



Episode 88 – 2008 Season Review Megamix

Dom: Hey guys, Dom here. Just calling in to do an F1 Minute style review of the season. First season where I've managed to watch every race live, which is pretty impressive considering what I was meant to be doing during a couple of them. So glad I did though, it's been a hell of a season, completely unpredictable, just about every minute was worth watching, maybe with the exclusion of a couple of Spanish races. Most of the races were at such a high standard this year, though, and the field closed up so much. Every team that scored points got a podium, it's not every year we see that. Probably best for me not to go into any detail, otherwise this voicemail will never end, but overall it's been an exceptional season from start to finish... certainly at the finish. It's just a shame we can't be sure that next year's going to be even better, fingers crossed though.

Rich: Hi, this is Rich from South Africa, it's a beautiful Spring day and I just want to share with the rest of the Sidepodcommunity some of my thoughts and views of the 2008 season.

Gavin: Good evening Christine and Me, it's Gavin Brown again, also known as RubberGoat. As you know me from the Sidepodpanel, you know I always like to put my two cents in, so I jumped at the chance at being part of the Megamix.

Jordan: Hey, it's Jordan here again, calling to make my 2008 race review of the season.

Alianora: Hello everyone, this is Alianora La Canta.

Scott: Hi guys, it's Scott here.

R.G: Evening all, it's R.G. Just talking about the season review for the 2008 season.

Gavin: First off, Australia. Well, a Grand Prix that really is just like Mario Kart. Great action, loads of crashes, loads of random things happening. It's almost like it set a precedent for the season with Hamilton doing well, Massa doing well but maybe having a bit of trouble, DC crashing, loads of overtaking.

Scott: Australia was, it was an occasion where everyone was seeing how everything was going to work without traction control. I think it was quite an exciting prospect, and of course Massa found out, because he dropped it at the first corner of the first lap of the first race of the season without traction control, and Lewis went on to take a very convincing win. Nico took his first podium as well, which was great to see.

Rich: You know, we all, sort of, expected a lot more from Kimi. There was an awful lot of criticism and people were doubting Kimi's commitment. My take here is that he just really was not that comfortable with the car, he was struggling a little bit. He just needed to get up to speed into a comfort zone, and then, during many of those races, he was just blitzingly fast. I mean, he set up fastest lap race after race, so I think we're going to see a lot more of the Iceman in 2009.

Alianora: Raikkonen on the other hand went from team leader to a driver whose exact role in Ferrari seemed uncertain. He clearly has one, as races like Malaysia and Spain demonstrated, but the fire that we saw burn brightly in the latter half of 2007 fizzled out after turkey. And don't get me started on Monaco yet.

Scott: Monaco? Oh, my goodness, the rain at Monaco was unbelievable. It did get to the point where Lewis hit the barrier, had a puncture, you did really come to think, oh that's it, it's over for Lewis. Lewis secured one of his childhood dreams to win the Monaco Grand Prix and it was nice to see that.

Jordan: Lewis Hamilton in Monaco in the pouring rain. Robert Kubica, Canada, when Kimi and Hamilton ran into the back of each other in the pitlane.

Gavin: Canada was awesome. Really, really sorry to see it go. One of the last great Formula 1 tracks that isn't about the money. In terms of the race, another shocking mistake by Lewis Hamilton. It was good of him to think at the last



minute to take out his rival though, so Kubica could win. Although having said that, it was well deserved, Kubica had a great season.

R.G: Canada was a turning point, probably for the worse for BMW Sauber, because the achievements at the start of the season were to win a race. I think once we won the race, yes it might have been down to luck, you know, Hamilton crashing into Raikkonen. You've got to take your luck to take your wins. It was a fantastic moment. I was disappointed for Nick not to win because I think between him and Kubica he probably deserved it more because he hasn't won a race yet and he's had quite a few races. Hopefully, in 2009, that'll change for him.

Rich: Now we come to Honda and their Earth Dreams which seem to have ended up into track nightmare. I mean, if ever a team kept slumping, it was Honda, and you had to really feel sorry for both Rubens and Jenson. I think Rubens really accounted himself very well, it was a little bit lucky at Silverstone, you know he still scored points in other races. The case of poor Jenson, it was almost as if he'd just given up on the beast.

Alianora: Hamilton had some astonishingly good races, particularly Silverstone, where he finished over a minute ahead in teeming rain. Nearly everybody else went off at least once but Lewis was incredibly sure-footed.

Scott: Found out that Silverstone wouldn't be hosting the British Grand Prix anymore and it was going to be going to Donington, I think at the moment it's probably looking quite unlikely because of the shambles of all the plans they've made and everything. But simply, I would say that was one of my top three races of the year, the British Grand Prix. Lewis' drive, in absolutely appalling conditions, with no traction control, was just majestic.

