



F1 Advent Calendar 2009 – Day Twenty-One

Hi there, you've tuned in to the F1 Advent Calendar 2009 - brought to you by Sidepodcast. We are peering behind a new door for each day of advent, revealing a key moment from the 2009 season. It's time for today's story from Day Twenty-One - Crossing the line.

Thankfully, by the time this year's Singapore Grand Prix rolled around, the trouble surrounding last year's race had been dealt with. There were still reverberations around the paddock, and Renault were busy unpicking the stickers of their rapidly departing sponsors, but it was a chance to get back to the racing.

The Brawn boys were back on form, topping the timesheets in Free Practice 1. Everyone held a collective breath when Romain Grosjean spun his Renault in exactly the same way as Piquet did in exactly the same place as Piquet did. Silence on the Renault radio. It seemed to break a little bit of the tension though, and things were a little more relaxed after the irony had died down.

On Saturday morning, Hamilton was fastest, with Vettel and Rosberg in second and third respectively, and then it was on to qualifying. Rosberg resumed his pace, posting the fastest time in Q1. Q2 was a similar story, with Rosberg up top, whilst Button struggled and couldn't make it through. Barrichello, Webber and Vettel all proceeded to Q3. Hamilton was the fastest man taking the vital pole position, with Vettel lining up beside him on the grid. Rosberg qualified third and Webber fourth.

This was Williams' best chance for a good finishing position. The car may have had pace early in the year, and Rosberg topped many a Friday practice session but he could never seem to convert it into a podium finish.

On to the night race, and Rosberg made an excellent start. He was on the clean side of the grid and overtook Vettel to slot in behind leader Hamilton. Sadly, during the first round of pit stops, Rosberg made a crucial error as he exited the revised Singapore pitlane. He may have been going too fast, or couldn't turn in time on the dusty surface, but the German flew across the painted pitlane exit line on his way out. He caught the car and straightened up but by then it was too late.

It wasn't just a stray wheel over either, it was as if the line didn't even exist. It appeared to be a silly mistake, and Rosberg was duly punished with a drive through penalty, one that effectively ruined what had been his best performance of the season.

Later, Sutil tried a move on Alguersuari, but spun and ended up facing the wrong way. In trying to correct himself, he lunged the Force India forward, into Heidfeld, ending the BMW drivers reign of consecutive finishes. Sutil's behaviour was considered dangerous and he was later fined \$20,000. This wasn't the last time he'd be in the middle of a controversial accident, either.

The subsequent Safety Car delayed Rosberg's drive through penalty, but once he had taken it, he found himself out of the points, down in 11th place. Hamilton secured his second win of the year, joined on the podium by Glock and Alonso - perhaps going some way to mend the damage the Piquet drama had done to Renault's reputation.

Rosberg's pit exit mishap meant he missed out on a golden opportunity to show his team what he could do, although that pretty much sums up his whole year. There were many points finishes for Nico, and only one retirement but the best he could manage was two fourth places. Despite the lack of standout results, Rosberg has been picked up by the



former Brawn team Mercedes GP for the 2010 season, and no matter who his teammate is, he's really going to have to do better than he did in 2009.

That's all for this episode, thank you for listening, and I hope you will join me tomorrow when we open the door for Day Twenty-Two.

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