



## View from the box

Murray Walker, the world's most respected F1 commentator, explains why he expects the final Grand Prix to kickstart an F1 revolution in Abu Dhabi

**F**1 is the most advanced technical sport in the world. It's got the highest television viewing in the world of any annual sport because although the Olympic Games and the Soccer World Cup may have bigger figures, they are only once every four years and Formula One is 16 or 17 times a year.

If you're interested in motorsport as I am, knowing about the final Abu Dhabi Grand Prix has been unavoidable. I haven't seen the circuit or the island yet but I have heard a huge amount about it and the Yas Marina Circuit is going to be an absolutely fantastic location with unrivalled facilities. I should

think it's going to be an enormous success, particularly as it's going to be the last Grand Prix of the year at which the World Championship is very likely to be decided – if things continue to go the way they have been going now that is.

As an Englishman, I would like to see Jenson Button win. There is no question of Lewis Hamilton winning because he is too far back. Jenson has had a fairytale return to form with Brawn GP this year and I would like to see him cap it with the World Championship. Mathematically, he can be beaten by several people but realistically it's between him, Vettel, Barrichello and Webber and that's a lot more than is usual at this time of the season. Although

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Famous for interrupting himself live on air, Murray became known for phrases like: "Unless I'm very much mistaken...I am very much mistaken."

Jenson had a wonderful run at the start of the year, with six wins from the first seven races, he hasn't done well since Turkey and really he has to start scoring points again so he can increase the gap. It looks like he's set up – but he could still be beaten.

What really stands out for me is Yas Marina Circuit's location. Not only is it a new track for the Middle East, but it's on an island and it has got the most incredible facilities ever built. Although I haven't visited it, everything indicates that it is quite an amazing structural achievement. I know the team which is masterminding its development and they have done an absolutely fantastic job. In terms of the state of the art facilities, I should think it's going to be the best circuit in the world. Even the hotels themselves will be a novelty because other than the Nurburgring in Germany, there is certainly nothing like what they have built in Abu Dhabi.

The first day-night race is also going to be very interesting to see. It's something new, something different. I have reservations about night races but if anywhere can do it then Abu Dhabi can. In my opinion there are only two places in the world where you can have a night race and really get away with it: one is Singapore and the other is in the UAE. In order for it to be successful, however, it will need to have a visually exciting background and impressive buildings lighting up the track at night. I'm also confident that it will be more interesting than the Bahrain Grand Prix by virtue of the fact that so much money has been spent on the Yas Island features. It's going to be a circuit the like of which the racing fraternity has never seen before.

Formula 1 is essentially a western cultural phenomenon – that is to say American and European – and its not really ingrained in the Middle East yet. But over the coming years, I have no doubt that Abu Dhabi will be of great interest for motorsport fans because the climate is ideal for testing and it will be a great platform for other events like touring cars, sports cars and motorcycles. 🏎️

*Murray Walker writes a regular Formula 1 website column for the BBC at [www.bbc.co.uk/f1](http://www.bbc.co.uk/f1)*

AS TOLD TO Mike MacEacheran