



Episode 6 – Men And Motors

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

Chris: Hello and welcome to Sidepodcast, Episode 6 – Men and Motors. Today we're talking about drivers.

Me: Drivers?

Chris: Yes, drivers. Way back in December, I wrote a post on Daily F1 Blog.

Me: What's that?

Chris: That's DailyF1Blog.blogspot.com [retired link]. Called 'The Official 2007 Entry List (Until They Change Their Minds)'. But actually, they haven't really, have they? Only a few unconfirmeds.

[Sweeper]

Chris: So, first on our list, obviously, is two times World Champion Fernando Alonso. Didn't he used to be your favourite?

Me: Used to be?

Chris: Why is he not your favourite anymore?

Me: Well, I tend to try and follow the Renault team, and he might have defected to another team.

Chris: Aww, did he leave you?

Me: He did, but I'm thinking about following him due to the aforementioned debacle with...

Chris: Don't talk about the colours again. That's two podcasts already, we've talked about the colours.

Me: I quite like silver. Alonso had something to say about it too, didn't he?

Chris: He did, he was talking about testing, he said: "Ferrari are looking very good and Renault will start the year well but they will get worse as usual." And then when asked what he liked best about his car, he joked: "The colours."

Me: Double ouch.

Chris: So what you need to know about Alonso is he was born in 1981 in Spain, he now lives in Oxford, England, and he's single, which would have been interesting but he's cut his hair.

Me: Oh dear, not a fan of the new haircut?

Chris: No. Did you know he took part in his first karting event at the age of three?



Me: Blimey.

Chris: I know, some people can't even walk by the age of three.

Me: He's tanking it round a racetrack.

Chris: A champion in the making, obviously.

Me: Absolutely.

Chris: Obviously he's come a long way since those days.

Me: Yea, he's grown up a bit this year, or this last year. He's had a couple of issues with the FIA, a bit of an outburst at the quality of the sport.

Chris: Last year he seemed very frustrated.

Me: Seems a bit older this year. Seemed to be quite youthful last year, maybe a bit wet behind the ears. This year, a bit more mature, maybe a bit worn by the whole thing. He did say at the end of last year that his target for world championships is three, like Senna's, and if he makes it this year, he will leave the sport. Which is interesting, this could be his last year. Although he does have a longer contract than that, so maybe not.

Chris: Do you think he will win again this year?

Me: That's a question, isn't it?

Chris: They have been very strong in testing.

Me: They've been very fast in testing. They're braking down a lot, the car's not very strong.

Chris: That's not a surprise. That sounds about right.

Me: Do you know, I don't think he will. I don't think he will, it's not going to be his year.

Chris: I think it's someone else's turn to be honest.

Me: It's got to be, and it's a big change, isn't it, and he's not going to have the protection that he used to from Renault. It's a different way of working, he's got to get used to Ron. That's got to take a year, so no, I don't think it's going to be his year this year.

Chris: And I think you're never going to get someone like Michael Schumacher again, who has seven of them. I don't think that's going to happen, you're not going to get the same person winning over and over again.

Me: Hopefully not.

Chris: Seems like there's a lot more competition now.



Me: Yes. Alonso doesn't have the team wrapped around him in the same way Alonso did. Obviously he's got Hamilton as a teammate which... bit of a favourite with Ron, so he's not going to get extra special treatment like Michael did.

Chris: Or in the way that he did last year.

Me: Yes, absolutely. Talking of Hamilton, he's gonna be Alonso's teammate this year, isn't he? First full year, no experience as a tester.

Chris: Not any experience at all.

Me: Sort of tootled around a bit at the back end of last year, cos he had a bit of time on his hands. Not much experience at all then.

Chris: But he's Ron's new favourite.

Me: He's doing okay in testing though, he's holding his own. He was fastest one of the days last week.

Chris: Part of me thinks yay, a new British driver, hope he's gonna be really good. But I don't like the special treatment he's sort of got.

Me: From the press or from Ron?

Chris: Both, really. No one's ever heard of him before and all of a sudden he's like, the next best thing. He just gets straight in there, whereas some people have to work very hard to get their drives.

