



## Episode 35 – Belgium GP

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

**Chris:** This is Sidepodcast, Episode 35 – Belgium GP. Sad news, first. Colin McRae has died in a helicopter crash outside his house. We saw him at Goodwood for about 3 seconds as he flew past in his brand new car.

**Me:** His concept four. I think that's a pretty good way to remember him though. Just, there he is. There he's gone.

**Chris:** Yep. It's very sad. Dave Richards was also in a helicopter crash today, but he escaped with no injuries, so not a fan of the helicopter today.

[Sweeper]

**Chris:** We're not gonna hear much from you today, are we?

**Me:** I should apologise. I have a very, very sore throat and blocked ears. So not only can I not speak, I can't hear a word you're saying.

**Chris:** Good, well, I'll just carry on then.

**Me:** I'm deteriorating rapidly, so I do apologise in advance.

**Chris:** A bit of news first of all. Super Aguri are talking to four different buyers, presumably because they haven't been paid for their sponsorship.

**Me:** And they are likely to be handed down a 2007 Honda, and they don't want that. They want to buy a 2008. No one wants that thing handed down to them.

**Chris:** The buyers are South African wheeler dealer Tony Teixeira. I like the name wheeler dealer, do you think that's what it is on his passport? That's his official job. Dutch billionaire Marcel Boekhoorn, Alejandro Agag, and a fourth mysterious buyer from Asia.

**Me:** He's bound to have a complicated name as well.

**Chris:** All those are named from GrandPrix.com, so they know everything. Roldan Rodriguez, a GP2 driver, was testing the Spyker B spec car at Silverstone. Colin Kolles said he performed very well, they were very impressed, and he's added something to the team, so you never know there might be a drive waiting for him in future years.

**Me:** Keep an eye out for that one.

**Chris:** BMW aren't announcing their test driver until Timo Glock decides what he's gonna do next year. He thinks he's in with a chance at the Toyota seat.

**Me:** Not Franck then?



**Chris:** No. I want Franck. And all the teams are currently in discussion to allow for 3,000 extra miles devoted especially to young drivers.

**Me:** That's a good idea because they're not getting much of a look in, due to the new Friday test rules, so amending those slightly is a good plan for 2008.

**Chris:** Obviously we're not gonna go into the whole espionage thing, because we did a special show about that, but Max Mosley has been causing a bit of chaos. On Saturday, he questioned Ron Dennis' integrity, basically called him a liar, and he subsequently had to issue a clarification which backtracked what he said. "For the avoidance of doubt," I quote, "Ron Dennis told me on the Sunday of the Hungarian Grand Prix, that notwithstanding an exchange with Fernando Alonso, there was no information held by anyone within the McLaren team which might cast doubt on the World Motorsport Council's decision back on the 26th July. He confirmed to me this afternoon, he did indeed say this, and I entirely accept that he believed it to be true at the time."

**Me:** They had a very cool hand-shaking ceremony, didn't they? It lasted all of half a second.

**Chris:** Yea, if you'd have blinked you would have missed it.

**Me:** I think some photographers probably did.

**Chris:** And Ron Dennis did not look happy about it.

**Me:** It's like, there you go, carry on, next.

**Chris:** Max also confirmed that half of the \$100 million fine would go to the other teams, and the other half would go to national sporting authorities to help young drivers progress. In a separate statement, he thanked Fernando Alonso for his assistance in the spy saga, saying that: "Without Alonso, we wouldn't have known what had happened. He was the only one in his team who did the right thing."

**Me:** Ouch.

**Chris:** I think that's pretty harsh considering Alonso was the one doing the blackmailing. Is that the right thing?

**Me:** You don't know for certain that he was doing the blackmailing and Max has gone to great lengths to deflect the criticism from Alonso, so maybe something more might come out next week in the transcripts.

**Chris:** He also sent out a warning to McLaren about Alonso's championship campaign, he said: "If they do anything wrong against Alonso, they will have to answer to us in Paris, and we will do what is necessary." I wish they'd just leave them alone.

**Me:** You can see his point because you'd imagine most of the McLaren team are unhappy with Alonso at the moment and they could literally stick a spanner in the works and throw his championship campaign off course. That would really upset a lot of fans, especially in Spain, and clearly Max has gone to great lengths to make sure the championship is still on. He wouldn't want to see it ruined now by McLaren with ulterior motives.

