



2014 television viewing habits poll – survey comments

There were 123 comments on the survey in total. I have selected about half of them, which are more detailed in terms of explanation for publication below.

Please note that the comments below have been made by readers' across the United Kingdom, and are not the views of The F1 Broadcasting Blog.

Comment 3

I can pay £21 for all Sky Sports channels for the month or pay £10 for a 24 hour pass on race days [via NOW TV]. On an average of two races per month that's a difference of a whole pound! It's completely overpriced compared to the monthly subscription. Somewhere around £5 for a weekend pass to just for Sky F1 would be brilliant, and maybe Bernie might not have to worry about the viewing figures dropping so much.

Comment 9

Croft's shouting, and obsession with spurious statistics and with 'celebs' annoy me intensely. I prefer to use 5 Live's commentary - McNish is a very good inclusion, dropping Anderson is a big mistake.

Comment 12

Long term I'd like to see Sky Sports F1 morph into Sky Sports Motorsport, which features other categories like Formula E, IndyCar, NASCAR and can be purchased separately as I don't require any football on Sky Sports.

Comment 14

Both Sky and the BBC are pandering to the occasional viewer to bolster viewing figures while showing contempt for the core audience. This will ultimately reduce their core audience to the point where catching the occasional viewer won't matter.

Televised F1 in the UK is teetering on the brink of collapse and with it possibly the sport itself.

Comment 15

As an avid F1 fan for the past 30 years or so, I was naturally upset that most free-to-air (FTA) coverage was split between the BBC and Sky. I have no desire to spend the extortionate prices that Sky charge per month and I am therefore happy with the live races and the highlights package that BBC offers.

In my opinion once Sky have, how can I put this, their grubby little mitts onto any sports coverage then they will slowly strangle that particular sport to death.

Once they have the sport exclusively, and trust me they will, usually by throwing large amounts of cash at it, then it will be taken away from the average viewer.

This has already happened with all cricket, half of the autumn internationals regarding Rugby Union (as of this year only Scotland and Wales matches are FTA), all Rugby League except the Challenge Cup, nine tenths of football and not to mention golf, tennis etc.

Sky don't care about the amount of viewers they get. All they require is a good and fast turnover of subscribers to be on the books, whether they watch or not is immaterial.

The only thing that will make any change at all is if people vote with their wallets, so to speak, and stop subscribing altogether. That however is, I admit, highly unlikely. Although it would be a nice thought if it ever did.

So comrades if you have the stomach for it. Start the revolution and stop subscribing. Because if this road runs its course then it will cease to be 'Sport for all' just 'Sport for the privileged few'.

Comment 21

I enjoy Sky F1 as part of my Sky Sports HD package.

I may record the BBC F1 coverage just so as to compare the style of presentation against that of Sky. I thought that the BBC style in 2013 was dire - tabloid effort.

Comment 27

We joined Sky when they took over rights from BBC and did the HD upgrade. We've been careful not to make any changes to our subscription as we understand we would then have to buy full Sky Sports (we don't really watch any other sports).

Most Sky programming is good; major negative is the 'mucking around' by the likes of Natalie Pinkham and Johnny Herbert.

Comment 29

I am a long time Sky subscriber, since 1992 due to Premier League Football. F1 on Sky has meant even more value for me personally but thinking more widely, I doubt it benefits the sport in the long run. Your blog's analysis shows the drop in viewing figures for races just on Sky, scary reading.

Comment 31

Given the choice I will watch the BBC coverage -- even though the idiots got rid of Gary Anderson - exactly the type of expert that is needed in a year of major rule changes, genius!

Retaining the Sky subscription is increasingly difficult to justify - what will happen when, as I suspect, the BBC drop F1 I don't know...

Comment 33

I do not have Sky F1, as F1 should be free to air like the BTCC and I will not pay ridiculous amounts to watch it. For 2014 I shall only watch the 9 BBC Live races. After watching all of the BBC coverage in 2012 and 2013, it is clear that BBC highlights cut out far too much, meaning you cannot follow the race properly. There is no excitement as it is not live, and highlights past 22:00 are an insult to fans. They refuse to show full race re-runs, hence for 2014 for 'highlights only' weekends, I have decided I will simply just read the results/reports only.