[Sweeper]

Chris: Alonso's ex teammate Fisichella, he must be happy now, moved up to the number one spot at Renault.

Me: Temporarily he's the number one driver, yea. If Kovalainen comes along and blows him out of the water in the first few races, he won't be the number one driver for very much longer. It may not happen, but we can live in hope.

Chris: Fisichella has previously driven for Minardi, Jordan, Benetton, Jordan again, Sauber and now Renault.

Me: He gets around a bit, doesn't he?

Chris: He does. It's his aim to drive Ferrari.

Me: It's the Italian thing. He did try, I think he tried... was it last year? The year before last? He was desperate to get in the Ferrari, he almost had a drive. They promised him maybe he could, at maybe a test or something, come along, we'll let you have a go in our car. And they didn't in the end, they backed out.

Chris: Gutted.

Me: He was. Can't say I was that bothered really.

Chris: So you think he's gonna be outshone by his new friend, Heikki?



Me: Yea, well, you know, a big fan of Heikki. It has to be said.

Chris: I wish he had a more easy name to spell.

Me: It's a bit hard to type, is it? Just call it Kovi. K-O-V-I. Something like that.

Chris: I have a quote from Pitpass. "Heikki attracted serious attention late in 2004 when he won Champion of Champions event at the Race of Champions. To win the title he had to beat both 2004 WRC champion Sebastian Loeb and seven times Formula 1 World Champion, Michael Schumacher. Almost overnight, everyone knew the name Kovalainen." But no one knew how to spell it. I might have added that bit on.

Me: That doesn't sound like a quote from Pitpass.

[Sweeper]

Chris: Speaking of Michael Schumacher, we're on to Ferrari. How come Massa is higher up the entry list than Raikkonen?

Me: Because he finished higher in the championship order last year, because he finished third.

Chris: But Raikkonen's better.

Me: That doesn't make the slightest bit of difference.

Chris: Massa began his career in karting, he moved up through the Formula Renault championship, Formula 3000 and then he got a drive with Sauber, but it started off quite badly.

Me: Correct me if I'm wrong, but in his first season in F1, didn't he spin so many times in one race that he gave himself a headache.

Chris: That's what he said, he actually admitted that.

Me: Just round and round and round and round...

Chris: I think he's getting better though.

Me: Yea, the last race of last season was priceless. That was a great drive from him. Apart from, maybe, the green suit.

Chris: Yea, that put me off a bit.

Me: It clashed a bit, didn't it? The red and the green. But it was a really good drive, he's definitely finding his feet now.

Chris: I think that he's an okay driver being carried by his car. How do you think he's gonna do next year?

Me: You're probably, that's probably quite a good assessment. What you're really asking me is do I think he's going to beat Kimi Raikkonen next year.



Chris: Yes.

Me: No. I think once Kimi's got into the swim of things and he's got a car that doesn't break down every five minutes, I think he's gonna waltz over Massa.

Chris: Apparently Raikkonen's entrance to Formula 1 was a bit controversial but I don't remember.

Me: You remember what happened to Ide last year?

Chris: Mr Idiot.

Me: Whereby he didn't really have enough miles under his belt for a superlicence.

Chris: And he was rubbish.

Me: Yes, well, it was like that with Raikkonen. He hadn't done that many miles and people were a bit frightened that he was gonna kill somebody but he wasn't rubbish.

Chris: I think Raikkonen is very good driver, but I don't like him. I don't like him, I think he's dull, and I can't understand him in interviews, he just mumbles, like this, I can't understand what he's saying.

Me: He's not the wildest guy in the pitlane, is he?

Chris: Except that he is.

Me: Oh he is, how could I forget? Of course he is. Some kind of Jekyll and Hyde thing going on there.

Chris: Yes, bit of a party animal. I like the way that Ron Dennis was always trying to protect his innocence, but we all knew what he was up to, it was in the papers.

Me: Well, it must be true then. The problem Ron has is that you can't really criticise people for drinking when you're sponsored by a whisky company.

