



## Episode 39 – Beginning of the End

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

**Chris:** Welcome to Sidepodcast, Episode 39 – Beginning of the End. Last week we talked about Alex Wurz’s decision to leave Williams and his race seat earlier than expected, and we were waiting on the decision as to who would replace him in Brazil, and unsurprisingly it was announced on Monday that it would be Kazuki Nakajima. It’s his F1 debut and he’s obviously very excited about it, he said: “Patrick has told me that it’s not a test, what I do in the next race has nothing to do with next year. This is a one race arrangement, but of course there is no harm in doing well.” Yea, right.

**Me:** Yea, it can either make or break his F1 career, this.

**Chris:** We kinda suspected that Williams might have had this all planned out, and that they were ready to go when Alex made his decision.

**Me:** That was in the back of our minds, yep.

**Chris:** But we’ve been doing some digging, and that might not be the case. We were interested to see what the AT&T Williams podcast were going to do with their 20:12 feature.

**Me:** That’s where they phone him up and ask him listener questions.

**Chris:** On a Saturday night, and we were curious to see whether they ran it or not, in China. Well, on the iTunes feed, there is no China or Japan, the last one is Belgium. And on another feed we found the last one is China, but the actual file points to Spa, so everything is a bit confused. Maybe Williams weren’t quite as prepared as we thought. It came to light this week that the Prodrive negotiations with McLaren may have broken down and Prodrive might be in a little bit of trouble with regards to being ready or allowed to race next year.

**Me:** I blame Max.

**Chris:** Well, the thing is Max asked all the teams to bid on getting a championship entry next year, but he doesn’t know what the rules and regulations are gonna be.

**Me:** And he didn’t have it sorted beforehand, did he?

**Chris:** Williams have now raised questions with the FIA about the legality of the Prodrive entry into F1, and not making their own chassis, but they might have to because McLaren have scrapped their plans at least for now to provide the chassis to Prodrive.

**Me:** Yea, they are leaving it very late, time is running out. There are a couple of options other than McLaren, Renault have been mooted as a possible partner, but really, time is running out for them.

**Chris:** But it’s not their fault.

**Me:** No, again Max’s.



**Chris:** Talking of Max...

**Me:** He's my favourite.

**Chris:** The FIA are going to oversee McLaren's treatment of both drivers at the Brazilian Grand Prix to ensure equality. McLaren have invited the head of the Spanish Motorsport Federation, Carlos Gracia, to attend the race with them, and he announced that the FIA would have an official steward to keep his eye on what happens to both drivers. So, they can't be trusted now, apparently.

**Me:** That's the inference. Alonso's been making a lot of noises and complaints about qualifying in China and the fact that his tyre pressures were higher than he expected them to be, and perhaps something mischievous was going on, and so now the FIA have stepped in to ensure equality in the closing stages of the championship.

**Chris:** Does that mean the FIA don't trust the regular stewards?

**Me:** Well, the regular stewards can't keep that close an eye on each team during the race. They could look at the data after the race, but by that time all the fans would have obviously assumed a winner.

**Chris:** It would be too late.

**Me:** They need up to the minute information and this is one way of ensuring that. Although this does make McLaren out to be the guilty party before they've actually done anything wrong, which is a bit of a shame for them.

**Chris:** McLaren are never out of news.

**Me:** It's never good headlines though, is it?

**Chris:** This time Wikipedia have had to lock Lewis Hamilton's entry until after the championship has been completed, because someone has been going in and changing things.

**Me:** I'm surprised it took so long.

**Chris:** One of the quotes said: "By the time he was 12, and in spite of being quite silly, he had gained his first black belt in the sport." You can guess which bit was added.

**Me:** That's just a bit of harmless fun.

**Chris:** Another one was: "I know that he is quite ugly, but if he keeps this up, I'm sure he will reach Formula 1." That's so mean.

**Me:** Okay, that's a bit harsh, fine.

**Chris:** They traced the IP address of the editor to someone in Mercedes Benz in Spain. A Mercedes Benz spokesman said: "It may not be possible to find out who did it, as activities are only stored for two days."

**Me:** A likely story.

**Chris:** Who only stores things for two days? That's ridiculous.



**Me:** A multi-national corporation: “We only store our internet traffic for two days.” That says to me, we fully support our employee and we are completely behind them defacing Hamilton’s entry, and we’re not even gonna try and bring them to justice.

**Chris:** It’s like, I promise we’re looking, I promise we are, just not very hard. More news about nasty comments, you know Max Mosley.

