

S'pore GP won't hurt Malaysia

The Star - 9/14/2007

It would be a boost to both countries, says racing legend Jackie Stewart

SEPANG: There will be no damage done to Malaysia if Singapore gets to host a Formula One race, said several Formula One personalities.

Former F1 world champion Sir Jackie Stewart said hosting races would in fact enhance both countries.

He noted, however, that not many people realised the huge cost and disruptions the island republic would face if the proposed street race went through.

"There will be four months of disruption if there was a street race," said the three-time champion when met at the paddock area of the Sepang F1 Circuit yesterday.

"This is because you need to build

»There is room for another race in the Formula One calendar«

JOHN HOWETT



barriers, a race track and grandstand. Not many people realise that."

He said although Monaco had hosted a street race for over 60 years, it would be a new challenge for Singapore.

On night racing, he said: "The jury

is still out."

Toyota Motorsport president John Howett said that there was room for another race in the Formula One calendar.

He said that having a race at the beginning of the season and one at

the end, such as what is being explored by F1 supremo Bernie Ecclestone, would see "less cannibalisation" of visitors and revenue.

Nicolas Todt, who is Ferrari driver Felipe Massa's manager, said logistically, it would make more sense to have the races back-to-back in the same area rather than have teams fly back for the Europe races and return for another race in Asia.

Singaporean Foreign Minister George Yeo said it would be a complimentary relationship between Malaysia and Singapore if the island republic got to host an F1 grand prix race.

"It should be a win-win situation for Singapore and Malaysia.

We should work towards that," he said to reporters yesterday after the F1 Petronas Malaysian Grand Prix.

"The two races will be able to synergise each other and develop the F1 market in South-East Asia."

However, Yeo said he had many concerns after catching the race here such as traffic congestion and noise.

"There could be very bad traffic jams and the noise is quite horrifying. It could be an inconvenience to the public so, it is a trade off," he added.

He added that real estate magnate Ong Beng Seng who is responsible for negotiating with Ecclestone was keen to collaborate with the Sepang International Circuit.