



Inside Track – Fuji Speedway

[Opening credits]

Christine: Welcome to Inside Track where we are previewing the Japanese Grand Prix. What are the chances of it living up to Singapore? Coming up this week, we catch up with Kazuki at his home Grand Prix and tour one lap of the Fuji Speedway.

Christine – Voiceover

Here's a quick recap of the position following Singapore's race. The second surprise victory in a row, Alonso took the win ahead of Rosberg and Hamilton, all three on the podium. Then Glock, last race winner Vettel, Heidfeld, Coulthard and Nakajima picked up a point.

Hamilton has managed to extend his lead again, after Ferrari's disastrous pit stop in Singapore. He's now on 84 with Massa on 77. Kubica has 64, whilst Raikkonen and Heidfeld have 57 and 56 respectively.

McLaren have taken the lead in the constructors championship now, lording it 1 point over Ferrari. BMW are still in the fight just 14 points behind the red team. Renault look to have fourth sewn up following their win, whilst Toyota round out the top five.

[Cut to Christine.]

Christine: In the two-week gap between Singapore and the upcoming Japanese Grand Prix, I've released the latest mini-series from Sidepodcast – this time about Ancillary F1. If you've not heard any of the previous series, go to f1resource.com, where you can find the archives. Each mini series is seven shows over seven consecutive days covering a certain topic. We've already had a beginner's guide to F1, and the history of Formula 1 by decades. F1 People is also a popular choice. This week we were looking at the companies involved in the sport but who aren't directly competing for the title. Check out f1resource.com for all the information.

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

Kazuki: Hi, I'm Kazuki Nakajima, driving for AT&T Williams team. Here we are in my home country, and in my garage. These guys are very important because they are working for my car and for the safety.

[Cut to Nico Rosberg]

Nico: Fuji is a nice track. Again, it's been redone by Hermann Tilke, the architect, who did a very good job there. I think the track layout stayed the same, but he readjusted the kerbs and the asphalt, and the safety, so it's a nice track now. Again it has a very, very long straight, nearly as long as in Shanghai, I think 1.2, 1.3 kilometres. It's great because you are racing right next to the huge Fugiy-no-ama Mountain, which, really, when you're close up, it's special because it's so big, it's unbelievable.

[Cut to Jackie Stewart]



Jackie: You've got Japan, you've got China and you've got Brazil. A lot of points for winning a Grand Prix, ten per Grand Prix. The World Championship is still wide open. Ferrari are still keen to win the constructor's championship as well as the drivers. McLaren have been through some difficult times, but in fact Lewis Hamilton has had the most amazing year, a considerable achievement. I think it's going to be a great crescendo, it's a real climax to the season, and the whole world's looking at it. It's going to be a very important end of season battle to claim the title.

[Cut to Christine]

Christine: Before we take a look at what to expect this year, let's remind ourselves what happened in 2007. The weather was the most important factor at Fuji last season, and Ferrari got it all wrong. They both lined up on the grid with intermediate tyres, despite official FIA word that extreme wets were the way to go. They claimed never to have received the message.

Extreme wets were very necessary, as the heavens opened and the rain poured down. After multiple cars aquaplaned off at Turn 1, the safety car came out and led the pack for 19 long, slow laps. Vettel embarrassed himself slightly by crashing into the back of Webber under the safety car, knocking them both out of strong points positions.

I'm sure the future team mates won't have any such problems this weekend. Let's take a look at the lap.

[Cut to animated circuit.]

Christine - Voiceover

Last year, we began this race under the safety car, and things were slow for the first 20 laps or so. However, if things are left to their natural order, then the first corner comes at the end of the super long straight. It's a tight right hander taken in 2nd gear at about 90 km/h, and it continues to the right until we get to Turn 3, which takes us round to the left. Round 3, 4, and 5, we're going well over 200 km/h, but when we get to the sharp left hander at Turn 6, that stops. 2nd gear again and 128 km/h.

Many of the drivers admit they prefer Suzuka to Fuji, and from this year the two tracks will be alternating as hosts. So 2009 will see drivers return to their preferred circuit. However, for this year, we're right underneath the mountain, and subject to whatever weather conditions it wants to throw at us.

We're now approaching Turns 10, 11 and 12, which are a series of S bends that lead onto the second timing line. These get down to 1st gear and can go as low as 70 km/h.

If you're worried about a repeat of last year's monsoon conditions, don't be. Current weather forecasts are predicting just some slight rain on Saturday, but the rest of the weekend clear. It looks like it's going to be cloudy and cool, though, so tyre strategy really comes into play.

The final corner is a crucial second gear 180 to lead back onto that incredible straight. Drivers can keep their foot down for about 15 seconds before it all starts again.

Pole position in 2007 was Lewis Hamilton in the McLaren with 1 minute 25.368 seconds.

Christine: That wraps up our preview this week. Despite the fact that in Europe, the sessions all start in the wee hours of the morning, we'll still be up and about and live commenting our way through the weekend. Please join us on Sidepodcast.com for any of the sessions that you can, because we'll be making the effort, and so should you. Plus,



someone needs to be there to make sure we don't nod off. I will see you there, and I'll be back next week with the Chinese Grand Prix preview.

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