



F1 Advent Calendar 2009 – Day Seven

Welcome to the seventh day of our F1 Advent Calendar 2009. This is an extended mini-series breaking the season review down into 25 short shows - one behind each door of advent. We're moving right along to Day Seven - Keep on Running.

It's fair to say that, despite the fact Red Bull took a win in China, by the time the Monaco Grand Prix arrived, we were beginning to wonder if Brawn were completely unstoppable. They had won four of the five races so far, and were still looking very, very strong. Plus, Button was turning up to Monaco with a lot of determination as it is one of his home races.

His closest competition continued to be Vettel, and Red Bull had finally managed to bring a double diffuser to the car. However, it was Barrichello on top in Free Practice 1, and Button was just pipped to the top by Alonso in Free Practice 3. Normality resumed in qualifying, though, with Jenson Button leaving it to the last minute to take his fourth pole position.

Other notable qualifying incidents included defending champion Lewis Hamilton crashing out at the Mirabeau - meaning he couldn't participate in qualifying any further and started 16th. The BMWs and Toyotas were remarkably slow, considering Trulli and Glock had been fighting for podiums up until this point in the season.

The race began, then, with Button retaining his lead and zipping away from the rest of the pack. Vettel had super-soft tyres on and really began to struggle for grip after only a few laps. With Monaco being so very overtaking unfriendly, the slow Vettel allowed the leaders to make quite the gap, and then he crashed into the barriers and retired from the race. Not a great race for poor Vettel.

Kovalainen and Nakajima also crashed out during the race, but it was Button's day as he crossed the line and took the chequered flag, ahead of teammate Barrichello and Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen.

Now, Monaco has a slightly different slowing down lap procedure than other races. Instead of coming in to the pitlane and stopping the car in parc ferme, the top three finishers pull to a halt on the main straight where the podium is hastily erected and the red carpet pulled out. Button hadn't been on the podium in Monaco since 2004, and was pretty used to the normal procedure, having been on the podium so often in 2009. He made his way to the pit lane, and parked up... in the wrong place.

To get to the podium, he had to jog out of the pitlane, and down the main straight towards where the crowd and Prince Albert of Monaco were waiting for him. As he jogged, he waved at the crowd, making the most of the opportunity. It was quite the moment - one of the highlights of the year, always up there when you ask people to name their top memories of the 2009 season. We almost want to start a petition to make all drivers run a lap of honour when they win a race.

They may not be in favour though, as straight after the race Button said: "It's been an unbelievable day, capped with my impromptu sprint down the pit straight to the podium. I can tell you it's a very long way!"

That's all for this episode of our F1 Advent Calendar 2009. I will be back tomorrow with another peek behind an advent window to find out what the story is for Day Eight.