



Episode 3 – Autosport International 2007

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

Chris: Hello and welcome to Sidepodcast, Episode 3. Today we're talking about Autosport International 2007, the racing car show.

Me: The racing car show?

Chris: That's what it's called.

Me: Who makes up these titles?

Chris: Which took place at the Birmingham NEC. The show runs Thursday to Sunday, with Thursday and Friday being trade only days. We had the choice between Anthony Davidson on Saturday and Takuma Sato on Sunday, and we chose Saturday.

Me: And we chose Anthony Davidson.

Chris: No, we chose Saturday. This is the third year we attended the show. The first year we arrived around 2 o'clock in the afternoon, everything was shutting down and everybody had run out of free stuff. The second year, we arrived about 11 o'clock. It was really, really busy. This year we decided to be punctual and arrive at 9am.

Me: And thank god we did.

Chris: It was perfection.

Me: If we'd have been five minutes later, we'd have missed the only person worth seeing all day.

Chris: Absolutely. There was a queue for the buses, but we walked. There was a queue for the tickets, but we bypassed that. And there was a queue to get in but it only took five minutes. It was perfect timing.

Me: And we happened to walk in the correct door. We walked in the door that was closest to the Formula 1 display.

Chris: Exactly.

Me: And we happened upon... who did we happen upon first? Someone was already there when we got there, weren't they?

Chris: It was Allan McNish. He was there.

Me: Ex-Formula 1 star, ex-Toyota driver.

Chris: Yes. I don't really remember, but I recognise him if that helps.

Me: How do you even know him?



Chris: I recognise him from previous years.

Me: Or ITV sport.

Chris: And that, yes.

Me: So, he was there, signing autographs when we arrived.

Chris: He was right there, when we walked in. You were quite amazed at how quickly it all happened. We were scrabbling for our cameras.

Me: We were just getting a look, there's some cars, there's some lights.

Chris: Pretty girl, with legs, that's nice.

Me: Ah, Allan McNish!

Chris: Where's our camera?

Me: Had we been any later, we'd have missed the only thing worth seeing which was Anthony Davidson. Who basically followed on almost immediately after Allan McNish.

Chris: I think you'll find it was 8 minutes later. 8 minutes exactly, because the guy that looks like Harry Hill with the big collars and everything...

Me: He did look like Harry Hill, yea.

Chris: He said Anthony Davidson will arrive in 8 minutes, and lo and behold 8 minutes later, Anthony Davidson walked through the door. He walked out amongst the formula 1 cars.

Me: It wasn't just amongst the... I don't want anyone listening to get the wrong impression. It wasn't just a bunch of Formula 1 cars spread out across the road where some kid had come and just tossed them out across the floor, like you do. They were laid out in the championship finishing order, were they not? In a pseudo grid, was it Monza, it was trying to look like? They had something to look like grandstands in the background, and they were, you know, Renault, Ferrari, McLaren, in the order they finished the championship.

Chris: Honda.

Me: Yea, Honda might have been in there somewhere, yes. With some guy sat in it. I don't know who was sat in there, who drives for Honda?

Chris: Couldn't tell you. So Anthony Davidson walked up and down the line with this Harry Hill guy, and he was talking about how he's very happy to have a race drive, how he's very happy to wait ages to get one, but how he'd got used to testing. Harry Hill asked the question about Red Bulls: "Who's going to win the battle between David Coulthard and Mark Webber?" Anthony Davidson was very diplomatic, as you would be, but it looks like he sided with Webber which was interesting.



Me: He had a lot of insightful things to say about customer chassis, as well, as he's going to be driving a Super Aguri next year.

Chris: Yes, he would do, wouldn't he?

Me: There's a bit of controversy there, he definitely sided with let's just take the BAR chassis and drive with it, please.

Chris: Please shut up about it now.

Me: Please don't ask me this question right now.

Chris: The cool thing about Autosport is you get to be really close to these drivers, because we were what, ten feet away from him.

Me: Yea, barely that.

Chris: I mean, we saw him at Goodwood, but we were quite a way away from him then, and he was small.

Me: We did see him at Goodwood but he was just doing a photocall in the distance, and we were behind a barrier, there was the PR people,

Chris: There was quite a good zoom on our camera.

Me: Whereas we were really close, weren't we? Right next to the guy really.

Chris: Yea, this time, we were really close. And it turns out he actually is really, really tiny.

Me: He couldn't actually see over the wings of the cars, really. I mean, he disappeared behind a Spyker in the background, I didn't see him for five minutes.

Chris: I kept saying to you that I wanted to pick him up and put him in my pocket and run out the door but I couldn't get close to him obviously, and people might have noticed.

Me: Security might have something to say about that.

Chris: I don't know, they wouldn't have been able to see him in my pocket. Would have been fine.

Me: His PR lady might have objected.

Chris: After Anthony left the stage, we had time to look at the cars more closely. You were quite interested in the Renault.

Me: I like the Renault.

Chris: Yes, being a championship winning car.

Me: It was the championship winning car, the car that beat Michael Schumacher again, and there it was right in front of us, you could actually touch it.



