



Episode 50– It’s a Bit Extreme and No One’s Done it Before

Coming Up

Chris: Welcome to Sidepodcast, Episode 50 – It’s a Bit Extreme and No One’s Done It Before. Coming up this week, we discuss the highs and lows at Barcelona and why it’s important that Champ Car’s have sidepods.

Intro

Chris: I’m feeling better, are you feeling better?

Me: I’m feeling massively productive.

Chris: Mm, good.

Me: Yes. Back on track. Been very busy this week. Lots of productivity on the blog.

Chris: We’ve done lots of little things on the site as well, things that you might not notice.

Me: Yes, it’s all the little bits that go on in the background. I think we’ve fully recovered from last week, haven’t we?

Chris: I’m ready to go.

Me: Let’s go then.

Good Week/Bad Week

Chris: It’s been a good week for Honda as Wurz has said he will race if they need him to. He said: “Look, no problem, if someone calls me in the morning and tells me that Rubens or Jenson slipped cleaning the bathroom, then I will jump in. I know what to do and I will do it with 100%.”

Me: What, jump in the bathroom?

Chris: Well, I’m not sure, you know, that’s all very well and good, but does he really think Jenson cleans his own bathroom?

Me: Why does he want to jump in the bathroom with him?

Chris: I don’t know.

Me: That’s all a bit weird, it’s too friendly.

Chris: It’s been a bad week for the Australian Grand Prix as Bernie has got his claws out again. This happens every year, but with an ever expanding list of Grand Prix venues and a finite calendar, Mr Ecclestone’s threats take on more and more relevance.



Me: I was reading a great post by F1Wolf this week, where he said he went to the 2005 Australian Grand Prix and the race promoters made no effort whatsoever to give any indication that there was a race going on, during the weekend. So, partly, I suspect they've brought it on themselves.

Chris: That's true, because you can't really escape the Silverstone promotion in this country.

Me: No, it's a bit over the top, it's cheap, but it is over the top and it does get in your head. You know there's a race going on at the weekend. In Australia, possibly not so much.

Chris: It's been a good week for Trulli, who has previously expressed concern that some teams might be able to get around the standard ECU business and get an advantage. Max Mosley has now said they won't. So, Trulli must feel a lot better.

Me: Right, because Max said so.

Chris: Exactly.

Me: Oh, I feel great now. All is well in the world.

Chris: It's been a bad week for Christian Klien who has been signed as a BMW test and reserve driver, along with Marco Asmer as the second tester. Although this is good news, Klien has made no secret of the fact that he feels he's done the testing thing and he's worthy of returning to a race seat.

Me: Some people are so ungrateful. Although, if he will go round spouting his mouth off about wanting to be a racer again and being bored of testing and you know, not wanting to be a Honda test driver anymore, it's gonna come back and bite him at some point, isn't it?

Chris: Honda are probably laughing about it, because he thought he was too good to be a test driver, but apparently he's not.

News and Views

Chris: You know there's testing going on in Barcelona at the moment as we speak. I don't like it.

Me: Why not?

Chris: Because there's news and information coming out and I can't do an F1 Minute to share it with everybody.

Me: I see, because it's a weekend. It's an unusual choice although they have done testing on Friday, Saturday, Sunday in the past. Not for a while, but it's been done before. I think they're probably simulating a race weekend, aren't they? The Friday practice, the Saturday qualifying and the Sunday race. Is that what they're trying to do?

Chris: It does look that way because Toro Rosso were doing qualifying runs, which might explain why they were 1 and 2 yesterday.

Me: Yes, on Saturday they were and Renault apparently are doing a full race simulation on Sunday. Also, Barcelona has been undergoing some safety improvements recently, so I guess they're all keen to get back to the track as soon as possible. And this doesn't happen to be the middle of the week, but that's just the way it is.



Chris: I find it a bit odd that all the testing's been done in Spain.

Me: Two teams are going out to Bahrain to test in the warmer ambient temperatures in a couple of weeks but it's warmer than Britain but close enough for most of the teams to get to, so it works out as quite a convenient choice.

Chris: It's not very fair on poor Lewis Hamilton though.

Me: He's getting lots of grief this week, isn't he? It's gone up a notch, hasn't it?

Chris: Apparently some of it was quite racist.

