

Hello, everybody, and welcome back to the Sky Sports F1 podcast feed and to Ted's pod book from the Monaco Grand Prix, the 2023 Monaco Grand Prix. And given the events, the terrible events that happened in Amelia, Romania, and as the clear up continues there, and we've been hearing some real horror stories from people who were working for Alphatari and people who were there in Imola at the time about just the devastation that the floods had wreaked on the Emilia-Mania region, it's, you know, with them in mind that we come to Monaco, very, very different place, very different venue, obviously, but we're here to do the same thing, which is to get the racing back underway. We haven't had a race for three weeks now since the Miami Grand Prix, and everyone is really keen to get going again, not least the drivers. I'll tell you about them in a second, just a paint picture of where we are. So we're down by somewhere called the K-Day Pecher, which, if you know your French, translates to Fisherman's Keyside or Fisherman's Wharf. I think that's probably the anglicisation of that. To my left is a huge yacht. It's not really a yacht, it's a small cruise liner called Octopus, which I believe belongs to a Swedish pharmaceutical billionaire, and there are the other ones lined up down the key that I can't see what they're called. Then there's a boat which is, we think, Ferrari is staying on. That does look a bit more like a small cruise liner. That's here every year, and it's also hosting a party for a watch sponsor of one of the ones. That's tonight, I guess. There are some men and women just getting everything ready for that over the next day or two. Behind me is the paddock, and just over the harbour that you can hear is the sound of some of the, well, it's the Porsche that's going around in the practice session. But as you can hear, the waves lapping against the hull of the Octopus and of the boat that Ferrari is staying on. I don't know its name, Pondant? Pondant? You can imagine the scene here, and it started wet actually today. There was a little rain shower early on, then it's dried out and it's been a beautiful day, a glorious day here on the French Riviera. It's been a reconvening of the Formula One family. As I say, while everybody's thoughts were very much with the people of Emilia Romagna, the drivers were saying actually how strange it was to have a kind of Melbourne 2020 feel that some of them went to Emilia and then had to come home and some of them didn't go, but they were all keyed up. They'd all done their simulated sessions and there was something sort of empty within there, and a natural rhythm. Sergio Peres talked about this. He felt that he had to go and do something, whether that was training or going for a run or whatever. He had to be something to burn off the energy because his natural rhythm was expecting to race and to sort of extend himself. But yeah, they all did that in various ways. Landon Norris did some gardening, as did Lewis Hamilton in his home in London, his place in London actually. Come on to Lewis Hamilton and what else he did in the weekend off, the Enforced weekend off in a moment before we start with, well, let's talk with Rudd Bill, Red Bull, and what Sergio Peres and Max Verstappen are saying is that this is their least fancy track of the season. Now, of course, everything can happen on a Sunday, but because as we've been saying, this Red Bull RB 19 is a great car when it gets going. And because the easy, the way it's so easy on its tires and the way the suspension means that it doesn't really, it takes them a while to get going in qualifying, they're wondering whether they're going to have to give second best to Ferrari, yes Ferrari, and Aston Martin in qualifying, whether that's going to mean a very long Sunday afternoon, Grand Prix Sunday. I'm not sure Max Verstappen