Chris: No, that's true. I don't think Ferrari are going to stand for it, are they?

Me: No, possibly not.

[Sweeper]

Me: So who's next on your list?

Chris: Jenson.

Me: Oh lord. He had to come round eventually, I suppose, didn't he? What do you know about Jenson?

Chris: He was born in 1980, in England, he lives in Monaco because he's rich. Doesn't he have a boat?

Me: Probably.



Chris: I like boats. And apparently, he's single. That's all I need to know.

Me: Okay, Barrichello.

Chris: I like Barrichello, now he's left Ferrari.

Me: Why's that?

Chris: I don't know, he always seemed like a shadow of a man in Ferrari. You know, always coming second.

Me: I tell you what I miss, now that Barrichello is in Honda. When he was in Ferrari and he occasionally won, he cried a lot. He was always crying. He cried when he won, he cried when he got pole, cried when he came second, cried when he came third.

Chris: Did he and Michael used to hug and stuff?

Me: Yea, there was a lot of tears. I do miss that.

Chris: Bless him, aw. Well, if he actually did anything worthwhile in Honda, you never know.

Me: He might cry again! That's something to look forward to this year.

Chris: Seriously though, 2007 is important for him, isn't it?

Me: It is a make or break year for Barrichello.

Chris: His contract is up at the end of the year.

Me: And he didn't do too well last year, didn't set the world alight.

Chris: He struggled at the beginning of the year, supposedly getting used to the car. Then he was better.

Me: He's on Bridgestones again this year, though. Apparently a big fan of the Bridgestone tyres, very used to them, spent his whole time on them in Jordan and Ferrari. Maybe that experience might come to the fore, he might be able to play a bigger part this year.

[Sweeper]

Chris: Okay, who's nex... ooh, it's the Yeti!

Me: Yeti?

Chris: Yea, you know, Heidfeld with the beard and everything.

Me: Okay, the artist formally known as Heidfeld.

Chris: Exactly.

Me: What's he up to then?



Chris: Growing a beard.

Me: Is that his full time occupation?

Chris: Pretty much.

Me: Now might be a great time to plug our YouTube playlists, actually, talking of Heidfeld. Because on YouTube, there was a great video, you know he drove his Formula 1 car in the snow, in the ice? And it was on YouTube, and what we've got on YouTube now is our little playlist.

Chris: Favourites.

Me: Yea, and basically we just keep it up to date with all the important events throughout the year that appear on YouTube. If there's only one place you wanna go and get all your latest Formula 1 information, check out the Sidepodcast.com website, there's a link to the YouTube playlist page, and you can download Heidfeld on a lake. A frozen lake. What's Heidfeld up to, then, apart from growing a beard, this year?

Chris: This year is his year to prove everybody wrong and live up to his nickname Quick Nick.

Me: Quick Nick. That's a bad name, I wouldn't want to live up to that name. Didn't he get, he got overlooked by Ron, when Ron picked Raikkonen from the Sauber team. So I guess he's got a chip on his shoulder about that. So this year's going to be the year where he proves everybody wrong. Except he won't cos Kubica's gonna kick his ass, right?

Chris: Yea, well, Kubica is quite quick.

Me: He was last year, lord knows if he can keep it up this year. And if he kept up the pace of last year, it should be an interesting season.

[Sweeper]

Chris: Next is Ralf.

Me: Ugh. Oh, I have a question for you. This year, is it gonna be, on the timing screens, is it just gonna be Schumacher this year? Or is it still going to be R. Schumacher?

Chris: Well, I don't know, obviously, until it starts, but the entry list says R Schumacher.

Me: Interesting.

Chris: I don't know why, but presumably they don't want to get him confused with the Schumacher that was actually good.

Me: Cos that's gonna happen. Who else is in the team?

Chris: That would be Trulli. Disastrous.

Me: Go on, what do you know about Trulli?



Chris: He makes wine.

Me: He does. Oh, he makes great wine. I like Trulli for that fact.

Chris: All you can really say about Trulli is that he's good at one lap at a time.

Me: He's a good qualifier.

Chris: But putting them all together, not so much fun.