R.G: Britain, people just go on about how great Hamilton's drive was, how fantastic he was doing, and you know it was a good drive, but remember, as well, Nick Heidfeld. Making a mistake in that race, I don't remember him making a mistake at all. It was a very good drive by Heidfeld, a very good drive by Barrichello as well, because nowadays you don't see Honda on the podium that much. You don't see Honda in the points.

Gavin: Massa had a terrible race, five spins. I still haven't quite forgiven him for that one.

Jordan: Hungary was Heikki Kovalainen who won. Honestly, I didn't think he could have won that race because IX Massa was so far out in front of him and if it wasn't for Massa blowing his engine, I don't think Heikki would have won a race this season.

Alianora: Even Kovalainen's poor season involved a win but there were times when I wondered whether his brother had got hold of the car again like Flavio Briatore claimed had happened in Australia last year.

Gavin: Lucky win for Kovalainen. Do you think it's a coincidence that both the Finns were disappointing this year? Let's hope they come back stronger next year in 2009.

Scott: He's been now touted the 100th ever Grand Prix winner. Really, if you think about it, I don't think he really deserved... As much as I like the guy, he doesn't deserve it, because that race, as I said, he didn't earn that win, he just inherited it because of the unreliability of the Ferrari engine.

Gavin: Valencia... [Yawn]

Paskis: Hey, this is Paskis calling from Sydney and all I can say is haaaaaht damn, that was a hell of a season. And of course, if you're going to have a season like that – a handful of races before the end and still four in the running, and then only a couple of races to the end and still two in the running, and the last lap of the last race – what do you do if you've had a season like that? You change all the rules and you change the car specifications. Of course, you're the FIA. Thanks everyone for a fantastic year of shows and I hope you keep it up through 2009. All the best from Sydney, see ya.

Alianora: In fact, the standard of stewarding was pretty atrocious throughout 2008. Replacing Tony Scott Andrews with Alan Donnelly was a disaster. A series of baffling decisions occurred. These ranged from the inconsistent, through the baffling, to the downright incomprehensible. Why did Bourdais get a 25 second penalty for Massa crashing into him? Changes have been announced for 2009 and not a moment too soon.



Jordan: And then we saw Belgium with all the fiasco, Kimi and Lewis going at it, I mean that was just totally amazing there. And then I really thought, with the FIA, they made so many poor calls this year and decisions, I mean, it just, just was horrible.

Gavin: Spa could have been great but the stewards ruined it, real shame about this. I don't know what happened there. It's as if the stewards get training from the Premiership referees. The similarities are quite canny really. Giving goals without [????], giving penalties without [???].

Rich: I said that BMW Sauber was my favourite team, well I sort of changed allegiances, and now Toro Rosso is. That's mostly because of young Sebastian Vettel. This guy is truly amazing. He's awesome, that Monza win. To take a Ferrari powered Minardi, which is what the Toro Rosso is, and to defeat the works Ferrari on their home turf. It's just such a special occasion, and it was rain, and no one really looked as if they could touch the young German.

Scott: Singapore, fantastic venue, fantastic concept holding it at night, it was brilliant to watch and we had a surprise winner in Alonso.

R.G.: I think one of the high points of the season is the introduction of the Singapore GP. That was stunning, you know, you've got the entertainment, and the night sky, that just looked brilliant. The F1 game released next year, that will be one brilliant track to drive across. Obviously the positives. What they need to improve on is they need to get better marshalling, without better marshalling, I think that was the only bad part about the Grand Prix.

Alianora: After the summer break, the Renault team emerged out of the darkness. Piquet Jr began to look like an F1 driver but the massive margin between team mates continued because Alonso was suddenly fighting for podiums. In three of the last four races, he got them. Two of those, Singapore and Japan, were victories. So, Alonso's season can be summarised as bad start, great finish.

Gavin: China, not a great race. Good for Lewis, bad for Massa. In fact, pretty embarrassing for Massa. Kimi Raikkonen almost had to park it to let him by, although that's what Formula 1 is about. It's an individual sport in a team, so they did what they had to do.

Scott: Of course there was that blatantly obvious switchover by Massa and Raikkonen. You could obviously see, you know, it was going to happen. And again, it wasn't a case of if, it was a case of when.

Gavin: And finally, Brazil. Wow. Just, just wow. One of the best races in twenty years of Formula 1. I've watched all sorts of drivers, I've watched all sorts of races, and that's got to be one of the best. Just unbelievable – the tension, the passion, McLaren vs Ferrari, Lewis vs Massa, just the whole thing. Unbelievable. I think for two weeks beforehand, I was just absolutely on edge, and I know a lot of other people were.