**Me:** I am familiar with his work, yes.

**Chris:** And his horrible comments about Jackie Stewart, well, lawyers are now involved. Stewarts lawyers are now talking to Max, and he said: “I don’t think you would see the Chairman of the Olympic movement saying such a thing, and that of course, is much higher than Max. I think it was an act of misjudgement by him but he must have been very upset for no apparent reason.” And he also said: “I think it’s unfortunate that he behaved in the fashion that he has, it’s libellous and I think that’s really all I can say.”

**Me:** And what was Max’s reply?

**Chris:** Max said: “Am I bothered?”

**Me:** He did not say that.

**Chris:** No, he didn’t. He said: “I have no apology to make for having said as much publically, and I’m more than happy to repeat this view about him now and in the future.” That is so bad, he really needs firing right now.

**Me:** Or hanging. But I do like Jackie’s comments about the Olympic committee, that would have hurt, that would have cut quite deep with Max.

**Chris:** A1GP have signed a six year agreement with Ferrari to manufacture and supply all A1GP engines. They’ll also consult on the chassis in 2008 and 9. Chairman of A1GP Tony Teixeira said: “This will officially position A1GP as one of the most significant motorsport series in the world.”

**Me:** That’s going to upset Bernie, especially as he’s bending over backwards, footing the bill for Ferrari to be in Formula 1, only for them to bugger off and join a rival series.

**Chris:** Tony again: “Ferrari has a global presence through its dealer network. We will be working closely with them to ensure they are a part of every A1GP event.”

**Me:** That is genius because Formula 1 doesn’t have a dealer network to speak of, it has nothing in the high street and no quality merchandise. A1GP have just got the jump on them.

**Chris:** The partnership includes an agreement for A1GP to licence the Ferrari name on the merchandise and use the phrase “Powered by Ferrari.”

*[Jingle: Ted News]*

**Chris:** We don’t really like to just read out people’s blogs and articles, but the thing is, Ted is like, a genius.

**Me:** Oh yes.



**Chris:** So, I'm gonna have to read this out because it's all important. "Nigel Stepney himself would be proud of the new development Ferrari's pit crew introduced in the Far East. They've done away with the lollipop man and replaced him with a small set of traffic lights. The lights hang down from the tyre gun booms and are connected to the fuel system. So the driver can see the red, amber and green lights that the fuel man gets to denote that the stop is about to begin, is in progress, or finished. The chief mechanic stands nearby with an override switch that he can use to keep the lights on red if it is not safe to release the driver. If it is safe the driver just reacts to the green 'all the fuel is in' light and leaves the pit."

**Me:** We watched this back on video. I can't believe we didn't spot it during the race.

**Chris:** The lollipop man isn't there, we didn't notice.

**Me:** There is no lollipop man, there is no lollipop, there's a huge set of traffic lights hanging down from the gantry, not a thing, didn't notice it.

**Chris:** Martin Brundle did point out that it was really lucky, or they were cutting it close when they pulled the fuel hose out.

**Me:** But it was intentional the whole time, and it's gonna make a hell of a difference. It's a brilliant idea, they've been trying it out for various tests throughout the year, and they finally got round to implementing it in China.

**Chris:** The thing is, is it wise to bring out new developments this close to the end of the season? Because people keep stealing their ideas, or people share ideas, and now they've got, all the other teams have got all winter to test it out and get ready for the new season.

**Me:** Given that they've been trying it out at various tests throughout the year, I suppose they intended to bring it out sooner, and it just took this long to bring it to a race. And you're right, teams now have all winter to try out exactly the same thing so they've only a two race advantage with their new system.

**Chris:** It didn't take long for Toyota to get onto the wheelbin thing, and Williams have started doing that as well now.

**Me:** They have an identical system, although they haven't brought it to the race yet, have they?

**Chris:** That's actually our talking point this week. "Should teams really bring things out this late in the season? Or should they save any late developments for the next season?"

**Me:** Well, it depends on how much the advantage will give them. At the end of last season, Toyota brought out this year's car early in order to get some on track testing done before they released the final version. I guess if they think it's going to give them a couple of seconds advantage, which this pit system might do, it's probably worth trying it out.

**Chris:** Last week's talking point was about Hamilton's retirement, should McLaren have pulled him in, did they really need to risk it? Nelson said: "Trying to win the race cost him dearly. Rookie mistake or bad team decision, I'll leave that up to each one of you, I'm just glad that the championship will be decided on the last race of the season." And Shaun said: "It's easy for us sitting at home to say oh, they should have played it safe and let the other cars past but it's just not in a team's or a racing drivers genetic makeup to go for the low-risk strategy. They are winners and winners only become successful, get to the top, by taking the high-risk option."