Me: Last week we were talking about it, it was quite funny, someone had a picture of a crane, where's the crane when you need it now? Every time Lewis spun off they heckled him a bit. But this week, it's taken a little bit of a turn for the worse.

Chris: They actually had to close the spectator area outside the McLaren garage.

Me: Partly, I imagine it's because it's the weekend and people don't have to take any time off work, so they can just turn up. You get more people and a different audience, it's no longer the dedicated audience turning up and taking time out of their lives to come and watch testing.

Chris: To McLaren's credit, they appear to be just keeping their heads down and getting on with things.

Me: Yea, I mean, they've got Pedro in the team, I'm surprised he isn't getting any support from the Spanish fans. But yes, all credit to them.

Chris: I thought that testing was all about making sure that your car was working.

Me: It is, isn't it?

Chris: Apparently, Piquet was practicing getting in and out of a seat.

Me: Right, so the driver has to work too then.

Chris: Yea, because the driver must be able to get out of the car in less than ten seconds, and so he had to practice.

Me: That's Article 13.1.4 isn't it? Where it says that: "from his normal seating position, with all seat belts fastened, and whilst wearing his usual driving equipment, the driver must be able to remove the steering wheel and get out of the car within 5 seconds, and then replace the steering wheel in a total of 10 seconds."

Chris: Why does he need to replace the steering wheel?

Me: I suspect so the marshals can manoeuvre the car if they need to. If they need to push it into a side road or something, they need to be able to turn the steering wheel.

Chris: Well, that makes sense and it's a good thing for safety reasons, but when I first read it, I immediately thought of Le Mans.



Me: Ah, yes, well, the rules been around since '98 and they haven't brought in driver changes yet.

Chris: It's not going to happen, is it?

Me: No. We could suggest it, but I think at the moment it's just a safety thing. It's a bit of an exam. Little bit of a test that the guy has to pass if he's gonna be allowed to go racing.

Chris: So, what's up with that Red Bull fin thing?

Me: Wow. That was an addition this week. I'm sure everybody's seen it.

Chris: Even I noticed.

Me: It's like a massive shark fin on the back.

Chris: I read that it's all about stability.

Me: It's a Newey design, it's a radical departure. He's been thinking and he's been playing but I'm not sure it's completely legal, I think it might be just outside the boundaries of the FIA regulations. Just because it's testing and they're allowed to push the boundaries a bit more. I wonder if we'll actually see that race, when it comes to Melbourne.

Chris: Why do you think it's illegal?

Me: It's a bit extreme and no one's done it before. I'm surprised that no one's spotted such a large loop hole in the regs.

Chris: Surely no one's done it before because they've never had this set of circumstances before, with the standard ECU and the engine braking?

Me: That's very true. Possibly, it has no aerodynamic effect in a straight line and is therefore unnecessary, it will only help them in the braking area and the early part of the corner. So you could be onto something there, yea.

Chris: The big news of testing so far is Williams. Nakajima had a crash so they stopped testing, then they thought they had it sussed so they started testing again, then they stopped and now they've gone home.

Me: Right, yes. On Friday, early on Friday, Nakajima went smack into one of the walls. I think it was about 11:30, so he hadn't been going long – major structure failure of the front wing. The team decided to pack up on Friday, they stopped Nico from testing, brought him in. They flew some more parts out on Saturday which they hoped would fix the problem. Didn't work, didn't work at all. The car ran all day but in the end they decided that enough was enough, it was too risky, they couldn't solve the problem immediately, so yea, they've gone home.

Chris: So is it that they don't know what the problem is, or they just don't know how to fix it?

Me: Oh, I suspect that they do know what the problem is, but they tried a rushed fix Friday evening, tried to get some structural stability in their front wing. Sent out another one in the hope that it would fix the problem and it wasn't quite enough, so now they're gonna have to go back, redesign the part, rebuild it, remake it, and then fit it to the car for the next test.



Chris: This is putting them a little bit behind schedule.

Me: Yes. Well, they were quite quick, so it shouldn't hurt them as much as last year when they had severe problems early on in testing. So maybe not such a major blow for them.

Chris: The front wing is quite an important part though, isn't it?