Scott: And then it came to Brazil, and you just could not have predicted the absolute chaos and unbelievable events of that Sunday. The rain shower at the beginning, and the whole thing with Lewis trying to stay in fifth place, and then the rain came down at the end, then Vettel passed Lewis. Every Lewis Hamilton fan must have thought, not again, this cannot be happening again, but then Massa crossed the line thinking he's won the championship. Then the last corner of the last lap of the last race of the season it all comes together.

Rich: Well, Brazil was a real cliffhanger there, with Lewis finishing fifth just enough to secure the World Championship and a virtually perfect race on the part of Felipe and literally for a few seconds there, he was World Champion and then the sort of despair as Glock was unable to defend his position and Lewis took over the position.

Jordan: What did we see, we saw Massa come across the finish line first, he was so happy. Him and his dad were just the happiest people alive right there, and then when Hamilton crossed the finish line to see Massa's dad's face just – the happiest man in the world – just the disappointment, how sad he was, I mean, that hurt.

R.G.: I don't think, I know people saying Brazil was the greatest race ever, I don't think that's right. In terms of tension, yes, but in terms of excitement quality, I think it wasn't really that good. It was four, five, six laps at the start, and two, three, four, five laps at the end that really was entertaining. The rest, you know, was pretty boring. Monaco, that was entertaining from start to finish, Britain, that was entertaining from start to finish. Italy, that was very entertaining as well. Europe... ah, maybe not.



Gavin: However, Lewis and Massa, too many mistakes, so you can't really say they were best drivers of the year. And I think a lot of Sidepodcast would agree with me. McLaren and Ferrari, not as technically sharp as they used to be. Quite surprising really, I don't think Schumacher would have put up with it, and McLaren used to be feared for how good they were with their tactics. The best drivers, I guess, were Kubica and Alonso, although unfortunately they couldn't challenge for the championship. They were the most consistent and won with not great cars, in my mind that's a better effort than Lewis and Massa because they had good cars.

Jordan: He might be like the JV because Jacques Villeneuve came in in the 1996 season, did well like Lewis, came second in the championship, won a few races. His next year he won the world championship, and that's what Lewis exactly did. And we were all kind of wondering what if he goes into this JV phase. I don't know if he will, and if he comes into this phase, that's why I've always loved Formula 1 where guys work their way up from lower teams to get to the best teams. Massa did it. Kimi did it. Alonso kind of did it too, but he did it with that team.

R.G.: You've got Nick Heidfeld, who finished every race of the season, which I think is a credit to the reliability of the team. Kubica only retired twice and that was because of the spin out in Britain, where practically everybody else spun out anyway.

Rich: I think 2009 could be more competitive, with the lower aero forcing, the slick tyres, and the introduction of KERS, so it should be a good season.

Jordan: You know, Formula 1 with Lewis, I think he was the first rookie that you would throw into a top three team and he's done well. Again, a good driver, I respect him, but I think next year will be a different story. I think Kimi Raikkonen could win the championship next year, I really think he can.

R.G.: For next year, you know it's gonna be big. You're gonna have Hamilton retaining the championship. You've got Massa, who can prove he's stronger than the car, you'll have Raikkonen if he's up to it. You're going to have possibly Alonso, if he's in a good Renault, you're going to have Kubica with BMW if they stay with him the whole season.

Alianora: Sidepodcast went from strength to strength. Already producing very good weekly podcasts, they introduced live commenting this year. Combined with ITV-F1's broadcast of Friday free practises (but not Saturday's practise, for some reason), this made the day of anyone lucky enough not to have a job (or to be able not to work for a few hours) on Fridays. Following the sessions this way brought a whole new understanding to the sport. Other notable additions included the Sidepodcast Wiki, the numerous live programmes and a stuffed panda called Jia-Tou. Congratulations are also in order because Christine and her co-host, who calls himself "me", got married.

Scott: Thank you very much Sidepodcast for a brilliant... sharing F1 for a brilliant year. And I shall let you get back to what you do for a break, and maybe see you at Autosport. Thanks very much.

Jordan: Great season. Thanks for you guys doing all the coverage that you do and all the podcasts that you make, and I really do thank you guys so much, and I hope to be on a Sidepodpanel one of these days.

Gavin: So, I guess to finish off, I'll just say thank you very much to Sidepodcast for the excellent work during the year. I joined late on and am absolutely blown away by how professional you guys are and how brilliant the podcasts are. They're so good to listen to, they've been great fun, I've really enjoyed them all. I've loved being part of the Sidepodpanel. It's been brilliant to be part of such a wonderful online community, you guys are all fantastic. Love the comments you make and it's always loads of fun.

Alianora: Thank you for listening to the podcast and [sung] We wish you a Merry Christmas, we wish you a Merry Christmas, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.