



Video 9 – Britain Preview Special

[Cut to Christine.]

Chris: Welcome to Sidepodcast TV. This is our British preview. Today we'll be looking at the recent test at Silverstone, our usual circuit of the lap plus ex-F1 drivers Martin Brundle and Mark Blundell take to the track in Modern Formula 1 cars.

[Intro shots of UK. Cut to Christine.]

Chris: For the first time ever, I'm going to be at a race. It's pretty exciting despite the fact that the future of the British Grand Prix is always in doubt. Our government is much more interested in hosting the Olympics and making a complete hash of it. Putting all that time, effort and money into a two week event seems a bit odd when motor-racing is an actual industry that employs people and brings in revenue. Still, at least they've got a good logo. Seriously, is that what it looks like? Even I could have done a better job than that.

Anyway... Silverstone isn't unfamiliar to the teams, because two weeks ago, nine out of the eleven turned up for a test. Sidepodcast was there to catch all the action. The only two teams missing were Honda and Super Aguri who chose to test elsewhere. Toyota were fastest for two out of the three days. Ferrari seemed to have found some speed whilst Renault were quite pleased with their improvements, raising their confidence for the French race. Red Bull kept breaking down, which is true to form for them. Williams did more laps than anyone else, with Alex Wurz running a full qualifying simulation for practice.

On the subject of Williams, they've been spending even more time at this track recently. As part of an ITV1 Insight special, ex-Formula 1 drivers Martin Brundle and Mark Blundell took a couple of Williams F1 cars around Silverstone to see how they compared to the cars they used to drive. Let's take a behind the scenes look at how they fared.

[Cut to ITV/Williams footage]

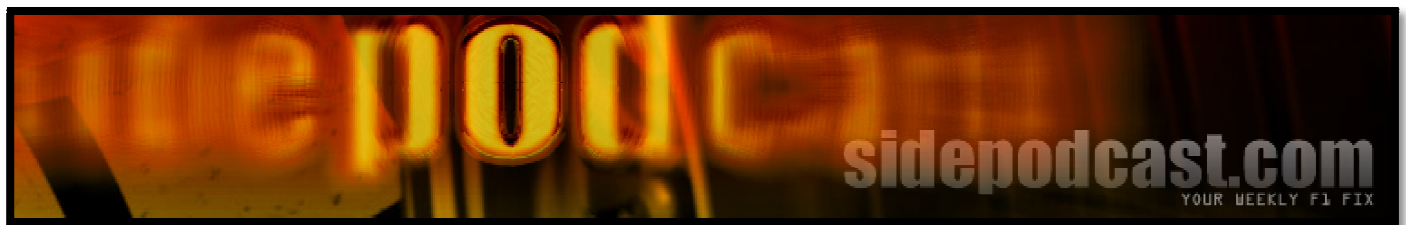
Chris – Voiceover

Martin Brundle and Mark Blundell used to drive in Formula 1 in the 1990's. They've both retired and moved on to present the sport, rather than be the sport. From outside the car, they can give us all an inside perspective of what the current drivers are thinking and feeling. But don't be fooled. Neither would want to miss an opportunity to get back behind the wheel.

Making television about driving looks like a lot of fun, but there's plenty of hard work involved as well.

Six cameras are attached to each car, with audio available from both the driver and the car itself as well. Reviewing the footage gained from each run is incredibly important, because of all the variables. Vibrations, excess noise, bumps, and even groans from the drivers can ruin a perfect take. As you can see, trying to present a piece to camera from the cockpit is a lot harder than standing in front of a blue screen.

Data from the car is sent back to the pit wall, which is collated into graphs by Williams engineers. Ha, listen to me talking like I'm interested. This bit is for the nerds.



Recording whether Martin is beating Mark or vice versa. Checking on the wind speed. Measuring each car's engine revs for later comparison. All this information will mean that Mark and Martin can easily discuss who is the best driver, and which car was easier to drive. It also means the engineers know what they need to adjust for the next run to keep the footage smooth and the competition fair.

