



## Episode 46 – It's Like Fantasy F1

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### Coming Up

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**Chris:** This is Sidepodcast, Episode 46 – It's Just Like Fantasy F1. Coming up on today's show: Good Week/Bad Week, potential 2008 regulations and wet weather worries.

### Intro

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**Chris:** Well, that's different.

**Me:** Well, some bright spark decided she'd like to rebrand everything.

**Chris:** Yea, that was me.

**Me:** Rebrand the website, rebrand the audio, rebrand the video. So, we've created our own theme tune. It's not quite finished yet.

**Chris:** Did we run out of time?

**Me:** Sort of, yes, it's a bit incomplete. But does it remind you of anything?

**Chris:** It's slightly sounds like the ITV F1 theme tune from 2003 to 2005.

**Me:** And why does it sound like that?

**Chris:** Because I asked you to make it like that.

**Me:** And why did you want a theme tune that sounded a bit like the old ITV theme?

**Chris:** Well, everyone's favourite F1 theme tune is that BBC one.

**Me:** The Chain. Fleetwood Mac. Bring it on.

**Chris:** Yea, yea, you're all wrong, and the best theme tune is this one that we've made.

**Me:** Oh that's the theme tune, the one that we've made? Our theme tune is the best theme tune, of course everybody else is wrong.

**Chris:** That's not what I meant, you know what I mean. It's my favourite because I always say that your favourite F1 theme tune is the one that you grew up with, like James Bond, you know?

**Me:** I see.



**Chris:** Always the one that you first saw and grew up. So that was mine. That's the one that used to come on the telly and I would fall asleep straight away, and then I would wake up, watch Schumacher get on the podium and hear the theme tune again. So that's my favourite.

**Me:** Right, so your early experience of Formula 1 was a theme tune, Michael Schumacher winning and the theme tune again.

**Chris:** Yep.

**Me:** Okay, so you wanted to recreate that on Sidepodcast.

**Chris:** Absolutely.

**Me:** Right. Schumacher's not going to win it anymore, you know that, don't you?

**Chris:** I know.

**Me:** He'll keep trying though. For those listeners who are unfamiliar with the track, you do have it, coincidentally as your mobile ringtone, don't you?

**Chris:** Yes, I do, every time someone rings me in the supermarket, this is what I hear.

[Play ITV Theme tune ringtone.]

**Chris:** Doesn't that take you back?

**Me:** Yea, I don't recall it stopping quite as suddenly.

**Chris:** That's when all the F1 goodness would start.

**Me:** I see, well, the beginning of ours sounds like the beginning of that one and hopefully as the weeks progress it will sound less like the ITV theme tune as we improve it.

**Chris:** Cos you don't want to get sued, basically.

**Me:** Absolutely not, and week by week the theme will expand and grow and evolve into something completely different and the listeners can join us in that evolution. Which is another way of saying we're just a bit disorganised.

**Chris:** No, we always like to say, you know, we're learning on air, live. Everyone can share the learning experience.

**Me:** Maybe we should share a note a week. By the end of the year, it'll be finished. It'll be a masterpiece.

### *Good Week/Bad Week*

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**Chris:** It's been a good week for Autosport International, who have confirmed plenty of famous people for their show next week. Button, Webber, Coulthard, Allan McNish, Andy Priaulx, Gary Paffett and the crew from ITV-F1 – woohoo.

**Me:** We're going next week, and we're going to be late.



**Chris:** Of course.

**Me:** We're going to turn up, miss all the important bits and end up sulking for the rest of the week.

**Chris:** But we're going both days to make up for it.

**Me:** Does anyone mind if I slap Mark Blundell, put it on YouTube?

**Chris:** I don't condone that kind of behaviour.

**Me:** Oh, it'll make the trip worthwhile.

**Chris:** It's been a bad week for Super Aguri who's driver lineup was revealed by the release of the official 2008 Entry list, when they haven't actually confirmed anything to anyone just yet. They don't seem that upset but just said that no one has signed on the dotted line.

**Me:** Their excuses have been a bit peculiar, I find. Things like, they haven't got their sponsors sussed, they're not entirely sure about contracts, but we're still gonna submit the name to the FIA. They must be 99.9% confident, so why not announce it?

