



Episode 38 – China GP

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

Chris: Welcome to Sidepodcast, Episode 38 – China GP. I think we should start with some people were saying they thought last week's show was a bit grumpy. Tom said: "I can't help but feel you are both missing what most fans love about the sport which to me is the greatest in the world. The thrill of watching cars take years to develop, travelling at immense speeds through conditions and race traffic that only the best drivers can cope with, is something that makes it worth watching. I simply cannot understand why you saw this as a boring or bad race."

Me: I got up at four o'clock in the morning to watch 22 cars for 19 laps at half speed in single file.

Chris: You were definitely grumpy.

Me: I was absolutely miserably, I make no bones about that, it was rubbish.

Chris: I think it's fair to say that we weren't upset at the rest of the race, that was really good, really exciting, but it was just those 20 laps, rubbish.

Me: You did make a good comment on the blog, didn't you?

Chris: Well, I say, people say to me all the time that Formula 1 is a procession and I argue the point saying it's worth waiting for the overtaking, it's good stuff. But behind a safety car for 20 laps, that is a procession, and it's really hard to defend.

Me: Hear, hear.

Chris: Lynchie also commented on another point in the podcast that we really didn't talk about Lewis enough. He said: "I like the fact that somehow in the Japan 'casts you glossed over the wonderful drive from Lewis, and that we are staring at a British champ – the first one in over ten years – give him some credit."

Me: We didn't give him credit because at the time we thought he was guilty of dangerous driving behind the safety car at multiple times during the race, and therefore there wasn't much to say, it wasn't a glorious or great drive.

Chris: Yea, you made a small comment about that, and then Nelsong took the baton and ran with it.

Me: Didn't he just?

Chris: He found *the* video, the YouTube video that may or may not have show Lewis Hamilton driving erratically before the crash. Franz Tost gave the stewards that video and asked them to investigate, which they did. A number of drivers weighed in against Hamilton. Mark Webber had the most direct comments.

Me: Direct is the word for it, yes. Did you hear what he said?

Chris: I definitely heard what he said, I don't want to repeat it though.



Me: Okay, do you have the beep machine ready? I don't mind saying it.

Chris: Yep, go on.

Me: Talking of Lewis, he said: "He did a s*** job behind the safety car. He did a s*** job and that's it."

Chris: He also said, when asked if he was going to talk to Hamilton about his driving, he said: "We'll talk about it, waste a bit of oxygen, and move on."

Me: He's not messing around, that man, is he?

Chris: Other drivers talking about it included Kubica, Alonso, Vettel, Button and Kovalainen. Nobody, not even his team boss stood up for him. I think it's fair to say the people that criticised him had a lot to gain like Alonso, obviously, or Kovalainen.

Me: Who would have won the race, if Lewis had been disqualified.

Chris: But even people unrelated to the incident, like Nico Rosberg, who was Lewis' team mate in GP2, they could have stepped in and offered some support? Nothing.

Me: Nothing. Absolute silence.

Chris: Hamilton's comments, he said: "I sat in the driver's briefing and everyone basically had rifles ready to shoot me. It was a bit disappointing because I knew a few of the drivers there and I didn't expect them to say certain things." He said: "If this is the way it's going to keep going, it's not somewhere I want to be."

Me: It's unbelievable, isn't it, after such a short amount of time in Formula 1, so many drivers can dislike the guys driving style. I mean, Schumacher had that kind of effect on people, but not after a couple of months. It did take him a few years to become that hated.

Chris: I don't think they hate him, I think maybe they're just not willing to stand up for him.

Me: Disliked?

Chris: It's difficult to say that, I just think that maybe they didn't want to get involved.

Me: They may not have wanted to get involved in the media fight, but it sounds like they certainly had it in for him in the driver's briefing, which is quite a reaction for a rookie driver, I'd say.

Chris: One man who did defend Hamilton though, was Bernie Ecclestone, he said: "My fear would be if he didn't win the title, Raikkonen barely talks to anyone, and as for Alonso, in his two years as champion, he has done nothing."