Comment 34

Sad to see Gary Anderson has left the BBC F1 team. Both BBC F1 and Sky F1 lack someone with motor racing engineering experience to help the viewer understand F1 from an engineering perspective without being over technical.

Comment 39

Unfortunately I don't have Sky so I watch races live when on BBC, highlights on BBC and listen when I can on 5 Live. From bits I have seen elsewhere Sky do a great job but its BBC F1 for me all the way and they do a great job, obviously I would prefer all races live on BBC like from 2009 to 2011 with

Brundle and Kravitz on BBC but I am happy enough with BBC coverage even though they made a mistake in getting rid of Gary Anderson but Allan McNish is a welcome newcomer.

Comment 43

BBC should in my opinion pull out of F1. It's poor to have half the races and who really wants to ever watch a sport highlight show. If you're a true sports fan, you will pay for it. All the Sky extras, race control apps, red button, Sky online and extra TV programmes all make it worth the price.

Comment 45

I still find it appalling that BBC sold out to Sky with F1 coverage! It was always said that Formula 1 would always be available for everyone to watch, then Sky got its money grabbing hands on it! The BBC sell out was the biggest mistake they ever made!

Comment 46

I don't have Sky and have no intention of getting Sky. Since the Sky/BBC deal, even though I enjoy F1, I don't get as excited about F1 as much as I did before the deal, knowing I can't watch all the races live. The sooner F1 goes back fully live to BBC or other free to air channel, the better.

Comment 48

Feel quite ripped off by having to pay over the odds by being a Virgin Media customer. Also no option to watch in HD.

I'm not a football fan so have no need for rest of Sky Sports channels.

Comment 49

Formula One should be free to anybody, to encourage a larger audience, which means terrestrial TV on BBC or ITV, preferably BBC, because the adverts cut out some of the action.

Bernie has made enough out of the fans, so he should pay for BBC to get the rights, to give back something for the fans' loyalty to F1 over the years.

Comment 52

Sky's coverage is too long to watch when I have work/social commitments. The BBC's coverage is perfect for someone who wants to catch the majority of the action without having to clear out a large portion of the day to watch F1. The BBC's coverage also lends itself better to the casual viewer and I rarely feel like I am missing out large portions of the race when watching their highlights shows.

Comment 53

I watched the first 2014 F1 Show on Sky and was very disappointed. Admittedly the show in previous years was not particularly interesting, but this year is much, much worse. I feel that it was mostly repetitive and uninteresting 'padding' together with the usual faked enthusiasm. I freely admit that I am basing this on a very narrow selection as only one show has been broadcast. At least when it was presented by Ted Kravitz there was a lot of new technical information and analysis. I'm sorry if it sounds harsh, but I'm afraid Natalie Pinkham is way out of her depth. I noticed last year several times that she made some inane comment while Ted was speaking and he stopped and looked at her as if to say 'what are you drivelling on about now' before continuing with what he was saying. This is why I record the programme on Sky+ and use the fast-forward button... a lot! If Sky stopped making the programme I certainly won't be writing a letter or email of complaint in a hurry.

I have to admit that I haven't watched the BBC F1 programme since Sky got involved. I was in the fortunate position that I had Sky HD when they first broadcast F1 so I got Sky HD F1 by default. I was also a fan of Martin Brundle and Ted Kravitz and I thought that David Croft and Anthony Davidson

did a good job on the Free Practice shows on the BBC Red Button. I was also not a fan of David Coulthard as he was obviously biased in favour of Red Bull as he was, and still is, employed by Red Bull. Also, I feel James Allen is biased in favour of Ferrari as he has written several books about Ferrari and Michael Schumacher and I noticed him favouring Ferrari during his stint as lead commentator at the BBC. I don't see how a public broadcaster can employ people that clearly have allegiances to one team in the sport in which they are involved.

Comment 55

Each year that F1 spends time on Sky, the less I find people talking about the sport, even hard core fans. Gary Anderson was a really interesting man that would explain details in an educational way. BBC have missed a trick getting rid of him and watering down their coverage with a second ex driver who in my opinion will add nothing extra to what Coulthard provides.

