



Episode 58 – We’re Just Reporting the Fact that Somebody is Reporting Something

Coming Up

Chris: Welcome to Sidepodcast, Episode 58 – We’re Just Reporting the Fact that Somebody is Reporting Something. Coming up on today’s show we discuss access roads, night lights, and of course, Mosley’s scandal.

Intro

Chris: Yay, my theme tune is back.

Me: You do prefer that one, don’t you? There have been a number of requests on the blog this week to retain the Chain.

Chris: I don’t think we’re allowed to.

Me: Because of copyright reasons? We could create our own version of the Chain.

Chris: Like we did with this one.

Me: Yea, takes a little bit of time, though.

Chris: It does take you a long time, and while we’re waiting, I’m quite happy with my theme tune.

Me: Fair enough. Hit me up some F1 news.

Good Week/Bad Week

Chris: It’s been a good week for Jean Todt, as he takes steps to sound even more like Max Mosley. He’s now encouraging F1 teams to cut costs even further and help bring the barriers to entry to the sport down. Does that sound familiar?

Me: It does and given the event that may have happened during the course of the weekend, which we won’t go into now, but we might have to address later on, he may find his way slightly clearer than he previously thought.

Chris: It’s been a bad week for Renault, as although Alonso is saying he’s patient enough to wait for an improvement in performance, he’s also made mention of the fact that he has a getout clause in his contract.

Me: Steven Roy raised a good point on the site earlier this week, after Brendan raised this very issue. He said: “It sounds to me like Alonso has signed something with Ferrari, but there is some kind of commit date coming up.” Which sounds quite likely.

Chris: So what does that mean?

Me: Well, the way I interpret it, it means that at some point in the very near future, he’s going to have to commit to Ferrari or lose that chance altogether.



Chris: It's been a good week for McLaren's \$100 million fine money, as the name's of the board who will decide it's fate have been announced. It includes a certain Michael Schumacher.

Me: Yea, he likes to get involved in that sort of stuff, he was always helping out the FIA in the past with their little campaigns.

Chris: It's been a bad week for anyone other than Ferrari and Toyota as their winter testing in Bahrain has meant that Ferrari in particular are favourites for the podium in the race next weekend.

Me: Back then, both teams did six days worth of running, and on the last day, Glock managed to split both Ferraris. He's had loads of time to do setup work on that track, which he's never had the chance to do before, and so I think he's going to be somebody worth watching during the next race.

Chris: Didn't Ferrari struggle to complete a race simulation?

Me: Massa had loads and loads of trouble, he struggled to complete a race distance. All sorts of reliability gremlins were affecting him. Hopefully, they've managed to get to the bottom of those before this race.

Chris: In response to the news that everyone's going to be putting their money on Ferrari, Martin Whitmarsh said: "We'd like to test in Bahrain but we have to prioritise where we spend our time."

Me: Do you think he's regretting that decision now?

Chris: I think he might be.

News and Views

Chris: The best news story I've read in a long time is Eddie Jordan and his concrete blocks.

Me: Did it make you laugh?

Chris: It made me laugh a lot.

Me: Cheered up my morning.

Chris: The story is that Eddie still owns some of the land surrounding the Force India factory, which includes an access road, and they won't buy it from him, so he blocked it up.

Me: Which he's perfectly within his rights to do.

Chris: They say it's not a problem because there are two roads.

Me: Yea, although it's questionable whether their transporters are legally allowed to travel down the second route.

Chris: But either way, blocking up a road with concrete blocks is very cool.

Me: It's very funny.

Chris: You wouldn't find Ron Dennis doing something like that.



Me: He'd probably call the lawyers.

Chris: Don't we miss Eddie Jordan?

Me: I didn't realise I did until this week but yeah, we need more colour and more characters in Formula 1 and we're lacking some Jordan.

Chris: Everyone who's talking about this story said it made them laugh.

Me: Yea, absolutely, in fact the only people who probably weren't laughing were the Force India team who came back with a load of transporters that wouldn't fit into their factory anymore.

Chris: We should have done some on-the-scene reporting.

Me: A podcast.

Chris: A live podcast from the concrete blocks.

Me: Darn it, we missed out on an opportunity there. Shoot.

[Sweeper]

Chris: I'm a bit confused by McLaren because they've been put to the back of the pitlane in Bahrain.

Me: And do we know why that is?

Chris: No.

Me: And do we have any thoughts on why that might be?

Chris: No.

Me: Can you hazard a guess?

Chris: I don't know because Bernie doesn't have any say in Bahrain?

