



## F1 and the World (Part 1) – Introduction

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Welcome to a new Sidepodcast mini-series: F1 and the World. This first show is an introduction to the topic and a preview of some of the things we're going to cover.

There's never been a better time to talk about F1 and the effect it has on the world around it. Being eco-friendly is in vogue, and motorsport is an easy target for environmentalists. High performance cars burning up energy to go round in circles doesn't sound like an excusable way to spend a Sunday afternoon. But Formula 1 has its place, and this series is going to investigate the arguments that surround the pinnacle of motorsport – both for and against.

The most well-versed argument I hear is "What is the point?" You can argue that with any sport, football is simply 22 men running around a field kicking a ball. Golf involves silly jumpers and much too much patience. Boxing is merely two people beating the living hell out of each other, and don't even get me started on curling. Formula 1 is no different, it can easily be conceived as a complete waste of time.

But we also need to look at what F1 gives back to society. In the world of motoring, Formula 1 technologies have given plenty to the road car industry to make our automobiles safer, more efficient and easier to use. Max Mosley's current plans aim to improve green technologies for the future both in and outside of the sport. With kinetic energy recovery systems, longer life components and the introduction of bio fuels, there are plenty of things to look at for the long term.

Honda has brought environmental concerns to many F1 fans attention with the introduction of their Earth Car last year, and the accompanying website encouraging eco-friendly pledges and charity donations. They raised almost £100,000 in donations in 2007, and intend to continue the initiative as a long term plan. They won an award for their efforts at the Green Awards in 2007 – the top prize aptly known as the Grand Prix. Perhaps other teams may start to take an interest in this kind of activity, perhaps not.

Some of the countries recently added to the calendar have developing economies that Formula 1 can only serve to enhance. Worldwide coverage can mean a boost to the economy especially terms of an increase in tourism, higher levels of employment, and much needed focus and attention for the country.

With Formula 1's primary audience based in Europe, the newest track on the calendar, Singapore, is intended to be a night race. Imagine the audacity, lighting up an entire 5km street circuit for an entire weekend and then annually for the next five years. It can't all be bad though, can it? We'll look at that in more detail later in the series.

I'm not going to try and convince you that Formula 1 is good for the environment. All I want to do is explore what things are being done to help the environment, and what things clearly aren't. Then I can maybe convince you that it is not as bad as you think it is. A modest aim, but I know it won't be easy.

Tomorrow we'll start with F1 and the Economy. Join me then.