[Sweeper]

**Chris:** Free Practice 1 was dull, dull, dull.



**Me:** It's a circuit where they tested recently so they didn't need to do too much running too early.

**Chris:** Same problem we had at Monza, then.

**Me:** The test was slightly longer ago, so there was a few more unknowns, but essentially same track, same conditions, not too much to learn.

**Chris:** Massa went off after one lap, he went straight on at the corner. Could have been a damper failure.

**Me:** Another damper failure. He had that problem in Italy, didn't he?

**Chris:** They seem to have a big problem with their rear suspension.

**Me:** Rumour has it that it could have been that that caused Raikkonen's off as well, in Saturday practice at Monza.

**Chris:** Yamamoto crashed, something appeared to brake on his car and he couldn't turn into a corner, and right at the end, drivers were allowed to make practice starts on the grid, which is new and unusual. The fastest three were Raikkonen, Hamilton and Alonso. In Free Practice 2, both McLaren drivers were having a bit of an on-track confrontation, right at the beginning of the session. Hamilton was in front and Alonso came up beside him, taunting him, as he does, but Hamilton just whizzed off into the distance. Wurz had a problem with his fuel, so he was called back into the pits.

**Me:** And that was about it, wasn't it?

**Chris:** That's pretty much it, the fastest three were Alonso, Hamilton and Massa. In Free Practice 3, Kubica broke down, pulled to the side of the track. He had an engine failure, so they decided to change his engine.

**Me:** As you would do.

**Chris:** He had the ten place penalty which meant that whatever he achieved in qualifying, it would be his worst qualifying ever.

**Me:** Because up till now, he's been, what, 8<sup>th</sup> is his worst position?

**Chris:** Yamamoto crashed again, in the same place, but this time it looked like it was his own fault. And Raikkonen was blindingly quick, he was the fastest along with Massa and Alonso.

[Sweeper]

**Chris:** In the first qualifying session, Massa left it until 5 minutes before the end before he went out. It looked like the problem with suspension he'd had in Free Practice was still lingering.

**Me:** Something funny is going on with those Ferrari cars in the back. It's unusual to have these kind of problems this late in the season unless something dramatic has changed. So the question is, what are they doing at the rear of those Ferraris?

**Chris:** Sutil managed to get up to 12<sup>th</sup>, which was really, really impressive. The top four did their laps, got their places, and then suddenly there was grip on the track, and all the mid-field runners started getting 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> place, one after the other.



**Me:** It did mix it up a bit, didn't it?

**Chris:** It was absolute chaos. I was surprised how many cars there were out at the end, because after the chequered flag, it's usually only 2, 3, or 4. The fastest three were Alonso, Massa and Raikkonen, and dropping out was Vettel, Barrichello, Sato, Sutil, Davidson and Yamamoto.

**Me:** Sato ahead of Davidson for the first time in a long time. Davidson not liking this track at all. In Free Practice at some point, he said his car was completely undriveable, so he's not liking the revised Spa at all.

**Chris:** In Qualy 2, both Renault's were out first after about 3 minutes, then Alonso came out and on his outlap, he was pretty much faster than Fisichella who was doing a flying lap.

**Me:** It was a hard outlap, and Fisichella's been slightly off the pace, but yea, that's quite worrying.

**Chris:** Raikkonen put in his flying lap which was the fastest of the weekend so far. The top four again did their bit and retired for a snooze in the garage. Webber just missed the chequered flag, he was in 8<sup>th</sup> and had no chance of doing another flying lap, which was kind of worrying, but no one else managed to better their own times, so he was safe.

**Me:** The track didn't pick up any grip in the second session. I guess the temperature might have dropped a little bit and everybody remained as they were.

**Chris:** The fastest three were Raikkonen, Hamilton and Massa, and dropping out were Fisichella, Schumacher, Coulthard, Button, Liuzzi and Wurz. In the third session, Hamilton was out first but he must not have been paying attention or something, because the Ferrari following him went flying past, it must have surprised Hamilton because he went off slightly. There was a puff of dirt and everything.

**Me:** After all the fuss that guy makes about being out first, and all the effort the team go to to cool his car down first, and then he just goes and lets the Ferrari fly past him.