Me: Nothing?

Chris: I think that's a little bit cheeky of Ecclestone because Alonso has brought him a lot of money.

Me: Oodles of Spanish Euros, he's brought in.



Chris: Anyway, the stewards interviewed the three drivers involved, and they decided that Hamilton wasn't guilty. While they were doing that, there was an amazing debate raging on our blog. It must be the best response we've had to anything ever. At the moment, the comment count is at 57, although, to be fair, half of them are you.

Me: I did not, although I did have a lot to say on this subject.

Chris: Mostly because you like disagreeing with people.

Me: Only because they are good people to disagree with. Lots of intelligent comments from lots of intelligent people which is always enjoyable.

Chris: I think everyone who commented on the blog needs a pat on the back, because the standard was really good, and we really enjoyed it.

[Jingle: Ted News]

Chris: More news from Ted's post race notebook on the ITV F1 website. Apparently at Fuji, Ferrari weren't at fault about the tyres, no one really knew, and he was basically going round telling everybody.

Me: This was the fact that they started on not extreme wets as requested by Charlie, instead on intermediates.

Chris: Yea, he said: "I asked one championship winning team manager what he made of Charlie Whiting's edict, and he didn't know what I was on about. That was 15 minutes before the pit lane was about to open." Then he went on to say: "The engineering brains of another championship winning team only discovered the email by chance as they heard the "You've got mail" ping." Finally, he said: "It wasn't until after the race that I discovered yet another technical director still didn't know he'd issued a document and went off to look at his inbox."

Me: After the race?

Chris: After the race. Bit late then.

Me: Considering all the television viewers and radio listeners knew about it, that's quite a shocking revelation.

Chris: Although we did only know about it because Ted told us.

Me: I guess so. Maybe it should be Ted's job to tell everybody in the pit lane.

Chris: Exactly.

Me: We're onto something there.

Chris: The Fuji Speedway organisers actually had to refund a lot of people's ticket money because they sat them in some grandstand seats where they couldn't see anything.

Me: Nothing at all?

Chris: No, the President of the circuit said: "These temporary seats were set up right before the race and we were unable to thoroughly check the conditions."



Me: Were they facing the wrong way?

Chris: I don't know, but they couldn't see any cars or anything.

Me: Shocking.

Chris: Useless. Last week on the podcast, we voiced an opinion about Max Mosley's uncalled for comments...

Me: About Jackie Stewart.

Chris: The Music Hall Man. The only notable person who seemed willing to say anything along the same lines is Damon Hill. He wrote a letter to Autosport magazine saying: "To call him a certified is really unkind. But on another level it's nothing other than a wicked joke designed to visit utmost humiliation on its victim. It is conduct most unbecoming of an FIA president and, in my humble view, brought the sport into disrepute, a crime he seems so keen to eradicate." It's good because everyone else seems a bit frightened to speak about it.

Me: Ah, well you see Max, he controls all the paddock passes so nobody wants to lose out on those. I guess Damon has no reason to visit Planet Paddock in the near future, but it's a shame no one else feels they can speak out against the man.

Chris: Now I have the most shocking news ever. Ralf is leaving Toyota this year.

Me: Not shocking on, then.

Chris: No. He said he quit, which is, you know, nice, but did Toyota fire him, really?

Me: Do you think Toyota were being extra specially nice to him to let him say that?

Chris: Maybe.

Me: Yea.

Chris: They did say it makes no difference to them though, there was a quote from John Howitt, Motorsport President of Toyota, he said: "This just means that Ralf is not part of our list of candidates anymore."

Me: He's not bothered.

Chris: They're not bothered at all. People are questioning whether Ralf's got a drive for next year, but we're assuming that he has because he's still part of the GPDA, he was voted in again.

Me: The Spyker door is kind of still open.

Chris: With his best friend Mallya.

