



Inside Track – Melbourne Preview

[Opening credits]

Christine: Hi everyone, welcome to Inside Track from Sidepodcast. In 2007 we brought you race previews throughout the year, profiling the tracks and giving a taste of things to come in the upcoming race weekend. This time round, we're expanding that idea so let's have a look at what's in store.

Coming up we've got a look back at last year in Australia and a look forward at what to expect this year. But first, we need to remind ourselves of the 2008 Entry List.

Christine – Voiceover

Everything stays the same at the top with Raikkonen, Massa, Heidfeld and Kubica all keeping with their teams. Alonso has rejoined Renault and has a new rookie team mate to do battle with: Nelson Piquet. Rosberg remains at Williams, and Nakajima turns his one race debut from last year into a full season's race seat. Coulthard and Webber remain at Red Bull, and Trulli at Toyota. Timo Glock makes his F1 return, taking the place of the departed Ralf Schumacher.

Toro Rosso fill their team with Sebastians, Vettel hoping to continue his strong start from last year, and Bourdais making the transition from Champ Car Champion to F1 rookie. Honda retain Button and Barrichello, and sister team Super Aguri also keep their pair Davidson and Sato. Brand new Force India keep Adrian Sutil from his Spyker days, and catch Fisichella as he is ousted from Renault. Relegated to the end of the entry list but not the end of the pit lane, McLaren of course retain Hamilton and welcome Heikki Kovalainen as their replacement for Alonso.

Christine: That's how things stand as we go into the first race. In a moment, we'll be looking closer at what to expect in Australia. If you've got thoughts or predictions about the race, or you have anything to say afterwards, get in touch. You can leave us a voicemail, either with the Skype username Sidepodcast, or calling our number 0121 28 TRACK, that's 0121 28 87225. You can leave your thoughts on the Facebook group, just search for Sidepodcast, or you can email me christine@sidepodcast.com. Look forward to hearing from you.

[Australia Footage]

Formula Una Girls: Hi, we're the Formula Una's and welcome to Australia.

[Cut to Timo Glock]

Timo: I think it's quite an unusual track because it's only been used by Formula 1 and I think, Australian touring cars. But at the end, a green track means no grip at all and that makes it sometimes quite difficult to get the right direction in terms of the setup. But at the end, I'm looking forward to it and I think with Jarno, I have an experienced team mate and that should help me a little bit.

[Cut to Christine]

Christine: This time last year, we were eagerly awaiting the season opener in Australia. Everything was different – no more Schumacher, Raikkonen at Ferrari and Alonso at McLaren. But the talking point of the entire weekend was rookie Lewis Hamilton. Raikkonen ran away with both qualifying and the race, and despite Hamilton's best efforts he



finished third behind Alonso. Notably, David Coulthard and Alex Wurz collided, with Coulthard flying straight over the helmet of Wurz. That is the key reason why cockpit sides have been raised for 2008.

But that was last year, and now it's time to look ahead at what to expect from the Melbourne circuit when we go racing this weekend.

Christine – Voiceover

Albert Park has a long initial straight, delaying the first corner goodness until the last possible minute. Turn 1 is a third gear corner, taken at 123 km/h. It flicks right and then immediately left onto another straight.

The combination of corners at Albert Park – some slow, some fast, twists, turns, tight bends and short straights – mean it is a welcome addition to the calendar, but Bernie Ecclestone has brought the future of the track into question. Along with Silverstone, it appears this is another Grand Prix that has its cards marked, and it will take something special for Bernie to extend Australia's circuit past its current contract.

Crossing the first timing sector, we approach Albert Road, a second gear corner taken at just over 100 km/h.

The Australian race in 2008 has had its start time delayed by half an hour, so as to make the timing difference to the main European audience more acceptable. It will still take place in the early hours of the morning here in the UK, though.

At the top of the circuit now, we pass the Lauda corner and head on to the Clark Chicane. This leads to a long bend that drivers can take in top gear, approaching 300 km/h.

Albert Park has the benefit of some beautiful views, with the lake in the centre and the surrounding Melbourne city landscape as well.

Heading around Waite and Hill corners, drivers will now prepare for the Ascari corner, a second gear turn, 90 degrees and taken at 125 km/h.

With the circuit only being used for racing once a year, tyre degradation and grip through the corners will be a primary concern during setup and throughout the race.

Almost on the home stretch now, the final corner complex starts with Senna, and sees speeds drop right down to 83 km/h. Drivers then hit Turn 16, and complete the lap on the start/finish straight.

Pole position in 2007 was Kimi Raikkonen, in the Ferrari, with 1 minute 26.072 seconds.

Christine: I hope you've enjoyed this look both back and forward at the Australian Grand Prix. Don't forget to get in touch, visit the site Sidepodcast.com, or call us on 0121 28 87225. Join us next time on Inside Track where we'll look at the results from Australia and forward to the Malaysian race.

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