



Why you should watch F1



PHOTO: AFP

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Are you bored? Have you binged all the good series and don't have anything else to watch? Then why not start following F1? Just to clarify, F1 isn't the one where they spend all day driving round and round in circles - that would be NASCAR/IndyCar. In F1 the cars have to turn both left *and* right. Incredible stuff, I know. With these following points I'll show you why F1 is worth your time.

Fast and Furious: F1 is *fast*. You know how your blood gets pumping when you hit 100 kmph on highway? Yeah, that would be cornering speed for F1 cars. On straights F1 cars hit speeds of 350 kmph and above. Now *that* is fast. F1 cars are the fastest road course racing cars and they are repeatedly pushed to their limits in the course of a race. The near-deafening noise of a car charging down the straight is sure to send shivers down your spine, especially if you're a motorhead.

The cars are beasts: F1 cars are beautiful pieces of engineering which show us why we need science. F1 teams have extremely well-funded R&D departments which focus all their attention on improving the cars. From aerodynamics to tire wear, everything is optimised for speed. Even the iconic arrow-like shape of the car is to increase downforce. This pushes the wheels down onto the track, ensuring the cars don't fly off when cornering.

Besides this, the cars also make use of technology very well. Besides general bells and whistles, the cars also have this thing called KERS (Kinetic Energy Regeneration System). This stores electri-

cal energy and allows it to be used as a sort of "boost" during the race for a bump in speed. In addition to this, the cars have DRS (Drag Reduction System). This can only be used when a car is trailing right behind another. DRS, at the push of a button, changes the shape of the spoiler to reduce drag. This results in a huge boost to top speed which allows more frequent overtakes, which adds to the fun.



Action: While from the outside F1 may seem simple, in reality it is anything but. An intense amount of strategy that goes into a Grand Prix (what each individual race is called). The drivers need to have the whole track memorised so that they can hit the brakes at the perfect moment at each corner. A few milliseconds early and they'll lose precious seconds which could lead to them getting overtaken. A few milliseconds too late and they'll

reach the corner with too much speed, resulting in the car flying off the track and into the barriers, effectively ending their race.

Then you get to the best part - the overtake. First of all, it's nothing like what you'll see in your average racing game. Each overtake has to be attempted with caution, because the last thing you want as a driver is to collide with another vehicle going at 300 kmph. The drivers

can't shunt the other cars off the track. Thus it becomes a convoluted game of cat and mouse between the overtaker and the overtaken. One is trying every trick in the book to sneak his nose ahead, the other is trying to fend him off while attempting to avoid contact.

B-but F1 drivers aren't real sportsmen: Hahahahaha, no. Driving an F1 car takes more than just turning a steering wheel left or right. A Grand Prix is on average 3

hours long, and drivers have to spend this entire period in the cockpit. An average lap will have 20 corners, and this is what a driver does in one corner - shift down from 6th gear to 3rd gear, while braking continuously, turning the wheel, hitting the apex of the turn, and checking the rear-view mirror for the car behind him. All of this happens in the span of 1 second. The driver has to repeat this 20 times per lap for a period of 70 laps. Not so easy now, huh?

Besides this, drivers also endure g-forces of up to 6.5g when rounding a corner. To put it into perspective, *fighter jet pilots face g-forces of 8g*. To endure this massive strain, F1 drivers have to be in peak physical fitness and are always in a training regime.

Memes: This is probably my favourite reason to watch F1. The sport of F1 has one of the biggest library of memes, and it keeps getting bigger. Once you get into the sport, you can truly appreciate the drivers' unique personalities and their associated memes. This is actually how I got introduced to the sport in the first place. Making fun of McLaren-Honda engines, some of the more memorable quotes from team radio, or how every crash is caused by Pastor Maldonado (which isn't entirely inaccurate) are just some of the memes in F1. Trust me, whatever makes you start watching, the spicy memes are what'll make you stay.

These were just some of the many reasons why I love F1. Give it a shot, you might fall in love with it too - and just in time to review the best of the season that ended.