

Hello, everybody, and welcome back to the Sky Sports F1 podcast feed and to Ted's pod book from the Austrian Grand Prix of 2023. Special guest for this one, it's Nemi Schiff. Hi, Nemi.

Hi, Ted. Thank you, first of all, very much for having me on the pod book. Not at all.

I guess it feels a bit like an honor, I guess. I've been featured a few times on the notebook, but the pod book, this seems like some sort of, I don't know, downgrade upgrade?

No, it's definitely a downgrade, but you join us, dear listener, in a rather idyllic setting because we're in our hotel which doubles up as a music school, a music schula.

Yeah, I guess so.

And if we don't talk too loudly, and if the kids playing in the playground next to us don't, you know, scream too loudly, you might hear some notes wafting down from an upstairs window, some piano and, well, I'd say they're sort of grade five so far.

Yeah, no Mozart just yet, but I'm clearly working on it, which is more than we can say for ourselves in terms of our musical ability, so we won't knock it.

Spot on with Mozart because, of course, being one of Austria's most famous sons, fact check, he was Austrian, wasn't he?

He was Austrian.

At least I know that he's buried in Austria, so there's that.

Yes, the famous Mozart balls, the chocolate balls that you get in Vienna, but we've been kind of not exactly celebrating, but had in mind another famous Austrian as we've been at the track today, or I certainly have, and that's Dietrich Metzschitz, because the founder of Red Bull, or Red Bull as it is known as in Europe and around the world, not the original Red Bull, which is owned by the Ties, but you know, I'll get into too much detail there.

It's the first time Formula One has been at the circuit he built since his passing in the sort of October last year, and I thought, I don't know, maybe I'm sort of reading too much into it, Naomi, but I think there is going to be a little bit of sort of sadness tinged and a determination by both Red Bull teams to kind of deliver for Dietrich, if you like, for the first time that, you know, the big man's not going to be at the circuit that he refurbished, that he bought when it was in financial straits, refurbished with that amazing media centre and great paddock building, and you've got a sense that even after winning their 100th race in Canada, this one might even be more special for Red Bull.

Yeah, definitely.

I mean, obviously Red Bull and Red Bull Ring especially is a very special place for them, it being, you know, their factory Red Bull's headquarters are not far from here in Montse, so it's one that they come to typically and have a sense of pressure, a sense of a need to deliver, but as you say this year, it's obviously, there's a bit more of a sentimental reason to, you know, make a statement here and make sure that they make Dietrich proud as he watches down on them.

Yes, it's a feature I'm doing for Sunday, I think it's, well, I might as well give you a preview of how I'm going to end it, you know, they, or is that a terrible spoiler alert, but it's kind of a, it's, you know, they want to, they want to deliver, they want to, they want effectively to make Dietrich proud, don't they, and they are coming off the back of

100 Grand Prix wins, yeah, there's every chance they can do that, Max Verstappen arrived quite late at the paddock today, he only arrived just after 2pm, all the photographers and as the checkers, as the checkers, I believe, did he actually come to the circuit?

I didn't see checkers.

I don't know if he actually arrived to the circuit, but I know that he arrived, touched down around 2pm today.

Yeah, so checker's not been well.

Yeah, he has been a bit unwell.

Initially, we thought it was a stomach bug of some sorts, but actually from what I heard, he came down with a fever.

So he's actually on antibiotics, but you know what racing drivers are like, no matter what happens, they will get behind the wheel and somehow adrenaline always seems to take that pain away at least while you're in the car.

So Max was on good form talking, replying to things that Lewis Hamilton was saying about when Lewis found out that Red Bull have already started on next year's car, Lewis was kind of throwing up the idea that maybe we should give a not-before date where teams can start on developing next year's car and actually said that Mercedes would have been a victim of that too in the years that they were dominating and it would have made it a lot closer when Mercedes were dominating said, yeah, there's no reason why it shouldn't have been.

You know, I would have preferred to have the competition that I had and Max was tapping very much kicking back on that and saying, well, it was easy for him to say when he's not got a dominant car like he did for all those times and now he does.

But Max was in good form, but should we get to that point from Lewis?

I mean, first of all, I'll tell you what Lewis was saying about what he's got up to recently, but yeah, he seemed like he came to the track or at least to the media wanting to say something about that.

So you've heard in Canada when Christian Horner said we've already started on next year's car that I think probably made, I imagine, made Lewis's heart sink a bit.

Yeah, well, obviously, as you can imagine, coming from, you know, Red Bull side, Max's side, Christian side, they're in an incredibly lucky position, unfortunate position right now that they've got this car that's just so incredibly dominant.