Me: Goodness, yea, I couldn't see exactly what happened because the pictures from the accident were a bit poor. Only appeared on a couple of sites, slightly suspicious, why more people didn't have more photographs of it. No mid-accident photographs either, only the aftermath could be seen, but it looks like the front wing snapped or failed at some point down the straight, got trapped beneath the undertray, lifted the front of the car up so the front wheels weren't on the track anymore and Nakajima was just a passenger. I don't understand why the rear brakes didn't do anything, though.

Chris: Unless the rear wheels were off the floor as well.

Me: Yea, could have done that, it could have lifted it up right from the centre of the vehicle.

Chris: It could have been flying.

Me: Yea, it could have just slid all the way into the wall. More worrying, it could be that the rear brakes don't activate until the front brakes have activated which means because the front brakes were off the ground, the back brakes didn't kick in.

Chris: That is worrying but surely we would have noticed something like that before.

Me: Yea, I can't believe that would be legal. I'm sure the brakes have to be applied. I'm sure when you put your foot on the brakes, the back brakes have to come on. But I do remember from last year with the whole Ferrari legal thing, do you remember that thing? Remember that whole Ferrari court case business? Did we mention it? I can't remember if we went into it enough. But if you recall, there was a whole thing about the rear master brake cylinder kicking in later after the front brakes kick in, then the rear brakes kick in. And presumably if the front brake sensor doesn't say that the front brakes are under load, maybe the back brakes never, ever activate.

Chris: On that controversial note, we should probably take a break. Join us momentarily, where we'll be talking about whether the Honda and Renault launches lived up to expectations, and catching up with your voicemails.

[Jingle: "Come and join Sidepodcast on Facebook. You can be my friend by looking up Christine Blachford or you can join our group by searching for Sidepodcast. Post photos, watch videos, take part in discussions and share your links, it's all happening on Facebook so visit us now."]

Chris: Last week we talked about the Honda and Renault launch, what we were expecting from the car and from the websites. They've both happened now and starting with the Honda one, not much.

Me: Nothing. EarthDreams.info, bit of a disappointment. Hasn't happened yet, could happen in the future, but at the moment Earth Dreams is just a case of Honda contributing money to causes to make themselves feel better. There was actually less social interaction than last year, when at least we could donate some money and get our names on the car. This year, we're just going to look at the car.



Chris: But at least looking at the car will be easier now it's pretty.

Me: Easier on the eye. Good lord. It's not perfect, there's still a round globe on an irregular shaped Formula 1 car, which is a bit of a shame, but it's less of a globe and goodness is it an improvement?

Chris: What I do prefer this year is that the uniform actually matches the car, because obviously last year they didn't want Jenson wandering round with the Earth on his suit, so now they actually match.

Me: Talking of which, haven't they stolen your idea from this time last year?

Chris: Yea, well, after the Earth Car, I wrote on the blog: "It's also worth noting that Jenson is still complaining about the lack of speed. Perhaps they should have gone for some go faster stripes instead of the entire earth."

Me: And what have they done this year?

Chris: There are stripes.

Me: There are stripes on the nose of the car, go faster stripes, and there are stripes down the left hand side of their racing suits.

Chris: I don't think it looks that bad but you said it looked like they'd been run over.

Me: I thought, you know those line painters can put double yellow lines around the streets of the UK? I thought maybe they'd got in the way. They'd just run over them too, with their little line painting machines.

Chris: Because they've just been lying in the street, of course.

Me: Yes, given that you've been so good at predicting what this year's Honda livery will look like, what are they gonna do for next year?

Chris: Well, I think maybe they'll go for something completely different, maybe something pink or yellow.

Me: Right, you just don't want them to steal your ideas anymore, do you?

Chris: No.

Me: You're giving them duff information.

Chris: Renault launched their car and their site this week and both were better than Honda.

Me: Well, the livery hasn't changed. Exactly the same car as last year minus the PVaxx sponsor and a couple of other ones added, no significant change there at all.

Chris: At least the launch was a bit more exciting, and I say exciting, I mean different, weird. Because they launched an actual road car at the same time.



Me: Yea, they did this last year and they liked the idea of marring their Formula 1 operation with their manufacturing operation and it gives them a good excuse to get two Formula 1 drivers standing next to a Twingo.

Chris: Well, you see Fernando like, perched by the car, and I just think, he's never gonna get in that car. You would never see him driving a Twingo.

