



## Video 17 – Belgium Preview

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[Cut to Christine.]

**Chris:** Welcome to Sidepodcast TV. Today we'll be looking at our usual lap preview, the ING Race Index and the Championship Standings.

[Intro shots of Belgium. Cut to Christine.]

**Chris:** The Belgian Grand Prix at Spa was cut from the calendar last year, after a small cash flow problem. The owners of the circuit went bankrupt and couldn't afford the necessary updates to the track, and by the time the money was found, it was too late. Fortunately, this year, Spa is back and better than ever. It's one of the most popular circuits for both fans and drivers alike, and everyone is glad to see it return. Here's the lap.

[Cut to Allianz animation.]

### Chris - Voiceover

It's not hard to see why everyone loves Spa. The track is complex but beautiful, and is very open to fans. Many of the corners have good views, so anyone attending the race should get their money's worth. McLaren have won four out of the last six races at this track, and Ferrari scooped the other two, so it'll be interesting to see if anyone else can get a look in.

There's barely time to get any speed up before drivers reach Turn 1, a 2nd gear, 90km/h hairpin that leads up a small incline. A kinked straight follows, overlooked by many, many grandstands and leading directly to the Eau Rouge complex. According to Wikipedia, this is one of the most dangerous sections of any racing track in the world. It's taken in 6th gear and is on the brink of 300 km/h, so not exactly a slow corner, but it doesn't look that bad to me. The next straight boasts the title of having had the best overtaking manoeuvre ever. You know, the one where Hakkinen overtook Zonta and Schumacher at the same time. We can't stop talking about it here at Sidepodcast, and it's on YouTube if you need to see it.

Turn 4 has a stopping distance of 110 metres, and loads drivers with 5.2G. Brake temperatures can get as high as 1000 degrees C. Turn 5 is taken in 3rd gear, at about 177 km/h, and braking takes 2.22 seconds. The smallest of straights leads to the 180 of Rivage, a 5th gear sweeping bend that leads drivers into the trees.

The next couple of corners are relatively easy, compared to what we have seen, and what's to come. Staying up in 6th gear, and pushing 290 km/h, these two turns create a much wider 180, with plenty of the old gravel as a run off. There's lots of kerbs for drivers to extend corners slightly as well, although the upcoming elongated S bend, should pose no problem. Taken in 3rd gear and between 140 and 170 km/h, the S leads into Stavelot – another fast 5th gear bend. So many sweeping corners! Finally drivers are allowed to put their foot down and build up some nice speed. Through another couple of kinks that don't really deserve to be called Turns, hitting 305 km/h, before the bus stop literally stops the cars in their tracks. Straight down to 2nd gear and all the way down to 90km/h, the Curva Bus Stop (very odd name) is the final challenge before drivers cross the start/finish line for the lap.

There was no race in 2006, so pole position in 2005 was Montoya in the McLaren with 1 minute 46.391 seconds.



[Cut to Brembo brakes.]

#### Chris – Voiceover

First corners are usually the most dangerous, and that's even more true at Spa, when the first corner is a hairpin. 22 cars will be decelerating at 200 km/h, taking 2.4 seconds and hitting 4.4G. Pedal loads will be about 130 kgs. That is definitely one to watch out for.

[Cut to ING Race Index.]

#### Chris – Voiceover

We've never really taken the ING race index that seriously. Okay, I know it's probably mathematically correct, working out all those numbers and creating the Dow Jones equivalent in F1 tracks, but the numbers are just so boring. 50 this, 60 that. I can't wait to see what they make of the ever popular Spa.

Our first category is Circuit and Strategy. No one could say that Spa is boring. It has twists, it has turns, it has trees, it even has a corner called the Bus Stop. What more could you possibly need? It's also the longest circuit in F1 so quite a challenge. ING agree, handing out an unprecedented 78 points.

The next category is Strain on driver. The track is seriously fast, and although efforts are made to constantly slow the cars down, it still takes some courage to keep your foot to the floor through blind corners. With high speeds comes G, and there's plenty of the force being thrown about during a lap at Spa. Strain on driver gets an impressive 73 points.

Vehicle Setup is not altogether too bad. The track is a low downforce circuit and pretty speedy all round. The weather can be a bit of a problem. The course is so long that one end may be raining whilst the other has it's own microclimate to worry about. That's when setup gets tricky. ING have taken all this into account and come up with 75 points. Another score in the 70s? What is going on?

The constant up and downhill at Spa is an engineering nightmare, so the requirements category takes into account the high engine demand. Only Monza has a higher percentage of the lap at full throttle, and only Indy has a longer flat out section. For these reasons, plus other complex equations, ING award 92 points. What????

Sorry, I am completely in shock. With those scores and the emotion and traditions that go along with Spa, the whole circuit gets 81 out of 100 and is placed 1st out of all 2007 races.

92 points????

[Cut to Christine.]

**Chris:** Now you know everything you need to about the lap, let's take a look at how the championship battle is hotting up as we head into the last four races.

[Cut to Championship Standings.]

#### Chris – Voiceover



Going into the Belgian Grand Prix, the drivers championship still has Lewis Hamilton on top with 92 points, Alonso is behind him on 89. Raikkonen has 74, Massa has 69 and Heidfeld has 52.

Whilst the drivers championship is still hotting up, the constructors is pretty much a foregone conclusion. As of this week, McLaren have been stripped of all constructors points, allowing Ferrari to take the lead. Both drivers are allowed to keep their points, and continue to earn more, but McLaren get nothing. They're not even allowed to send anyone up for the constructors trophy, should they win. No champagne for them.

So, the standings before we head to Spa are as follows, Ferrari are new leaders with 143 points, BMW are second with 86. Behind them, Renault have 38, Williams have 25, and new into the top 5, Red Bull have 16.

[Cut to Christine.]

**Chris:** That's all for our Belgian preview. As always, visit Sidepodcast.com for full coverage of the race, and let us know what you think by calling the voicemail on 0121 28 TRACK. See you soon.

[End credits]