Me: Yea. He did say something about wanting to develop a slow car and make it faster, so that would put him in the Spyker bracket, wouldn't it?

Chris: I'd say that's definitely a step backwards though.



Me: Well, it's still in F1. And I guess he'd rather be in F1 than elsewhere.

Chris: On the subject of drivers leaving Formula 1, during a press conference on Friday and talking about the future of Alex Wurz, Frank Williams said: "Alex has been very reliable, but I'm not sure whether he's going to race again next year."

Me: We kind of expected that, didn't we?

Chris: Well, this forced Wurz to announce that he is going to retire from racing at the end of the season, although he's still considering a test driver role next year. Apparently he actually made the decision after Canada.

Me: That was ages ago.

Chris: I know, he's been keeping quiet. And that's a weird decision, because he actually finished on the podium in Canada, so you'd think that was happy times.

Me: Well, maybe he wanted to go out on a high. I didn't think he was doing that badly at that point in the year.

Chris: It's gone downhill since then, but at that time it was alright.

Me: Maybe he should have quit in Canada, that's a shame.

Chris: I do like him because he's extremely honest, says what he thinks and everything, but, if there's a seat at Williams Toyota, what do you reckon Franck's chances are?

Me: Slim to non-existent.

Chris: Fine.

Me: Wurz leaving doesn't make any difference to that.

Chris: There's also news about Nigel Stepney, he's been making comments about receiving information from McLaren, but we'll talk about that next week.

Me: That's quite an in depth subject, he's written a letter to Max, which so far Max has failed to acknowledge. So, maybe a whole show dedicated to that.

Chris: Not a whole show because next week, we'll also be talking about customer cars. Spyker have their arbitration case on Tuesday, against Toro Rosso and Super Aguri, arguing that they shouldn't have been allowed these past two years.

Me: Big case.

Chris: And Frank Williams has issues with Prodrive, saying they shouldn't be allowed next year.

Me: While you're talking about court cases and appeals, Toro Rosso also have their appeal about Liuzzi's eighth place finish in Fuji to be heard this Friday.

Chris: So definitely not a whole podcast dedicated to Stepney then.



Me: It's gonna be a whole legal podcast, isn't it?

[Sweeper]

Chris: Onto this weekend in China, in Free Practice 1, Nick Heidfeld broke down, parked on the home straight with smoke pouring out the back of his car. But later on, he did manage to get back out on track. Nakajima came back, he's the test driver for Williams, and presumably they're testing him out to replace Wurz.

Me: Not Franck then.

Chris: Yea, whatever. He ended up 9th which is not bad going. The fastest three were Raikkonen, Alonso and Massa. In Free Practice 2, ten minutes into the session, Nick Heidfeld pulls off the track...

Me: Again?

Chris: Again. The mechanics ran to try and help him, they managed to get the car back to the garage and started working on it. Apparently the problems were hydraulic leaks, and they both meant gearbox changes.

Me: Busy mechanics.

Chris: Kovalainen also broke down and his engineers had to come and rescue him, they got him going again, something to do with fuel pressure.

Me: I think it was only a warning light, and it shut down the machine inadvertently. I don't think it was a major issue, again, engineers working overtime this weekend.

Chris: The fastest three were Raikkonen, Alonso, and Massa. In Free Practice 3, not a lot happened. There were some new graphics though.

Me: Cutting edge graphics, I'll have you know.

Chris: Yep, tyre temperature, so this little bar that told you how warm or cold it was, and also Speed, so the best speed the car had done, and the speed it was currently going at.

Me: I really like the tyre temperature one. It seems kind of random, in it's placement of exactly how hot or cold the tyres may be.

Chris: Seemed to be flipping up and down a lot, I didn't think there was that much variation.

Me: No. But more information, always appreciated.

Chris: The only thing that did happen, Raikkonen appeared to stop with smoke coming out of his car, but he managed to get going again.

Me: He's just toying with us.

Chris: Well, yea, because he was the fastest in that session as well, followed by Alonso and Hamilton.



