

FAST TIMES AT MONACO HIGH - MEMORIAL DAY TRASH TALK

Hey there fellow lugnuts at the Emptywheel garage, how about some Memorial Day Holiday Trash Talk? We haven't taken out the trash lately, so it is time. There are a few things on tap to chat about.

First up is the Gran Prix de Monaco, the crown jewel of the Formula One season. F1 is a sport of the masses across the world in many ways, but the constructors, participants, and the circus that follows them are without question the elite, rich and beautiful. You see the elegance at any F1 race, but nothing compares to Monaco. Technically speaking, Monaco is somewhat of a processional – passing is nearly impossible and the key to the race is qualifying position and pit stop strategy. If you start in the front you have a good shot at finishing there. But no race is as valued by the drivers and history, nothing has the cache of a win at Monaco.

It has been an interesting season to date. Mercedes, Ferrari, Lotus and Red Bull are all solid and in the hunt. Sebastian Vettel leads the drivers' standings with 89 points, Kimi Raikkonen just behind with 85 and Ferrari's Fernando Alonso closing in with 72. Hamilton Massa and Webber are in a second group well back of the three leaders, but still well within contention for the year.

The all important qualifying is proceeding as I write this here trash; I will update when it is completed. Okay, qualifying just ended as I put this post up. Mercedes took the front row with Nico Rosberg on pole and Lewis Hamilton in P2. The second row is Red Bull with Vettel in P3 and Webber P4. Row 3 will be Raikkonen and his Lotus in P5 and Alonso and the red Ferrari in P6. You can bet the farm the winner will come from the first three rows, and likely the first two rows.

In a real holiday treat, NBC Sports Channel is airing the absolutely fantastic documentary "Senna" tonight, Saturday night, at 8 pm EST (5 pm PST). This is one of the finest sporting documentaries you could ever hope to watch whether you are an F1 fan or not. My wife, who knew nothing of Ayrton Senna and F1 went with me when it premiered in the theaters two years ago and still raves about it. Highly recommended for viewing and/or DVRing.

Also this Sunday is, of course, the Indianapolis 500. The "Biggest Spectacle in Motorsports" is a far cry from what it once was, but it is still a great race to watch and always provides some excitement. The pole is held this year by Ed Carpenter, with Carlos Munoz and Marco Andretti sharing the first row. But Indy favors those that know the way to the winner's circle, and there are two proven champs in the field I would watch out for, Helio Castroneves and Dario Franchitti. Both are three time winners. There are only three men who have won Indy four times – AJ Foyt, Al Unser and Rick Mears. It is an elite club, will there be a new member when the milk drinking is over?

There are also the NBA Playoffs underway, with both conference finals in progress. Last night the Indiana Pacers upset the Miami Heat in game 2 of the Eastern Conference finals in Miami. A huge win. Even more shocking, but for some boneheaded coaching and player selection in the last seconds of game one, the Pacers might be up 2-0 on the defending champs. Now the series heads to Indy. Both games have been nail biters; really good basketball. In the Western Conference finals, the Spurs are up 2-0 over the Memphis Grizzlies and appear to be well in control of the series.

Also underway is the NCAA College softball postseason. My ASU Lady sun Devils are 5th ranked and in a west Super-Regional against Kentucky, with a berth in the Women's College World Series on the line. The best 2 out of 3 match is in Tempe at Farrington Stadium though

where the Devils are 28-3 in post season play, so their chances look good for advancing. Also in an east Super-Regional is Jim White's beloved, and 2nd ranked, Florida Gators. The Gators are heavy favorites over the University of Alabama-Birmingham. Will there be another showdown in the world Series between the Devils and Gators? I hope so, that would be big fun! Also looming large are powerhouses Oklahoma, Texas and Alabama. Believe it or not, Marcy's team, the Michigan Wolvereenies are in play and already up a game in their Super-Regional. This could be a big time Emptywheel grudge smackdown World Series!

Lastly, holidays are about FOOD! Here at Casa de bmaz, we are grilling copious amounts of bird and beef, chased by a lot nice Mexican beer. What you got going, and why?