



## Episode 51– What’s That Helmet Doing in the Middle of my Dinner?

---

### Coming Up

---

**Chris:** Welcome to Sidepodcast, Episode 51 – What’s That Helmet Doing in the Middle of my Dinner? Coming up on today’s show, just how fast are Ferrari, who likes the gold and Silverstone’s only way out.

### Intro

---

**Chris:** Is this yet another outside broadcast?

**Me:** Here we are in beautiful sunny England in February. We’re sat in a pub garden. Why are we here?

**Chris:** It is sunny, it’s bloody freezing, but it is sunny. Well, what happened was we had this plan to go to Ikea to get lots of lovely furniture for our Sidepodcast videos.

**Me:** Okay, so we went to Ikea in Milton Keynes and how did we end up in this pub garden?

**Chris:** Well, it was on the way back and I was hungry and I needed a drink and we thought we’d stop in this pub and it just so happens that it’s Mark Webber’s pub. And we just happened to have our audio recording equipment, which is such a coincidence that we can now do a podcast from Mark Webber’s pub.

**Me:** It’s almost as if we planned ahead.

**Chris:** Almost.

**Me:** Okay, well we’re freezing our nuts off just to bring this podcast to you. It does have a Formula 1 angle though, doesn’t it, that’s the important thing. Red Bull Racing driver Mark Webber does own a restaurant in, where are we? Near Milton Keynes.

**Chris:** We’re in a little village called Mentmore and it really is little. The roads are tiny. I’m not entirely clear on what stake Mark Webber actually has in this, I thought it belonged to his wife, but the people seem to be wearing Red Bull shirts and Red Bull seem to be quite heavily involved.

**Me:** As we sit in the garden, we are sitting underneath a Red Bull parasol, all of the staff are wearing Red Bull uniforms and there’s a Mark Webber helmet inside.

**Chris:** And some gloves. It’s all very weird, because it seems a bit random. If you didn’t know this was Mark Webber’s pub, you’d be like, what’s that helmet doing in the middle of my dinner?

**Me:** It’s not smack in the middle of your dinner, it’s not in the middle of the plate or anything, I wouldn’t want to put anyone off from coming here. But there is a pizza named after Mark Webber, isn’t there? What’s it called?

**Chris:** The Mark Webber pizza.



**Me:** That's genius. I think we're gonna have to come back to this later on in the show. But shall we get started?

### *Good Week/Bad Week*

---

**Chris:** It's been a good week for Honda staff as it's rumoured they are offering a \$2,000 bonus to all employees if either driver win a race in 2008. Apparently it really is all employees, even the cleaners. This comes from Global Motorsport Media.

**Me:** I think that is horse radish. That does not sound like a team who are in control of what they're doing, that sounds like panic. And I don't believe a team with Ross Brawn at the helm are in to panic, therefore I think that's an entirely made up news story. Don't believe a word of that.

**Chris:** Yea, I'm not being funny but I don't see Ross Brawn giving the cleaners bonuses. It's been a bad week for the McLaren four, Ron Dennis, Martin Whitmarsh, Mike Coughlan and Paddy Lowe have all been called to see the Italian authorities who are investigating the espionage thing for Ferrari. Alonso and Hamilton have answered questions before and came out relatively unscathed but I think it might not be so easy for those guys.

**Me:** We were expecting this though. Ferrari have never made any bones about the fact that this is going to happen and they were issued with summons during the Italian Grand Prix weren't they? So it's not come as a huge surprise, no major development in this yet.

**Chris:** Brendan left a good comment on F1Minute.com, he said: "Going to Italy to answer any kind of charge can be a dangerous business. The Italians have a nasty habit of bugging you in jail and leaving you while they prepare their case of papers which can take years. For a while after Senna's death, while the Italians were still trying to hang it on Williams, Frank would not attend the races in case they locked him up. Ron needs to be a bit careful methinks, I sure wouldn't go under these circumstances without a cast iron guarantee it's just a witness summons. Ferrari are very powerful in that neck of the woods and we can all guess what they're saying to the judges in private."

**Me:** An interesting point. The only thing I'd say is that the Senna case did involve a death, whereas this case is not quite as serious. Just espionage. So, it may not require such a long jail sentence and they may have less to worry about than perhaps Frank Williams did.