Comment 56

Simon Lazenby for me is a much better host than Suzi Perry. As much as I like Suzi (I enjoyed The Gadget Show which she presented), she just isn't right for F1 in my opinion. I've been very impressed with Simon as a presenter. But the best part about Sky (along with Martin Brundle) is Ted Kravitz. His notebooks and general input to the Sky Sports F1 channel ensure that I will not be changing to BBC anytime soon.

Comment 58

F1 should return solely to the BBC. The BBC did exactly what Sky are doing (live practice qualifying and race) but Sky are charging people whereas the BBC did it for free. If Sky has exclusive broadcasting rights in the future, then I will have to abandon my love of the sport after watching it for many years. The BBC F1 team are great, especially Eddie Jordan and if the BBC go completely, then F1 would have lost something special.

Comment 63

I have no need to buy a whole Sky package so I would much prefer to have Sky F1 as a standalone, online channel. NOW TV is also too expensive and prohibitive as it's just for a 24 hour period so would not cover race and qualifying with one payment.

Comment 65

I have been a viewer of Sky Sports F1 coverage since the start of 2012 and I think their general coverage is better than the BBC. We didn't have Sky Sports prior to that but as you could receive the Sky Sports F1 channel with an HD package, we upgraded to that and fortunately, Sky haven't changed their channel criteria to Sky Sports pack only. I am not interested in football or cricket, so just having the F1 channel is great for me. In my opinion, the race team of David Croft, Martin Brundle and Ted Kravitz works really well, and I prefer it to the BBC race team of Ben Edwards, David Coulthard and Tom Clarkson.

I am a huge fan of F1 and the breadth of content on Sky F1 is impressive. Daily news updates on Sky Sports News, a weekly one hour long magazine show, a midweek report, classic races every week, and generally I think Sky are doing great with F1.

Comment 66

In comparison with Sky, BBC coverage has been inferior since 2012 for the few races I have watched with them. Their reasoning for removing Gary Anderson from the coverage revealed a certain contempt for the intelligence of the viewer in that they would be incapable of understanding some of the finer technical aspects of the sport so removed his explanations which I would often look at online. This smacked of the dumbing down of their coverage in the mid 1990's, when levels of down force were measured in relation to the weight of an elephant in short pieces to camera by Jonathan Palmer. Sky in comparison often gets a little lost in the detail, but at least they attempt to cover the sport immersively and the detail of Ted's notebooks provide excellent analysis.

Sky's coverage would be enlivened with the addition of a quality anchor to draw the various elements of the coverage together. Simon Lazenby still comes across as a man doing his job, not someone given the keys to the sweetshop and enjoying every minute of it like Jake Humphrey did. However while the producer remains in place Lazenby is unlikely to be changed.

The use of all - driver experts does rob Sky of a certain level of depth in its coverage. The addition of a Gary Anderson - esque technical editor would be invaluable. Ted Kravitz could arguably anchor the coverage in place of Lazenby, freeing up some technical analysis for a former designer.

Comment 67

Considering that they have a dedicated channel and a much bigger budget than the BBC I think the Sky F1 service is a big disappointment. For example, where are all the behind the scenes reports that Martin Brundle promised when he explained his move from the BBC to Sky F1? I pay over £20 per month to get SkyF1 (on Virgin Media) and for that money I don't want to see endless replays of old F1 races.

I actually think the BBC team provide better coverage of live events than Sky team and, even when they just provide extended highlight coverage, the BBC team still manage to provide all the information that I need - apart, of course, from the spontaneity of a live race!

The Sky pundits tend to over analyse everything and sometimes completely miss the point. In contrast, David Coulthard and Allan McNish are concise and informative.

I thought I might miss Gary Anderson on the BBC but, based on the Australian GP coverage, I now think that his departure has given Tom Clarkson more scope to interview key technical people in the pit lane - which, in my opinion, is more valuable.

Comment 70

F1 coverage hasn't changed for me. I watch on the BBC when it's live, and Sky when I have to. The coverage on the BBC is of an extremely high quality, I far prefer David and Ben to Martin and Crofty.

Sky does have its moments, such as Ant's insight, Ted's notebooks and some of the features, but if you could add these elements to the BBC coverage there would be no contest. Sky is far too glossy and the BBC despite reduced airtime offer a better show, given those limitations.