Me: No, short attention span that man.

Chris: Yes, that's what it is.

[Sweeper]

Chris: Next up, the oldest man on the grid, who has started over 200 Grand Prix races.

Me: So he knows his way round then?

Chris: He should do, by now.

Me: Who's that?

Chris: That would be David Coulthard.

Me: Ah, our Dave.

Chris: They say that practice makes perfect. Not in this case.

Me: What's his excuse?

Chris: The only thing I really know for sure about Coulthard, is that he's often complaining about safety.

Me: He cares.

Chris: But to be honest, does he drive fast enough for it to be a problem?

Me: Ouch. You're not a fan of Dave then.

Chris: I don't mind, but I've never seen him do anything worthwhile really.

Me: No, he used to have a major problem keeping the car on the road, he's forever diving into a ditch, into a wall, spinning it, that kind of thing. He doesn't have that problem recently, he's just slow.

Chris: The one time he did get onto the podium, he put on a Superman cape.

Me: Oh he did. That's unforgivable.



Chris: It is. This year, he's partnered by Webber. We love Webber.

Me: We can be a bit harsh to Webber, we have been in the past.

Chris: Yea, we seem to talk a lot about him. Last year, he seemed to stop a lot, not finishing. But I don't think it was really his fault.

Me: How's he going to do this year, is he gonna get the best of Dave?

Chris: I think he probably can, if the car's good enough, I think he's a better driver. Again, it's one of those make or break seasons, because last year was so rubbish.

Me: That's true. He's got a lot to prove this year, he's got a new car, he's got a new team. I guess Dave's maybe more settled within the confines of the Red Bull environment. Although, Webber used to drive for Jaguar, and Red Bull is the ex-Jaguar guys, essentially, so he should fit in quite nicely. I guess he's gonna have quite a good year.

Chris: It seems to be that the Red Bull team is a good place to be, like Coulthard was so stressed out before. And then he went to Red Bull, and suddenly he was the coolest dude, all relaxed and growing a beard and everything – not quite like the Yeti, but just a little beard. And Webber had such a miserable time last year, that maybe the move will do him good.

Me: Yea.

[Sweeper]

Chris: I have a question for you.

Me: Okay.

Chris: Nico Rosberg's dad is Finnish.

Me: I thought it was Keke.

Chris: No, no, from Finland.

Me: Oh, yes.

Chris: Right, so why is Nico Rosberg German?

Me: I think it's because his mother is either part or wholly German, and because there's a larger F1 fanbase in Germany, and obviously Schumacher was on the verge of retirement, somebody made the executive business decision to base him, push him as a German driver. So that he can get all the German fans buying all the German t-shirts and that kind of stuff.

Chris: He lives in Monaco now, so he must be rich. And he's single, so if you like the Jason Donovan look, he might be the man for you. We like him because at Goodwood last year, he signed tons of autographs.

Me: He did, he was the only one.



Chris: Yea, Martin Brundle stalked off into the distance, but Rosberg was nice, he went along the whole line signing all the autographs. Who's the other driver for Williams?

Me: Wurz.

Chris: Who's that?

Me: He used to drive many moons ago, then he was a test driver for McLaren. He made a really shrewd move about two years ago, from test driver at McLaren to test driver at Williams, on the assumption that he might have a better chance of getting a race drive.

Chris: He was right.

Me: At the time, I thought that's crazy, test driving for McLaren then test driving for Williams, not a big deal. But no, it worked out for the best really.

Chris: So do we know if he's any good then?

Me: He used to be. He once overtook Michael Schumacher at Monaco. That's about the only significant thing he did, I think. Bit of potential. Didn't he race at McLaren as well, when Montoya tripped over a fig leaf or something. I don't know, he had a race then that was quite good. He's proven potential and perfect for Williams this year, assuming they build a decent car.

Chris: I tell you what, I do know something about Wurz. All the other drivers seem to have got into Formula 1, or started their careers karting. Wurz actually he got into BMXing, well, BMXing then karting, but still, it's different, I like it.

[Sweeper]

Chris: Toro Rosso are being very annoying.