**Chris:** Yes, the first lot of flying laps had Massa going fastest, despite a massive lockup. Then Raikkonen went faster, but Hamilton did not manage to pip either of them to the top spot. Alonso had a huge spin, ruined his flying lap and was in tenth.

**Me:** And his tyres.

**Chris:** They all pitted and we noticed that there was only one guy on each tyre for McLaren.

**Me:** And I think there was only one guy on each tyre for Ferrari as well.

**Chris:** Which is because they have the two pit boxes.

**Me:** We think that's the reason, we should just put a quick caveat around that statement, because we've yet to confirm exactly why they've started doing this, but presumably, because they're now using two pit boxes in order to remain equality between drivers, they don't have enough mechanics to be three per wheel.



**Chris:** In the second round of flying laps, Alonso managed to keep it on the track. The final grid positions were Raikkonen, Massa, Alonso, Hamilton, Kubica, Rosberg, Heidfeld, Webber, Trulli and Kovalainen. But Kubica had his ten place drop.

[Sweeper]

**Chris:** During the evening news on Saturday, the BBC covered the F1 qualifying results, which is unusual in itself.

**Me:** Absolutely, everybody jumping on the F1 bandwagon this weekend. And also Question of Sport.

**Chris:** Yes, there was 4 questions in a Question of Sport.

**Me:** The last time I saw a Formula 1 question on that program was when they had a Formula 1 driver taking part. There were no Formula 1 drivers taking part this week, 4 Formula 1 questions.

**Chris:** And did you know all the answers? Of course.

**Me:** Yes, sadly. But who said the spying scandal is bad for F1?

**Chris:** Anyway, the evening news, Saturday, they showed the Ferrari mechanics cheering their pole position, obviously, then it showed the McLaren mechanics cheering their positions too. The newsreader guy said: "Any imitation, surely accidental." You can't say things like that.

**Me:** They were copying the clapping.

**Chris:** Yea, the mechanics were clapping.

**Me:** I like it.

**Chris:** Anyway, couple of things to note, it was the first all-Ferrari front row of this season. The drivers were seriously unhappy with the tight pit entrance. I mean it was a bit ridiculous.

**Me:** They were complaining about that at the test previously, and the organisers painted some orange stripes on the wall, which didn't make it any wider, obviously, but at least it made it more visible. Many were predicting there would be an accident during the race as a result of the very tight entrance.

**Chris:** Most of the people were starting on hard tyres, a couple of the people at the back, Spykers, were gambling on a safety car and starting on the softs.

**Me:** Both Spykers started on the softs, it actually played out quite well, because Sutil actually made up a couple of places on the first lap.

**Chris:** Fisichella joined Kubica in having an engine change and he decided to start from the pitlane. Davidson also started from the pitlane, because he felt something a bit dodgy on the outlap and pulled into the pits. There was quite a lot of smoke coming from the brakes of Massa and also someone else's car while they were waiting for the lights to go out. They all got away safely, but it didn't look very healthy. The two Ferrari's sped off round the first corner fine. Alonso chopped Hamilton right up, pushed him off the track. Hamilton got some grip whilst Alonso lost some on the grass, so Hamilton was able to pull alongside, and then they went along together through Eau Rouge,



Alonso just kept his foot down, and Hamilton decided it would be safer to lift off. In my video preview that we did of the track, I was like: “Oh, that corner’s rubbish,” but I think I underappreciated it slightly.

**Me:** I should say that the video, I think Eau Rouge might have tested the limits of 3D track simulation, because if you look really closely, it doesn’t actually go down the hill and go back up.

**Chris:** It just shows the tyre, doesn’t it?

**Me:** The front wing dips, as if it’s going downhill, and then lifts up again a bit. I assume they couldn’t do that undulation.

**Chris:** So it didn’t look that interesting to me, but seeing it in real life, it was kinda scary. Aside from that, everyone got through the first corner safely, but Fisichella crashed at Turn 5.

**Me:** He had cold brakes and a lot of fuel on board. It was a driver error and he broke his front suspension.

**Chris:** And Wurz spun off and ended up last. Kovalainen was one-stopping, basically getting in everyone’s way. Webber overtook him pretty quickly, then he was holding up Heidfeld who eventually managed to get past him as well. Sutil was up in 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Me:** Really, really good from him. Obviously the soft tyres helped but still having a pretty good race.