Comment 73

F1 to have its own channel like Sky is just what I've wanted for years. Being an F1 collector myself it's great to see them show classic races like I would have done myself from tape before. Also the many hours of live coverage is just great.

Things of improvement for Sky are:

- Show more full classic races (also full length for the races before 1997).
- Show more of the F1 world feed before the race, especially when cars are heading out to the grid etc. This can be very entertaining when it's wet and also with all the problems the teams are having to get the cars running atm.
- Have a 30 minute evening show after qualifying, with interviews etc.
- They need to do an F1 wrap up with people who weren't on the live team, like Midweek Report but on Sunday evening. They could show some extra interviews and get the views from ex drivers/personalities who weren't at the race track.

Comment 74

I watch F1 races via the BBC iPlayer site. I am not happy with BBC letting Anderson go, as we need technical points of view throughout the whole weekend. Gary is really good at what he does and brings so much info from his background, BBC are stupid to let all these guys go to Sky, Martin, Ted etc.

Comment 78

Have watched F1 on Sky since the channels inception. This is the only sport from the sports package that we watch. I've got to question if the cost of the package is worth it for two races a month. I'm going to see what BBC's coverage is like especially with the incredibly boring Monaco race and may well consider cancelling our Sky Sports package. Biggest mistake Sky made is not making the channel available as an independent subscription. This is hitting their viewing figures keeping them sub 700k.

Comment 79

TV: While I intend to continue watching F1 coverage on the BBC, I made a one-time exception to pay for a one-day NOW TV Sky Sports pass on my Apple TV in order to watch unedited coverage of the Australian Grand Prix. I timed the payment so I could see the full qualifying replay on the Saturday and all the live coverage on Sunday morning. I still watched the race highlights on the BBC in the afternoon.

The BBC team: It's a shame Suzi Perry is continuing to host the BBC F1 coverage. She struggled to hold the live shows together last year, and it's hard to believe there'll be a significant improvement this year.

The Sky F1 team: Simon Lazenby is a pretty unlikeable host. He's better in a live situation than Suzi Perry, but his blokey-ness is grating. In fact the bloke-bloke Sky Sports style does nothing for me. The BBC do a better job of inclusive, gender-neutral appeal, Sky feels like a gentleman's club.

Comment 80

Cost is a big issue at the moment and if I hadn't been able to negotiate a reduction in my Sky monthly costs I would likely have left Sky altogether. Unfortunately that would have meant watching highlights which I have always found to be frustratingly disjointed (the nature of highlights I guess); just how long I would have put up with that I'm not sure. I live in the country so Virgin Media is not (and unlikely ever to be) an option.

Additionally, if there had been a chance that Red Bull and Vettel had continued in the same vein as the last four years I would almost certainly have ceased watching.

Out of boredom of F1 I watched a few IndyCar races in 2013 and enjoyed both the race content and (mostly) the coverage (which is odd as some of it was highlights - see comments above - and I didn't seem to mind the disjointed-ness; perhaps I'm not such a purist when it comes to IndyCar, or perhaps I wouldn't mind F1 highlights these days. I may find out in 2015).

Comment 84

F1 should never be on pay TV, it's pricing out the real fans! I had Sky for years but in the end £90 a month is silly money. So a fan of F1 for 20 years gets to watch 9 races this year..... shocking! F1 to BT Sport I say! Coverage of MotoGP is excellent.

Comment 87

Never have really liked Suzi Perry hosting BBC coverage. Some of the races are better as highlights in that they are shown at a better time and do not impact on the race coverage.

On a different note I just wanted to say how pissed off I was that Eurosport lost the MotoGP to BT, but was pleased with the job that ITV4 did with its highlights program.

Comment 88

Don't see the point of McNish - driver's perspective is handled expertly by Coulthard and McNish adds nothing of interest. By contrast Gary Anderson's departure is a big loss. Suzi Perry hasn't improved over last season and Lee McKenzie would be a far better presenter. Biggest problem though is that both GPs have been processional. Can see ratings falling on BBC and Sky unless the racing improves.

Comment 90

I miss Eddie and his mate. I find Suzi a pain to watch. Lee [McKenzie] should have been given a chance. Suzi just does not fit in.

