

FORMULA ONE TRASH TALK: THE CIRCUS COMES TO OZ TOWN

Hi there Wheel, Empty, and and otherwise gear heads, it is time for Spring Trash Talk. There is a lot under foot, Spring Training in Major League Baseball, free agency season and pending entry draft in the NFL, the somewhat diminished fortunes of the NBA and, most of all, FORMULA ONE! The Circus season is upon us, and it is starting down under in the Land of Oz.

Appears we are starting off where we left off: there is yet no reason to believe the Red Bulls of Sebastian Vettel and Mark Webber are anything less than the cars to beat. But, that being said, there is also no reason to think that the Ferrari and McLarens are anything less than the threat that they were at the end of last season. Drivers make a difference in F1, and Fernando Alonso and Jenson Button are very, very good drivers. And their cars are not chopped liver either. For the *clear* superiority of the Red Bulls, and even the McLarens for that matter, Fernando Alonso pulled off one of the greatest performances in the history of F1 with inferior equipment last year. Alonso was only 3 measly points behind Vettel in the final Driver's standings. Simply astonishing.

The opening two practice sessions for the Australian GP were late last night my time; i.e. between 9 pm and 12 am whatever the heck time AZ is. (Daylight savings time really screws with our heads here, cause we don't do that). Bottom line....not much has changed.

Okay, if I were pleading guilty (I would never!) to a heinous offense under truth serum to make sure I was cray cray (yeah, okay, this is some stupid shit too) I MIGHT admit that a lot of this post was written from a series of taco joints in Old Town Scottsdale. It is nowhere near as opulent as it sounds; hell even the

mariachi music is piped in like Muzak. And the 60 something threesome at the table next to me looks like their Winnebago may be illegally parked out on Camelback Road.

Where were we? Okay, back to the Australian GP. Here is what Brad Spurgeon thought:

Red Bull and Sebastian Vettel have won all the titles for the last three seasons. Vettel became only the third driver in Formula One history to win three drivers' titles in a row, after Juan Manuel Fangio in the 1950s and Michael Schumacher last decade. Only Schumacher, Fangio and Alain Prost have won more than three titles, with seven, five and four, respectively. So both Vettel and the team have more pressure on them than ever. Still, Red Bull has the advantage of the consistency of keeping the same two drivers and technical team, and Mark Webber is still pushing for his own final career chances to capture the drivers' title. With the great designer Adrian Newey leading the way, Red Bull should remain among the strongest.

As a lifelong aficionado of Scuderia Ferrari, I would kill to demur. But, I cannot; I think that is right. Still. As to the beloved Prancing Horse, well, from the lens of the season start, it will take another superhuman drive for the ages by Fernando Alonso to keep Ferrari in the chips.

That leaves McLaren and Mercedes fighting for sloppy thirds. Maybe it will come to be that one will blast out of nowhere to be a contender for King Vettel's Crown, but it is really hard to see. Lewis Hamilton proved himself to be a self absorbed punk at the more superior team, McLaren; now he will try to do what Michael Schumacher could not at fast, but unreliable, Mercedes. Please. Juan Pablo Montoya performed better and was sent packing to NASCAR.

For all the sturm and drang, for all the off season shuffle, the Championship will still be fought for between Red Bull and Ferrari, with a decided advantage to the former.

Let the Circus games begin!

And, then, there is the NFL free agency merrygoround. Heck, I do not know who are the winners and losers at this point. But, a quick take says the Steelers and Cardinals, the teams of local pricks bmaz and Scribe, did not do well. To be kind. Probably nobody did worse than the Cardinals, who signed an aging punt return specialist that even the Cleveland Browns did not care about anymore, and let go Kevin Kolb, the only even practice squad level NFL quarterback they had. Seriously, what kind of addled mentally challenged assholes are running the Cardinals? Oh, wait, it is *still* the fucking Bidwell family. Who could have guessed from this level of rank pathetic incompetence??

The Deetroit Kitteds seem to have done very well. If they can keep their peeps healthy and out of the klink, they may have the greatest show on fake turf. The Pats lost Welker's whining wife (and shitloads of clutch catches in the slot and over the middle) BUT gained a sometimes fragile Danny Amendola. Amendola was the successor in kind at the Pirate attack fun/gun at Texas Tech. Amendola is actually every bit the route runner, and even faster, than Welker. But he ain't as predictable, nor as reliable, as Welker. This could be a wash, or it could be a loss. Time will tell. The Pat's defense and, especially, secondary looks to be much improved.

Other than the above, the Squawks got Percy Harvin and some other studs, and the Niners got some too. Whoo weee baybee, the gold rush is on on the left coast.

MLB is in Spring Training; let me tell ya something brother, it is fucking hot here. The NBA is in the stretch run, but the only question of interest I see is what lower seed will the

Lakers fill? 8? 7? 6 looks bleak, but not impossible; though I would be shocked. We will return to that in a roundball post later. As we will with the student athletes for March Madness, and very soon.

Rock it, Talk it, Jayhawkit. Get yer sweve on Wheelies. Light it up.

Music by BB King, Bono and the band.