[Sweeper]

Chris: In Qualifying, it was kind of notable that Flavio wasn't there.

Me: He was out kicking a ball.

Chris: Apparently, he was out on football business, despite the fact that he said F1 was the most important thing.

Me: Except for when football is.

Chris: Exactly. It was very windy.

Me: The weather prediction said a typhoon was heading towards the racetrack. How exciting!

Chris: Raikkonen was out straight away, which is quite unusual, but he went back in the pits straight away. Apparently he was just testing after the issues he'd had in practice.

Me: That makes sense.

Chris: Massa, two McLarens, and two BMWs set fast times, whilst everyone else went into the pits. Raikkonen finally came out with just four minutes to go, and then all hell broke loose, the cars were crossing the line one after the other, after the chequered flag had dropped. They all seemed to be leaving it later and later, and to be honest, I found it impossible to follow, I just had to wait and see who ended up where.

Me: It was another one of those tracks, and this happened before this year, where in the end of qualifying 1, a lot of cars found an awful lot of speed. It's not entirely clear why that would happen, because it never seems to happen again in Quali 2. But it isn't the first time.

Chris: Raikkonen, Massa and Hamilton were the fastest three, and dropping out: Barrichello, Fisichella, Wurz, Sato, Sutil and Yamamoto. In Quali 2, the top four did their stuff, with both Ferraris ahead of McLarens. The rest pitted, I did notice the BMWs were stacked behind each other, and then everyone piled out to improve their times. The fastest three were Raikkonen, Massa and Alonso, and dropping out: Liuzzi, Vettel, Trulli, Kovalainen, Davidson and Rosberg. Rosberg apparently had warm up problems with his car, which made it unpredictable and impossible to drive. And with Fisichella out in the first session, and Kovalainen out in the second, not very good for the Renaults.

Me: Very, very bad. But I believe they gambled on a wet set up in anticipation of a wet race on Sunday, so possibly some of the poor performance can be attributed to that. Not all of it, but a little bit.

Chris: Hamilton and Alonso headed up the queue for the third session, and started burning their fuel. Hamilton and four other people pitted quite early, with nine minutes to go.

Me: Unusual tactics there, unexpected.

Chris: Raikkonen put in a fastest lap, then Massa did, which was bizarre because Massa's been behind all weekend.

Me: He has.



Chris: There were two close calls in the pits, people really need to start looking, you know, mirror, signal, manoeuvre, don't drive out into someone else. It looked like the Ferrari's had it in the bag, but then Hamilton pulled out a stunning lap.

Me: Superb.

Chris: And got pole. The final grid positions were: Hamilton, Raikkonen, Massa, Alonso, Coulthard, Schumacher, Webber, Heidfeld, Kubica, and Button.

Me: I think Massa made a big mistake on his last lap. He was fuelled lighter than Raikkonen, and I guess Ferrari wanted to send him out to control the race from pole position, and he kind of messed it up when it mattered most.

Chris: There's a quote from Jenson, he said: "We have overachieved in terms of where this car should be in qualifying, which is a nice feeling."

Me: I'll bet it is, he didn't expect to be there, did he?

Chris: And David Coulthard said: "I drove in exactly the same way as I have in previous qualifying sessions, but for some reason there are more cars behind me." So, he was also surprised.

Me: I was accidentally in fifth.

Chris: Following on from Alonso's fourth place qualifying, three places behind his team mate, he had a bit of a tantrum.

Me: A bit is an understatement though.

Chris: He threw his helmet down on the floor, he kicked a door.

Me: He kicked a door off its hinges.

Chris: Formula 1 summed it up nicely, they said he ran out of toys, so he threw himself out of the pram.

Me: He did that, didn't he? It's not going for well for him this season.

Chris: He's basically complaining about his treatment within the team again, can't believe that Hamilton in the same car would be so much faster. Kind of fuelling speculation about his future still, he said: "I've spoken to Coulthard, Montoya, Kimi and all those who have left the team, and they have been much happier for it. There must be a reason for that."

