



F1 Advent Calendar 2009 – Day Twenty-Four

Hello and welcome to the penultimate episode of our F1 Advent Calendar 2009. We have been peering behind a door on each day of advent, and discovering the story of a key moment from the year. It's Christmas Eve, which means it must be time for Day Twenty-Four - Fight or flight.

The Brazilian Grand Prix had barely got underway before there were drivers colliding with each other. Kovalainen and Vettel had a bit of a tangle, and a couple of corners later, Trulli and Sutil had a coming together. My goodness, that was the start of something. Trulli was attempting to overtake the Force India, but managed to tap the rear of the car, both cars spun off, one each side of the track. Sutil's car went flying into the grass before returning to the circuit into the path of Fernando Alonso, who was duly knocked out of the race. The three drivers exited their cars, and Trulli immediately ran over to Sutil, gesturing wildly.

The safety car was deployed, while the stricken Force India, Toyota and Renault cars were recovered. All three drivers got a ride back to the pit lane, and with Trulli still visibly fuming, their race had come to an end. In the post-race quotes, Jarno said: "I am extremely frustrated by what happened today because I had a very good chance to challenge for the podium... I think there was enough space for both of us to get around the corner." Adrian was having none of it though and in the Force India press release, he said: "Trulli was there on the outside trying to go round. It was a really stupid manoeuvre as there was no space and I couldn't see him at all."

Afterward, the stewards investigated the incident, and although there was no action taken on the crash itself, they fined Trulli for his post-race behaviour. He was reprimanded and had to hand over \$10,000 as the stewards found his arguments with Sutil to be unsporting. If only they knew what was to come!

The Italian would not let the matter go. During a later interview, he said of the Force India driver's manoeuvres: "To happen once is a racing accident – we might have a touch or we might bang wheels. But when someone does it deliberately at that speed, this is crazy. It is unacceptable." Sutil kept his head down, defending himself where necessary but otherwise not rising to the Italian's bait.

When the circus turned up to the next race in Abu Dhabi, the FIA wasted no time in arranging Thursday's press conference with Trulli, Sutil and Alonso present, plus Adrian's nemesis Räikkönen for good measure. When the questions came from the floor, it wasn't long before the incident in Brazil was brought up. Trulli said they were going to discuss what happened in the drivers' briefing, but Sutil didn't think there was anything to be discussed. In response, the Italian said he had photographic evidence of the incident, which he then pulled from his pocket to show to Sutil. "I don't know if you're blind but they clearly show you that my front wing is next to your front wing..." to which Sutil responded: "...it was not my problem, it was his problem. I don't know why he's freaking out like that, to be honest." The pair continued to argue to the point where Alonso said to Räikkönen: "Shall we go?"

Alan Baldwin was next to ask a question, and he tried to continue the conversation, presumably for the amusement of everyone. However it wasn't to go on much longer, Trulli confirmed: "Just so long as we all know the rules." While Sutil pointed out: "I know the rules." That was how the matter was left in public, and as far as I know, it wasn't brought up again. I would imagine Sutil is not top of Trulli's Christmas Card list though.

That's all for this penultimate episode of our F1 Advent Calendar 2009. Just one more show to go, and that is the big one - Christmas Day. I know you'll be busy but please remember to listen to our final advent episode - Day Twenty-Five.