F1 on Sky is good only because BBC gave-up on F1. I find it sad that the BBC can spend vast amounts of money on Olympics, show jumping, running and other sports but F1 is pushed out.

Sky is getting better, if they can nick Eddie they could be on to a winner.

Comment 91

BBC coverage, content and analysis is getting worse. I can't justify subscribing to Sky as it is only the F1 I am interested in. I now use NOW TV (from Sky) to watch the non-BBC races at a daily cost.

If the BBC continues to use Suzie Perry and other pointless time filling VTs I will be tempted to watch all on NOW TV. Surely there must be someone better to host F1 than Suzie Perry - ask Lee McKenzie to do it. Also bring back Gary Anderson and more intelligent presenters.

Comment 92

Whilst not changing my viewing habits, the BBC not having a technical specialist (e.g. Gary Anderson) has detracted from their output this year in my view, as has the introduction of the somewhat pointless copy of Sky's TV replay thing, used by Alan McNish.

Gary Anderson (or another technical person) with a notepad or on screen graphics is much better and more down to earth. I don't need to see the presenter poking at a TV screen button or a button on an iPad. Just show me the video and give me a technical analysis of the changes.

Comment 93

Allowing Gary Anderson to leave was a tragic mistake for the BBC, he was by far the best thing about their coverage. The whole BBC output feels to me to be dumbing down, as though they want to quietly let the F1 coverage die. Still, miles better than Sky though.

Comment 95

I watch non-BBC live races via Sky Go on a HTPC - it's actually my parents Sky Go account as they're daft enough to pay for the full package. I'm enjoying the F1 iPad App and the videos offered on there, especially as it involves Gary Anderson, BBC were stupid to get rid.

It's a shame FOM don't offer subscription HD streaming direct - I'd gladly pay for that, F1 is probably the only reason I pay a TV licence - it's the only program I watch live.

Comment 97

My desire to watch F1 has diminished over the past few seasons, not a reflection of the Vettel dominance, especially over the race weekends I feel that the coverage has gone overboard since Sky was added, this has taken some of the enjoyment of the race out for me. I appreciate some may like this but I rarely switch on until around 20 minutes before the race. Whereas a few years ago I would do my best not to miss a race, now I watch it if I'm able to. Sky F1 comes as part of my Sky Sports package on Virgin, but if I had to subscribe separately I probably wouldn't.

Comment 100

I watched F1 on Sky last year because I had a half price introductory offer with Virgin. This year its full price for all Sky Sports and I'm only interested in F1, not paying £20+ for 4 hours of viewing a month. Such a pity because I love F1, but I'm not going to be drawn into paying to watch a sport that has which should still be free. In my opinion the BBC did an amazing job with F1, but should never have been allowed to spend tax payer money on such a sport and should have left it with ITV. We would still be watching it for free now!

Comment 101

I have to say that though many of my answers were pro-Sky, something I would have hated when the move was announced in 2011, I can't deny that they have recently obliterated the BBC with their tight, informative coverage. Suzi Perry seems lost and can be fluffy instead of on-the-mark, whilst Eddie only ever turns up for the odd race (we love Eddie, but is he too precious? I think not). Coulthard is very, very good, and he works well with Ben Edwards in the commentary box, but when you look at Sky, you can't help but think that they've got the best team: Kravitz is the smartest guy we have for UK TV coverage. Pinkham makes Suzi Perry look like someone from The IT Crowd is manning a serious televised sporting event. Meanwhile, Crofty and Brundle in the commentary box should have happened from the off when the BBC got the coverage, and yet it took Sky to realise this. Jake, Eddie and DC with Kravitz, McKenzie and Brundle were good days, but now that is not the way, Sky is the only way for us.

Comment 102

When BBC started showing Free Practice session live I was really interested in these session, however as this has become the norm, across both BBC and Sky, I find I am less and less committed to watching these sessions, almost to the point where I wouldn't be bothered if they were not shown live, but were instead show as highlights or re-runs in the evening. This might just be because I work on Friday, but even still I find less and less interesting stories come from Free Practice 1 and 2.

I would like more technical analysis across both BBC and Sky, if I hear of an interesting piece I will make sure I watch it across either channel. However with Gary Anderson's departure and the new technical regulations I feel both Sky and BBC have not served the public well in interpreting the technical regulations and how they play out in terms of race strategy for the drivers.

