

AUSTIN CITY LIMITS TRASH TALK

The eyes of Texas, and the world, are on Austin this weekend. No, it is not for the big resurgence of Mack Brown and whether he and the Whorens can keep it up against those high flying Cowboys from Oklahoma State. No, it is because it is United States Grand Prix week!

In the inaugural run last year at the Circuit of the Americas, I was pretty cautious about the sufficiency of both the course, and facility as a whole. I was clearly wrong, as the race, and reviews from all I know in the traveling circus that is F1 were spectacular. And, really, what is not to love about the music, food and scene in Austin itself? A one of a kind, unique American gem. So, the circus returns for year two. It is the penultimate race is a disappointingly boring season (at least in the second half of the year).

Here is a shocker, Vettel, Webber and the Red Bulls were fast at practice, with Rosberg, Hamilton and Lotus's Heikki Kovalainen trailing. One very huge note is that Kimi Raikkonen is absent, having undergone surgery in France on a long standing back problem (undoubtedly a problem that was speeded up by Kimi's salary dispute with the team he is leaving in the off season. to return to Ferrari). Qualifying today should be interesting. Alonso, Massa and the Ferraris are back in mid pack if practice is any indication.

So, let's get to some football. The Mack Brown line above was not a total crack, OSU and Texas will square off today, also in Austin. So, it really is quite a sports weekend for Austin, wish I was there. Hard not to think the Cowboys will roll the Whorens and put Brown back in the lurch, but I am going to predict an upset. Besides, how can you not root for Brown to hang on and keep the Longhorns mediocre? Other really interesting game is the Stanford Tree at the

home of Tommy Trojan. USC has been MUCH improved since Lane Kiffin was bagged. Tempted to pick another upset here, but will stick with the Tree. Dawgs of Georgia at Auburn also could be interesting. Hard to believe Auburn is really as good as their record; Georgia will give a good test. In the late game, Oregon State visits the Sun Devils at Frank Kush Field. Devils should – *should* – get by this, which would set up a HUGE game next weekend with UCLA.

As to the Pro Joes, the biggest buzz is the Chefs in Denver for some Mile High cooking. Sorry men in tall white toques, unlike your previous vanquished opponents, the Donks have a winning record and a real offense. hard to see how KC can score enough to beat Peyton and his ankles. Pats at Carolina should be more interesting. Cam Newton and the Panthers finally seem to be jelling and getting some consistency, and Carolina's defense is seriously tough nuts. Pats gonna get a third loss. Niners at Saints also notable. I rate it a pick-em, but if the Niners take another loss, they will be tied with the Cardinals (who ought to be able to take the Jags) and pretty hurting compared to Seattle. Surely Philly can get a home win, right? I know it has been a while, but Nick Foles is settling in and the Skins just seem feckless. Pack at Giants will depend entirely on whether or not GB can field a better QB than FB Jon Kuhn. Does not look good for the Cheese.

Off to the races we go, make some noise!