

Abu Dhabi

November 27th, 2016

PRACTICE 1	FRI	4AM
PRACTICE 2	FRI	8AM
PRACTICE 3	SAT	5AM
QUALIFYING	SAT	8AM
RACE	SUN	8AM

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Announcements

- Coming soon to an iTunes near you, the newest Podcast to hit the airwaves. If you like humor, and a little bit of racing, then this podcast is for you. The guys discuss the latest race from Rob's new baby room while sipping coffee.
- No further announcements



Paddock Pointers

Dear Pals,

I know you guys instructed us in the last newsletter to basically buzz off and call our mothers if we have any issues or life questions. I respect your need for a break, but can you give us readers any tips for getting through the off-season? The start of the 2017 season seems so far away and I need content.

Sincerely,
Idling in Pit Lane

Hello Idling,

All right, if the fans want content, the fans will get content. The Newsletter staff was planning to take a nice long vacation, but due to the outpouring of requests for advice, WAGS, and tyre strategy, we will be producing some great new content throughout the off-season. Interviews with F1 drivers? You got it. Breaking news about team lineups, you will hear it from us first.

So with that, we at The Newsletter would like to announce that the first official F1 podcast will be hitting the iTunes store shortly. The show really just revolves around us making fun of Rob, but it does touch on driving at times.

You are Welcome.

Rewind with Rob



Hamilton | Rosberg | Verstappen | Perez | Vettel | Sainz Jr. | Hulkenberg | Ricciardo | Nasr | Alonso

In a country known for its rainforests, it wasn't unexpected that the Brazilian Grand Prix would be wet. It may have been surprising just how wet it was, however. Thanks to the downpours, the race had to start behind a safety car, there were multiple crashes, two red flags stopping the race entirely, and fans were treated to spectacular driving from Red Bull's Max Verstappen.

The rain-induced carnage started before the cars even got to the start line grid. Haas's Romain Grosjean hydroplaned his car into a wall on the way from pit road to the starting grid. The cars don't try to go fast or even warm up their tyres on that lap because they sit on the grid for a while before the start of the race. So the fact that Grosjean lost control at that point is strong evidence that the track was incredibly slippery.

FIA Director Charlie Whiting took note and ordered that the race get off to a rolling start behind the safety car. The safety car start meant that the cars circled the track without being able to pass each other, i.e., race. Viewers could see the tremendous amount of spray that the cars generated as they circled. Under normal circumstances, the cars gradually dry the track by spraying the water elsewhere, but it was simply too wet in Brazil. So when the safety car came in after about 8 laps, the real racing began on a still-wet track.

The racing began with the Mercedes of Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg in P1 and P2, respectively. Verstappen qualified in P4, but immediately showed that he wasn't afraid of the water on the track. On the *very first turn* after the safety car came in, Verstappen came blazing into Turn 1 and passed Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen for P3. Hamilton was driving well in P1 but it looked like the young Verstappen might take more gambles and pressure both Rosberg and Hamilton.

Behind the front-runners, it was slow going, as the drivers struggled with visibility in all of the spray. It wasn't too long before the water took its second victim, when Ericsson crashed on lap 12 near the entrance to pit lane. Another safety car. Raikkonen crashed immediately when racing resumed on lap 20 and that brought out the red flags to stop the race. The spray reduced the visibility so much that Raikkonen was lucky not to have his disabled car speared by the other cars flying down the front straight. William's Felipe Massa, in his last race in his home country of Brazil, was yet another victim of the wet and he crashed out on lap 48. Aside from the race-ending crashes, Verstappen, McLaren's Fernando Alonso and Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel also slid off the track or nearly into a wall in the tough conditions.

