



## Video 10 – Europe Preview

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[Cut to Christine.]

**Chris:** Welcome to Sidepodcast TV. Today we're previewing the European Grand Prix.

[Intro shots of Germany. Cut to Christine.]

**Chris:** Coming up we have our usual lap of the circuit, plus the ING Index and a look at how the British GP closed up the championships.

The European Grand Prix takes place at the Nurburgring, but on only a fraction of the original Nordschliefe circuit. With 73 corners and 20.8 kms to negotiate, plus an infamous corner that's taken many lives and cost Niki Lauda his ears, it's no wonder the track was rejected for being too dangerous.

[Cut to Nick Heidfeld's Nordschliefe lap]

### Chris – Voiceover

Earlier this year, Nick Heidfeld took his life in his hands when he drove his BMW Sauber F1.06 around the full circuit. It's been 31 years since a current Formula 1 car has taken to the track, and Nick was absolutely over the moon to be the one to break that drought. Sensational, awesome and the best track in the world were just some of the verdicts to come from him. They did three laps and didn't break any records, having to edge carefully around several of the trickier corners. Before starting his first run, Heidfeld had been cool, calm and disinterested, because he's too young to appreciate the full effect of the original German circuit. A couple of Playstation laps aren't really enough to prepare for the seriously quick track. It only took one go though, for Nick to be completely enamoured, saying he was sad to only have two laps remaining and that he could have driven until he ran out of petrol. Thankfully that didn't happen.

[Cut to Christine.]

**Chris:** Like I said, this race is called the European Grand Prix. It used to be that there were two races in Germany, so one of them had to be called the European race. This year there is no German race, except this is the German race. They can't call it the German Grand Prix because Hockenheim have the rights to that name. From this year, the German Grand Prix will alternate between Hockenheim and Nurburgring but they're still not allowed the name.

Next year, there's the added complication that Valencia joins the calendar, thus making two Spanish races. They could borrow the European Grand Prix name, although there's talk that Valencia will become the Spanish Grand Prix, whilst Barcelona becomes the Catalunyan Grand Prix.

PHEW! So now you know why it's called the European Grand Prix, here's the lap.

[Cut to Allianz animation]

### Chris – Voiceover



Our Nurburgring features ten times fewer corners and less death traps than the original circuit but that doesn't mean it's an easy ride. It starts off well with an enormous long straight, but after that drivers have to negotiate many tight corners. Each turn on the Nurburgring is sponsored and therefore named after a brand. You'll see.

So we start with the long straight. Down to 1st gear, the speed drops from 300 to 85 km/h which takes 2.6 seconds. The opening corner is one of the tightest on the calendar and is definitely one to watch out for during the race.

Turns 2 and 3 are 2nd gear lefts that lead into another right hander. These corners require minimal braking distances, with drivers only slowing 20km/h from one to the next. This area is known as the Mercedes arena, and it goes on to lead the driver down a short, straight hill to Turn 5. Reaching speeds of 220 km/h, the drivers need to get down to 100, which takes them 80 metres. Turn 6 is the Ford Curve, a second gear corner that slows the cars down even more. Then there's another short straight, again heading downhill. This leads to the slowest area of the track, the Dunlop curve, surrounded by enormously popular grandstand seating. The corner is not as tight as some hairpins, but getting the line right is enormously difficult. One false move and you're in the gravel. A good exit is vital to maximise speed back up the hill towards an elongated S bend. This used to be sponsored by Audi, but for 2007 has been renamed the Michael Schumacher S. For God's sake.

Now we approach Turn 9, a 90 degree left that loads the drivers with 4.6 G and brings brake temperatures up to 1000 degrees C. It's followed swiftly by a right, almost identical to the previous corner, if a little tighter. We continue our progress back up the hill and around a fast right hander, before the tricky NGK Chicane. Slowing from 280 km/h and 6th gear, the drivers only brake for 1.6 seconds to get around the quick left/right.

Just one more corner to go, so-called the Coca-Cola Curve. Another medium hairpin, this brings the drivers back round onto the straight to raise speeds to almost 300 km/h and cross the start/finish line in style.

Pole position in 2006 was Fernando Alonso in the Renault with 1 minute 29.819 seconds.

*[Cut to Brembo Brakes]*

The Dunlop Curve really is the most difficult point of the lap, slowing the drivers right down. Deceleration is 100 km/h and that takes 1.2 seconds. This causes 3.5 G and requires pedal load of 100 kg. No wonder the grandstands are always packed.

*[Cut to ING Race Index]*

Ah, the ING Race Index. My favourite. Like the Dow Jones but for Formula 1 circuits, they say. What that means is a comparison of tracks on four different categories. I've made fun of it in the past, but it's a serious business, honest. This week we're looking at the Nurburgring, that little orange thing there. The enormous blue line that extends from it? That's the old track, the original Grand Prix circuit. 73 corners, you know. 33 to the left and 40 to the right. Almost 13 miles. But we're looking at our little orange friend there. Who says size doesn't matter?

Our first category is Circuit and Strategy. Basically, the track is half of what it used to be. That's all I have to say on the matter, and ING feel the same. They give Nurburgring 60 out of 100.

Next up is strain on driver. The first corner of Nurburgring is pretty strenuous. Anybody remember the 2005 race where Kimi Raikkonen suffered an almighty blowout on his last lap? Almost took Jenson Button out in the process. It was so close, I find that pretty stressful to watch. ING don't agree because they're only dishing out 56.



The Vehicle Setup requirements are pretty tough for this race. The circuit tends to make cars oversteer which needs careful monitoring. Plus the mix of tight corners, short straights and various trips up and down hill mean it's a mechanics nightmare. For once ING are pushing the boat out and rocketing this score up to 69. Trust me, that's high.

Last but not least we have Engineering Requirements. Only 56 per cent of the lap is at full throttle which means it's one of the slowest of the calendar. Only Monaco, Japan and China have less acceleration. Nurburgring makes up for it with gear changes, boasting 49 shifts per lap. Still not great though. 58 points out of 100.

Rolling all those scores in together and adding in any additional factors such as tradition, fascination and emotion gives us an overall score. I'm not sure what those extras can add, seeing as most of the amazement comes from the track that's no longer used in F1, but ING have settled on a score of 62 out of 100. That brings Nurburgring quite amazingly to 8th position out of the 17 tracks.

*[Cut to Christine]*

**Chris:** That's what our drivers have to look forward to, but we should have a look at the championships going into the European race.

*[Cut to Championship Standings]*

#### **Chris – Voiceover**

Hamilton maintains his lead on 70 points, whilst Alonso struggles to stay in touch on 58. He needs to be careful because both Ferrari drivers are hot on his heels – Raikkonen has overtaken Massa on 52 points to 51. Heidfeld drops back on 33.

McLaren continue to race away with the constructors lead, on 128 points. Ferrari are on 103, BMW have 56, Renault have 31 points, whilst Williams remain on 13.

*[Cut to Christine.]*

**Chris:** That's all for our European preview. As always, stay tuned to Sidepodcast for full coverage of the race and let us know what you think at Sidepodcast.com. See you soon.

*[End credits]*