



## Video 18 – Japan Preview

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[Cut to Christine.]

**Chris:** This is Sidepodcast TV. Today we'll look at a preview of the Fuji circuit, the ING Race Index and the championship standings.

[Intro shots of Belgium. Cut to Christine.]

**Chris:** The Japanese Grand Prix returns to Fuji this year, for the first time in 30 years. Whilst it's an unknown for a lot of fans, there are those who recall the 1976 and 1977 races as absolute classics. The track appears to offer a couple of good overtaking opportunities and some beautiful scenery as a backdrop. The only problem with it is the time difference, but to be fair, the same would apply for Suzuka. So, let's take a look at one lap around the Fuji Speedway.

[Cut to Allianz animation.]

### Chris - Voiceover

Never has a Sidepodcast preview been so necessary. As a new fan, I am still learning the pros and cons of all the tracks on the calendar, but this week, I can rejoice in not being the only one who doesn't know what to expect. So, let's see. Where to start? Well, as usual, we have a nice start/finish straight, only this time, it is absolutely enormous. It goes on, and on, and on, eventually diving into Turn 1. A tight right-hander taken in 1<sup>st</sup> gear, Turn 1 gradually drops downhill as it extends round and back on itself to Turn 2. The Coca-Cola Corner, I love that name, is taken in 4<sup>th</sup> gear and immediately brings drivers to the sweeping Turn 3. There's no slowing down for this turn, remaining in 5<sup>th</sup> gear, and going almost 200 km/h, it hardly seems to count as a corner.

Turn 4, however, is called the Hairpin Corner, and deserves its name. Straight down to 3<sup>rd</sup> gear, it has a braking time of 1.83 seconds, with a final speed of 126 km/h. Next, drivers face a stretch of track that isn't straight, but isn't a corner, it's kind of littered with kinks, and that leads to the Dunlop Corner. More of a chicane than a corner, this sees drivers heading right and then left in 2<sup>nd</sup> gear, pulling 4.4G.

This leads to the so-called 13<sup>th</sup> Corner, presumably unlucky for some, where drivers can take plenty of kerb to keep speeds up. Around the Netz corner at 200 km/h, dropping down to 115 on the exit, and on to the last Turn of the lap. Panasonic Corner is taken in 2<sup>nd</sup> gear, and leads drivers back onto the almost 1 mile long initial straight.

Although it can hardly be relevant, pole position in 1977 was Mario Andretti in the Lotus with 1 minute 12.230 seconds.

[Cut to Brembo brakes.]

### Chris – Voiceover

After such a long straight, drivers are probably grateful to get to Turn 1 each lap – finally! Something to do! And what a lot they have to do. Deceleration is 215 km/h, which takes 2.8 seconds, and causes 4.9 G. Hmm, there's a calculation missing. Presumably no one has measured the pedal load yet.



[Cut to ING Race Index.]

#### Chris – Voiceover

Yay, the absolutely unintelligible ING Race Index. Hailed as the Dow Jones for Formula 1 tracks, ING are now going to tackle the new addition to the calendar – Fuji! Refurbishing the circuit to fit modern standards has cost at least 130 million Euros, so now we'll see whether it was all worth it.

First up, Circuit and Strategy. This track is a game of two halves, with the first part, including the almost mile-long straight, being super speedy, and the second half being much slower. Apparently there are plenty of overtaking opportunities so we may be in for a good show. ING have taken this on board and dished out a respectable 66 points out of 100.

Next up, we're looking at Strain on drivers. Of course, for most, Fuji is an unknown, especially in a racing situation. There don't appear to be too many factors on track that cause any strain other circuits don't, aside from that fact that we're all newbies to it. I can't understand why, but ING have decided to award 69 points for Strain on driver.

Vehicle setup is usually one of the trickier categories, and again the unknown factors of Fuji just add to the engineer's problems. How do you set up your car to work at its optimum without knowing exactly what you've got in store? Plus mechanics will want to see real speeds achieved in the long straight, whilst clinging onto downforce around the corners. 56 points.

Engineering requirements are pretty low, with only 55% of the course at full throttle. Also, the difference between the highest and lowest points of the circuit is only 36 metres, which means Fuji, really, is pretty tame. ING have rated this circuit with a shockingly low score of 46 out of 100 for Engineering requirements.

Combine all those scores together and add in any emotions and history that the circuit holds... oh wait... we haven't been here for 30 years... never mind. What else can we use to boost the score? The only notable thing is the beautiful Mount Fuji in the background. That'll do. Because of this, ING give Fuji an overall score of 57 points out of 100 and that is 15th out of 17 tracks this year. Rubbish.

[Cut to Christine.]

**Chris:** With McLaren out of the running and deciding against an appeal for their points loss, Ferrari took the constructors championship easily. There are still a couple of races to go though, and a chance for BMW to break through the 100 mark. The driver's championship looks set to be a battle to the very finish. Let's have a look at how the points stack up heading into this weekend's race.

[Cut to Championship Standings.]

#### Chris – Voiceover

Hamilton is clinging onto his lead with 97, but Alonso is closing the gap, now on 95. Raikkonen is still in with a chance on 84, but it's looking less likely for Massa on 77. Heidfeld rounds out the top 5 with 56 points.

New champions Ferrari lead the way with 161, with BMW behind on 90 points. Renault, Williams and Red Bull remain in the distance with 39, 28 and 18 points respectively.

[Cut to Christine.]



**Chris:** That's all for our Japan preview. Don't forget you can leave your thoughts about the race at Sidepodcast.com, or leave us a message on 0121 28 TRACK. Thanks for watching, see you soon.

*[End credits]*

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