

<p>Tuesday May 25th was a crazy day. I was going through my normal morning routine, stepped outside to pick up the newspaper, opened it up, and there was the <a title="Formula One headed for Austin"

href="http://www.statesman.com/sports/formula-one-headed-for-austin-708205.html?cxtype=rss_business">news. The <a title="Is Formula One coming to Austin?"

href="http://www.statesman.com/news/local/is-formula-one-coming-to-austin-709355.html">headline on the front page said it all.</p> <p>I can't remember a time when I've ever seen a <a title="Scuderia Ferrari"

href="http://www.ferrari.com/English/Formula1/Pages/Home.aspx">Ferrari <a class="zem_slink" title="Formula One" href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Formula_One"

rel="wikipedia">Formula One car on the front page of the Austin American-Statesman. Ever. </p> <p>I think my jaw hit the floor before reality settled in.</p> <p>On Tuesday, it was officially <a title="F1 revives US Grand Prix in 2012 in Austin, Texas"

href="http://www.statesman.com/news/texas/f1-revives-us-grand-prix-in-2012f1-revives-us-grand-prix-in-2012-in-708242.html">announced that Austin is the new home of the US Grand Prix. Formula One is coming in 2012. There is a 10 year contract. And consider me excited beyond all belief.</p> <p>I may currently be in the minority. Though it has made the news, including front page headlines, my sense is that it's really a non-entity thus far amongst most people. I haven't heard much <a title="F1 Austin announcement a big surprise to many"

href="http://www.statesman.com/sports/pro/f1-austin-announcement-a-big-surprise-to-many-718374.html">talk of it. Apparently I am the only kid running around in this candy store, or one of but a few. </p> <p>For those who have yet to make sense of this, allow me to explain. In simple terms, this is a big deal for Austin, for the US, and for the global sports community. And here's why.</p> <p></p> <p><a title="The Official Formula One website"

href="http://www.formula1.com/default.html">Formula One has a huge global economic impact. It is the most-viewed sport in the world, with an aggregate global audience of 600 million people for each race (with the 2010 season having 19 events). This also makes it a multi-billion dollar sport. In order to run a team, you need a budget of greater than \$100 million per season and that barely makes you competitive. Teams such as Ferrari have budgets in excess of \$500 million. Now multiply that by 12 teams, and you get some rather large numbers that equate to the Gross National Product of many small nations.</p> <p>Perhaps putting it in more familiar terms will help. Imagine Austin having a successful bid for the Olympics, or for the World Cup. Expect 300,000 people over the course of a weekend. That is about the magnitude of the impact we should expect to see here in Central Texas.</p> <p>Formula One has the highest level of technology in the world. Imagine a jet fighter and the technology involved. Now, put it on the ground and slap on four wheels. That's about what we're looking at here. How about 5gs of force in any direction at any given time? How about an engine revving to 18,000 rpm? Just for reference, a Honda Civic redlines at about 5,500. How about accelerating from

zero to 100 mph in about 3 seconds, and slowing down from 100 mph to zero in about the same time. That brings new meaning to ♦stopping on a dime♦. Maybe a 220 mph top speed sounds appealing. And get this - they turn both right AND left. This isn♦t [NASCAR](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NASCAR "NASCAR") we♦re talking about here. The technology that you see there will eventually make it♦s way to your car. Past examples include the use of aluminum and carbon fiber, traction control, and paddle-shift transmissions, among other things. Just look at [Mercedes-Benz](http://www.mercedes-benz.com/ "Mercedes-Benz") as a prime example.

It all makes perfect sense for Austin, otherwise known as Silicon Hills. Many of our local high tech companies are or have been sponsors of F1 teams. Just look to Dell and AMD as two fine examples. If there is any city in Texas that could embrace this event, it♦s Austin.

Oh, and as for the drivers ♦ not only do they turn left and right, but they also have some salaries that rival Tiger Woods. [Michael Schumacher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Schumacher "Michael Schumacher"), in his glory days with Ferrari and seven time world champion, was consistently one of the top 3 athletes *in the world* on the salary and endorsements scale.

The organizers have proposed a \$250 million purpose-built facility and have stated that they want the track design to resemble some of the classic F1 establishments like Silverstone or [Spa-Francorchamps](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circuit_de_Spa-Francorchamps "Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps"). Tentative news reports indicate that they have already found a suitable tract of land southeast of Austin. And, to make things even better, it♦s rumored to be hilly, which would make for an even better F1 course. Now a \$250 million facility isn♦t [Jerry World](http://stadium.dallascowboys.com/ "Jerry World"), but Jerry World also doesn♦t have much pull outside of the US. Plenty of ego, but not much global relevance.

Of course, relevance to a global market doesn♦t explain the relative indifference that Americans have for Formula One. But that changes once you are there to witness it.

As a follower of Formula One for over 30 years, I am ecstatic that Austin pulled what can be considered a bit of a coup in the motorsports community. As a person that has attended something to the effect of between 15 and 20 grand prix events since 1972 (including the glory days at Mosport and [Watkins Glen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Watkins_Glen%2C_New_York "Watkins Glen, New York")), I can state unequivocally that this will be a spectacle to behold. The legendary Ferrari fans, the [tifosi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tifosi "Tifosi"), will be there in droves, even in Texas. When you hear the screaming wail of a Formula One engine on full song, you will know what I mean by ♦exhilarating♦. Trust me on this one. There is nothing like it in [auto racing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auto_racing "Auto racing"), nothing like it in sport.

Count me in for a couple of weekend tickets. 2012 can♦t come soon enough.

Photo credit: [Wikipedia](http://commons.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Michael_Schumacher_2006_USA.jpg)

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- <http://www.autoblog.com/2010/05/25/breaking-formula-one-coming-to-austin-texas-in-201>

2/">BREAKING: Formula One coming to Austin, Texas in 2012 (autoblog.com) <li
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