Me: Okay, why's that?

Chris: They won't confirm their drivers.

Me: Will they not?

Chris: It's a bit stupid because that guy in charge, what's his name?

Me: Oh, you know him. Gerhard Berger.

Chris: I don't know him.

Me: Yes, you do, he's famous.

Chris: No, I don't. What's he famous for? Oh, wait, the guy on the balcony?

Me: The guy... the guy on the balcony?



Chris: Yea, you know, at Goodwood. You pointed to him and said, oh look, it's Gerhard Berger, and I was like, who?

Me: Gerhard Berger is not famous for sitting on a balcony at Goodwood. He's an ex-Formula 1 driver, multiple wins, no? Now boss of Toro Rosso. You're so young.

Chris: Anyway, he's come out in various news items and said we think it's gonna be Scott Speed and Tonio Liuzzi but we're not confirming it yet. Well, if you're gonna come out and say it might be, either say it is, or don't say anything.

Me: Right, so we don't know who's driving for them?

Chris: I don't want to tell you about them because it might not be them and we'd be wasting our breath.

Me: Okay.

[Sweeper]

Chris: Spyker have Christijan Albers and Adrian Sutil.

Me: Who?

Chris: I know nothing about him.

Me: Who?

Chris: Can't find anything about him on the web either.

Me: Who?

Chris: Adrian Sutil.

Me: Don't know.

Chris: But we have heard of Albers.

Me: Yea, he's been there a while, rather uneventful though. He's been tootling round the back for a bit. Any facts on Albers?

Chris: I have a quote from Pitpass.

Me: Another one? Go on then.

Chris: It says: "Despite an unnecessary incident at Monaco, Christijan generally gave a good account of himself, especially at Indianapolis where he qualified 14th, and the 10th place finish in Hungary." 14th and 10th? Fantastic.

Me: Brilliant. He did have a slightly unnecessary incident at Monaco, that's one way of putting it. That's like the politically correct way of putting it, but we're not politically correct, are we? He basically banded his teammate into the wall off the start line.

Chris: They tend to do that though.



Me: Your own teammate?

Chris: Those people at the back, they like bouncing off each other.

Me: The guy was following his teammate, he could see, he just... I don't know whether he fell out with him, whether they have some kind of argument.

Chris: I bet they did afterwards.

Me: It's not really the best place to take your gripes and your grievances, is it? On the startline. At Monaco.

[Sweeper]

Me: So that must leave one team left. Is that Super Aguri?

Chris: It is, Super Aguri, the baby team.

Me: The baby team?

Chris: Well, they're new, and what strikes me about this lineup is that it's really, really little. There's photographic evidence that Sato used to stand on a box to have pictures taken with Jenson, and Davidson is tiny in real life. I've spoken before about fitting him in my pocket. They're my favourite miniature F1 team. But they're not very good, really, are they?

Me: I think they did quite well, for a team with no budget, but I can't see them setting the world on fire this year. And also they're probably going to get sued from here to Outer Mongolia by Frank Williams.

[Sweeper]

Me: That wraps up our look at the drivers for 2007, but before we go, we've got to say a quick thank you to all the people who Dugg us. Have we got a list of people there to say thank you to?

Chris: We do, Oliver White, DanF1, JLynchie999, and Smiler79.

Me: Wow, so if your name's not just been read out and you haven't Dugg us already, please do so at Digg.com/podcasts/Sidepodcast, and if you've got some free time on your hands, why not check out the forum at...

Chris: www.sidepodcast.com/forum [retired link]

Me: I love it when you say that.

Chris: We've got some new topics on there, actually. I'm quite interested to hear how everyone got into Formula 1 in the first place.

Me: Oh, can I say that? I haven't done it yet.

Chris: Well, you'd better get on with it.



Me: I've got a great story.

Chris: Okay, well, don't tell us now, go to the forum.

Me: I'll do that.

Chris: Next week we'll be taking a look at how to start your own Formula 1 team.

Me: Wouldn't miss it for the world.

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

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YOUR WEEKLY F1 FIX