

[Transcript] Sky Sports F1 Podcast / Ted's Podbook | What can we expect from the Japanese GP?

Hello everybody and welcome back to the Sky Sports F1 podcast feed and to Ted's Podbook from Suzuka, Japan. Well I say Suzuka, we're not actually in Suzuka, we're in our hotel which is on the outskirts over a town called Yokoichi which is the the third town along the Issei Bay from Nagoya. So what you do is go to Tokyo, then you go to Nagoya and then you get a local train and go Kawana which is the first town, then Yokoichi, then Su and then somewhere between Yokoichi and Su, spelled TSU, you go northbound and then you get to the circuit. So this is the Podbook from Japan or as they say in Japan, Podbook desuka. Podbook it is. And in the hotel routine which is a typical Japanese business hotel, we're down in the lobby. It is 10 past 7 p.m. on Thursday and in the lobby we have various people, we have Damon Hill, the 1996 Formula One World Champion, we have Bernadette Collins, Bernie, our resident strategist who's just waiting for something to happen, they're both waiting for something, well they're waiting for the pros to go to Suzuka restaurant and Karun Chandok who's disappeared for a second. I don't think either of them are going to appear on the podcast because I'm determined to keep it to 10 to 12 minutes today, just so last time it was 22 minutes ridiculous. So I can give you a flavor of what's been going on at the track and really the sort of one of the best flavors of what's been going on the track has been Sebastian Vettel and the Insect Hotel on the inside of turn one, turn two, buzzing corners as they're calling it. But I'm going to wait until the end because Sebastian Vettel is not a current competitor in Formula One because there's not enough going on with the 20 drivers that are out on the track or will be out on the track this weekend. Not least of course the new constructors champions to be Red Bull Racing. And when Karun turns up again I'll ask him what number constructor they're on the verge of. I think it's six. They're on the verge of their sixth constructors. Four under Vettel. Or did they? There's one year they didn't win it. I should have done my preparation. Anyway, Max Verstappen, Sergio Perez have spent the week in Tokyo. They were doing some filming on Wednesday with a sort of crazy Japanese game show that Red Bull Japan set up for them. You can see that a feature I did with them throughout the weekend. And I kind of asked Max, look, you know, are you just going to, when are you going to go for it? First of all, when are you going to go and put the rights of Singapore wrong? The wrongs of Singapore right? Are you just going to go for it? Do the fastest final three sectors on Friday, Thursday night, if you're watching in the UK, practice remember, 345 a.m. And you're just going to go for it straight away. And he's like, no, no, no, I'm not going to do that. You know, I build up the weekend, get the car sorted, get the tyre characteristics under control. You know, then in qualifying, I'll go for it. All right, by the time you watch this, you might have already got up and watched Free Practice 1. But I think that is reason enough to watch Free Practice 1, to see whether Verstappen immediately wants to go out and say, right, lap one, what car have I gotten today to me? Yes, it works. It's not the beast of Singapore. Lap two, Bosch. There you go. That's what we can do on a more ordinary circuit. But we

