a quick joke?

Chris: Yea, go on.

Me: Do you want to hear the shortest joke in Formula 1?

Chris: Yea.

Me: Ralf.

Chris: That's horrible.

Me: So that's what I was doing when the race was on. We did try listening to 5 Live though.

Chris: We thought... we always try and give ITV a chance but again they were annoying, so we thought we'd try and tune into Radio 5 Live, but whenever the adverts where on the telly we flipped over to 5 Live, they kept cutting to the cricket.

Me: Yea, but it was exciting cricket.

Chris: No it wasn't. Cricket is not exciting.

Me: It was important, I'm sure. Some stumps fell, they said. I heard them. He said lots of stumps have fallen.

Chris: Right. Woohoo.

Me: Yay. I thought there was only three in cricket anyway.

Chris: There's no ideal solution, is there? ITV is rubbish, Radio 5 Live cuts away, so I think we'll just have to do our own commentary, you know.

Me: Shall we?

Chris: Maybe.

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