



Inside Track – Valencia Preview

[Opening credits]

Christine: You're watching Inside Track from Sidepodcast, and today we're previewing the brand new Valencian Grand Prix. Coming up this week we take a first look at the Valencian street circuit, and weigh up who's going to do well around it's many corners.

Christine – Voiceover

A surprise retirement for Massa three laps from the end of the Hungarian Grand Prix saw Heikki Kovalainen take his maiden F1 victory. Glock stood next to him on the podium, with Raikkonen picking up third. Alonso came in fourth, Hamilton fifth and Piquet finished sixth.

Hamilton retains his lead on the drivers championship with 62 points, whilst Raikkonen leads Massa 57 to 54. Both BMW drivers are together, Kubica on 49 ahead of Heidfeld on 41. Kovalainen has 38.

Ferrari top the constructors championship with 111 points, but McLaren are catching up fast now with 100. BMW have 90, whilst Toyota and Renault scrap on 35 points to 31 respectively. Red Bull drift into the distance on 24.

Christine: We're always looking for new ways to make our shows available to you, and now we're getting into the world of the torrent. I'll admit, when I heard the word torrent, it immediately sounded painful and not something I wanted to do, but actually it's quite easy.

We're now providing links to download the torrent file of each of our shows, alongside the traditional formats. The torrent version is exactly the same, it just means we're all sharing the bandwidth needed to download a file, and you can get a BitTorrent client to organise your media for you. If you want more information, there are a couple of entries on Sidepodcast.com that should help clear things up, or you can always email me, christine @ sidepodcast.com.

[Cut to footage of Hungary. Cut to Kazuki Nakajima.]

Kazuki: I think it's going to be much more busy, compared to normal track, and more bumpy, and we will have more vibrations.

[Cut to Christine]

Christine: This is the first ever Valencian Grand Prix on the street circuit, so we have no history to bring you this week. Instead, I thought it might be worth looking at who could have the upper hand when it comes to the twists and turns of the new track.

Just recently, it's been brought to our attention that some of the teams feel they've stuck to the engine regulations a little too much and are therefore lagging behind when it comes to power. Flavio Briatore certainly thinks so, and Frank Williams believes it may be happening without it being an attempt to cheat. Nevertheless, the Valencian circuit should be kinder to those who feel their engines are less strong, and the layout will be more suited to their cars.



Another team who may benefit this weekend is McLaren, who already have history on the streets of Valencia. In 2007, they launched the MP4-22 in spectacular style in Spain, thanks to new signing Fernando Alonso. They got a taste of the tarmac, and presumably know the logistics of the area, and I'll bet that will be more of a help than a hindrance this year. Of course, Fernando Alonso has now moved back to Renault, and this being his home race, he might gain some motivation from the local supporters.

Now let's take a look at one lap at the Valencian Street Circuit.

Christine - Voiceover

For a while now, Monaco has been holding up the good name of the street circuit all by itself, but this year it is joined by not one, but two brand new city circuits. This first one, Valencia, is massive. Whilst the length of the track is about standard at 5.4km, the layout sprawls across the streets and includes over 20 corners. So, let's take a look at some of them.

Already, we have rounded the initial sweeping curve of Turn 1, and the tight right hander of two, and you can see from our map in the left hand corner that we've just passed the chicane of four and five. Up from third, it's important to get a good exit from there to make the most of the somewhat kinked straight.

Turns 8 and 10 are two more than 90 degree corners crossing the river, taking the bridge in third gear. Once those have been negotiated, plus the following arc to the left, speeds can build up on the longest stretch of track, top gear and over 320 km/h.

With teams never having raced on the streets of Valencia before, the drivers are going to want to maximise their on-track time to get the most data possible. We know that Bridgestone are bringing the soft and super soft tyres, just as they did in Monaco, but we don't know how they will fare across a race distance.

We're in the middle of turns 12 to 15, and our drivers have to work through a tight right-left-right combination, dropping to about 180 km/h. This track was designed by F1 supremo Hermann Tilke, of course, and Bernie Ecclestone will be hoping it's a successful weekend because he's signed the race up for seven years.

We're nearing the end of this enormous course now, a hairpin to the right for Turn 17, leading to some S bends taken in 3rd or 4th gear. Building up the speed to over 200 km/h towards the final hairpin that then leads across the start/finish line.

There's no pole position from last year, obviously, and I can't wait to find out who lands the inaugural front row slot.

Christine: That wraps up our preview for Valencia, it's going to be a fascinating race whatever happens, so I hope you can join us on Sidepodcast.com for live commenting during all the sessions. And don't forget you can leave us a voicemail with your thoughts of the brand new circuit on 0121 28 87225. I can't wait to hear from you.