Me: I think FOM instigated this move, but as yet, we haven't established exactly why it is. It seems like a last minute thing, because the organisers of the Grand Prix assumed they'd be in position five again, but now they're dropped right to the back.

Chris: Aren't the garages slightly bigger in Bahrain?

Me: Marginally, but not that much bigger than Malaysia. They're certainly bigger than in Australia, and there's an argument to say that might be part of the reason, but McLaren haven't got their massive motorhomes on any of the flyaway races, so they shouldn't need the larger garages at any point until we get back to Europe.



Chris: Maybe Bernie was trying to, perhaps, influence the championship slightly, make it more interesting, but now he knows he has got an interesting championship, he's shoved them to the back.

Me: Okay, you think he might have given them a bit of a leg up when he thought they might be on their back foot, but now they're standing on their own two feet, he's got no issue with dropping them right to the back again.

Chris: Could happen.

Me: Or it could be that some of the other teams have complained to Bernie, and he's had to back down on his original agreement.

Chris: Yea, I've never understood why Red Bull would allow that in the first place.

Me: The whole thing is surrounded by question marks.

[Sweeper]

Chris: This week Massa said that Q3 is boring. He said that you don't get to see good, quick flying laps because the cars have to have the fuel load that they'll start the race with. I thought that's why they did the fuel burn thing in the first place, to help with the flying laps.

Me: It sounds to me like he's just trying to stir up a bit of controversy, to take the heat off his slight faux pas during the Malaysian Grand Prix. Did he have anything else to say on the subject?

Chris: There is a really a funny quote, he said: "Q1 and Q2 are so long and then you have to wait in the garage, and having a very heavy car to drive in Q3 is not very much fun. Even if I put in a fantastic qualifying in Q3 in Malaysia to take pole position."

Me: I'm sorry, what was that, I didn't quite get what he was saying there?

Chris: Well, I don't see what that's got to do with anything, but it sounds like he just wanted to throw that in there. By the way, I did well, remember.

Me: He's kicking up a controversy, then he's reminding everybody he did really well in qualifying, and just forget anything that happened in the race. It's not the race, racing's not the important bit.

Chris: In the blogosphere, there does seem to be a general feeling of complaint about qualifying. I know most people don't agree with me, but I preferred the single lap qualifying.

Me: Single lap qualifying, you did get to see every single driver.

Chris: I liked it because you got to see all the drivers, it mixed up the grid, like if it rained in the middle of a session, and I always knew what was going on. Because, it would be one driver and then you would see the next driver, whether he beat the previous drivers time. Whereas now, there's cars flying all over the place, I don't know what's going on until after the session's finished.

Me: I do take your point, but for goodness sake, please don't tell them to make more changes to qualifying. Aren't they proposing another rule this week?



Chris: This week they're tweaking it slightly so that there's a maximum lap time, to stop what we saw in Malaysia.

Me: Okay, and that's going to happen for the next race?

Chris: I think so, yes.

Me: Thank goodness for that. Do you know what the maximum lap time's going to be?

Chris: They haven't confirmed it yet, but something like 120%. It is quite funny though, because it must have been what two weeks since they last changed qualifying?

Me: It has been something like that, but in this case, it's a change they have to make.

[Sweeper]

Chris: Toro Rosso's team manager Massimo Rivola, who by the way, I've never heard of...

Me: No.

Chris: He's hit the headlines this week because he's been complaining about the upcoming night race in Singapore. He thinks it may not be all that safe, especially because of the lack of testing.

Me: He went to watch the motorcycles do their first night race earlier in the year, didn't he? So he had a little bit of experience in this subject.

Chris: Apparently he's spoken to Charlie Whiting about it and he's particularly worried that the first Friday Free Practice session is in the day time and therefore not particularly useful.

Me: That seems like a very valid point, and all they have to do is move the Practice schedule back a bit and it'll all be at night.

Chris: Coincidentally...

Me: You cynic.

Chris: Grand Prix organisers have demonstrated the lighting system that will be used in Singapore. They've lit up a stretch of road.

Me: Yes. As a bit of an example they've put up a truss and hung up some lights on it, and said this is what it's going to be like when we light the whole circuit.

Chris: But it's just regular cars, they didn't get a Formula 1 car driving up and down there.

Me: They didn't get a Formula 1 car driving up and down at night, although Mika Hakkinen turned up in an old McLaren and did a couple of runs in the daylight, didn't he?

Chris: Wouldn't it make sense if he did it at night?



Me: Yes.

Chris: Seeing as they've gone to the trouble of putting the lights up for him.