They've won every single race as a team this season so far.

You've got to kind of look around and say, well, what more can they do to this car to protect themselves?

They're very much in the safe, they're very much in the clear and they can now put their focus on next year's car, whereas everyone behind them is clearly trying to close that gap to them and gain as much margin on them this season still.

So it's obviously an argument that you've got to sort of see from both sides.

My personal perspective is I totally get why Red Bull would argue that that shouldn't be the case, but if you look at it from a sporting perspective, from an audience perspective, from a media perspective, from everyone else, essentially, perspective is we want to see a race.

We don't constantly want to see the same people at the front, and at least if it is the same people at the front, let that battle be closer.

So whatever it is that puts, you know, not necessarily a better show on, but more competition, well, we want to see a competition, really.

Between the Red Bull drivers as well, that's why I hope that Checker gets well very quickly, because would you say this is, you know, at the least a must podium for him?

I know I've gone about this sometimes, but it kind of really is, isn't it?

Look, I think if there's one place where he should be very close to Max, it'll be here.

That obviously is now going to be dependent on his physical condition, given the fact that he's not well.

But, you know, Red Bull Ring, this track has the least amount of corners on the Formula 1 calendar, and that's just 10 corners.

But actually, if you really look at the track layout and in terms of driver input, there's only really any difference they can make in only seven corners.

So there's really, there's such small margins here in terms of what's going to make the difference that the gap between Max and Checko here should be very close.

I don't think there should be any excuses for him here.

OK, we'll see how that goes.

Yeah, best of luck to Checko as he gets over that.

Fever, let's do Lewis and George while we're talking about it, Mercedes, then we'll get back to Ferrari.

So Lewis was talking about his week off.

He's been very busy.

He's been in Spain, I believe, shooting a commercial.

He's been at the, I want to say, Louis Vuitton event and lots of things at Paris Fashion Week.

Yes, exactly.

And he's been at Glastonbury, where he said, apparently he thought it was just a complete spur of the moment, he thought, how am I going to spend this Sunday?

I know.

I'll go to Glastonbury.

Well, that's what he said.

I'll go to Glastonbury.

I don't know how I can get there.

How I can get there.

I assume he was all right with that.

He had a great time.

He said he's been there before to watch Kanye West in the past and had a great time watching Elton John.

So great.

Yeah.

I mean, it's nice to have that little bit of a week off to do other stuff and what seems to be the busiest period in Formula One.

We've had, what is it, four races in five weeks?

Four races in five weeks and many races up ahead of us in July, with just one week off as well.

But then there's obviously Goodwood Festival of Speed as well.

So and...

Is that when's that?

That's the week after Silverstone.

Yeah.

So it's a very busy period at the moment for the world of motor sports, between Le Mans, Formula One, Goodwood, all of the above, and no time to rest.

Well, of course we've got...

So this one's backed about.

Austria's backed about with Silverstone.

That is to say is Goodwood and then it's Hungary and Espar.

Just telling you the other thing you might hear in the background is the Austrian Air Force doing their exercises in the Eurofighters, Typhoons, or is it the Saabs that they run?

I don't know.

I'd have to look on the internet.

Oh, come on, Ted.

Even just by hearing that sound, you should know what that is.

I thought they were the Saabs.

They might be the French Raphaels.

Do you hear that?

Yeah.

They're picking this up on the mic and anyone listening hear this?

Yeah, but you'll see them.

You'll hear them because of the Zeltweg air base, which is nearby, of course.

So yeah, Lewis, saying that there's nothing on the car to make them faster, downplaying their expectations at Mercedes, but Mercedes will have an upgrade at Silverstone.

So George also saying that's when to expect a little bit more from the car, but it's still a compromise, isn't it, this car?

It obviously is a compromise car because they've started the season with one base and then they sort of patchworked the new direction change onto what was their original concept.

So it's always going to be a compromised car, but I think it's been quite positive.

Post-Monaco, obviously they didn't really get to show the performance of those upgrades in Monaco.

Barcelona was a really good indication of what was possible and then Canada as well.

And I thought that Canada was a really good tell-tale sign of how much they have gone in the right direction.

But then I looked at the results from Canada last year and they actually performed quite well in Canada last year.

So it seems that Canada does suit their car.

So I guess we've got a seat on a number of other circuits with different dynamics.

But yeah, I think they were all surprised about just how much potential they were able to unlock with this set of upgrades.

So I think whatever is to come in Silverstone should be another proper push in the right direction.

