



## F1 Advent Calendar 2009 – Day Twenty-Two

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Hello and welcome to Sidepodcast's F1 Advent Calendar 2009. This extended mini series is bringing you the highlights of the 2009 season - peering behind a door for each day of advent for another key moment. We're on to Day Twenty-Two - Injury time.

With just three races left to go, there were still three drivers in contention for the title. Button maintained his lead in front, but Barrichello was closing up and Vettel mathematically still had a chance, albeit very small.

The Japanese Grand Prix weekend started out wet, and the Friday practice sessions were pretty quiet. The notable absentee was Timo Glock, who was taking a day of rest to try and recover from a fever he was suffering from. In his place was GP2 and Toyota test driver Kamui Kobayashi. He finished 19th in FP1 but improved to 12th in the second session.

On Saturday, Glock was back behind the wheel, finishing 14th in the morning practice. Webber crashed heavily towards the end of the session, trashing his car so badly, he couldn't take part in qualifying. Buemi crashed at exactly the same place during qualifying 1, but his mechanics worked super hard to get the car fixed, and the Toro Rosso, which for the first time this season finally had good pace, made it through to the second session.

With Q2 underway, Alguersuari also crashed at the Degner Curve - that's three cars at the same corner now - and he was out of qualifying. Moments later, Glock crashed head on into the barriers at the final corner. His Toyota was buried deep into the barrier, and qualifying was halted while the marshals and medics attended the scene. It took them a long time to get him out of the car, and he was flown to hospital by helicopter, complaining of back pains. He also had a wound on his leg. Worryingly, Glock was taken to the wrong hospital - they weren't expecting any incoming patients from the circuit, and the helicopter had to take off again soon after. Thankfully it wasn't too serious an injury, but that reflected very badly on the circuit.

Qualifying continued, with Buemi crashing once again, scraping his way down the barrier of the long straight, leaving debris all over the track. His mechanics deemed that he'd gone a step too far this time, and his car couldn't be repaired. Kovalainen made it four drivers to crash at the Degner Curve, his session over as well. Finally, we learnt that Vettel was on pole.

Glock's leg was strapped and he was released from hospital but he was not cleared to race. He turned up in the paddock anyway to watch from the garage. Toyota requested that Kobayashi be allowed to fill in but the FIA declined, as to participate in a Grand Prix, a driver has to have taken part in at least one session on Saturday. Vettel won the race, thus keeping himself in contention for the championship. Just.

Although initially, his main injury seemed to be the leg, Glock was ruled unfit to race in Brazil as well. Subsequent tests had revealed a cracked vertebrae that meant he needed more time to recover. This time, Kobayashi participated in all the sessions and got to have a go in the race. He finished 9th and proved himself to be pretty racy and a just little reckless as he went about it.

Abu Dhabi proved to be a similar story for Timo, although the excuses for keeping Kobayashi in the car grew slightly flimsier. Toyota suggested they had conflicted medical opinions on Glock's condition, so for his own safety, they weren't going to let him race. This time, Kobayashi finished sixth picking up some points and again putting on a pretty good show.



Just days later, Toyota pulled out of Formula 1, leaving both Glock and Kobayashi without a seat. Glock subsequently signed up for Manor Grand Prix, now called Virgin Racing. Hopefully, they will let him drive.

That's all for this episode of our F1 Advent Calendar 2009. I hope you will join me again tomorrow, when we open the door for Day Twenty-Three.

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