Me: You might on some kind of Renault PR thing but no, it's not his style at all. But at least he didn't have a mobile phone in his pocket this year.

Chris: Anyway, the site launched as well, the social networking thing.

Me: Yes, it was a bit late, it was a bit broken. Severely broken on the first day, got a little bit better and still getting better throughout the week.

Chris: They're working on it.

Me: They've stolen our idea of releasing stuff before it's finished. We do that, they're not supposed to do that. They're supposed to do planning and organisation and project management and stuff. But no, they've just thrown it up there and they're fixing it on the fly. Which is basically our mantra, right?

Chris: It definitely has potential. It just needs a bit more work.

Me: Yea, apart from the blog that was there last year, there's not too much stuff to make me come back again and again. They need to add more to it, and I'm sure they will, but at the moment it's just a bit basic. And there's a lot of moderation going on, so it took a day to upload a photograph, and it's taken another day to upload an avatar and it's just a little bit slow getting off the ground.

Chris: Whilst we were concentrating on two sites that were only just started, we were pointed in the direction of the Force India social network.

Me: That's been going a lot longer.

Chris: All the bugs are already fixed.

Me: Yes, there's more people on there, there's quite a bit more to do. You can add videos and you can interact with people in better ways. I'm enjoying it a lot actually, and this week, haven't they got a launch coming up? So maybe there'll be some more improvements pending.

[Sweeper]

Chris: At the Autosport Show last month, we were just walking along and I was chatting away, as I do and then I turned round and you'd gone and you were spending money.

Me: Yea, I was buying lots and lots of magazines. Back issues, specifically, of a magazine I hadn't seen before called The Paddock.

Chris: I haven't seen that one in shops or anything.



Me: No, apparently, it's not for distribution in the likes of WH Smiths, and it's a subscription only.

Chris: What's it about?

Me: It's about the business side of F1, moreso than something like the Autosport magazine. It's subscription only, delivered to your door, and it's quite fantastic. Lots and lots of in depth articles about subjects that I wouldn't normally find on the web or find on the usual magazines we read. I'm quite enjoying it.

Chris: I've read one of them so far, and there was a good article in there that I liked about what Ferrari are getting out of their deal with A1GP. So that was interesting, but it has really bad grammar, there are mistakes everywhere.

Me: It drives you a bit crazy, doesn't it?

Chris: It's awful. People make mistakes, and you might expect to see one mistake or maybe two, but you know people are paying for this magazine and there are mistakes littered through the book. I read one magazine and there are at least ten mistakes.

Me: Right, in need of a bit of proof reading then. Maybe you should apply, maybe you should tell them, you need a proof reader, and I'd like to proof read your magazine for you. And therefore, it would be a better magazine.

Chris: Assuming that bad grammar doesn't upset you as much as it upsets me, you can find more information about the magazine at thepaddockmagazine.com.

Me: And we highly recommend that everybody goes out and gets a subscription to this magazine, because it's insightful and it's unique and it's information you wouldn't get anywhere else.

On the Phones

Chris: Last week, I was crying because no one was calling our voicemail number.

Me: No, but they were happily ringing up Kimi.

Chris: Yea, but now I'm happy because I have two voicemails.

Me: Wow, you got two voicemails this week, just as a result of you crying about not getting any. That's very sweet.

Chris: Yea, I should cry more often.

Me: Yea, our listeners are lovely.

Chris: The first one is from Gary Shavit, and I think it adds a lot to the conversation.

Me: Okay. Please play it.

[Voicemail]

Gary: Hi Christine, I don't have anything to say. If you feel so bad that people weren't sending you voicemails, then here's one. Bye.



[End Voicemail]

Me: Aw, that's nice of him.

Chris: Yea, I do appreciate that. And the second one is from our good friend Brendan.

Me: What's he got to say for himself then?

[Voicemail]

Brendan: I'm sorry the two of you are sick. I hope you are both well as soon as is possible. This is Brendan, your Atlanta correspondent. Get well soon.

[End Voicemail]

Chris: Which is very sweet and we are both well now.

Me: Absolutely. That's two Americans we've had call in. Where's the UK contingent then? How come no one from the UK is calling us up? We also had a comment from Evenstar that said she'd call in at some point in the future, because she made it onto that Kimi podcast, amazingly.

Chris: That is very cool.