**Me:** That is true, unless you're talking about Alonso who tends to be a low-risk kind of guy.

**Chris:** Sometimes he does crazy things, like putting his foot down and overtaking manoeuvres.

**Me:** Yea, he's the master of bagging the points though, isn't he? Turn the engine down, take it easy, make sure you get it home safe.

**Chris:** Back to the news, then, it was announced yesterday that the Court of Appeal have upheld Liuzzi's penalty at Fuji, rejecting the appeal from Toro Rosso. Spyker boss Colin Kolles said: "We felt our case was without doubt and the FIA had no objections to our evidence." And Toro Rosso boss Franz Tost said: "Obviously we are disappointed but we accept the decision of the court."

**Me:** That now means that every team bar McLaren have a point in the constructors championship.

**Chris:** Nigel Stepney is writing a book called Red Mist and the publisher, soon after the book was announced, actually pulled out of the deal because of pressure. Stepney doesn't know who's responsible for this, because the publisher is unwilling to tell him what's going on. He's going to go ahead and try and find another publisher. There's a website called nigel-stepney.com. It has ye olde visitor counter on there.

**Me:** That is very retro.

**Chris:** It looks rubbish.

**Me:** Charming.

**Chris:** But it's at 13,000 visits at the moment, so it's definitely showing that there's interest.

**Me:** I think it actually has a point of being there, even though it looks retro and it looks bad and someone's spent no money on the design. The fact that it's got 13,000 views glowing there right in the centre there is important, because it shows someone is interested, and someone is looking, and that's what a publisher needs to know, and that's what Ferrari need to know.

**Chris:** He didn't manage to get nigelstepney.com without the dash, because it was purchased by an Italian company, coincidentally, two days before the FIA Court of Appeal transcriptions were released.

**Me:** Make of that what you will.

**Chris:** Proceeds from the sale of the book are going to Great Ormond Street Hospital.

**Me:** That's so nice of him.

**Chris:** No it's not. He's not allowed to make money off the book. It's a crime, you can't make money from a crime.

**Me:** Ah, he's not a criminal yet, though.

**Chris:** Not yet. Stepney's actually been practising writing by sending a letter to Max Mosley, which was published on Grandprix.com. It has all sorts of interesting points on it and we'll link to it on the blog.

**Me:** If you haven't read it already, you must go and look at it.



**Chris:** We'll give you a summary of what it says though. Back in January 2007, he questioned the legality of the front floor of the Ferrari, with chief designer Aldo Costa, and he said he'd look into it. In February, a couple of items on the car had been better disguised. He enquired if clarification had been sought from the FIA and the response was no, they would go with the system and take any advantage up to the time any team made a noise to the FIA. At minimum they would get a one race advantage. Stepney decided in mid-February to step down from the role of technical manager, one of the reasons was due to the new way of approaching the regulations. He made it clear to some top people at Ferrari that the car was illegal in several areas. He then went to Peter Wright...

**Me:** Who is a technical advisor to the FIA.

**Chris:** Asked him about the legality, and was told it looked suspicious. He said that Wright could bring it to Charlie Whiting's attention, as long as he remained an anonymous source. Why would he bring it to Charlie Whiting's attention? Isn't he just the race director?

**Me:** He's also head of the FIA's F1 technical department.

**Chris:** Peter Wright did tell Charlie, and informed Stepney that the matter would be looked into at Australia. On the Friday of the Australian GP, Stepney phoned Mike Coughlan to see if the FIA had taken any action. Mike asked why he was interested, and Stepney said I want nothing but a clean and fair championship.

**Me:** That does shed doubt on the FIA's evidence that the two were coercing on Ferrari's technical information. When according to Stepney, all he was doing was seeking clarification from Mike.

**Chris:** Nothing happened previous to, during or after the race, so the first major thing Stepney is asking Max is "Why did Charlie not act until McLaren sought clarification?" That was a couple of days after the race. Stepney was sure he had done everything he should, by telling the FIA, and nothing happened, so then he had to blow the whistle to McLaren and that really explains everything.

**Me:** It does certainly back up what McLaren were saying about Nigel being the whistleblower in the July hearing.

**Chris:** Yea, cos the FIA, they were questioning if he was a whistleblower, why wouldn't he go to the FIA? But he did.

**Me:** He did, he went there first, and he brought attention to Charlie Whiting and he did nothing about it, when he was given ample opportunity to do something about it.

**Chris:** Which is really bad, if the FIA did nothing.

**Me:** If this is true, the FIA have been negligent in their management of the championship.

**Chris:** About the documents...

**Me:** That's the 780 page documents found in Mike's house.

**Chris:** Stepney says he had every right to have them in his position, and he went to Mike asking for help to get a better job. He shouldn't have shown Mike the documents, he was very naive.