I will continue with Sky as F1 is my passion and if that is what I have to pay to watch it then so be it. I also follow football so this is not entirely wasted money. I've stopped going to football matches to pay for the Sky subscription, so interesting other sports have suffered because of F1 being pay to view.

Comment 103

I will watch the full BBC races as normal and have bought a NOW TV box for the races that are only on Sky. The Sky build coverage is a bit wooden and dull, but I like the commentary. The BBC build up with Eddie Jordan and Coulthard is fun and entertaining so I look forward to that. Suzi Perry needs to use her imagination and experience, she looks a bit scared sometimes. She needs to do her homework. I like Ben Edwards' commentary also, his voice is distinctive and suits the sport like Murray Walker. Ben Edwards should be the voice of motor sport.

Overall I prefer the BBC coverage but did not want to miss out this year so purchased the NOW TV box, but I only watch the races. I do not purchase a pass for qualifying.

Comment 104

I cancelled my Sky subscription and will never be their customer again. I object to paying them for entertainment channels with only 40 minutes of programming in every hour when on-screen advertising only provides 10% of their income. I have seen their F1 coverage and think it is awful with too much gossip and speculation. I just want practice, qualifying and races when I would wish to switch their incessant commentary off.

I became tired of the BBC's obsession with tyres last year. A drinking game based on the word 'tyre' would have killed an alcoholic.

Comment 106

I had to select 'other' pay TV, I don't use any pay TV, I have YouView, as we cannot get cable in our area otherwise it would be Virgin Media.

I don't think F1 should be on any pay channel, but if it has to be then it should be fairly priced, it is just way too expensive on Sky, nearly £50 a month just cannot justify it at all. I have a feeling that BT Sport might be interested in getting hold of it when the Sky licence is up and share with the BBC like they are doing with the FA Cup. If BT Sport get it and it is cheaper then I would certainly consider subscribing. If Sky F1 was a standalone channel, then would it be on YouView? You can get NOW TV and other subscriptions through it.

I think Sky thought everyone would just jump across to Sky F1 and blindly subscribe to it and this hasn't happened, the viewing figures are poor and F1 relies on good TV viewing figures for advertising revenues, this isn't happening with Sky F1, the viewing figures are going down and I don't believe it's anything to do with Vettel winning every week or anything else, other than you have to pay Sky to see the full seasons and I think a lot of people won't pay Sky and are not bothering watching F1 anymore. I wouldn't object to delayed full coverage but 60 minutes highlights of a race which is 1h 40 minutes usually just isn't good enough.

Comment 107

While understanding the commercial value of the Sky/BBC deal, I feel the races exclusive to Sky gradually loses casual viewership which may affect the audience figures in the long term. Free to air coverage maximizes viewership, keeps engagement of the casual or less well-off viewer and would likely ensure teams get more valuable sponsorship deals. BBC coverage pre Sky deal was ideal for both casual viewers and diehard fans with red button extras satisfying those wanting more in depth coverage.

Comment 118

I've had access to Sky Sports F1 from the launch of the channel via the old HD pack. I am remaining on that only because I still get Sky F1 through it. I am considering ditching it though as I could get a significantly cheaper package to suit my viewing habits other than the F1 element.

I always watch the BBC live on their weekends and find their highlights shows just about give enough of the flavour of the race for me to cope with losing it, that said I couldn't be happy with highlights only if the BBC ditched (or lost) live coverage completely.

I actually think I prefer this deal with 50(ish)% of the races live and 50(ish)% highlights over having it on a commercial station with ad breaks during all races. I don't think that's often commented upon.

Comment 123

I used to love the BBC coverage, it was truly unrivalled and Sky just couldn't match up. Since her appointment I have found Suzi Perry painful to watch and feel bizarrely alone in my judgement that she ruins the BBC coverage. I also have missed Gary Anderson this year and this also makes me less interested in the BBC coverage. Eddie Jordan has yet to appear in 2014 and that leaves David Coulthard and Lee McKenzie as the only two positives. Sadly they just aren't enough and I shall be watching the bulk the season on Sky. Are we likely to see Suzi Perry replaced anytime soon? If only...