They didn't skimp on any measures for this programme, setting each car up as though it was about to go out for the championship deciding race. Fresh tyres at every opportunity. Feedback from the pair of drivers meant each lap could get better and better. All their conversations were recorded for posterity and for TV, and that must have been a weird experience for the team. They're not used to being the ones in the limelight. I wonder what he's saying right now. Basketball? Slicing a chicken?

[Cut to Christine]

Chris: Now it's time to have a look at the Sidepodcast lap. They might be ex-F1 drivers and all that but if I was allowed behind the wheel of a Williams, I'd do it something like this.

[Cut to Allianz animation]

Chris – Voiceover

So, here it is. Lewis Hamilton's home Grand Prix. All eyes will be on him as he negotiates the track, but what delights will he have in store?

Silverstone is steeped in motorsport history, and aside from a few realignments, the track remains the same as it always has. Turn 1, a 5th gear, 226 km/h corner called Copse is a fast introduction to the first of 60 laps. A short straight follows, which leads into a key sequence of corners. Turn 2 is a 6th gear corner, taken at over 280 km/h, which then feeds round an extended S bend through Becketts and Chapel – Turns 3 and 4. It's important for drivers to hold off braking so that the car flows through the corners and has plenty of speed for the following straight. The Hangar Straight sees speeds of over 300 km/h, before, all too soon, it's Turn 5 – Stowe. This is a 4th gear corner, with final exit speeds of 200 km/h.

Another short straight leads into Turn 6. It's bumpy, it's fast, and it's very demanding, but more importantly it breaks up the drivers rhythm. It's very easy to make a mistake and lose all momentum.

Drivers will want to get as much speed as they can on the exit of Turn 6, as they are now faced with an uphill struggle to the Abbey chicane. Turn 7 and 8 make up the chicane, which is the slowest point of the lap – 2nd gear and down to 120 km/h.

Turn 9 is a fast right hand dip that leads into a similar, but tighter, left hand at Priory – Turn 10. This leads into the final section of the lap, a loose hairpin and a speedy exit, made up of Turns 11 and 12 – Luffield and Woodcote.

Drivers slow to 110 km/h, which means a stopping distance of 60 metres, that takes 1.3 seconds. A good exit from Luffield will ensure full power around Woodcote – barely a right hander - to cross the start/finish line for the lap.

Pole position in 2006 was Fernando Alonso in the Renault with 1minute 20.253 seconds.

[Cut to Brembo Brakes]

Silverstone is not that tough on braking for drivers. In fact, only 11% of their time is spent under braking. However, a corner of note is Stowe. Deceleration of 100 km/h takes 1.4 seconds. This loads the drivers with 3.6 G and requires upwards of 90kg pedal load. No wonder this corner is one of the most likely overtaking spots.



[Cut to Christine]

Chris: That was the lap and everything you need to know about braking. The French Grand Prix showed Ferrari's resurgence to top form, whilst McLaren were fighting off BMW. That leaves the championships going into the British race looking something like this.

[Cut to Championship Standings]

Chris – Voiceover

Lewis Hamilton retains his lead over teammate Alonso with 64 points to the Spaniard's 50. The two Ferrari drivers continue to battle it out with Massa on 47 and Raikkonen catching up on 42 after his victory in France. Heidfeld remains in 5th with 30 points.

The constructor's championship sees McLaren-Mercedes on 114 points, with Ferrari trailing on 89. BMW have 48, and falling further and further behind are Renault with 28 and Williams – Toyota on 13.

[Cut to Christine.]

Chris: That wraps up our preview for the British Grand Prix. Sidepodcast will be there so if you're attending, make sure to look out for us and say Hi. If you can't get to the race, stay tuned to Sidepodcast for full coverage. See you soon.

[End credits]

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YOUR WEEKLY F1 FIX