will see. I also asked him, how is this car, you know, how has this car felt to drive? Sort of since Azerbaijan, when he got to grips with it, he said that, yeah, in Azerbaijan, they found some sort of tweaks to do on differential and thinking a little electronic toys that they can play with. That has made the car beautiful, great to drive. Singapore accepted, it's made the car great to drive. And in the same way that Midsmayby sort of gone away from Checo since Miami has a Bajant time, it's gone towards Max. And he says it's just been, you know, a dream. So, yeah, looking forward to seeing what he can do around here. And by contrast, it's an interesting thing what's happened to the Ferrari, because Singapore winner Carlos Sainz was saying that, you know, since the car is much harder to drive than last year. Last year's Ferrari, this year's Ferrari, he's built a kind of, you know, false understeer into the car, an inbuilt understeer into the car. Because the rear is so difficult to live with, he just wants to put some understeer in the car. And that's been a balance that he's much happier with. That's gone away from Leclerc, whose driving style is to have a more understeery car. I said to Leclerc, look, you know, that doesn't mean you can't set up the cars differently. Why don't you just go with the understeery car? And he said, well, the problem is, when it gets on the limit, it snaps so quickly at the back that, you know, I'm going to end off spinning off, like, you know, we've seen this year. So that's why he doesn't have it. Yes, it's harder to drive quickly on the limit with understeer, with Leclerc's style, but it's sort of safer because the car's not going to go off into the barriers. So Natalie Pinkham, our presenter for the weekend, has just arrived alone. And that's why it's sort of gone more towards science. You know, you can file that as another driver excuse or Leclerc excuse, but I think it is true. Also, bear in mind that, you know, science is sort of talked about of maybe not staying at Ferrari long term, something that he doesn't want to do. He wants to stay at Ferrari. He does want to. He wants to stay at Ferrari. And that's something he was keen to underline, was to say how his current run of form is just nice to remind Ferrari of his quality, that it's not all about Leclerc, this team. And it's, you know, something that he can be a race, he is a race winner on a consistent basis for Ferrari. Apparently, the new, you know, after every race, well, you might not know this, but after every race win, they mount a new flag or a prancing horse flag outside the Ferrari race factory. This week, after science's victory in Singapore, the flag has been put outside the old entrance over the over the road, the old Maranello entrance to the to the car factory, because apparently Ferrari CEO Benedetto Vigna wants it to be Ferrari's win, not just the gestione sportiva win. Corone can have a question. So that's why the flag is red bull. We're live. Well, we're sort of live. I'm doing the pod book. Red Bull are on the car. There's Crofty. He's the stats king. Red Bull are on the verge of their sixth constructors world title. Or is it seven? I think it's six because they crofty. Sorry. I did it. I did a bundle there. You did a bundle there. Is it? Is it the six world championship constructors that Red Bull will win or seventh? Have they won six so far? They've won five. They've won five. Yeah. Yeah. So they're on the verge of their six. That's what I was about to say to you. Shout it, Crofty. I did. I did an

Yeah, exactly. Classic bundle. What nobody explained about the Martin thing was that the Esteban Esteban is a running joke on the grid, isn't it? Is it? Yes. Explain it to me. No, you remember, no one picked up on this. They thought Martin was being rude. He was just joking because a few grid walks ago, he shouted at Ocon Esteban Esteban. It was partridge thing like Dan Dan, and he walked away and he chased him up the grid. Didn't he? Yeah. So he was just doing that again as a kind of joke. Esteban Esteban, happy birthday. He never expected Oscar to disappear. Yeah, I don't think he told Oscar that nor did Oscar get the joke today. Come on. Keep up, Oscar. All right. Thank you, Karin. Thank you, Crofty. Yeah. So that's okay. So they're on the vert. What was it? Six. Yeah, they're on the verge of their six. Good. Glad we've established that. That's Red Bull. That's Ferrari done. Lewis Hamilton, along with being extremely excited with the link up with, I forgot his name again, Sora Baye, the artist. Anyway, there's a very famous Japanese artist who Lewis admires greatly, and sorry, Baye. I should have written this down. Google it. And he, Lewis, admires him hugely and went to, reached out to him, said, would you like to do a link up for a bit of merchandise and design my crash helmet? And the famous Japanese artist, whose name I haven't got quite right, said yes, which Lewis said he was very happy about, and has a chrome helmet. This artist is famous for doing artworks in chrome. So he has a chrome helmet for the first time in ever, I think. I've never known Lewis to have a fully chrome helmet before, but on track, away from the artist, unnamed artist that shall remain forgetful and nameless for the moment. Don't text into me. I know I'll find out what his name is. Lewis was saying that he, explaining the qualifying thing, and saying when he's not qualifying ahead of George, then it's very difficult to overtake. Still in Formula One, despite the rule changes. And it means that he's not going to get the opportunities going for the win, like might have happened at Singapore, which is its own story. And so he really needs to improve on qualifying because of that, because opportunities for the win he feels might be passing him by, because he's getting outqualified by George Russell. Firstly, Lewis said my qualifying has, well, a slightly rude word, I won't say it, has been bad, he said, paraphrasing him, for two years now, and I need to put that right. Kind of, yes, but kind of no. I mean, didn't he not qualify on pole in Budapest last year? So that's something, I think maybe it's Lewis being hyper critical, which he always is of his own performances, likes to be perfect, of course he does. He's the most successful ever. And is that something that he can fix, which is going to be an interesting one? And it leads me onto the question, does Lewis Hamilton think that if he had been the lead driver on the road, would he have won Singapore, whereas George Russell didn't manage to get through Lando? I think he knows he would have got past Leclerc, but did George Russell didn't manage to get past Lando? And, of course, then Carlos, does Lewis think that he would have been able to no problem? Don't know. It's kind of the hint that he's giving, but we didn't actually ask him that. And even if we did, he would have said, oh, no, you know, well, it wouldn't have happened or didn't happen. Right, a couple of other things. I've already done, I've already done 10 minutes or so. Lance Stroll is back, said that he was, while he was cleared to race on the Sunday of Singapore, he didn't feel right in himself and just thought it was going to do more harm long term, wanted to be fit for Singapore, Suzuka. So he is, which is good. Fernando Alonso found out