OK, someone else who performed well, I suppose in Canada, was Ferrari, Carlos Sainz trailing home behind Charlotte Clair, but they're not really racing each other, they just wanted to get some good points, positions which they did.

Carlos Sainz was kind of optimistic about the weekend ahead, I was saying more optimistic of the two.

But then he often starts weekends like that, Carlos, and then something always comes in to sort of upset his rhythm.

While Charlotte Clair was saying that, yes, while people love anniversaries in Formula 1, love celebrating birthdays and anniversaries and notable dates, this one is not one that he wants to celebrate because it is one year since...

His last victory.

Exactly, yeah.

I remember last year talking to him straight after the race, we did a little walk and talk to the press conference.

Very stark contrast to where they are at the moment in Formula 1 compared to where they were last year.

Carlos Sainz can only really be uphill on from what happened to him here last year in terms of car going up in flames, really scary moment that was, so hopefully that nothing bad happens to them this weekend.

But it's quite tough for Ferrari at the moment, I think they are making very slow progress as opposed to the teams around them, which is really disappointing if you look at where they were last year at this time.

Yep, yep, they've certainly gone as the, I know I keep saying this, but gone as the easy to drive, nice car of last year and it's a bit of a temperamental horse, this one.

It is, let's touch quickly on Alpine, I saw Pierre Gasly around the place, didn't speak to him, did speak to Espan Ocon, most of the questions Ocon was getting about this investment into the Alpine team, Renault giving up 24% of the team, I think that's kind of the headline, I mean they could talk about Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhaney and all of that and the Wrexham related investors, but the reality is for me that Renault, a big, you know, constructor in Formula One history, has just given us, just sold almost a quarter of their F1 team, Kiskisbassah.

Kiskisbassah, well money talks doesn't it Ted?

Kiskisbassah, what's going on?

Kiskisbassah, what's happening, look I think it is surprising you want to maintain as much control as you can over your team and over the future of your team, but at the end of the day the sport is all about money and money is definitely something that will help them move forwards in the directions that they've set out for themselves, they've got really big targets in terms of where they want to be, maybe this is what they needed in terms of making that next step, making that big step towards the top teams, I can only imagine that that would be the reason why they'd give away such a huge part of their ownership.

Kiskisbassah, yeah they don't need the money, Renault.

You don't think they do?

No, there's a massive corporation.

Well that's for the team, the team surely.

Well I'm sure there's a reason that makes sense for why they've done this, surely. Well I guess to spread the burden and get a valuation for the team, maybe that helps them.

But listen we'll talk about that throughout the weekend, let's move on to McLaren because they have the first of their three race upgrades, they work very hard in working to get the upgrades on the car here, it's not all of them, majority of them will come at Silver's Stone and then the last few in Budapest but Landon Norris was saying that it's always been my most successful track ever since he first came here in Formula 3, he said I've always gone well here and it's headed for an exciting weekend and I do remember him in I think it was 2020, getting the podium here.

Covid times, he did get a podium here, I mean look some of that was paired with a little bit of luck but the fact of the matter was he was in a position to claim that little bit of luck that he had and as I said it's a track where the drivers can make somewhat of a difference but not too much of a difference, the margins are always so tight here between the field, last year at top three, between the three of them was one tenth which is very small compared to some of the other events we go to, so that gives the midfield teams a little bit more of an opportunity to capitalise on picking up whatever additional points they possibly can, I can see you looking at the sky to see what plane this is.

Well we can see them, they're right above us, it looks like they're doing a practice dogfight but it looks like one of them is going slightly slower than I would expect the other one to go, it's kind of belletic they're flying there.

It's crazy just how loud they are because if you guys could see how far away they are from us here, the amount of sound that's coming out that is just insane.

We'll let the Austrian Air Force get on with it.

Let's move on to Alfa Romeo Sauber, Valtteri Bottas was a late arriver here actually, he only came in this morning so he hasn't been doing much cycling in the hills here but has been doing some naked swimming in Finland he was saying, did you see on the socials? No I tried to avoid seeing Valtteri Bottas' butt cheeks too much on the net.

It was the summer solstice there as well as everywhere else I suppose in the northern hemisphere and he was saying that the nights are only two hours long in Finland.

That is a very, very, very long day.

I know, it must be good for people who suffer from seasonally affected disorders.

I guess so, I guess.

You get lots of sunlight.

Yeah good for them, I mean good for like vitamin D is so important for everyone isn't it?

It must be but Valtteri.

It's off to Finland after this I guess.