**Chris:** All I read was that there was ongoing negotiations.

**Me:** I see. You'd have thought they'd have wanted to get the jump, get a bit of PR out of it, not let the FIA take all the glory.

**Chris:** It's also been a good week for Toyota and their new sponsor Wurth.

**Me:** Alex Wurz?

**Chris:** No, Wurth.

**Me:** Oh, what are they then?

**Chris:** They're some kind of tool and assembly suppliers, they'll get their name on the transporters and the pit garage. Not quite a replacement for Kingfisher, but definitely a step in the right direction.

**Me:** Are they the guys who make one time wheel bolts for £1 million a piece?

**Chris:** I don't think so, that still upsets you, doesn't it?

**Me:** It does, I haven't got over it yet.

**Chris:** It's been a bad week for Yu Zhifei, the ex-chief of the Shanghai circuit who was jailed for corruption and sentenced to four years in prison. He basically embezzled everything in sight, mostly public funds, and involved twenty government officials. He embezzled 1 million yuan, which is about £70,000 and he was fined 300,000 yuan which is just over £20,000. Honestly, these days, with fines going for silly money like \$100 million, I can't even work out why this is news.



**Me:** That's because he was convicted in the real world, in a real court of law and not in the FIA's kangaroo court.

### *News and Views*

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**Chris:** Williams have decided they're not launching their new car, even though they'd sort of hinted at a date.

**Me:** Previously they said it was gonna be somewhere at the end of February, now they're saying we're not gonna really bother to do anything at all.

**Chris:** Do we know why?

**Me:** We can speculate, but there's nothing official from the team thus far.

**Chris:** Go on then, speculate.

**Me:** Well, they haven't got a lot to announce, really, because they've got Nakajima in Wurz's seat, which they did for the Brazil Grand Prix. So, there's no change there, we've all seen him in action, running people down, that kind of thing. They've now got Nico Hulkenburg to take over Nakajima's testing role, he's a guy who did quite well in A1GP but he's not a huge name in F1 so there's not really a massive amount to announce there.

**Chris:** They haven't got any new sponsors or anything.

**Me:** Sponsors are the same. Last year they announced AT&T and Lenovo had an increased sponsorship program, so they announced a big deal with that. And they had a whole new branding on the car and all sorts of things, they had the deal last year with Toyota, but that's an ongoing thing so same engine partner, same team name, same sponsor, same logo, basically the same drivers who finished the season last year. Not a lot to announce really, and slightly strapped for cash.

**Chris:** They do seem to be one of the poorest teams, not a high budget for that kind of thing.

**Me:** Their year end financials weren't that great this year.

**Chris:** They'll probably say that they just want to focus on the 2008 car, which probably wouldn't be a bad thing because they finished fourth in the championship last year.

**Me:** Yes, although that was due to McLaren's exclusion so it was really a net fifth result.

**Chris:** But in 2006 they were eighth, so eighth then fourth, hopefully they're on the way back up again.

**Me:** Start of a clime.

[Sweeper]

**Chris:** Towards the end of last year, when we'd pretty much finished podcasting and started the year end stuff, the FIA proposed some new rules.

**Me:** Oh lordy, this is the Monaco meeting, they came out with a bunch of proposed regulations for 2008.



**Chris:** And they're all a bit rubbish.

**Me:** Extreme, is what I call them.

**Chris:** Shall we have a look?

**Me:** Please, run through them.

**Chris:** Okay. Teams to use no more than one wind tunnel.

**Me:** Good idea, because this is the most environmentally unfriendly part of Formula 1. The wind tunnel is the most expensive thing to use and running two of them is obviously twice as expensive, twice as damaging to the environment.

**Chris:** I can't really see why you'd need two anyway.

**Me:** One should be enough, especially when a lot of teams are struggling to correlate the two and are ending up with duff information when they try and extrapolate that information from each of the two tunnels.

**Chris:** Honda.

**Me:** Red Bull.

**Chris:** Test fluid to be air at atmospheric pressure.

**Me:** I don't really know what that means.

**Chris:** Is that a sentence?

**Me:** Test fluid...

**Chris:** ...to be air at atmospheric pressure.

**Me:** Should it be at... no, it doesn't make any sense.

**Chris:** No. We'll just leave that one. Maximum test section wind speed 50m/s.

**Me:** That sounds like a pretty good idea because by restricting the amount of flow through a wind tunnel, you're limiting the amount of energy that can be expelled and burnt using one of those huge tunnels. So that's a pretty good rule, I think.