It was incredibly slippery, which made the other storyline all the more compelling: Verstappen's driving. Verstappen was holding in P3 after his first turn pass on Raikkonen. But after one of the many restarts, he drove around the outside of Rosberg in Turn 3 into P2. The Mercedes 1-2 stranglehold had been broken! More ominously for Rosberg, his lead in the World Drivers' Championship was imperiled. Verstappen lost P2 position when Red Bull pitted him to put him on the intermediate wet tyres. That turned out to be the wrong decision when the rain picked up again. With only 16 or so laps to go, Verstappen and his pit wall decided they needed to pit again and put the full wet tyres back on. Verstappen said it was like trying to drive a boat with the "inters" on the car. With the stop, Verstappen fell from P5 all the way to P16. But Verstappen drove masterfully in the rainy conditions, regularly braking late into turns and holding speed through the outside of turns to storm all the way back to P3, which was an astonishing rate of almost one position gained per lap. You'll want to keep this race on your DVRs for a long time to come.



Track Talking

Oil, Sheikhs, and F1 racing; it does not get much better than that. Although, I think they are pretty strict about drinking booze over in the UAE, so that isn't too cool...kind of seems like one of those rules that doesn't really apply to white American males though. I will let Rob test that theory out.

The United Arab Emirates may be an odd location for the final F1 race of the season. It isn't exactly the birthplace of motor sport. But a Sheikh gets what a Sheikh wants. Especially when he owns a whole ocean of oil.

Now, some people believe the Championship is all but locked up for Nico Rosberg. I am not one of those people. If there is one thing I know about the Emiratis, it is that they love drama. Reality TV in America has been funded by the UAE for years now. These guys wet their beaks on every minute of Bravo you watch. I wouldn't be surprised if we see some antics on lap 1 that causes this whole championship to be flipped. Lewis has been wearing a traditional robe all week. You connect the dots.



Charlie's Chatter

- McLaren racer Jenson Button is expecting a "hugely emotional" weekend at the season finale in Abu Dhabi in what could be the Briton's final race in F1.
- Hamilton is 12 points behind Rosberg going into the race at the Yas Marina circuit but cut a relaxed figure as he tweeted a picture with the message: "Squaaaad!! My fam for life". What a loser.
- Red Bull's Max Verstappen, 19, has the potential to become the best driver of all time, according to three-time world champion and Mercedes non-executive director Niki Lauda.
- Fernando Alonso, 35, has hinted he may join former F1 driver Mark Webber in driving for Porsche in the World Endurance Championships when he ends his F1 career.
- Malaysia looks to be dropping its F1 GP after 2018. Could we see a Las Vegas night race?
- Bernie Ecclestone has thrown the future of the Singapore GP into doubt, with the F1 boss suggesting the city-state doesn't want to renew its contract to stage the night race beyond next season.
- Both Esteban Gutierrez and Guenther Steiner are playing coy about their dust up in Brazil.

Fantasy Focus



(P1) Tonka BMW | (P2) Schweizer F1 | (P3) O'Brien Red Bull Audi



After the heady highs of Mexico, the GP Predictor scores came back down to more typical levels. Several of the races for overall standings are basically over, with the positions all but locked up. But others, including the race for 1st place overall, are hotter than they have been in months! It's a case of fantasy mirroring reality, as the race between Rosberg and Hamilton for first place overall is also coming down to the final race. Let's see how the GP Predictor squads did in Brazil and how they stand overall.

Full Brazilian Grand Prix Results

Tonka BMW (67)
Schweizer F1 (52)
O'Brien Red Bull Audi (49)
JBone (46)
Scuderia Drew (41)
FO Racing (41) (shuttered)
Sauber Alfa Romeo F1 (39)
PIT ROAD HOOLIGANS (30)
(shuttered)

Overall Standings (Total Points; Points Behind Next Place Ahead, Points Ahead of Next Place Back)

O'Brien Red Bull Audi (1042; --, +34)
Tonka BMW (1008; -34, +86)
Schweizer F1 (922; -86, +93)
Sauber Alfa Romeo F1 (829; -93, +34)
Scuderia Drew (795; -34, +94)
JBone (701; -94, +4)
FO Racing (697; -4, +264) (shuttered)
PIT ROAD HOOLIGANS (433; -264, -) (shuttered)

O'Brien Red Bull Audi

had a lead of over 112 points when the season resumed at Spa in late August. Now Tonka BMW is only 34 points back. Tonka BMW has only bested O'Brien Red Bull Audi by that many points once this year, but a stumble or well-placed bonus could lead to a new champion.