**Chris:** I'm sure Ferrari see it as some kind of major case though.

**Me:** Oh, I'm sure Ferrari see it as the end of the whole world as we know it.

**Chris:** It's been a good week for Super Aguri who have passed the crash test set by the FIA and are thus allowed to race in 2008. Whether they get there or not depends on some investment possibilities but there are a few rumoured so things are looking up for them. It's been a bad week for Renault because they've signed Yamamoto as test driver. Flavio Briatore said: "We are delighted to welcome Sakon to the team for 2008. We plan a particularly aggressive development programme for the coming year and his F1 experience will be useful to us in this context. Furthermore, the ING Renault F1 team is one of the most active in promoting Formula 1 around the world thanks to our unique Roadshow programme and Sakon will boost our visibility in important markets. He will be an important asset for the team." But not cos of his driving.

**Me:** He didn't say that last bit, did he? Interesting point about the roadshow though. They do do a lot of promotion for Formula 1 through roadshows and I can see how he would be useful. However, one has to ask what experience does he really have apart from a couple of Grand Prix starts and maybe it seems like Renault may be running short of



a little bit of money. Especially with Fernando Alonso extended and overpriced contract that they've got to suddenly pay for. PVAXX are missing as a sponsor. There's quite a lot of gaps actually for more branding on that Renault car. Possibly Yamamoto might be bringing a little bit of money to the team.

**Chris:** Wasn't Yamamoto in all the press shots?

**Me:** Oh, he was, yea that was weird too. You know that they did the launch was it last week, they had the whole big Renault launch in France. Then when they announced Yamamoto a couple of days after that, it turns out that they'd already done all of the press shots with Yamamoto in it, so it was already a done deal and they knew it was going to happen. So I'm curious as to why they decided not to announce it at the launch, almost as if they were a little bit embarrassed by the fact that they had him in their team.

### *News and Views*

---

**Chris:** So, it's only right, being the news section of the podcast that we talk about the race row in Barcelona, but to be honest, there's not that much to say about it. Everyone seemed to act correctly and do what they should do so I don't know what the fuss is about.

**Me:** There has been an awful lot of talk this week and I think the FIA should be congratulated on doing exactly the right thing at exactly the right time. As should the Circuit de Catalunya who responded correctly. I am massively disappointed in the way that the tabloids have tried to twist this to their own gain in order to get as many sales as they can with their newspapers, and also the bloggers who are trying to milk it a little bit more than possibly it should have been. There's nothing else to say.

**Chris:** Obviously, it was a horrible thing and we're trying to make light of the situation at all, but it just seems like a lot of fuss for something that was dealt with correctly. I'm a bit confused by the bloggers that seem to think Fernando Alonso should stand up and speak out against the so-called fans, when really if he does so, I think he'd just be giving them the attention that they want.

**Me:** Yea, the last thing anybody needs is more headlines.

[Sweeper]

**Chris:** Ferrari and Toyota have been testing in Bahrain. Now clearly, given the competition, Ferrari were top of the timesheets but they have been going ridiculously fast.

**Me:** They have put a couple of blinding laps in. I'm wondering if it isn't just to smack the competition on the head and say listen, look what we're up to. Because no one knows exactly what's going on out there. There's only one team plus Ferrari, so we haven't got a great benchmark, we haven't got a great comparison, so it's quite possible that they're not running legal parts. And it's quite possible that they're cutting chicanes and doing all sorts of things in order to get the best lap times.

**Chris:** Like the opposite of sandbagging.

**Me:** Exactly the opposite of sandbagging. Obviously Ferrari are legendary for that, when they're with other teams, in order to give the false impression that they're slower than they really are. I think now they're doing the opposite and they're trying to pretend they're much, much faster than in reality they can be.

**Chris:** It is leading people to believe that maybe it will be a one-horse race once the season starts but I don't think so.



**Me:** I think we want to remain optimistic at this point and don't believe the hype, that's what I'd say.

[Sweeper]

**Chris:** Back in January, we saw the Force India testing livery up close and it was really nice, so I want to know why they've changed it to this hideous gold and silver rubbish.

**Me:** Oh, they had a launch, didn't they? The official car unveiling. Now I thought the test livery was gonna be pretty much the final livery that we see racing. Now we really liked it, it was a nice deep red and it looked good. It looked good on the track, it looked good up close, but now, not so impressed. It's another white car, isn't it? We've got the BMW, we've got the Williams, we've got the Honda is predominantly a white car, and now added to that we've got the Force India which is also white and gold.