Me: That is a good point. He's true there. Never a truer word spoken. I don't know why he was so slow, he thinks he didn't make any mistakes, and he thinks he put in a stellar lap but you have to say, Hamilton overreached the car. It was a little bit like Silverstone, where he was fourth or lower for most of the qualifying sessions, and suddenly out of nowhere, pulled out this almighty lap, which put everybody else to shame.

[Sweeper]



Chris: By the time the race rolled round on Sunday, it was pretty obvious that the typhoon wasn't going to hit, but there were some showers pre-race. It was hot and muggy, and the track was greasy, so there was indecision about which tyres to start on.

Me: But it wasn't going to be starting under the safety car.

Chris: No, that's a good thing.

Me: Thank goodness.

Chris: Most people favoured intermediate tyres to start with.

Me: Except for Spyker, who gambled on extreme wets, because it worked for them at Nurburgring where it was changeable conditions, and they tried to pull out the same stunt this time.

Chris: Vettel's ten place penalty from Japan was revoked, but he got a five place drop for apparently impeding Davidson in qualifying.

Me: That man's destined to start this race from the back, isn't he?

Chris: Everyone got away well, when it got to the first corner, Alonso went all the way round Massa, and had the position but then Massa got it back. There was contact and everything.

Me: Alonso almost had Raikkonen, if it weren't for the contact from Massa.

Chris: Schumacher spun almost immediately which dropped him towards the back of the pack. Barrichello and Davidson had a collision but both of them carried on. Liuzzi was up to 7th, and he got past Heidfeld.

Me: Heidfeld made a mistake, but very good overtaking manoeuvre.

Chris: Rosberg was down in 17th which is rubbish.

Me: Williams not having a stellar weekend, I wonder if it's related to running Nakajima on Friday.

Chris: Franck would have done a much better job.

Me: Leave it.

Chris: It rained a little bit at the start, but it stopped after a few laps, and Hamilton began to stretch out his lead. Kovalainen was really struggling with tyre pressures and not turning.

Me: Not turning? You mean understeer, right? He was turning the car and the car wouldn't turn in, understeer. Not turning.

Chris: Yea. He was overtaken by Trulli, and being chased by Button. Anthony Davidson pulled off to the side of the track, race over.

Me: Caused by?



Chris: His contact with Barrichello.

Me: Made his brakes get hot, and his discs melted.

Chris: Rosberg overtook Button, but...

Me: Yay.

Chris: What do you mean yay?

Me: Well, thought it might wind you up.

Chris: Button didn't give up, he tried to fight it, but couldn't get it back.

Me: To no avail.

Chris: Hamilton pitted on lap 15, so Raikkonen was leading the race. They didn't change Lewis' tyres, he came out ahead of Coulthard, so once again, he beat the traffic.

Me: Good strategy.

Chris: Rosberg overtook Kovalainen, who kept going wide.

Me: You mean not turning.

Chris: Shh. Massa came into the pits, and Raikkonen put his foot down.

Me: You might say he was a little bit inspired, when he realised Lewis didn't have a heck of a lot of fuel on board. I wonder if anyone told Alonso yesterday that Hamilton didn't have much fuel on board, because that would explain the time difference.

Chris: That would have saved a helmet.

Me: It might have saved a door.

Chris: Ralf got past both Button and Kovalainen almost in one go.

Me: He was doing loads of overtaking today.

Chris: He was, but at the same time, he kept spinning a lot, so it evened out. Alonso pitted, and he came out behind Massa, so he basically retained his position. Sutil spun off backwards but he kept it out of the gravel and managed to continue. Raikkonen pitted and he came out behind Hamilton, so that position was maintained as well.

Me: He did manage to halve the gap though.

Chris: Yea, it was like 8 seconds halved to 4, I think. Ralf tried to overtake Rosberg, and got him after a couple of laps of trying, then he spun, you see, evening it out, and touched a Toro Rosso.