really feels like that. Obviously he's got a good car, Sergio Peres too, but of the two of them, I'd say Max Verstappen looked the more relaxed. Maybe he thinks, look, you know, the car isn't really fancied here. Maybe we might have to have a difficult weekend, or maybe that takes some of the pressure off. You know, if they had gone to Imola, maybe they thought all the expectations would have been on Red Bull to get a one two. Maybe they're not expecting it here. Maybe they've taxed some of the pressure. I don't know. Maybe he was just in a good mood. But Sergio Peres, a little bit more reticent. That's the wrong word. Pessimistic about retaining his crown of the latest Monaco winner, thinks it's going to be hard, thinks that Ferrari are going to be best because they are very good on the softest of the five tires, the C5 compound tire. So watch out for Ferrari. Charle Clare was a man in a hurry today. He's got a very nice new Monaco edition white cap. So it's got the very prancing horse in the middle. It's got the CL16 stripes on the side. And then it's got this diamond motif that you see around Monaco a lot. It's kind of one of the emblems of Monaco. So he's sort of red and white diamond motif on the left hand side as Charle looks at it, on the right hand side as you look at it. So it's, you know, white, predominantly white is cap and bits of red in there as well. But he will be just thinking not about the color of his cap, but about the color of that Ferrari and how fast it is around Monaco streets, because they really need a good result after, you know, after Miami and after some races before that, when they weren't able to capitalize on the pole, they have the pole in Baku, for example. Le Clare, I think, I wouldn't be surprised to see him on pole, but I think he himself would be surprised to win the race after that. But in Monaco, they've got a better chance than anywhere else. On a normal weekend, not the one we had last year, when there was the chaos and the pits and the strategy meant that Red Bull beat Ferrari very soundly, as well as Red Bull having the quickest car. It will mean that Ferrari have a chance if Le Clare can produce something magic on that C5 tyre. Get it on pole, he's got a chance of winning the Monaco Grand Prix. Does Fernando Alonso feel the same? Yes, well, I think he's a bit more optimistic that they can do something. He's really in the groove. He looks determined. He looks like he knows what it takes to deliver the goods around here, which he undoubtedly does, and is going to use all of his experience and garland, all the other cliches that I throw at it, to mean that he actually can convert. But first of all, they have to qualify well. Yes, that Aston Martin heats up his tyres well, should do it, but can they actually get the win on Sunday? I don't know. I kind of think they might be looking at a P2 in the end of it. I think they'd be happy with a second. They're going for the win, obviously, but I think they would happy to be a second. Of course, podiums seem like old news to Aston Martin and to Fernando Alonso at the moment. I did ask him whether if he won the Monaco Grand Prix, would he get a new Aston Martin DB12 off of Lawrence Stroll, and he laughed and said, at least. I want at least a new DB12, the car that he helped launch here in Cannes on Thursday. No, it was Wednesday night, wasn't it, along with his teammate Lance Stroll. So it would be a colossal thing if they can win it. I know a lot of people are talking Aston up, but I think they're keeping pretty much their feet on the ground. They're very happy to have the Honda Works Engine for the future. I did put it to Fernando that they mentioned, the Honda Top Brass did mention in their press conference, along with Martin Whitmarsh and Lawrence Stroll in Tokyo, that they had a lot of respect for Fernando Alonso and they would have no problem with him driving an Aston Martin Honda. Alonso was completely respectful in his reciprocation.

He was respectful too. He said it would be an honor to drive for Honda again. So any of you out there thinking that that relationship is toast after what happened at McLaren Honda, not a bit of it. Fernando said it would be an honor to race for Honda again. They went through some tough times, he said, but clearly they know what they're doing. They've had the best engine. They won the championship in 2021. They won it in 2022 and they're probably going to win it in 2023

as well. That Honda engine is probably the most powerful on the grid, something Fernando was very happy about, that it's coming to Aston Martin. So yeah, that was the top three really. Well, I'll get on to Mercedes in a second. So Mercedes, so Max Verstappen is, yeah, good mood. I think he'll take whatever's coming. Sergio Perez feeling maybe that he's got a bit of an uphill struggle to repeat his win of last year, but is possible. And Fernando, high hopes here, Hungary, Singapore, tracks that are good for the Aston Martin and Red Bull's strengths, especially in a straight line, aren't going to be shown up to be so powerful here at Sed Alonso. So maybe they can't run and hide the way they have done in the past. Carlos Sainz, you might have seen online, did the charity football match here on Tuesday, I think it was, or was it Wednesday, and sustained a leg injury. He said, I've got a dead leg. Someone gave me a dead leg. I think they need him in his thigh and it's got a bit of a dead leg. And he said it was an unfortunate, what was the words? It was an unfortunate experience, but unfortunate incident, but it's nothing that will impede me for the rest of the weekend. We've got one of the tenders from one of the swish yachts just pulling up at the jetty here at the fisherman's quayside. Very nice. So yeah, that's what's going on with Carlos Sainz. And then I asked him about, you know, you keeping across all these silly season stories about people going, Lewis coming to Ferrari and maybe Charles going to Mercedes and you teaming up with Lewis. He said, look, you know, I do expect