Listen I've been there with Valtteri at his lake and his fun sauna time so yeah I know what a paradise it is up there but not so much a paradise on track because Alfa Romeo Sauber are in danger of being caught by Williams with Alex Albans and as our Haas actually, Kevin Magnussen at Haas saying look you know we keep an eye on Williams but we've scored points three or four times with his car so far this year we don't think that's going to dry up.

We think Candor was a bit of an outlier but Nico Hockenberg proved in qualifying there

is speed in the car, we just need to get it together but Valtteri is kind of thinking and this made me think you know back to Valtteri's Williams time, I mean it's a very different team, it was a stronger team surely when Valtteri was at Williams but you know have Alfa Romeo Sauber now got to worry about Williams in the constructors, I suppose they have. I mean that's not really good news is it, well I mean I guess that has something to say about Williams' progress as well, not so much as you know maybe Alfa Romeo's regression let's say but it's been a tough season for them and I think it's been quite a tough season for Valtteri as well, I mean his performance compared to his teammate Joe has been not very impressive if I can say so, you would think you know coming in as such an experienced driver so many years you know battling right at the front with Lewis on several occasions out qualifying him, on several occasions out racing him that he's a driver that clearly has what it takes if you're beating the greatest of all time on track then you clearly are very capable so I'm not sure what's going on with him in that car at the moment and why he doesn't seem to be getting along with it, well or maybe that's just Joe Guanyu also just having outstanding performances and what seems to be quite a tricky car to get around the track. Yeah he's had a better year Joe Guanyu certainly than last year and we will leave you with a little bit of a teaser from Lance Stroll I asked him are you now going to be qualifying concentrating on qualifying given that qualifying has been the weak point he says yes the last few qualifiers haven't been good but there are little things that have been happening in qualifying we know what they are in the team and we're going to do something about it and I said of course all right what are they he said basically I'm not going to tell you so I don't so he's keeping secrets yeah things are happening I don't know miscommunication potentially prioritizing maybe one driver over another yeah I guess I guess they probably are not there's not many things that can really be that secret about what would be going on within the team and qualifying other than some sort of you know communication error or disagreements about timings of two pits put on new tyres I don't know it's happening in Canada wasn't it yes well I mean it's been it's been a very stark contrast between him and Fernando much like it's been between Max and Checa over the last couple of races so I think he probably does need to change something now obviously Fernando is a mighty force to go up against but you would expect him at least to be in Q3 with a car that seems to be very you know second best at the moment okay well at least Lance Stroll knows what those little things are that he needs to fix in qualifying and we'll look forward to him doing that and seeing how far Fernando Alonso can go can he be faster than Mercedes again this weekend will Ferrari get up there will it be those three teams challenging for the second or third places and can anything upset Max Verstappen and that desire on his behalf I'm sure in the whole of the Red Bull team and family who run and own the circuit to deliver for the first race we go here since the passing of their founder Dietrich Mateschitz so but I will leave you with a thought from George Russell who while we're talking about our only intelligence he's talking about artificial intelligence and apropos absolutely nothing came up with something and said there's a lot going on with artificial intelligence at the moment in teams and how that world is evolving in motorsport and a lot going on in machine learning as well so that was a bit of an intriguing thing so I like to know that I like to think that engineers think that they are much more intelligent than machines and machines could learn something from them but maybe it'll be the other way around and 100% be the other way around I mean they're saying that

artificial intelligence is already so much smarter than we are in terms of IQ so I can't see why that would not be the case and some even say that artificial intelligence is more of an existential crisis than global warming at the moment so I can imagine that that would be having an impact on the Formula One world and who's got access to what software and what data and what AI well if there's nice people at artificial intelligence whoever they are could concentrate on countering global warming then that would be like one existential existential crisis cancelling out another one fantastic that'd be great good and if only we were run by artificial intelligence we would not be hitting the six o'clock bell here in our and our hotel and we would have finished 10 minutes ago when we should have finished but hey if an AI machine can make this podcast 10 minutes long with you and me talking then good luck to them because we can't but it's been a pleasure Naomi thank you very much thank you for having me Ted and we will see yes as the music

I think six o'clock the music lessons finish their parents have come to pick them up silence any birds chirping now okay and the Air Force have gone for their kendoodles and they're cut off on thanks for joining us it's a sprint weekend so we will see you for free practice one on Friday which let's face it it's probably when you're listening to this and qualifying Friday afternoon then sprint qualifying on Saturday morning and then the sprint race on Saturday afternoon and then the Grand Prix as it normally is starting at 12 30 UK time with the lights out at 2 pm we will say tschüss and that we auf wiedersehen auf wiedersehen