Tonka BMW

is focused on hitting every apex in a last ditch effort to catch O'Brien Red Bull Audi. Its 86-point lead over Schweizer F1 will probably hold up. So it's P1 or P2 for this squad.

Schweizer F1

has had a tremendous comeback this season. After Baku, Schweizer F1 was P7 in the GP Predictor league, so this podium finish is quite an achievement. It can go into Abu Dhabi comfortable, knowing that it has third place locked up.

Sauber Alfa Romeo

is fading on used tyres and lost even more ground to its pursuer, Scuderia Drew, this week. It has the same 34-point lead over Scuderia Drew that O'Brien Red Bull Audi has over Tonka BMW. It will take a big result, but Sauber Alfa Romeo F1 needs to be on its game to hold onto P4.

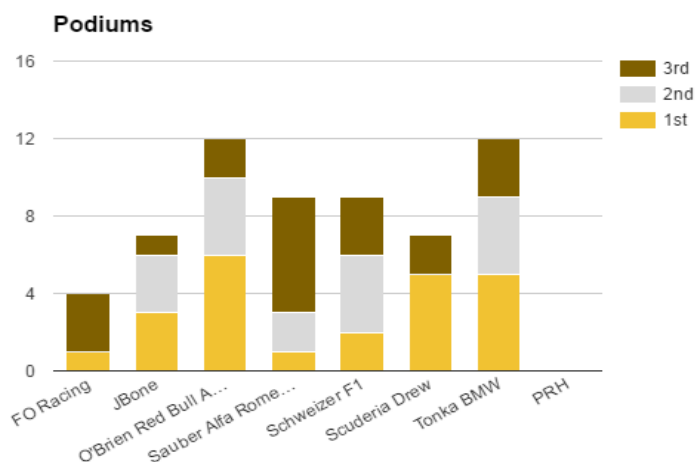
Scuderia Drew

has never beaten Sauber Alfa Romeo F1 by 34 points in a race, so the overtake, if it happens in Abu Dhabi, will be historic..

JBone

has a 4-point lead over the shuttered FO Racing squad. Luckily, JBone knows what FO Racings predictions will be in the upcoming race and it can cover any predictions to hold onto its place.

Last but not least is the race for number of podium finishes in the race year. As you can see, O'Brien Red Bull Audi and Tonka BMW are tied with 12 podiums apiece. O'BRBA holds the tiebreaker with more P1s, but a failure to finish top 3 for either squad would break the tie.



WAG of the Week

Welcome to the final WAG column of the year. Understandably bittersweet. This week we are going to examine the relationship between William's driver Felipe Massa and his wife Anna Raffaela Bassi. Now before you spit out your coffee and start squawking about already honoring Massa in the Brazilian GP edition, calm down and think about all that Massa has done for the sport. I think we can spare a few more words for the Brazilian who is retiring from Formula 1 this upcoming weekend.

Felipe Massa's romantic relationship is a bit like his driving. Steady. Nothing flashy. Maybe even a bit mundane. Felipe has been involved with Anna Raffaela Bassi, another Brazilian, since 2002. Massa and



Bassi were first introduced by Raffaela's friend who at that time was dating one of Massa's friends. It was love at first sight and the two Brazilians have been together ever since. The couple seems to be especially adroit at keeping their relationship private. One of the few pieces of news that we have heard about Felipe and Anna is that they were married on November 30, 2007 in São Paulo, Brazil.



Moment in History

The first Formula 1 Grand Prix held in Abu Dhabi took place on November 1, 2009. Six years of racing has not provided much history, but we have found the finest, most heart wrenching moments for you to read about in this week's moment in history. We take you back to 2010 when yet another World Drivers' Championship was being decided in the last race of the season. At that time Fernando Alonso (246 points), Mark Webber (238 points), Sebastian Vettel (231 points), and Lewis Hamilton (222 points) were all within striking distance of the title. That was the first time in Formula One history that four drivers had a shot at the Championship during the last race of the season.