it around Monaco, Barcelona time every year. Silly season. Last week they had me going to Audi. Last week they had Lando going to Red Bull. You know, what's it going to be next time around? So Carlos sort of dismissing those things, which gets us on to Lewis Hamilton. And I didn't hear the written press conference, but I certainly heard the press conference that I was in, just as well because I was in it, asking him some questions. And my colleague Mara San Giorgio from Italy, obviously the move that's rumoured, moved to Ferrari's big story for our Italian colleagues. And Mara was asking Lewis straight away. And Lewis was saying, look, you know, what do you put this story down to? She said, and Lewis's answer was bad reporting. Okay. I mean, with, you know, due respect to the journalist and the vessel in question and the vessel in question, they can't just write anything. They have to have a source for it. So it would have come from somewhere. And, you know, who knows? I put it to him that, look, Ferrari is recruiting in every department. Is it natural, of course, that they would have made an offer? They've made an offer to Adrian Newey before he signed and confirmed with Red Bull. They've made an offer to everybody else in the paddock as they seek to replace some key people. Would it not be usual for your representatives to talk to Ferrari? And he said, look, they're not talking. We're hammering out was the phrase I used. Are you just hammering out a deal with Mercedes? He said, hammering out is the wrong word. We are discussing positively our contract for next year. So I think we can put that one to bed. Lewis also said that he had spent some of the time as well as gardening in his place in London meeting Brad Pitt and Joseph Kaczynski, the star and co producer and director respectively, of the new as yet untitled F1 movie. But I have some very interesting new

details about that. So watch out for my notebook on Saturday when I'll let you know the latest into the Brad Pitt and Lewis Hamilton produced F1 movie, including who is going to be starring in it. Yes, both cars and personnel, movie stars. Yeah, very interesting. Right. So what was anything else from Lewis? Yes. And George Russell talking about how they had to bring the new car here because they've changed so much so many of the internals that didn't make sense to change it all back again for one race. Even though this is the worst Hamilton said this is the worst kind of track that you could possibly bring a new car to with which you've added downforce, because it's not a track that requires much downforce, requires the car to be soft and roll have good roll characteristics and be good on its tires. But what you don't need is loads of downforce because it kind of gets up to the speed to actually use the downforce really. So while they're not going to learn too much about the new side podded car, they are going to use it because as George Russell said, if it gives at least two tenths around a circuit like this, maybe when they get to Barcelona, it'll be half a second optimistically speaking, they would have hate to have run the old car knowing that they still had two tenths on the table that they could have used if they run the new one. Practically speaking, given that Spain is next week, I think it was too much of a cost implication and too much for bother to go back to the old car. What they have done is raise the suspension wishbone points to where they are on the red bull. So it looks like they've adopted some of the anti dive on braking, some of the suspension geometry that stops the car diving forward on braking and gives the tires a bit more of an easy ride. But that might hurt them in qualifying as it's tended to hurt Red Bull now again with locked front wheels. So watch out for any Mercedes locking their front wheels if they do, you'll know why. So yeah, we'll see how well the new Mercedes with its new side pods go. Although George Russell said something interesting about the side pods, he said, look, it's not the side pods, it's what's underneath the car that's important, i.e. the floor, they've got a new one of them at Mercedes as well. The side pods, George Russell said, are just a box that we wanted to tick to prove that, okay, right, the no side pods, no pods didn't work, let's put some side pods on it, and are they quicker? So I need to get to the bottom of that. So follow us throughout the weekend, we'll get to the bottom of exactly what George meant about why they put the side pods back on if they're not expecting them to be so much quicker. So we'll see what that's quite interesting, want to know what that was. Alpine, and with the demise of the, I was tempted to ask Pierre Gasly what the French for demise is, which I assume it's de mise, of the French Grand Prix, the closest that Alpine are going to get to a home race, a home Grand Prix, even though we're not in France or in Monaco, sorry if that wasn't obvious. And he said, look, it is important race for us. Monaco is always important for every team, but because there isn't Paul Ricard here, it is important to us. And talking about Paul Ricard, the previous boss of that race, Eric Boulier, the ex-team principal of McLaren, was in the paddock today. Eric Boulier, who has been rumored to be the potential replacement for Ottmar Zafna, if Alpine decide that Ottmar Zafna is after all not the right person to be leading them into the future, given the comments that the teams CEO Lauren Rossi had to say about a couple of weeks ago. Ottmar Zafna is still here, he is still in charge, but I thought it was interesting that Eric Boulier was in the paddock today. He wasn't meeting with any people from Alpine actually, I saw him in the Mercedes-Benz home, but just to let you know what was going on, Pierre Gasly says, look, we have everything we need, we just need a faster car, but we're doing the job, we just need a clean weekend, and we can deliver on what Lauren Rossi wants, Esteban Ocon, same sort of thing. We scored two points, two cars and the points in Miami