**Chris:** Maximum model scale 60%.

**Me:** Now this is gonna affect almost every single team bar Super Aguri, because Honda recently spent £30 million on a full scale wind tunnel which they're not gonna get the full benefit of now.

**Chris:** Waste of money.



**Me:** That and the fact that the FIA are proposing they turn off the other one. You know what I mean, they're now losing on both counts.

**Chris:** Apparently Williams run a full size car one week out of every six.

**Me:** Yes, so it's gonna affect them a little bit less than Honda, but most teams will lose from this rule.

**Chris:** No more than one model to be tested during a run.

**Me:** Now, we think this is a good rule, don't we, because in the past teams have been accused of running one car behind another in order to find out how to deliberately obstruct the air flow and prevent the car from overtaking, which is a little bit naughty, you might suggest.

**Chris:** But, if you can run one car in front of the other, they could be working on how to make overtaking easier.

**Me:** Oh yea, but they're not.

**Chris:** Yea, but they could.

**Me:** If they were, absolutely, that would be brilliant.

**Chris:** They're not gonna be able to now, so that's putting that straight out the window.

**Me:** What would be really fantastic is if at the start of this year, all the teams came forward with their 2008 challengers and said one of the advantages of this car is that it's easier to overtake, we spent loads of time in the wind tunnel making sure anyone can pass us. It's obviously not going to happen and that's why they should restrict one car following the other car in the tunnel.

**Chris:** Maximum usage to be equivalent to 15 runs per 8 hour day, on 5 days per week for team F1 purposes. Tunnel may be contracted out at other times.

**Me:** Impossible to police and completely impractical. You cannot see McLaren subcontracting out their wind tunnel in their factory. Nobody goes in that factory, that's exclusive to McLaren. What are they going to say? We're not using it tonight, come down to our factory, use our wind tunnel. It's not in use.

**Chris:** The McLaren wind tunnel, isn't it in the middle of the factory, hidden. You wouldn't be able to tell if it was on or not unless you broke in.

**Me:** Again, policing it, it's impossible. What are you gonna have, an FIA guy just standing there all day every day? That's not a waste of money. FIA shift workers to make sure all the wind tunnels in all the world are not being used for Formula 1? That's not gonna work, is it? And what happens if you don't manage to subcontract your wind tunnel? You can't turn the darn things off, because if you want to switch them on again, you need to get permission from the national grid because they suck so much power warming up. You need to get some kind of written permission. Therefore, you've got a subcontracted wind tunnel that's not subcontracted to anyone, that's just running continuously with nothing in it. No Formula 1 car in it, it's just on because it's too expensive to turn off.

**Chris:** Is it really inefficient, like it's better to leave your car running than stopping and starting again?



**Me:** Yes, on a normal road car, it's much better if you're going to stop for a short period of time to leave your engine running, rather than to switch it off and start the whole thing up again because that's a waste of energy. Same with the wind tunnel. You want to keep it going continuously if you can, in the world of Formula 1 that's not a problem. 24/7, that's how wind tunnels work.

**Chris:** Aerodynamic testing may only take place in wind tunnels if at reduced scale or at FIA approved test tracks if full scale. Full size testing to be subject to the F1 testing agreement.

**Me:** By the sound of it, this is trying to ban the shakedown loophole that currently exists in testing whereby teams can run cars in a straight line up and down, a runway for example, in order to make sure that all the bits are working correctly and nothing falls to pieces. I guess they're trying to prevent cars from doing that, but the question I do have to ask is before Formula 1 cars get shipped to a Grand Prix, there's no time to now shake a car down, presumably.

**Chris:** It looks like they're just trying to limit everything to the actual test sessions.

**Me:** Which they can do now they've got the standard ECU but this might be taking their new found power a little too far.

**Chris:** Full scale specific aerodynamic testing is to be reduced to five days a year.

**Me:** Five days? That's it?

**Chris:** That's all you can have.

**Me:** I wanted to go to Silverstone testing. I wanted to go to Spa testing.

**Chris:** Tough.

**Me:** What about... they have to test at Monza because it's a ridiculously dangerous racetrack. It's unique amongst the calendar, they have to test at Monza.