**Chris:** Yea, gold is never a good look. I'm not ashamed to say that in previous years and perhaps even last year, I found it difficult to tell the difference between BMW and Williams, because they were both white and blue cars. Now, I feel like I've got that down, and the number of white cars has just multiplied.

**Me:** This year, the majority of the mid-field runners are all gonna look very similar. What happened to standing out, making a difference. Do you know the Formula 1 logo at the beginning of every race, and you see the colours fly by before it turns into an F? There's the cyan, the magenta, the yellow, those are the colours of what Formula 1 used to be, with Jordan and Renault. They are colours that stood out, colours that you could tell the difference. How come everybody now just wants to blend in with everybody else?

**Chris:** I liked it when I first started watching, although I didn't know what was going on, I could tell the Jaguars because they were all green, and I could tell the Jordans because they were all yellow. This is what I like to see, if I had an F1 team it would be all purple.

**Me:** You'll have to find a purple sponsor first, which could be an issue. Talking of that, actually, I think that might be the main problem with their testing livery and that it was red. And they've got Ferrari engines in the back of their cars and I suspect that Ferrari want to be the only red car on the grid, and I suspect they kyboshed the whole idea.

**Chris:** It's a different colour red, of course, but Ferrari won't be able to tell the difference.

**Me:** It was a deeper red, it was almost closer to your purple, in fact, which is possibly why you liked it so much. But I think they want to be the only red team in existence, and I suspect they had a word in Mallya's ear and said under no circumstances will your car be red.

**Chris:** Is it weird that they did their speeches and interviews with the press the day before the actual launch?

**Me:** I find it very peculiar that they decided to do that, I don't know what their reasoning was behind it. It seemed quite odd to me though.

**Chris:** I think it's quite funny because Fisichella was saying how great his new team is and the progress they're making and Mike Gascoyne was saying that the improved budget was making all the difference, although he does understand that it's not just about throwing money at the problem. And then Sutil goes: "I am confident but we don't yet know if it's enough to reach the second qualifying session." That's confidence for you.



**Me:** So, Sutil's gone up in your estimation then?

**Chris:** At least he's honest. Instead of saying yea, we're gonna be brilliant, he's just being realistic.

[Sweeper]

**Chris:** Last week was all about Australia's future in the calendar, and this week it appears to be Silverstone's turn once again. Bernie Ecclestone has said: "So there are two things to overcome. First they need to build the facilities and then they need to pay the market rate. There is no sentiment in this from my point of view. We would want a letter of credit to cover two years fees. They would then need to build a facility in the way we would want it built. If they didn't build it for whatever reason, they would lose their two year fee."

**Me:** I think it's about time they cut the track loose from the calendar, isn't it? I'm sick to death of Bernie going on and on and on about how bad Silverstone is. We don't need a Silverstone Grand Prix and I don't think Silverstone needs Bernie anymore. Just get it off the calendar, let it go somewhere else. It's not a major blow to us, we don't mind. We don't need a British Grand Prix anymore.

**Chris:** Personally, it makes no difference to me, because I can live without going to a Grand Prix. I'm quite happy to stay at home and watch it because at least then I know what's going on. I can see why in some countries, like Australia for instance, they're saying, well, you know, what will our country do without out, where will we go, because obviously, they're quite far away from anywhere else. But personally, I don't care if it disappears.

**Me:** I think the only thing that can save Silverstone now, is that if Bernie's saying they have to pay the market rate, the same as every other European race, why not get every other European race organisers together, band them together in a big group and say, right, we all want the price to be less. None of us want to pay Bernie's market price. What's he going to do, throw every single European race off the calendar? That's the thing, that would save them. The bosses of Silverstone have got to get together with the bosses of every other Grand Prix in Europe, they've got to get together and say look, this is the price we want to pay.

**Chris:** Of course, Bernie would find it easy to get some circuits together, probably in the Middle East or wherever, to replace the ones in Europe, but he keeps telling us that the main audiences are in Europe, so that would be a problem for him.

### *Il Maschio*

**Chris:** Anyway, we are here in the freezing cold garden of The Stag Inn, which houses the Il Maschio restaurant. Like we said before, we're a bit confused about the status of who owns the pub or whatever, but I find it a bit confusing because this is a traditional English pub and the restaurant inside is presumably owned by an Australian, making Italian food.