**Me:** Very, very naive.



**Chris:** But he didn't expect Mike to steal them.

**Me:** This backs up what Mike was saying about copying the document to disc in order that one day he might have to give it back to Nigel. I can't wait to read this book, can you?

**Chris:** I can't believe we didn't know this earlier, everything would have made a lot more sense. I mean, you can't guarantee that it's all true, and Jean Todt is saying that Stepney's lost his mind. He is writing the letter with the benefit of hindsight, but it's really good to get the other side of the story. It completes the picture.

**Me:** We haven't actually heard what Mike has to say either, he's put all he knows into an affidavit but that's never been released publically, so we're missing some key pieces of the puzzle.

[Sweeper]

**Chris:** The last race of the 2007 season is the Brazilian Grand Prix on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October at Interlagos. The track is 2.667 miles which will be 71 laps, and the previous three winners were Massa, Montoya, and Montoya again.

**Me:** It's the championship showdown, every single race this season is all building up to this one finale.

**Chris:** It's on at prime time in Europe which does kind of screw with our podcast schedule but that doesn't matter.

**Me:** That's the least of everybody's worries. So we're gonna be a bit late. I suspect afterwards we're going to need a lie down anyway, cos whatever happens, it's gonna be a classic, is it not?

**Chris:** Last year, Massa won it, in his lovely overalls.

**Me:** Green overalls, and he won it in style. Ferrari had a tyre advantage last year, which they're obviously not going to have now that everyone's on Bridgestones. Also Bridgestone are bringing their two softest compounds which the red team have not got the best out of during this season. So advantage McLaren to begin with, and Ferrari have a massive hill to climb with Kimi. But they do have Massa to defend him.

**Chris:** It really is going to be tough for Raikkonen. I think it's probably down to between the two McLaren drivers, and it's so tough to call who it's gonna be. Your smart money is on Hamilton, obviously, but don't ever count Alonso out.

**Me:** He has his friend in the garage keeping an eye on things for him, so that might help his mindset, stop the paranoia. Given that advantage, it might be all he needs to keep ahead of Hamilton. What do you think Lewis is going to be thinking after the last race? Is it playing on his mind still? It was a long time to wait.

**Chris:** No, I think Lewis believes he's going to win, because he's ahead in the championship.

**Me:** He has got that advantage. If it looks like Alonso can't win it, do you think he would throw it for Hamilton and let Raikkonen win? Do you think he would prefer it if Kimi were the world champion?

**Chris:** I like to think that he wouldn't, but some of the reports we've been hearing, he's not the man I thought he was.

**Me:** No, he's gone down in your opinion this year, but he's not gonna want to see Lewis lift up that trophy.



**Chris:** There definitely is a bitter rivalry between, I think that can be said, and with the tantrums and blackmail, you know, you can never tell what he's going to do next. But I just like to think that the gentleman racer in him will come out, and he will just do his job.

**Me:** I like to think that Raikkonen can win it from the front, and the two McLaren's tangle early on in the race.

**Chris:** That is the only way that Raikkonen can win the race.

**Me:** It's gonna take mechanical reliability, a mistake, or deliberate actions from another driver, isn't it? But he can still do it. He can still do it, I have faith in the man.

**Chris:** I think it's safe to say, after the last race, anything is possible.

**Me:** Yes, wouldn't like to be putting money on this one.

[Sweeper]

**Chris:** I just want to warn people, I put a lot of photos on Flickr today, and they're all of me, so I just to... you know, don't be alarmed if you see pictures of me.

**Me:** Why are you putting lots of pictures of yourself on Flickr?

**Chris:** It's actually lots of screen grabs from our videos because, um, I need to remember what I wear each time, I mean, god forbid I wear the same thing twice.

**Me:** So, you've put it on Flickr for your own use?

**Chris:** Basically yea.

**Me:** Okay, so you don't wear the same clothes two videos in a row.

**Chris:** That would just be terrible. Can't be seen out wearing the same thing.

**Me:** The problem is you would never have thought of that as being a problem when you started doing videos, did you?

**Chris:** No, and then I ran out of clothes and had to go out and buy some more.

**Me:** And then you forgot which ones you'd worn.

**Chris:** And talking of the videos, this week is our last ever preview.

**Me:** Good lord, the season really is coming to an end, seems so final.

**Chris:** It's a good one though, we've made it extra special, so make sure you check it out.

**Me:** And don't forget to join us next week for the explosive finale to the 2007 championship.



**Chris:** And make sure you call us on our Skype number 0121 28 TRACK because if you haven't had anything to say about the individual races this season, you must have something to say about the championship as a whole.

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

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