**Chris:** They can test all they like, just no aerodynamic testing.

**Me:** That's rubbish, how are they going to police it?

**Chris:** I think it's that ECU thing again.

**Me:** I am going to get sick of hearing about that this year, how about you?

**Chris:** I already am. Restrictions will be imposed to stop shift of resource from wind tunnel testing to CFD.

**Me:** Oh yea, and how are they planning to do that then? I tell you what, they must have a new FIA secret weapon, homologated handcuffs, used for FIA official purposes for the next ten years, they're gonna tie the wind tunnel technicians to the wind tunnel so they can't go near the CFD computers. It's the only way it's going to work.

**Chris:** This doesn't make any sense because I thought they were supposed to be encouraging CFD and not encouraging the wind tunnel and yet at the same time, they're saying you can't move people around, no more people on the CFD.



**Me:** I'm almost beginning to believe they're desperately trying to make a lot of people unemployed. Is there a skills deficit in the aerospace industry at the moment or something? Is F1 taking all of the skilled engineers? Why are they trying to make everybody redundant?

**Chris:** And these two are on the same lines, I think. The number of people involved in CFD development will be limited to a number to be agreed, and CFD computer systems will be characterised in order to set hardware performance limits, but growth will be allowed year on year to allow for hardware/software development.

**Me:** That's without question my favourite new regulation. It's the most preposterous and ridiculous idea I have ever heard the FIA come up with. Who thought of this one? Firstly, what do the FIA know about year on year hardware/software development improvements?

**Chris:** Hey, come on, technologically advanced sport.

**Me:** Fax machines, photocopiers, that's the limit of what they know. Secondly, you know how we have a website, you're familiar with our website. And you know how we're having problems in the past with our hosting and we're thinking about moving somewhere else?

**Chris:** Absolutely.

**Me:** One of the solutions we're looking at is Amazon EC2. Are you aware of Amazon EC2?

**Chris:** I've heard of it.

**Me:** Shall I explain it to anyone who maybe doesn't know?

**Chris:** Go on then.

**Me:** It's a bit geeky, but try to bear with me. What the basic concept is, Amazon, the people we buy books from, not to pigeon-hole them in any way, shape or form at all.

**Chris:** They do a lot more than books.

**Me:** I know, but they're famous for selling books for a reasonable price. They've come up with this great concept which is a bunch of virtual computers somewhere, somewhere around the world. It doesn't really matter where. They've called it a cloud, and you can purchase a computer off them, and you can rent it and in our case we'd make a web server sit on it and our website would run on this Amazon cloud in the middle of nowhere. If we got really suddenly very popular, which could happen, we could then buy more computers in this cloud. We don't have it in our house, we don't have to, we only pay for what we use, the power we use and the bandwidth used. If, say, I was a Formula 1 team and I didn't want to run a web server but I did want to run a CFD farm which is basically masses and masses and masses of computers, I could potentially, instead of having them in my design factory or my Formula 1 factory, I could store them in Amazon's virtual cloud in the middle of wherever. I could operate them all from my bed. Now, how in the world are the FIA going to stop a Renault engineer, for example, just to pick one out of thin air, purchasing a load of Amazon compute clouds, which is their technical name for it, operating the entire CFD farm from his bedroom. How are the FIA going to police that one?

**Chris:** I'm not sure the FIA would even understand that at all.



**Me:** I don't think they're aware such a thing exists. I'm sure they think they're going to go, right, you've got four computers in this building, you're only allowed three. Well, fine, I tell you what, I'll use one of the three that I'm allowed to buy hundreds of thousands of millions more and I'll scale it out as big as I like and I'll operate it from my one PC that you allow me to use. Brilliant, I'm within your regulations, except I'm spending millions and millions and millions of pounds and you don't know about it.

**Chris:** Well, you know the only way they'll be able to track that is to watch the races and see if you're going faster than Ferrari and if you are, then they'll catch you.

**Me:** Ouch, Miss Blachford. Did you understand that explanation? Does that make sense?

**Chris:** Yes, I kind of got distracted by the talk of clouds, and then you said when we get more popular.

**Me:** Right. At which point you dreamed about being more popular and maybe needing more servers.

**Chris:** Yea.

**Me:** Okay. Well, essentially, it's a preposterous, ridiculous idea and it's never, ever going to work. Anyone that thinks, even dreams that it might work is completely on their own planet.