Me: Yes, severe lack of joined up thinking there.

Chris: Before he did his run, Hakkinen said: "If the lighting system and all the organisation is at a top, top level. I don't think testing is necessary."

Me: And I'm not going to test it for you.

Chris: The best quote though, was from Singapore's senior minister of state for Trade and Industry. He said: "It seems pretty bright to me."

Me: That's great. So when the whole Grand Prix goes the same way as the organisation of the ticket sales, we can blame him.

[Sweeper]

Chris: Sad news, this week. The former President of the FIA, Jean-Marie Balestre died aged 86 in France. Max Mosley paid tribute to him saying: "His contribution to motorsport in France and indeed throughout the world, has been unique."

Me: Right. Don't go out on a limb, there, Max.

Chris: Unique is not necessarily a good thing, is it?

Me: I'm surprised he didn't just go all the way and say interesting.

Chris: Balestre's presidency was way before my time but I did do some research on him for a mini series.

Me: Yea, I have a nagging feeling that Max may have stolen Jean-Marie's limelight once again this weekend though.

Chris: Do we have to talk about that?

Me: Well, I had a quick look in the podcasting handbook and I'm not entirely sure how to deal with facism, sadomasochism, or anything like that on a family show. All it said was Zune = bad, iPod = good.

Chris: I think the less said the better.

Me: Well, it could have far reaching implications for F1, so we should at least address it, but we might have to be careful.

Chris: Okay, I can do this. Right. The News of the World are reporting that Max Mosley may have been caught with his trousers down doing some bizarre things with some ladies of the night, mostly involving speaking German and recreating some events in history. How was that?



Me: That's perfect. We're not going to get into any trouble by saying that. We're just, well, not even reporting the facts. We're just reporting the fact that somebody is reporting something.

Chris: All the websites that are reporting it, seem to have crashed.

Me: Yea, but F1 Wolf did find us a video on YouTube. We've got a clip of it, do you want to hear it?

Chris: Really not.

Me: No, no, just, shall we just start playing it? It's clean, it's okay. It's safe for work. Promise.

[Begin Audio clip]

Lady of the Night: Okay, undress.

[End Audio clip]

Chris: Ah, stop it, it's horrible. Oh, it's horrible. Creeps me out.

Me: Okay, okay, I promise. No more. No more. That's not funny. It's on YouTube, you can see it if you really want to. It's blurry, and the evidence is questionable, however if it is true, what implications do you think it will have on Formula 1?

Chris: Well, he can't be the president anymore.

Me: Maybe not, no.

Chris: He can't be. I can't take him seriously. I'm freaked out.

Me: You can't even look at him.

Chris: I'm not going to be able to sleep tonight.

Me: I bet Ron Dennis is smiling from ear to ear this morning, don't you?

Chris: He's probably as freaked out as I am.

Me: That's a fair point. Do we think Jean Todt stepped down at exactly the right moment, then?

Chris: Seems like it.

Me: Not for the first time in his life, he's in exactly the right place at exactly the right time.

Chris: Please can we move on now?

Me: Yea, we'll have to see what the fallout from this is later on in the week.

Feedback



Chris: We've had a couple more subtitle entries on Facebook.

Me: Okay, give us them.

Chris: Alex Andronov suggested: Sidepodcast, Every Week and Every Race Day. Which I think is a bit more confusing than weekly.

Me: Every week and every... yea.

Chris: But he did say that if you include F1 Minute, we do actually post something daily. So it could be Your Daily F1 Fix.

Me: He might be on to something there, keep them coming, because we haven't found the exact thing we're looking for yet. We're a bit picky, like that.

Chris: It's easy to do, just find the Sidepodcast Facebook group and add something to the discussion. Also on Facebook, Jordan is trying to embarrass me.

Me: Yea, because you're doing so badly in the Fantasy Racers league at the moment, what he's trying to do is to get a load of new people signed up, named after really bad Formula 1 teams, in order that they can beat you and make you look even worse than you already are.

Chris: He said: "Now, as much as you would think it would be cool to rename your team Ferrari, McLaren, Williams, Benetton and the other championship winners, why not dig up the names of the lightweights of Formula 1 to name your team? Just to embarrass your co-fans? From my perspective, being beat by a team called Ferrari is one thing, being beat by a Minardi, well, maybe it's time to take up chequers."

Me: I like what he's doing there. That sounds like a good plan. If you're not already part of our Fantasy Racers league, there's still time to beat Christine, because she's so far back.

Chris: Shut up.