Chris: You're not allowed but you did. I thought it was a bit odd because they all had helmets, obviously there weren't actual drivers sitting there all day.

Me: For four days.

Chris: But they had helmets there to represent the drivers, and some of them didn't have drivers which I thought was a bit odd.

Me: Just empty cockpits.

Chris: But Ferrari had a white helmet, which I thought was even weirder, like they couldn't decide which driver to put in there.

Me: I don't really understand, the only thing I can assume is that it was the lead driver in the championship, and maybe because Schumacher's retired...

Chris: They didn't want to.

Me: It's a tough call, because... yea, it was kind of weird because a couple of back markers didn't have any helmets at all. The Red Bull had no one in it and the Toro Rosso had no one in it. And also there was a great act of diplomacy from the Honda guys. They had, on one side if you looked at it, they had Barrichello, his name and sticker.

Chris: It was Jenson's helmet. Jenson's helmet and it said Barrichello on one side, and Jenson on the other.

Me: So they obviously couldn't decide who was who.

Chris: Or they had excess stickers. Having had our fill of the Formula 1 cars, we decided to carry on, have a look and see what else is out there. There was plenty of rally cars, there was a rally set up stage thing, with branches, trees, rocks and a weird looking sheep.

Me: It was kinda weird that sheep.

Chris: It was demented.

Me: You could see what they were trying to do, the car lifted off the ground, jumping over the hill, that was great. Sheep? Kind of weird.

Chris: There was also Le Mans cars, regular sports cars, there were lots of karting stands. There was a little Scalextric track, well, I say little, it was huge. It went round and round and round a bit more, but none of them were any good at it, I didn't think.

Me: They kind of got a bit overexcited with the whole, pull the trigger and go as fast as you can, and the cars... it was kind of a suped up Scalextric, not your run of the mill one you get from Argos Scalextric track.

Chris: Although I'm not very good at that either.

Me: This was a really, really, really professional piece of kit, and people sat on the start line, the guy said go. They put their finger on the trigger and the cars just flew off the racing track.



Chris: I mean, there was four or five guys in the middle of the track and it went all the way round them, and they spent the entire time just racing after the cars, putting them back in place again. It didn't look like much fun.

Me: It was a good track, it was a great setup, but a different kind of Scalextric really, a different league.

Chris: There was all that fun stuff, but there didn't seem to be as much Formula 1 stuff as we've seen in previous years.

Me: No, in previous years, we've had the history of Formula 1, and Formula 1 cars throughout the years.

Chris: Yea, last year, there was a really good chronological thing with all these different stands and Hakkinen's car, and going right back to the fifties.

Me: There was and also there tend to be more Formula 1 personalities, I hesitate to call them stars, people from Formula 1 tend to turn up a bit more.

Chris: David Coulthard wasn't there.

Me: He wasn't. He's been there every year previously and he decided not to turn up this year. Big disappointment David, where were you?

Chris: We have got lots of pictures of him already, though.

Me: You know, he must have something else to say.

Chris: He's always got something to say.

Me: So he wasn't there, but Toyota were there.

Chris: That's right, we came across a Toyota thing, which was actually very cool and probably one of the best bits of the whole thing.

Me: Absolutely. Big up the Toyota boys, that was genius, I'm well impressed. They turned up with the full F1 rig, you know, the car transporter, the full bananas, they bring the car out of that kind of thing. They set up a proper bonafide 2006 Formula 1 car. Probably Ralf's or Trulli's or one of them.

Chris: How many others were there?

Me: Could have been the test drivers.

Chris: Oh, okay. I tell you what, they had two postcards that you could pick up. One was Zonta and the other one was the other guy.

Me: Panis.

Chris: Exactly. But nothing for Schumacher or Trulli, which I thought was a bit rubbish. Shouldn't you be promoting the drivers?



Me: Hasn't Panis retired?

Chris: Yes, he did. Yes, exactly.

Me: Last year. Didn't they give him a piece of race track or something?

Chris: And a big cake.

Me: They turned up with this great big clock in the back of their stand.

Chris: Big red numbers.

Me: Absolutely, and what it was, they got teams of three people per wheel, and they did a makeshift pitstop and timed you.

Chris: It was like a little competition.

Me: I forget what the winners get, but it was a great idea.

Chris: Hats. Baseball caps. Brilliant, worth fighting for.

Me: Possibly not worth the effort put in, but it was a great idea, you turned up with your team of three people, you had a go, somebody had the wheel gun. It was a proper wheel gun, not some kind of toy gun, actual proper Formula 1 wheels, put the wheel on, put the gun in, swap the wheel over, and they timed you.

Chris: Apparently, the fastest was about 4 seconds, which is incredible for just the regular person on the street.

Me: Non professional, 4 seconds to change a Formula 1 wheel.

Chris: You especially liked the team of girls that went to do it dressed in their white, skimpy outfits.

Me: We happened to stop by, I forget who it was now...