**Chris:** Other restrictions will be placed on rig testing, design and manufacturing, suspension and brakes, hydraulic systems, bodywork, weight distribution, circuit testing and the number of personnel at races.

**Me:** The number of personnel at races. So, more people on the dole queue, then?

**Chris:** Do you know what? I like how they listed out very specifically all that stuff that we've just covered...

**Me:** About aero.

**Chris:** And then they're like, yeah, and then we're gonna put restrictions on all this other stuff as well, just randomly, very randomly.

**Me:** None of this is very police-able, apart from the possibly the number of personnel at races, because they have to apply to the FIA for a pass, and potentially the circuit testing because of the ECU, but the rest of it must be bartering tools.

**Chris:** So you mean Max is saying these are all the rules but we might let you off this if you agree to something else.

**Me:** Yea, they put in some worst case examples in order that the teams freak out at the whole idea of it and say no, we will actually agree to this other rule that you want us to implement and we refused to implement ages ago. That kind of thing.

**Chris:** That's quite clever.

**Me:** He is at politics.



**Chris:** Anyway, further details will be given to the teams on January 11<sup>th</sup> and it will be followed up by a meeting of the World Motorsport Council in the spring. There does appear to be an alternative solution to all this FIA madness, and we'll come to that after this short break.

*[Jingle: If you've got any comments or feedback, why not leave us a voicemail? It's free if you're a Skype user, find us under the username Sidepodcast, or you can ring us in the UK on 0121 28 TRACK, internationally, it's +44 121 28 87225. If you're the more shy and retiring type, you can always email me: christine [@] sidepodcast.com]*

**Chris:** The FIA way of trying to stop teams spending extortionate amounts of money is to come up with a thousand and one rules, as we have seen. Ross Brawn and Nick Fry from Honda have come up with an alternative solution that seems to be a little bit more sensible.

**Me:** What they're saying is why not apply a budget cap to each and every team?

**Chris:** Simple.

**Me:** If there's a man who can find a loophole in an FIA rulebook, it's Ross Brawn, and if he says there's loopholes in those rules and regulations, I'm inclined to believe him.

**Chris:** I like the quote that he said: "How fast can you make this car go for 100 million a year? How efficient can you be? And it's up to the teams to decide whether they spend 50 million on the driver and 50 million on the car, or 1 million on the driver and 99 million on the car. It would be fascinating to have that challenge." It's just like Fantasy F1.

**Me:** It is just like Fantasy F1, isn't it? What a great idea. £100 million, what can you do with it? There is obviously with this solution, the problem of how again, do you police something like this?

**Chris:** You could get them to submit accounts or something.

**Me:** To be audited? Tax auditors?

**Chris:** Everyone loves auditors.

**Me:** They're usually pretty thorough, tax auditors, they can find out if someone's being a bit sneaky with their money. I bet FIA auditors would be good at that job, wouldn't they?

**Chris:** They always find what they're looking for, it makes their day to find something, otherwise they're bored.

**Me:** There's always the threat of the FIA fine, if someone gets caught doing something wrong. \$100 million. Oh no, that was their budget. Another solution could be an FIA currency.

**Chris:** Max's head on all the notes?

**Me:** Yea, oh, he'd love that, wouldn't he?

**Chris:** How do you actually spend that money though? How would you pay for things with suppliers?



**Me:** Well, it would be an official currency, so that any supplier that maybe wanted to provide a service for a Formula 1 team would have to accept that currency, and maybe it would be tracked in some way, so they'd know how much a team had spent at any given point. Maybe give them marked bills, I don't know, it's another idea.

**Chris:** So, it would have an exchange rate and everything.

**Me:** Oh yea, absolutely, it would be an official thing.

**Chris:** I see.

**Me:** One day the FIA will be their own country, it's just the beginning.

[Sweeper]

**Chris:** On a different subject, this week, David Coulthard and his band of merry man approached the FIA with wet weather concerns when there's no traction control.

**Me:** Right, so from this year, traction control is banned, they don't like it. Or they're a bit worried it's a bit unsafe?

**Chris:** Yea, dangerous.

**Me:** The thing is, you brought this to my attention earlier because whenever David Coulthard starts going on about safety, my eyes glaze over, I sort of enter a catatonic state, not really paying much attention to what he's saying. So what's the crux of what his issue is?