**Chris:** He had overtaken Trulli and was hunting down Coulthard, and the Red Bull team radio said: “Don’t worry about the guy behind you,” because you know he’d be thinking what the hell is a Spyker doing there?

**Me:** That car looks orange. That can’t be right, have I fallen backwards?

**Chris:** Vettel went into the pits on lap 7, which I thought was kinda early, but he was only out for one more lap after that, before retiring. They did work on his car for a bit but it was no good. He said he couldn’t turn right, so it was some kind of steering issues but they still don’t know what the problem was.

**Me:** That is a pretty serious steering issue, it goes left, doesn’t go right.

**Chris:** Kubica was the next to get past the roadblock that was Kovalainen. Rosberg and Webber pitted first, together. Raikkonen and Alonso pitted next together. Then Massa and Hamilton came in together. It’s like Noah’s Ark or something.

**Me:** They’re all working on the same optimum strategy, so if the computer said that’s the best way round the lap, that’s what all the teams did.

**Chris:** Sutil came into the pits and when he came out, he ran wide which let Trulli back past him. Hamilton had a slow outlap, he missed a corner, generally looking a bit out of sorts. The two Ferrari’s were racing ahead, there was a big gap, about 14 seconds, and then the two McLarens were together after that. Wurz had managed to make up a couple of places, but then he spun, he let Yamamoto through, so he was last again. Not a good race for Wurz.

**Me:** No, he actually spun it near the entrance of the pitlane. Not proud of that.

**Chris:** Coulthard was one stopping and he went all the way to lap 25, he pitted from 10<sup>th</sup> and came out in 13<sup>th</sup>, so that’s quite a good strategy decision for them.



**Me:** Yep, worked out well.

**Chris:** Davidson went off, as Hamilton was lapping him, and I'm thinking you know, he's really not that scary, you don't have to go off the track for him. And then Wurz got past him as well, so Davidson was last, rather than Wurz. Sato was chasing Button.

**Me:** Sato was having a very good race, wasn't he?

**Chris:** He was, and it must be really, really upsetting for poor Button.

**Me:** To be overtaken in last year's car, again.

**Chris:** Coulthard retired, parked it very nicely off the track, out of the way. It wasn't gearbox issues.

**Me:** What was it?

**Chris:** It was power steering this time instead. I know it's still bad that he retired, but I think it's something to celebrate. It wasn't gearbox.

**Me:** Yea, hydraulics this time. Never mind.

**Chris:** Massa went into the pits, so Alonso was leading briefly, but then he dived in for his second stop as well. Wurz retired with fuel pressure problems, similar to what he had in Free Practice. Hamilton went really long, there were only 7 laps to go when he came in for his final pit stop. He came out in 4<sup>th</sup>. Button retired, same problem as Coulthard with the power steering. Hamilton had a final brief moment where he ran wide, but there was no harm done, and the positions remained the same until the end.

[Sweeper]

**Chris:** The final points positions were Raikkonen, Massa, Alonso, Hamilton, Heidfeld, Rosberg, Webber, and Kovalainen. The drivers championship has Hamilton on 97, Alonso on 95, Raikkonen is on 84, Massa is on 77 and Heidfeld on 66. The constructors has Ferrari on 161, BMW on 90, Renault on 39, Williams on 28 and Red Bull on 18.

[Sweeper]

**Chris:** Ferrari have mathematically won the constructors championship now, although it was pretty obvious that they would. Montezemolo dedicated this win to: "the English gentleman who in the month of June, wanted to inform us that somebody linked to an opponent team, entered into his shop and asked him to copy dozens of pages containing confidential information about our car." The copy guy, basically.

**Me:** This is the fictional guy that nobody has yet managed to prove exists, is it? The guy who has no name and by rights should be in every single newspaper this week, and yet decides he doesn't want any press or promotion for his copy shop.

**Chris:** I didn't think it was that great a race, I mean, everyone raves about the the track, and the track looked good, but I thought there would be more overtaking, I was a bit disappointed.

**Me:** You can almost guarantee that with Spa on the calendar, you're going to have a wet race and we didn't.



**Chris:** The sun was shining and everything.

**Me:** The whole weekend. I don't remember it ever being sunny the whole weekend at Spa. The pit entry at the end of the race was interesting wasn't it?