Me: He went in too deep and ended up off the track.



Chris: Webber was the second driver to put on dry tyres and he was overtaken by three cars so it didn't look like a good decision for him. Toyota lost a tyre in their pit stop, it bounced across the pit lane, until someone from the pit wall grabbed it. Wurz was the first man on dry tyres, and he was lapping a second quicker than Hamilton who was in the lead.

Me: So he was making the most of those tyres.

Chris: Alonso did a stellar overtaking move on Massa, but it was just in time for Massa to come into the pits.

Me: How annoying would that have been?

Chris: It was actually a bit embarrassing.

Me: Like, yay, oh, ok, that was a waste of time.

Chris: Interestingly Massa adjusted for loads of front wing.

Me: Yes, they were winding it on to the max.

Chris: Sutil had a big crash into the wall, and Ralf spun at the same place, so it looked like they got tangled but they didn't.

Me: No, it was just slippery in that last section on the track. Sutil made a bit of a mess though, didn't he?

Chris: Lots of debris all over the place. Rosberg spun into the gravel, apparently he had a puncture, and he didn't know what caused it but it could have been the debris from Sutil.

Me: That sounds likely, doesn't it?

Chris: He did manage to get out and continue, though. Hamilton started running wide, and Raikkonen was hassling him, after a few too many wide corners, Raikkonen made it stick.

Me: I think his tyres were wearing down a bit.

Chris: There was a good bit when two Renaults and Rosberg seemed to do a repeat of that best overtaking manoeuvre ever.

Me: You mean Schumacher, Hakkinen and Zonta in Spa? That one?

Chris: Yes, only it wasn't quite so stylish because a couple of them went off the track.

Me: It was nothing like it really, only that they were three cars wide and the one in the middle was slowest.

Chris: Hamilton tried to lap Trulli, but he couldn't do it. He kept unlapping himself. It definitely appeared he had issues with the tyre and he tried to make it back to the pits, but he couldn't turn the corner and he ran into the gravel. He waved at the marshals to come and push him out, and they did try, but I don't think it was possible. They ran off, and he got out of the car and looked at them, like "Where are you going? Get back here and push the car." But they brought the tractor and his race was over.



Me: They didn't look like they tried that hard.

Chris: Well, the guy at the front pushed the wheel a bit and it didn't move, so...

Me: It was a bit beached. Before he came in, you could actually see the canvas coming through on the rear tyre, so he was running them for way too long, and that was his downfall on the day.

Chris: Kubica was leading the race, although it was because he was due a pit stop, but he pulled off the track, coasted along the grass, his race was over too.

Me: That was caused by a hydraulic leak which was the same problem Heidfeld had in both sessions on Friday, so I guess they didn't manage to get to the root cause of that problem.

Chris: Button set the fastest lap of the race.

Me: Who did?

Chris: Button.

Me: I took a screen shot of that, from the live timing. I'm gonna frame that.

Chris: Cos it never happens.

Me: Jenson Button, fastest lap of the race.

Chris: And then he started pushing Vettel for fourth place. Fisichella overtook Liuzzi, and there was team radio of a Renault engineer really cheering him on. I'm thinking, if he needs that kind of encouragement, should he really be racing?

Me: Yea, Renault have got this sussed though. They know that if they get on the radio and sound really excited and sound like it's really important, the race director will play their radio commentary, and they'll get a bit more TV time. So it's not just Fisichella being uninspired and disinterested, they're just trying to up their profile a little bit.

Chris: Raikkonen ran wide and Alonso began to catch him but there weren't enough laps left. The race pretty much played out from there. Vettel was up 13 places to 4th place, and Button up 5 places to 5th place, which is really impressive.

Me: Considering the luck that Vettel's had this weekend, that's pretty impressive. And Button, in that car, that's more points today than he's got all year.