and

want to do the same thing here, but we just need a bit of a faster car. So I don't know if that's the drivers saying back to Lauren Rossi, look, you know, you can criticise us all you like. It's not our fault, we're just driving the car we've got. You can only drive with the car you've got and everyone needs to produce a faster car, which I suppose was the point of what Lauren Rossi was saying in the first place, but a very heartwarming story, a wholesome story, wholesome content from Esteban Ocon about taking his mum to the Cannes Film Festival being on the red carpet, which apparently was something that Esteban's mum had always dreamed of doing and she loves the Cannes Film Festival and had always followed it when it had taken place in previous years, loves to see all the movie stars on the red carpet, loves all that kind of the film stuff and the glamour stuff around it, and is a big connoisseur of the Cannes Film Festival. And so it was a life highlight and what a pleasure, a delight for Esteban to take his mum to the film he did on Tuesday night, so well done Este, nice, nice gesture there, to Mrs Ocon. Right, who else have we got to talk about? McLaren. Lando Norris was on a warm day, he was wearing quite a sort of

heavy overcoat, so warm overcoat, so I don't know whether he's feeling the chill a bit and he didn't really look full of the joys of May and Spring really. I think they expect to have a better weekend than they did in Miami, let's face it, it couldn't be much worse, but I don't know, I'm going to hold judgement on Lando. He's been quiet so far, I want to let you know, and not sad exactly, I think he's just, you know, he's increasingly sort of frustrated with the situation, I did talk to ask him about silly season, you know, do you see yourself moving around and he says, I want to win a championship with McLaren, which is laudable, and he's obviously saying the right things to his current employer, but is it actually going to happen? Well, we'll have to see that happen sooner rather than later, before McLaren might lose Lando to a rival, but I hope that doesn't happen, I hope Lando manages to get some cheer, manages to get a bit happier with his car and his lot as the season goes on. Right, let's wrap it up, because I've already done 18 minutes, I'm only meant to do 10. Alfa Romeo Sauber, Zhe Guangyu, looking forward to his second weekend here as a Formula One driver, saying that actually this time round, rather than just going in, not being able to change the setup, which he kind of hinted on, had happened last time where he was here with Alfa Romeo Sauber, they gave him kind of a baseline setup and said, get on with it, learn the track, we're not going to change the car, because we don't want to confuse you, he said, okay, we might do, I might get my eye in again, and if FP won, unlike last year, this year, I want to do some proper setup work and go through some changes and differences, so that's what is happening at Alfa Romeo Sauber, and we'll finish with Nick De Vries and Yuki Sinoda. Yuki was talking about how he was helping clear up after the flood devastation from the floods in Emilia Romagna, in Fianza, his hometown, and where the team Alfa Towsery are based, so good for Yuki, he was talking about what he was doing there, it was pleasure to do it, Nick De Vries also about how many people in the team had suffered with flooded houses and damaged flats and property and all of that, so yeah, it's just good to get everyone back and safely and racing again, and as for Helmut Marco, as I put it to Nick De Vries, Mr. Motivator, his latest sort of motivational press briefing or media story that come out from an interview, where he said that he would give Nick De Vries, Imola, Monaco, and Spain to prove himself and Scott scoring points before the pressure really goes on, Nick said, look, I don't read the media because it's kind of self-protecting device, so if Helmut has said that, then I haven't read it,

but I know full well the expectations of Red Bull with Christian Horner and of Helmut Marco, and believe me, I'm doing everything to try and score points and to be as quick as I've shown, and highlighted, well I highlighted, but he agreed, qualifying in Monaco in Miami as for when things had gone right, so if he can just have as positive qualifying here in Monaco as he did in Miami, then he's starting to put a good weekend together and that will surely for Nick De Vries' sake end up in points, so you will want to know when we can see, when you can see, the action for the Monaco Grand Prix, free practice one on Friday, 11.30 we're on air, free practice two, we're on air at 3.15 on Saturday, it's an early start because we're going to include free practice three and the Formula Two as well, so 10.15 all through your Saturday morning, and then the all-important, arguably the most important qualifying session of the year is the Monaco qualifying at 2pm, that's when we're on, 2pm for Monaco qualifying Saturday afternoon, and the race because it's a usual European event, it is 12.30 on air for a 2p start for the Monaco Grand Prix, so we will say ahoy there, or whatever they say when you're leaving ships from the fisherman's quayside, and look forward to having your company on Skype one throughout the weekend, thanks for listening, bye