**Chris:** They didn't get to do a lap of victory because the lap is too long.

**Me:** Yea, that's nice for the fans.

**Chris:** Yea, great. So there were marshals waving them in and they had to turn into the pit exit and go up the wrong way.

**Me:** I like Kimi Raikkonen doing the donuts though. That was enjoyable.

**Chris:** Never get to do that, do they?

**Me:** They should do that more often. That's what we like to see. So that was good. You're right, it wasn't one of the best races, and we really needed a good race this weekend, didn't we?

**Chris:** All hail Sutil, though. I mean, my God.

**Me:** Boy did well.

**Chris:** And what happened to Ralf? Because I didn't see him at all during the race. Where was he? Was he even there?

**Me:** That's true, the camera didn't pick him up at all, did it? He must have been. He did finish. He finished behind his teammate Trulli. I thought Hamilton had the strategy today, to beat Alonso. He went longer in the second stint, which should have given him enough laps to jump Alonso, but he didn't have the pace, did he?

**Chris:** He seemed very out of sorts today. He went wide a couple of times, and that kind of thing.

**Me:** Maybe the whole week has disturbed him.

**Chris:** Talking of Hamilton, that brings us to this week's Talking Point.

**Me:** Ooh, new section.

**Chris:** Well, it's not really a section.

**Me:** A new part of the show.

**Chris:** It's something that we noticed from this week in Formula 1 and we want to ask you about, get your opinion on, see if there are differing opinions, that kind of thing.

**Me:** And you're talking about the first corner incident.



**Chris:** Today we're talking about Alonso vs Hamilton. What else is new? Was it right that Alonso pushed him right off? Did he deserve it? Was he just playing with him? Was it a message?

**Me:** Yep, okay, fair enough, and what do people have to do to be part of our talking point?

**Chris:** The usual ways, comment on Sidepodcast.com, or leave us a voicemail on 0121 28 TRACK. Hamilton's had his say about the incident. After the race, he said: "I wouldn't say fair, but it was hard. I don't know whether I was ahead but there was enough room for us to get round fair and square." He also said it's been a much more difficult week for him than Alonso because: "I feel more attached to the team, I guess, and I care a bit more, I think." Boo hoo.

**Me:** So, there you go. 0121 28 TRACK. Let us know your thoughts. We want to hear them.

[Sweeper]

**Chris:** Sidepodcast is on Last.fm. It's a website for sharing music tastes, let's you know what songs you are listening to, what your friends are listening to. It also works for podcasts. People who listen to Sidepodcast also listen to the ING Renault F1 Podcast. Find us at Last.fm/user/sidepodcast. Be our friend, tell us what podcasts you listen to. You've also written a super duper application that tells us where we are in the iTunes music store for each country.

**Me:** Well, yes, I have a lot of time on my hands at the moment and one of the things I do when I'm a bit bored is have a look at iTunes and see how we're faring. You know, where we are in the charts, where we are for certain keywords. It's a bit slow, it's a bit time consuming because you have to go into each country and type in Sidepodcast and see where we appear. So being the geek that I am, I wrote an application that will do that for us. It will go into iTunes, go into each country, and will say you are in this chart position and most importantly, these users have reviewed your show and given you this rating. And we found loads of people talking about us this way, didn't we?

**Chris:** In England, F1 Lou gave us a five star rating, saying this is what every F1 fan needs. Thank you very much. In the United States, Negative Camber and Jim Val both left us reviews. If you're bored this week, do leave us a review, and if you let us know we can see whether our application actually works.

**Me:** It'll be a good test.

**Chris:** Yea, and we can give you a shout in the next show.

**Me:** Especially if you're in a country that's not England and not the United States, because we'd really like to know if it works for commenters in Spain or Italy, and all the far flung regions of the globe, just to see if it's written correctly and does what it's supposed to do.

**Chris:** There's the test next week, last test of the season. Alonso's not going to be there, apparently, he's not invited.

**Me:** Not invited isn't fair. Ron said he could turn up if he wants to, maybe he doesn't want to, maybe he's banned. It is the last significant test of the 2007 season, prior to the last two races, and Alonso will be a no show.

**Chris:** That's what we'll be talking about next week, and hopefully there won't be anymore McLaren news.

**Me:** Amen to that.

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