[Sweeper]

Chris: The final points positions went to: Raikkonen, Alonso, Massa, Vettel, Button, Liuzzi, Heidfeld and Coulthard. The drivers championship has Hamilton on 107, Alonso on 103, and Raikkonen on 100. Massa on 86, and Heidfeld on 58. While the constructors has Ferarri on 186, BMW on 94, Renault on 51, Williams on 28 and Red Bull on 24.

[Sweeper]



Chris: I don't understand why they didn't bring Lewis in and change his tyres.

Me: I think they wanted to stretch their pit stop window, just for another few laps in order that they could fill few Lewis to the end of the race.

Chris: It obviously didn't work out for them, but Ron said: "I don't think we did anything dramatically wrong, and neither did Lewis. The circuit was considerably than the pit lane entrance."

Me: That's a fair point but they weren't playing the points game today, they were still being out and out competitive, which in some ways should be commended because it's always good to be out to win. However, this time last year, Renault played the points game to much better effect, and there was no reason to go out with that kind of competitive strategy.

Chris: Ron also said: "We weren't at all fazed about Kimi, we weren't racing Kimi, we were basically racing Fernando."

Me: He said what?

Chris: So, Ron Dennis and his team are basically against Fernando now?

Me: We were basically racing Fernando?

Chris: I mean, I presume he's talking on behalf of Lewis, and Lewis' team half, but that doesn't seem like a good thing to be saying. Although when Lewis retired, he and Ron shook hands from afar. I thought there would have been big bear hugs, and "aw, don't worry about it," but apparently, they're not so cosy anymore.

Me: I think Alonso's engineers should be commended because after the mess he made of his car in Fuji, they had to extract that engine without him incurring any kind of penalty, and put it into the T car, and they did a wonderful job of building that car up and bringing it home.

Chris: Vettel was literally screaming down the radio, so happy, aw, it's so cute.

Me: Yea, he made up for last week, didn't he? Against all the odds, he did really, really well to bring that car home on a one stop strategy, that's what really made it for him, wasn't it?

Chris: And he had to look after his tyres, so definitely a good driver.

Me: I think he came out on dry tyres when it was still wet, so he did really well to keep it on the track, and to not mess anything up, and a well deserved fourth place.

Chris: Toro Rosso did such a good job that Patrick Head from Williams actually congratulated them in their press release.

Me: Yea, Liuzzi did a really good job too, after having his point nicked last week, he made amends as well, in China.

Chris: They've jumped really high in the constructors championship now as well.

Me: That's a massive shock, in the lower echelons of the table. I don't think anyone was expecting that to happen, least of all Super Aguri and Honda who have now lost several million pounds as a result of it.



Chris: Depending on whether Spyker get to keep their point that they stole off Liuzzi, aren't McLaren the only team with zero points?

Me: That's really bad. They used to be one of the bottom three and now they are absolute plum last.

Chris: It was the 200th win for Ferrari.

Me: That's a big number.

Chris: But then, if you compare that to how many starts they've had, possibly it's not quite such a bit number.

Me: You're suggesting they've been doing this for a while. I really enjoyed this race, did you?

Chris: I really did. See, that's the kind of race where the wet weather did the right thing. No safety car, all that.

Me: It was nice to see such a mixed up finishing order.

Chris: Yea, well, it was mixed up in qualifying, really, so it started out well and got even more mixed up during the race.

Me: The biggest disappointment for me was maybe Coulthard who started off fifth and ended up eighth. He should have maybe got more out of the car that was looking really, really good yesterday in qualifying, not so racey today.

Chris: What was wrong with him?

Me: Nothing. He was just slow. I think they might have gone for a slightly drier setup than everybody else yesterday, making a compromise, that flattered his qualifying pace, and then it didn't pay off in the race because obviously the changeable conditions made his car a little bit unstable.

Chris: I actually did feel sorry for Hamilton when he pulled off, he looked quite upset. We all thought he had the championship sewn up.

Me: He did.

Chris: And it just got thrown away.