Me: Just go pick yourself a really, really poor Formula 1 team, sign up with that name and see if you can't beat her.

Chris: And if you really have your heart set on beating me a lot, you can have more than one team, but I think you have to donate to the site.

Me: Sounds like a plan, I might do that myself.

[Sweeper]

Chris: Steven Roy noticed a mistake on F1 Minute this week, where my transcript mentioned Massa saying qualifying is boring, but the audio didn't.

Me: Could you not fit that story in?

Chris: Yea, the problem is I'm not allowed to talk fast anymore.



Me: So it just slipped through the net?

Chris: At least this shows people are listening and reading.

Me: I'm well impressed.

Chris: And we also thought it highlighted the difference between how we deal with mistakes and how larger media companies deal with mistakes.

Me: Because we put our hands up and went, oh yea, we did make a mistake and then we didn't try to hide it, and bury it and delete all the comments and hide any trace of it.

Chris: Because it has been known if you comment on a larger media site and point out a flaw, they will fix it and delete your comment and cover it all up.

Me: That happened to me this week.

Housekeeping

Me: So we've had a busy weekend, we've got a new server.

Chris: Is that because the comments broke?

Me: Yea, live commenting, it was struggling a little bit. It got to 400 comments and then it sort of fell over. We managed to patch it up and it lasted for another week or so, but really it needs a new server with a really solid database, and that's what we've done. We moved it across yesterday, and some of today, and it seems to have gone quite well.

Chris: And didn't we upgrade Wordpress at the same time?

Me: Well, smack in the middle of it all, Wordpress decided to update their content management system, and we weren't really sure whether or not we should update at the same time as moving servers. So we put the question to the people and we got some good feedback on Twitter and on the comments, didn't we?

Chris: Yea, opinion was kinda split 50/50. SteveintheUK said: "I would wait until after the Bahrain weekend to upgrade to Wordpress 2.5."

Me: Sensible choice.

Chris: And Tom said: "First rule of anything in computers, change one thing at a time."

Me: Yea. On the other hand, Ollie from BlogF1 decided to dive right in there, and he upgraded his website like some kind of kamikaze coder that he is, and he didn't have any problems with it at all.

Chris: Brendan said he'd done his blog and it was fine, and Steve said Geekbrief were already running it. So we did it.

Me: We did it too, we went for a server move and a Wordpress upgrade at the same time, and it all came out well.

Chris: Does this mean we can actually use plugins again?



Me: Yea, we did hit some kind of theoretical limit whereby we could not add any more plugins even if we wanted to, because we basically just ran out of memory. Now, shouldn't be a problem, so lots of good stuff on it's way.

Chris: And the live comments should hold up better.

Me: Yea, we'll give them a test this week, so Friday, Saturday, Sunday, we'll have to see how they hold up now.

Chris: Friday will be interesting, because I'll be at work for the second session.

Me: Are you gonna speak nicely to your boss?

Chris: I'm gonna try and still be around but my access might be a bit limited?

Me: I'll still be here, I'll be watching the ITV live feed and the numbers from F1.com and I'll be commenting on the blog, because I have nothing better to do really.

[Sweeper]

Chris: I have a very quick cry for help.

Me: Cry for help?

Chris: Yes. I was doing the transcript for the latest F1 Rewind video.

Me: The one we did last week.

Chris: Yea, and there's a bit of Trulli talking about his vineyard, there's one bit of it that I don't actually understand./

Me: So you can't transcribe it?

Chris: His accent is a bit thick.

Me: That's a new one on you.

Chris: Yea, that's the first time that's happened. In the transcript I've just left it as question marks but if anyone knows what he says, I'd be quite interested in knowing as well.

Me: So maybe comment on that thread.

[Sweeper]

Chris: Also a first for me this week, the Blue and Orange Lion who's now known as NONSENSE.

Me: NONSENSE in uppercase, I wonder if that stands for anything.

Chris: Possibly. He asked for a signed photo of me.



Me: That was weird.

Chris: Which is very weird because I'm not famous.

Me: No, you don't have any photographs to sign. We're gonna have to take some photographs, and get them printed, so that you can sign them. If anybody else is after a signed photograph of Christine, just drop me a line.

Chris: Don't encourage it, I'm not famous.

Me: I could do a batch job.

Chris: You know I'm still kinda disturbed by that video thing, I may need to go and have a lie down.

Me: Yea, I don't blame you.

Chris: We'll be back in seven days, when hopefully I'll be over it.

Me: And you know what? I've just taken a look at that Singapore lighting setup, and it seems pretty bright to me.

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