Let us keep in mind that Sebastian Vettel was twenty three years old at the time and fighting for his first World Championship. The young German was an up-and-coming racer much like the young Max Verstappen is now and the anticipation was palpable as Vettel grabbed pole position during Saturday qualifying. To add to the drama, Vettel's Red Bull team had wrapped up the Constructor's Championship the weekend before and no one knew how team orders might factor into the race.

Racing conditions were perfect when the lights finally went out. Vettel jumped off the starting line and maintained his lead through turn one followed by Hamilton, Button and Alonso. Webber, meanwhile, was struggling for grip on the super-soft, option tyres and dropped down in the field. Things went from bad to worse for Webber as he brushed the turn 19 steel barrier damaging the right side of his car. Webber pitted, but was never able to regain form. Unfortunately, Alonso suffered the same fate brushing the turn 19 barrier and pitted for better tyres. Alonso rejoined in front of Webber as both drivers struggled to make up ground. That left the door open for Vettel. All he had to do was win the race and the Drivers' Championship was his. That's exactly what he did. Vettel was the youngest World Champion in Formula One history. Let's see if he can hold onto that title with nineteen-year-old Max Verstappen taking names and cashing checks.



Tyre me out

The track in the desert is easy on tyres. In 2015, teams stopped twice. They ran the red Supersofts for 5 to 10 opening laps and then did two stints on yellow Softs. Although they averaged 22 laps per stint, there was considerable variation, as some did 17 and then 27 laps, and some did just the opposite.

This year, Pirelli is adding the purple Ultrasofts into the tyre choices. The favoured tyre will depend on the track temperature. Because the race starts at 5 pm and continues into sunset, track temperatures drop and the optimal tyre changes along with it.

Overtaking is difficult at the Yas Marina track, so even with the Ultrasoft tyre added to the mix, do not expect teams to add more pit stops into their strategies. The reason being that even if a team stopped and got new, fast tyres, it would reemerge on the track but be unable to take advantage of that speed because it would become stuck behind other cars running on older, slower tyres. We saw Sergio Perez get stuck behind the Williams in Mexico in just that scenario. If overtaking is easy, such as at Monza, there is less chance of being stuck and pit stops become more beneficial.

PIRELLI			
FORMULA 1 ABU DHABI GRAND PRIX			
YAS MARINA - SELECTED SETS PER DRIVER			
DRIVER	YELLOW SOFT	RED SUPERSOFT	PURPLE ULTRASOFT
#44 HAMILTON	4	2	7
#6 ROSBERG	4	2	7
#5 VETTEL	5	1	7
#7 RAIKKONEN	4	2	7
#19 MASSA	5	1	7
#77 BOTTAS	4	2	7
#3 RICCIARDO	5	2	6
#33 VERSTAPPEN	5	2	6
#27 HULKENBERG	3	2	8
#11 PEREZ	3	3	7
#20 MAGNUSSEN	5	2	6
#30 PALMER	4	3	6
#26 KVIAT	4	2	7
#55 SAINZ	4	2	7
#9 ERICSSON	3	4	6
#12 NASR	3	4	6
#14 ALONSO	5	1	7
#22 BUTTON	5	1	7
#94 WEHRLEIN	4	3	6
#31 OCON	4	3	6
#8 GROSJEAN	4	2	7
#21 GUTIERREZ	3	3	7

As you can see, most teams are planning to substitute the Ultrasofts for the Supersofts and use them during qualifying and for the opening stint, but then use the more durable Softs for the race, just as they did in 2015. The red Supersofts will play a minimal role, with teams only selecting a few sets of those. We'll see how it all plays out when the lights go out!

Circuit City

YAS MARINA CIRCUIT

FIRST
GRAND PRIX

2009

NUMBER
OF LAPS

55

CIRCUIT
LENGTH

5.554
KM

RACE
DISTANCE

305.355
KM

LAP
RECORD

1:40.279
SEBASTIAN
VETTEL
(2009)