**Me:** Yea, they do do a Sunday roast every third Sunday of the month, traditional English. We appear to be under, I don't know if you can hear this, the flight path to Heathrow, so it's not the most sedate garden in the world. We're surrounded by kids and a busy road, which is a bit of a shame, but inside is lovely.

**Chris:** It's a family friendly pub, what can I say? A bit of an advert for you, it's open seven days a week from 12 noon. We didn't book in advance because obviously we're not that organised. They do advise that you do and if you want to check out the website, it's ILMaschio.com which is I-L-M-A-S-C-H-I-O.com.



**Me:** So, earlier on today, when it was a little bit warmer and we were inside, you had a Mark Webber pizza. How was it?

**Chris:** Yea, today I had a bit of Mark Webber and to be honest, I've had better.

**Me:** That's a bit harsh. Mark said it's the best food in the country, do you think it lives up to that?

**Chris:** It is very nice food. I wouldn't say it's the best, but I have no complaints.

**Me:** I do have one complaint and that is they don't have Guinness on tap, so right now I'm drinking Bombardier which is premium bitter. I'm just reading it off the glass, I don't know what it is. It's Bombardier something. Wells Eagle Brewery, Bedford. That's what it says. I know nothing about it. It tastes nice, but it's not Guinness.

**Chris:** So, let me get this straight, I'm working hard doing a podcast and you're just getting drunk?

**Me:** You've the designated driver today, we're responsible podcasters, obviously, and yea, I'm having a beer.

**Chris:** There is actually another reason why we decided to get out of the house today, usually we're quite reclusive. You know, outside = bad, inside = good. Our internet connection died, again.

**Me:** The last time this happened, we put up a blog post and requested help as to what we could possibly do about getting a more reliable internet connection, and one thing that was suggested to us was to get one of those 3G modem thingies, that plug into your laptop, that work anywhere. They work like a mobile phone, they work anywhere in the country, or I think anywhere in Europe, actually. We should be able to get internet connection wherever we are on the road. So we bought one of those yesterday and it seems to work pretty well, and we thought, now we can broadcast anywhere in the world, maybe we should do a live outside broadcast. And this is what we're checking out today. Can we do a podcast on the road?

**Chris:** So far it seems to be working really well. If we'd had this at Silverstone last year, it would have been brilliant. We could have basically live blogged the whole thing, so if we go to more events this year, it's going to be excellent.

**Me:** And it's really cheap, it works really well, it's been a pretty successful experiment, wouldn't you say?

**Chris:** Well, I've certainly had a successful day, I've swallowed Mark Webber.

### *On the Phones*

**Chris:** We only had one voicemail this week, but I think it was a particularly good one. It was from Matthew, aka Swordsman007.

[Start Audio Clip]

**Matthew:** Hey, Sidepodcast crew, this is Matthew aka Swordsman007. Unfortunately, I was hoping I would be the first American to leave you guys voicemail to thank you for all the great work that you do on the website, the podcast and now of course the Facebook group that I've just joined. Anyway, just wanted to say thanks for all your hard work and hope to speak to you in the future. Oh, p.s. about the Champ Car news, don't forget that Indy car's also have sidepods. Something else you might want to consider, okay, cheers.



[End Audio Clip]

**Me:** That is the greatest voicemail ever, not only does it complement us, it promotes our stuff too.

**Chris:** And it's actually a link to something I wanted to talk about. Clive wrote a post about the possible merging of Champ Car and Indycar back together.

**Me:** We've had this conversation before, we are not doing a Champ Car podcast.

**Chris:** No, but this has some relevance. Hear me out, okay? Clive's post said: "All I can say is congratulations Bernie on missing the best chance F1 ever had of making an impact on the States. Instead of capitalising on the damaging rift between the American series, Ecclestone kept his eye on short term profit and succeeded only in losing the US GP. Now the window of opportunity closes and F1 will find it much more difficult to find a toe-hold in the biggest market in the world.

**Me:** So, what Clive is talking about there is in America, they obviously have two open wheel racing series. They used to have one, they split apart, hemorrhaged their audience as a result, and now they are considering getting back together.