Me: Yes, what a small world. But she's gonna call us up at some point in the future. So, if you're interested in calling us and joining in this wonderful conversation, what do you have to do?

Chris: If you're on Skype, you'll find us under the username Sidepodcast, and it's free. Alternatively, you can ring us on 0121 28 TRACK.

Me: That's...

Chris: 0121 28 87225.

Me: Brilliant stuff. I've actually got a new idea this week.

Chris: Okay.

Me: Because we're trying to encourage more interactivity and more conversation on here, via the phones, I'm thinking of calling us up regularly.

Chris: You are.

Me: What normally happens throughout the week, you hear stuff, you read stories, you pick up tidbits of information about Formula 1 stuff, and I say oh, write that down, must talk about that on the podcast this coming week. You know, it might be quite useful, those kind of things. From now on, I'm gonna call us up. And I'm gonna say, hey, I've just heard this cool bit of information and these are my thoughts on it.

Chris: You do know that you're actually a co-host on the show.

Me: Yea, no, I do, but it's more live. It's like my thoughts as I read them, as opposed to my thoughts after a week of thinking about them and having them gestate in my brain and then they become other thoughts. So, it's like live thoughts.

Chris: Okay, so have you made a call to us this week?

Me: Yea, I'm gonna start this week. What I've done, I've put 0121 28 TRACK into my mobile phone, and every time I read something or hear something important, I'm gonna ring it up. And this week, was the story of Super Aguri potentially dropping one Anthony Davidson.

[Voicemail]

Me: Something's just come to mind as I'm reading this story about Honda insisting that Super Aguri keep Anthony Davidson on, because he's useful to them as a test driver. How bad must that guy feel knowing that he's not good enough for the Honda team, they don't want him in their race team. He can't get much testing out of them, because obviously testing is restricted this year, and therefore they've punted him off to Super Aguri but they don't want him to go really. They find him useful, they find his input insightful, they don't want to lose that ability but they don't want him to race either. Not for them, not for the main team. That's just what I was thinking, thought I'd throw it up in the air.

[End Voicemail]

Me: It's like having a live conversation with myself.

Chris: Well, Super Aguri are obviously in a difficult position because they need the sponsorship from Honda, but they don't want to be dictated to. On the other hand, Honda have said that supporting Super Aguri is actually a bit of a hassle, so you can see why they'd want to get something out of it.

Me: Yea, absolutely. They want to get their money back because it's causing them lots and lots of grief. But they should have the backbone to stand up and say Anthony Davidson is a good enough driver, he shall be a driver in our team. Even though we don't have any space for him.

Chris: As long as he doesn't take Jenson's place.

Me: Oh yea, well there is that I suppose. Yes, yes, they can only go so far. If you're interested in joining in this conversation, don't forget 0121 28 TRACK, put it in your phone, give us a call, anytime anything important happens, we'll feature it in our new section On The Phones.

Housekeeping

Chris: My Facebook group is really fun, we've had loads of people join this week.

Me: Is it quite active?

Chris: Yea.

Me: I noticed that after you created a Facebook group, F1 Wolf did the same.



Chris: Yes, he did, and I joined it.

Me: He stole your idea.

Chris: No he didn't. Facebook is open to everyone.

Me: No, it's alright really. Absolutely. He's got a really good comment plugin on his website so we're gonna steal it.

Chris: We're gonna steal it back.

Me: We're gonna steal it back, yea.

Chris: There are some really good discussions going on, and there are a couple of comments that I wanted to share with you.

Me: Is it the wall ones about them drugs?

Chris: No. Not the one that says we're the crack cocaine of podcasts. No.

Me: The other one about the lines? No?

Chris: No.

Me: Which comments were they, then?

Chris: Well, this actually ties in with what we were talking about earlier, Louise Johnson pointed out that Ferrari, Red Bull and Honda all have stripes on their uniform. This go faster stripe thing is catching on.

Me: Yes, I hadn't spotted that.

Chris: And in a conversation about the Red Bull fin, Ian Lockwood said "Fins clearly make you go faster, Mika, Kimi, and Heikki."

Me: I like it.

Chris: Shall I tell you my favourite thing about Facebook this week, though?

Me: Go on, then, go on.

Chris: A while back Scott Drydon, Facebooked me a message.

Me: Facebooked you?

Chris: I don't know what the word is.