Me: I was on the edge of my seat, the tension, will they push it, can they get him out the gravel, is it back on? Because it would have been really good if it was just delayed slightly in the gravel and in the real race he would have had to make a comeback. Just to be out of it was a bit of an anti-climax for the guy.

Chris: But it does mean the championship is on.

Me: Game on.

Chris: My talking point last week was: Is the season over now? Clearly it's not but at the time we kinda thought it was.

Me: I thought it was, I'm a bit defeatist like that.



Chris: You said to me: “Under what circumstances could Raikkonen win the championship?” And I’m gonna say to you these.

Me: The circumstances when Hamilton gets beached on the gravel on the entrance to the pitlane, those circumstances, maybe.

Chris: On the blog, Nelsong said: “The season is all but over. The 2006 season saw a battle between Alonso and Schumacher until the very end. What happened to Fernando on Mount Fuji could very well happen to Lewis Hamilton on any or even both of the remaining races.”

Me: He wasn’t wrong.

Chris: And F1 Wolf said: “It ain’t over till it’s over. China may end up being rainy like last year, and anything can happen.”

Me: And it did!

Chris: These people are psychic.

Me: Amazing. Or maybe just optimistic.

Chris: I’m glad everyone thinks like that though, being optimistic and they were all proved right, so it’s good.

Me: What’s this week’s talking point then?

Chris: Well, I’m a bit annoyed at my talking points because two weeks now, I’ve come up with an interesting topic, and something more important has happened, and everyone’s talked about that instead.

Me: So you’re saying, Lewis’ driving stole your thunder last week.

Chris: It did. But I will persevere. This week’s talking point: Were McLaren doing the right thing, or should they have played the points game? Is it worth risking the points to fight your own team mate?

Me: That’s a very good point, and I think, as I said, Renault last year chose not to. But Alonso was criticised a lot for not being a racer, and just a guy who comes home and bags the points, and maybe Lewis doesn’t want to be considered to be one of those guys. What do you think?

[Sweeper]

Chris: Today I noticed on Pitpass.com, there’s an F1 survey.

Me: This isn’t the usual dull predictable and forced FIA survey, this is Pitpass’ own survey.

Chris: I know filling in surveys isn’t the most fun ever, but I think people should grab any opportunity to have your say, and put your point across. You never know when the FIA are gonna take notice. And Pitpass promise that it’s not for any nefarious purpose like data collection or marketing or anything like that.

Me: Or manipulating your sport to your own ends. Just saying.



Chris: So go to Pitpass.com and there's a big red link in the navigation bar.

Me: Can't miss it.

[Sweeper]

Me: Do you ever take any time off?

Chris: No, why would I?

Me: You've got another podcast.

Chris: It's only little. It won't take any time, it's fine.

Me: How many podcasts does one woman need? Do you want to tell us all about it?

[Play F1 Minute – Intro]

Chris: Hello everybody, I'm Christine and this is your F1 minute from Sidepodcast. A new weekday show capturing the top headlines in the F1 world, and bundling them up in a nice 60 second package. You don't need to trawl through pages and pages of news sites, just tune in to F1 minute to hear everything you need to know. Expect important stories, driver quotes, all the latest rumours, and of course, championship updates. I'm not a fool, I know that there isn't F1 news every single day, especially not in the off season, which is rapidly heading towards us. I won't let you down though, on slow news days, you'll find me bringing you bite size snippets of history, Formula1 statistics and figures, and maybe even driver birthday specials. Anything is possible - the F1 world is our oyster. For more details on this podcast, go to f1minute.com, where you'll find information about the show, transcripts for each episode and links to the stories we're talking about. The first episode is tomorrow, join me then.

[End F1 Minute – Intro]

Chris: So that's going to keep me busy all week, and then of course, we'll be back next weekend.

Me: With loads and loads of legal gumph.

Chris: More legal stories.

Me: Because you've had your fill of on-track action and it's time to head to the courts.

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