**Chris:** And it's actually really bad news for Montagny.

**Me:** And why's that?

**Chris:** Because he's the Champ Car side of things, or he is possibly on the Champ Car side of things, and when they get back together, it's gonna be all about the Indy Car.

**Me:** I see, so your man Franck who you thought had a chance of winning this series this year. He's taken over from Sebastien Bourdais, effectively, that seat, the Frenchman in Champ Car, and now he's just going to be a midfielder at the back, even if he gets the chance at all.

**Chris:** Because they're using the Indy Cars, and I'm not happy about it.

**Me:** And I think Clive has a point, Bernie could have had a major foothold in open wheel racing in America and he's lost his chance. It's probably gone now.

**Chris:** Like Clive said, Bernie is all about the short term profit.

**Me:** He has to think short term, look how old he is! He hasn't got that much longer left.

### *Housekeeping*

**Chris:** Our Facebook group is doing really good business, last time I checked we had 65 members and there's lots of good discussions going on. But I want to point out some of the nice positive things people have said about us, because everyone loves compliments. This one's quite special, I think. Rich Knight in South Africa said: "Hi Christine and Me, I thought I would let you know that your podcasts are so good, it has encouraged me to get my students into making podcasts for themselves, and they will each get the latest iPod Nano's – 8GB – to manage their podcast subscriptions and other material that we will put on them. We also got today the really nice surprise of a loan of an out of the box new Apple iMac computer for making podcasts." That sounds like a great class to be in.



**Me:** Jealous, much? You want one of those, don't you?

**Chris:** I really do, yea, I might have to go to South Africa.

**Me:** You could be on a special envoy, some kind of advisory board.

**Chris:** Podcast consultancy, that's what I need to do. And we also had a nice message from Andrew who said: "I recently discovered Sidepodcast. As an American without the dollars to subscribe to the big cable packages, my F1 access is limited to well, blogs, websites and podcasts. Sidepodcast makes me laugh out loud, which can be a bit awkward when walking down the street, but I don't care, keep up the great work."

**Me:** I dread to think what he did when he learnt you swallowed Mark Webber.

[Sweeper]

**Chris:** We also had a really good response to the Must Comment Monday initiative that we started last week. Steven said: "What an interesting idea, it's so good I might actually look forward to Monday mornings, now." So that's good, if we brighten up people's Mondays? That's a good job.

**Me:** It should be noted that this week with your internet connection troubles, you may not be able to do as much commenting as you normally would of, given the fact that it's a little bit ropey still, and you may not be able to get on to every single site. But I just wanted to say, if we didn't comment on your blog last Monday, it might mean that we don't know about it, or it's fallen off our radar. If you've got open comments, we don't have to log in, we don't have to register, do let us know, either via emailing Christine or leaving a comment on the blog saying you should be checking this out, this is my site and I want you to comment on Must Comment Monday.

**Chris:** Talking of emails, I was listening to another podcast this week and they said that they had to declare email bankruptcy because they had so many emails that they just didn't have time to answer them all.

**Me:** That's rubbish. You'd never do that, would you?

**Chris:** Well, it seems a bit odd, I can't believe it's that hard to keep up with emails, especially when it's your full time job, but I'm a bit annoyed because I only get, like, two emails a week.

**Me:** So, you'd love to be in a position to declare email bankruptcy but you never would.

**Chris:** I never would, but you know, we talked about Facebook, the Facebook group and everyone joined. We talked about voicemail and we've started getting voicemails, so now I thought if we talked about emails, maybe people would start sending me emails.

**Me:** So this is a cry for help, really. Email me, love me, tell me something. Yea, is that what you're after? That kind of thing? And your email address is?

**Chris:** [christine@sidepodcast.com](mailto:christine@sidepodcast.com).

**Me:** Wonderful, and you're looking for anything really. Mostly compliments you're fishing for there, but criticisms welcome, I'm guessing.





**Chris:** Well, you know, compliments are better, but we take criticism on board and we always listen to your suggestions and feedback and we love it.

**Me:** So even if it's just to say hi, we welcome all emails and will never declare email bankruptcy.

**Chris:** Absolutely. I have to say, I am pretty freezing cold now. Can we go?

**Me:** How about we go inside? I fancy another Bombardier.

**Chris:** We'll be back next week, probably more sober, definitely warmer and hopefully with our internet connection back up and running.

**Me:** Drink.

sidepodcast.com  
YOUR WEEKLY F1 FIX