



Video 19 – China Preview

[Cut to Christine.]

Chris: This is Sidepodcast TV. Today we'll preview the Shanghai International Circuit, look at the ING Race Index, and check up on the championship standings.

[Intro shots of Belgium. Cut to Christine.]

Chris: Shanghai is still a relatively new track, entering its fourth year in Formula 1. Last year saw plenty of rain that allowed Michael Schumacher to take the win. After the safety car spoiled racing at Fuji last weekend, let's hope the rain behaves itself this time around. Here's a lap around the Shanghai International Circuit.

[Cut to Allianz animation.]

Chris - Voiceover

This circuit really represents what Shanghai is all about. Everything is big, shiny and modern, but most of all, if you look at the track from above, it resembles the Shang symbol, part of the host city's name.

The initial straight is short enough for drivers to just be aware of the mighty, imposing, glass hospitality structure, before plunging into Turn 1. A twisty little number, Turn 1 curls in on itself, forcing the drivers to drop from 3rd to 2nd gear, and down 50 km/h to 125. Taking plenty of kerf on the exit, drivers enjoy a short straight, with a right hand kink that takes them across the first timing sector. Speeds can almost reach 300 km/h, before the next corner. Depending on how you number the first few twists and turns, this could be Turn 2, 4 or 6. I think we'll go with 4. The tight right hander leads to an arching left hand bend that can be negotiated in 5th gear.

Turn 6 has a stopping distance of 77 metres, that takes just over 1.1 seconds, and Turn 7 swiftly follows to lead onto a medium length straight. This straight will allow just enough time to get into top gear, and maybe reach 270 km/h, before the speeds are interrupted by Turn 8. A striking resemblance to Turn 1 means that Turn 8 is a 2nd gear corner that spirals round on itself to lead onto the back straight. This time, the straight is plenty long enough for the highest of gears and speeds reaching 326 km/h. Here at Sidepodcast, we like a good bit of speed, but overtaking opportunities generally occur when the corners approach.

Bring on Turn 9. The final key corner of the track, Turn 9 houses the second timing sector, whilst slowing drivers right down to 85 km/h. Turn 9 is taken in 2nd gear, but that's not for long. Up a gear or two for Turn 10, a sharp left hand that snatches the drivers back onto the start/finish straight.

Pole position in 2006 was Fernando Alonso in the Renault with 1 minute 44.360 seconds.

[Cut to Brembo brakes.]

Chris – Voiceover



There are many important corners in the Shanghai track, but a couple are particularly hard on braking. For Turn 9, deceleration is 246 km/h, which takes 2.8 seconds and causes 4.2G. Pedal load required is 124 kgs to get through the corner safely.

[Cut to ING Race Index.]

Chris – Voiceover

We're drawing towards the end of the season now, and we've reviewed the majority of tracks on the calendar. We know that Spa was super popular, and we know that Fuji really wasn't, so what will the ING race index make of China. The Dow Jones for Formula 1 circuits usually comes up with some mundane numbers, and today I'd expect nothing less. Let's get started.

Our first category is Circuit and Strategy. Seven right hand corners and seven left, plus two switchbacks create the Shang symbol, and give our teams plenty to think about on race day. Designer Hermann Tilke also included one of his long straights, to mix things up a little. Evaluating all the evidence, ING give the circuit 66 points out of 100.

Strain on drivers is next, and with the two spiral corners designed to lure drivers into making a mistake, China is not as easy as it looks. If you think it looks easy. There are plenty of overtaking opportunities, especially with the unpredictable weather. Still, ING grant the track only 53 points out of 100.

Next is Vehicle Setup. The Shanghai International Circuit requires plenty of downforce all the way around, so it's a track made for the aerodynamically efficient cars. Bad luck Honda. There's plenty of braking, tyre wear, and good vehicle balance is essential. Taking all this into account, ING have come up with 63 points out of 100.

Our last category is Engineering Requirements, and it's one of the tougher ones. The lap only boasts 54 per cent driven at full throttle, Monaco is the only other circuit that has a lower percentage, but to make up for it, there are 50 gear changes per lap. 5-0, 50. Unbelievable. With that being an all time high for number of gear changes, ING award 68 points out of 100 – which is not an all time high.

Let's combine those four category scores with the tradition and emotions that Shanghai conjures up. To be fair, F1 is still relatively brand new in China, and the sport is still gathering momentum over there, so it's tough. The facilities are incredible, but ING obviously don't think that counts for much, as they let the final overall score drag down to 58 points. That's 12th out of 17 tracks this season.

[Cut to Christine.]

Chris: Alonso's non finish in Japan means Hamilton's lead extends ever further. With only two Grand Prix to go, China and Brazil, it looks like it might take a minor miracle for something to upset the standings. Let's look at the points going into this weekend.

[Cut to Championship Standings.]

Chris – Voiceover

Hamilton heads up the driver's championship with 107 points to Alonso's 95. Raikkonen leads the Ferrari duo, still in with a championship chance, however unlikely, on 90. Massa sits back on 80, with Heidfeld on 56.



Ferrari lead the constructors championship with 170 points, BMW have 92 and Renault have 51. The only likely constructors battle within the top five is between Williams and Red Bull, on 28 and 23 respectively, five points between them.

[Cut to Christine.]

Chris: That's all for our China preview. Check in at Sidepodcast.com for our audio coverage of the race, and leave your thoughts as a comment, or as a voicemail on 0121 28 TRACK. See you soon.

[End credits]

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