Me: Messaged you.

Chris: He messaged me saying that Montagny would be testing in Champ Car and I should keep an eye out for it.



Me: Okay, and did you?

Chris: Clearly I forgot because I have a very small brain. So he messaged me again this week and said Montagny had gone fastest. In Champ Car testing.

Me: Out of everybody?

Chris: Out of everybody on his first go.

Me: That's mighty impressive.

Chris: It's not actually his first go, because he's done it before.

Me: Does that mean that Champ Car is beneath F1 standards?

Chris: No, it means that Montagny is really good.

Me: Right, we don't know what they were doing in terms of fuel running or anything but I can tell you're happy about it.

Chris: It was only like six thousandths of a second as well, but I'm not letting you take anything away from this.

Me: Right, are we gonna do a Champ Car podcast now?

Chris: We might have to have a little Champ Car section. The problem is...

Me: I don't want to do a Champ Car section.

Chris: The problem is that it's on Eurosport and we don't get that. So I'm gonna need to have a Champ Car correspondent.

Me: Are you, you're not gonna buy Eurosport just for Franck are you? He hasn't got a drive yet, has he? He's just testing. If he gets a drive, would you put that much money forward?

Chris: What do you mean, if he gets a drive?

Me: Well, he may not get a drive.

Chris: He was top of the timesheets.

Me: He's literally swapped with Sebastien Bourdais, hasn't he? Fair enough, so do you think, well, okay, are you gonna buy Eurosport then?

Chris: No. I need a correspondent.

Me: I don't want to do Champ Car news.



Chris: Okay.

Me: I just don't want to do it.

Chris: Champ Cars have sidepods.

Me: It's a Formula 1 podcast.

Chris: Sidepodcast.

Me: For... you have a point. You have a point. But you're not winning this argument. I'm glad that the guy's doing well and I'm glad that he's in a car and he's still going round in circles and he's still happy. I still don't care.

[Sweeper]

Chris: A long time ago in the days before Sidepodcast...

Me: BS.

Chris: Yep, I had...

Me: In the days BS?

Chris: That doesn't sound good.

Me: That doesn't work at all, does it? Keep going.

Chris: I had a personal blog and I read a lot of other blogs, and I found that I wasn't really commenting, I was more of a passive blog reader.

Me: Okay, you were a consumer.

Chris: And as a blogger, I know that comments are really good, they're fun to read and it makes the whole thing worthwhile.

Me: Yea, interaction.

Chris: So I decided that I needed to become a more active commenter and the only way to do it was to set myself a bit of a target.

Me: Okay, and what was that target?

Chris: It was called Must Comment Monday.

Me: Ooh, catchy title.

Chris: It's quite obvious but the basic idea is that every blog that you read on a Monday, you must comment on it.



Me: Right, you must add to the conversation.

Chris: Yea.

Me: So, to become less of a passive consumer and to integrate and to interact more, and to become more active in the world of Formula 1 you're suggesting that people should comment every Monday on everything they read.

Chris: I'm saying that I'm gonna start it again, resurrect Must Comment Monday on Sidepodcast, so therefore, every F1 blog I read on a Monday I will comment on.

Me: That sounds good.

Chris: And it would be fun if other people did the same thing.

Me: Okay, not just on our blogs but on any Formula 1 related blog, this is. So, anything you read, anyone that will let you comment, obviously some news sites they don't let you comment.

Chris: You have to log in and things like that.

Me: They don't want you to know. So, you've got some ground rules then, if you have to log in, you're not really interested in that.

Chris: Yea, if you have to register, that's just too much effort.

Me: Okay, but if it's a simple comment and you can add something to the conversation, then that's what you're going to do every Monday.

Chris: Yep.

Me: Okay, well, in that case, I'll try and do the same thing then.

Chris: And the blog world will be a much better place.

Me: Really? You haven't seen my comments yet. You might change your mind when you've said that.

Chris: It will be a much more vocal place.

Me: Okay, it will be a much louder and more crowded space. I will give it a shot, though. I like the sound of it and I will start, that's tomorrow, isn't it?

Chris: Monday is tomorrow, yes.

Me: Okay, I'll give it a shot tomorrow.

Chris: That's it for this week, we'll be back in seven days time.

Me: And I am gonna call myself to discuss ideas for next week's show.