there was damage to his car, which explains Aston Martin's low pace, says that Aston Martin haven't had to change their car because of the technical directive. So if you listen and believe every team, then none of the teams have had to change their car, including Red Bull and Aston Martin and everybody else after the technical directive, which rather begs the question, why did the FIA feel the need to put the technical directive out if everybody says they didn't need to change their car? Good answer. Good question for you there. Alf Tari with their big upgrades. Liam Lawson, very happy to score those two points, needs to work on his starts. He says of the starts, messing up the starts is all down to him. They're fine in practice, but then he gets to the grid and he kind of gets a bit freaked out when the lights go off and he's on the grid and something he needs to do. So he's going to do lots of practice starts here this weekend. And it's a problem for Salva, Valtteri Bossas and Joe Grandiou, saying they need to score some points because Alf Tari are coming for them in the Constructors' Championship with the big upgrade, even though Alf Tari are still at the bottom. Fred Vassar has been meeting the two-headed Mercedes Boss, Toto Wolf replacement. Authorus, the two-headed dog of Greek mythology. Right. So the authorus, I thought it was Cerberus, of Mercedes this weekend in place of Toto Wolf is Bradley Lord and Jerome D'Ambrosio. And so going around, like an Orthros or a Cerberus, can you Google Cerberus for me, Johnny, please? Is Bradley Lord and Jerome D'Ambrosio going to meet other team bosses? So Fred Vassar, the Ferrari team boss, went into Mercedes to say hello to the two-headed chief of Mercedes F1 this weekend. And they both had to, Bradley and Jerome, had to both go out and talk to Fred. It's just as well that team bosses don't have to. So Cerberus is, the hound of Hades is a multi-headed dog that guards the gates of the underworld to prevent the dead from leaving. That's a terrible, terrible reference. Sorry, thank you, Johnny. Johnny Green from the guys, what's everyone digital there? Right. Okay. So that's what's going on at Mercedes. Pierre Gasly saying he's very happy to be back in the flow and back in Japan a place he knows well. Who else did I speak to? Logan Sargent at Williams just feels the speed is there, just has to cut out the mistakes. Kevin Magnussen very happy to score a point for Hasse. And he said, it was just banter on the radio when he said, I love you all guys, even you Gunter after Singapore. And I think that just about wraps it up actually. Honda, yes. It's, oh, James Key is here for Salva. He's the new Salva technical director, of course, ex of McLaren. And this is his first race back at the Salva team. And Honda, Rebel hoping, well, as they wrap up their six constructors championship, they can do so in Japan because as a tribute to Honda, whose engine, of course, they have in the background, Soriyama. There you go. The artist. Sorry about that. Soriyama is the artist. There you go. Got there in the end, which leads us to the Sebastian Vettel Insect Hotel on the inside, buzzing corner, buzzing corners on the inside of turn one, turn two. It's all about biodiversity. It's all about encouraging insects and bees and wasps and hornets and everything to live in these places because the more that climate change affects the earth and the more natural habitats that are cut down either forests or rainforests or gardens or anything like that, then the more species are threatened and that is going to affect humans in a very, very negative way. Well, yeah, I think, you know, in terms of, you know, making life even harder, even understanding, considering the ravages of climate change. And that's something that Sebastian is passionate about avoiding. And that's why he's opened this. People are calling it a bee hotel, but it's not just bees. It might not even be bees. It might just be lots of different

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insects to live in these huts. So each team has got a hut and has decorated it. And then Sebastian has a little one bee hut as well or insect hut as well. So on the inside of turn one and two and the inside curb is painted black and yellow in the bee style. So it's made a lovely local Japanese pine and Lee San is the carpenter who has helped Sebastian put it all together. So watch out for our qualifying show for all of that. Right, I've done more than I wanted to, but thank you very much. Karun Chandok and David Hill, Johnny Green from Sky Sports F1 Digital and everybody for helping me out. Thank you for listening. Join us free practice one in the early hours of Friday morning, 345, 645 a.m. for free practice two, and then repeat that free practice three on Saturday morning qualifying. Anyone know what time qualifying is on? 7 a.m. Thank you very much. And the race 430 for a 6 a.m. start. Excellent work. Good. Thanks very much. Hope to have your company throughout the weekend. Sayonara!