**Chris:** Well, this is quite sensible, actually, what they basically want is a definition of when a race is too wet to continue based on the complete cock-up that was Fuji. I definitely agree with them because no one knew what the hell was going on.

**Me:** No, it wasn't a great race in terms of organisation or driver's whining and complaining to Charlie when really the track was fine. So, how on earth are they planning to define that then? Is it a certain amount of average rainfall per minute, or something?

**Chris:** I don't think they've gone into any specifics yet but the topic has been raised.

**Me:** And what do his merry men have to say on the subject?

**Chris:** Well, Jenson Button said: "The only worry I have about driving without traction control is racing in wet conditions. It's going to be very dangerous, we couldn't have raced in Fuji without traction control, there would have been people spinning on the straight."

**Me:** Well, there would have been one person spinning on the straight. Probably. An Englishman. Probably. Who thinks he's great in the wet, but isn't.

**Chris:** Shut up.

**Me:** Someone who maybe crashed out of Nurburgring when he thought he was doing really well.

**Chris:** You're mean.



**Me:** Oh, what better way to start the year?

### *Housekeeping*

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**Chris:** That's it for F1 news but the new Ferrari was launched earlier today. Aside from the higher cockpit sides, it looks just the same.

**Me:** Well, it's a little bit different, but that's the key thing, there's some extra cockpit padding which you can't see. It's a bit heavier which you can't see.

**Chris:** Right.

**Me:** What we're probably going to do is do a dedicated show just to car launches, I think we did that last year, didn't we? And it worked out quite well because you get to compare who's doing what for 2008. Of note, there don't appear to be too many pictures of the back of the Ferrari, so there's not a lot to say about things like the diffuser, and even in the video – there's a video kicking around of the launch, and even that doesn't go near the rear of the car. So, we only know a certain amount of information at the moment.

**Chris:** Of course we want to know your opinion about it, so don't forget you can leave us a voicemail on 0121 28 TRACK.

[Sweeper]

**Chris:** I don't know if you noticed but we released a video recently.

**Me:** We did, a pilot episode, in fact.

**Chris:** We asked for some feedback and we got loads. It was brilliant.

**Me:** Absolutely, great response.

**Chris:** We're working through everyone's comments, taking everything on board, and we're trying to figure out where F1 Rewind will fit in the schedule.

**Me:** It seems quite difficult to do a weekly video show, but it could be possible that we alternate this show and the video show. So one week we do F1 Rewind and the next week we do an audio discussion.

**Chris:** Was I a bit hasty when I said weekly video?

**Me:** You were quite keen. Weekly would be ideal, that would be perfect if we had the time to make it each and every week. There's almost always enough F1 news to fill a 4-5 minute video, however, it does take time to make.

**Chris:** As ever, we'll keep you posted when we know what we're gonna do.

[Sweeper]

**Chris:** Also this weekend, we found out we were nominated by Ollie for the 2007 Performancing Blog Awards.



**Me:** We were very pleased to discover that one.

**Chris:** We're in the Best Blog Podcast category.

**Me:** And who else is in that category?

**Chris:** It's absolutely ridiculous. We're with people who have their own Wikipedia entries. Matt Mullenwag.

**Me:** Who does, he created Wordpress? Is that right?

**Chris:** Yep.

**Me:** And Jason...

**Chris:** Calacanis. He made Mahalo Daily.

**Me:** And you subscribe to that each and every day, don't you?

**Chris:** Yep.

**Me:** That's some pretty tough competition, isn't it? How are we doing?

**Chris:** Well, we were doing okay. There is one podcast that's way out in the lead so we're never going to win.

**Me:** Okay, so we're second?

**Chris:** We were doing a good second, but it looks like we're dropping back a little bit now, so we need your votes.

**Me:** And how do people vote?

**Chris:** To make it easy, we've put all the information on a blog post on Sidepodcast.com.

**Me:** Click on the vote button, then select Sidepodcast and cast your vote. No need to register, no need to sign up, it's just a point and click job.

**Chris:** Voting ends on January 10<sup>th</sup> so act quickly.

**Me:** And we appreciate each and every one of your votes.

**Chris:** I think that's it for this week.

**Me:** Yea, we've got to go and find some pictures of the back end of a Ferrari.