Chris: It was the Coventry University of Motorsport, their glamour girls for their stand. They were dressed in these white skimpy outfits, they decided to have a go, or maybe they were told to have a go, whatever.

Me: I suspect marketing got involved and said, "You're a team of three women, go and have a go."

Chris: It wasn't very good for the girls, let's just leave it at that.

Me: Didn't they lose? They came last didn't they?

Chris: Sh, yea, sh. They took an exceptionally long amount of time, but we don't need to keep talking about it, it's fine.

Me: Well impressed with Toyota for turning up, and they were basically the only Formula 1 team to turn up, bar Renault, who turned up with the R26, did they not?



Chris: They did, yes, you stayed by that for an awfully long amount of time, until some legs walked past, and then you were chasing off after them instead.

Me: Did I?

Chris: Yea you did. You do like the Renault, but not as much as the girls. That's what I've come to discover.

Me: It might have won the 2006 World Championship, but suspenders! What can you do?

Chris: I'll tell you my favourite thing about Toyota, just going back a bit, they had the stand where you get to have your photo taken with the two cardboard drivers, and Ralf Schumacher's tooth had been blackened out by someone.

Me: Yea, someone was messing around there.

Chris: It was kind of mean.

Me: A British holiday tradition kind of thing where you've got the fat guy, and the fat lady, and you put your head in between them...

Chris: With the little baby at the bottom.

Me: And Ralf... somebody blacked out Ralf's teeth.

Chris: Funny.

Me: Bless him. I guess they only brought one because they didn't replace it.

Chris: They didn't, it was there all day.

Me: And that was the lot really, for the Formula 1 fraternity turning up really. Toyota, Renault, and then a big line of cars.

Chris: Which is to do with F1 Racing, isn't it? The cars don't get a say in it.

Me: Oh is that right? It wasn't Autosport particularly, it was F1 Racing that organised it.

Chris: I think so. So we spent the rest of the day taking pictures of all the girls, I mean there were a lot of girls.

Me: I'll tell you the slight justification here, and I'm sure I don't need it, but if you attend the same show every year, year after year, you'll find that 90% of the stands end up at the same place, 90% of the merchandise is still the same, I mean they were still selling BAR Honda merchandise. It's 2007.

Chris: I bought that t-shirt last year, it's out of date within six months.

Me: It was out of date last year.

Chris: Exactly, but they're still selling it. I don't know why people are still buying this stuff when it goes out of date so quickly.



Me: I swear to God, I cannot tell a lie, there's a company there, they turned up and they're trying to sell Jaguar Racing uniforms.

Chris: No way.

Me: Yea, Jaguar Racing Green. Eddie Irvine's uniform changes very little, the only thing worth taking a picture of that was different from last year, and the only way you could look at a photograph and know it was 2007, as opposed to that was 2006, when the stands are the same. The same Formula 1 grid turned up with the same cars in basically the same order.

Chris: Don't tell me, different girls each year?

Me: Different girls each year.

Chris: That's your excuse is it?

Me: Yea.

Chris: The only good bit of merchandise I could see was that guy who was painting pictures, like actual paint, brush and everything.

Me: He was, live artistry.

Chris: The picture he was painting wasn't Formula 1, it was something else, but he had some around of Formula 1 cars, and they look quite nice, but then, I still worry that you're gonna look at that and think, well, that's out of date. I don't know if it's going down as a piece of history, or if it's just gonna go out of date.

Me: That is a problem, if you go back and get Senna hanging on to Mansell's air box, you know...

Chris: That's a bit of history.

Me: Put it on my wall. Nick Heidfeld in a BMW, not so much. In a couple of years time.

Chris: No. That's the problem. So, there wasn't very much on the Formula 1 front, it was actually a little bit disappointing, but we did make up for it, by gathering lots of bags of stuff.

Me: Lots of free tat.

Chris: No it wasn't tat, it was cool stuff. There was pens, and I got two keyrings, and we even got a notepad from a business that's actually just up the road from us. So you know, that's was worth going.

Me: That was worth the five hour round trip. Pick a notepad up from over the road.

Chris: Yea, well, it was. Exactly. So if you haven't been, I really recommend going.

Me: I recommend going.



Chris: We recommend going. It's worth it if you live sort of nearby. It's not worth travelling halfway across the globe for, but a couple of hours in a car isn't going to hurt. And it's probably not worth going two years in a row because it tends to be the same thing over and over again. Although we will be there next year, so don't listen to us really.

Me: Do as I say...

Chris: Not as I do, exactly. That's only because we're a couple of geeks. So this has been episode three of Sidepodcast, don't forget to check out the website at Sidepodcast.com, where we have a new forum, where you can talk about anything you want to really.

Me: Formula 1 related, obviously.

Chris: Well, yes.

Me: And keep it clean.

Chris: And don't forget to keep dailyf1blog.blogspot.com (*now retired*) for all the news and gossip from the Formula 1 world. Next week we'll be talking about all the news from January, including new car launches from Ferrari, McLaren, Honda and Renault.

Me: Ah, Renault.

Chris: You do like the Renault. So I'll see you next week.

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

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