



F1 Advent Calendar 2009 – Day Nine

Hello and welcome along to the F1 Advent Calendar 2009 - an extended mini-series from Sidepodcast where we open up a new door each day of advent to find a key story from the 2009 season. Yesterday was all about politics, so let's hope for some racing action this time, on Day Nine - The First Time.

With the future of Formula 1 back on an even keel for now, attention turned back to the racing. The British Grand Prix had been a sombre affair overshadowed by the politics, so it was down to the German race at the Nurburgring to pick things up again. Vettel had won the race at Silverstone, and the Brawn dominance was beginning to look a little shaky, although their championship leads were still very much in tact.

Qualifying was a wet affair, and played right into the hands of Red Bull. Webber and Vettel made it a very strong 1-2 until last minute laps from the Brawn boys split them up. Webber retained his pole position, followed by Barrichello and Button, with Vettel winding up fourth. Notably, Sutil managed to qualify up in 7th, which was the highest Force India grid position since its inception.

The race was dry, and got underway with a collision between Webber and Barrichello. The pair of them got off the line essentially together, and whilst Barrichello kept it in a straight line, Webber moved across and bumped into the Brawn. Still before the first corner, Hamilton came flying past both of them, but Webber's front wing nicked the McLaren's rear right tyre. Hamilton overshot the first corner, ran wide, and then limped back to the pits with a puncture. He returned to the track one lap down and finished in 18th, which was last with two retirees behind him.

Barrichello didn't seem to have been too affected by the incident with Webber initially as he took the lead. Webber received a drive through penalty for that first corner incident, so had to make an extra stop, but despite that he kept the pace up and his strategy saw him continuing to fight at the top. Barrichello, though, was beginning to slow, and holding everyone up. Ross Brawn was on the radio telling him he was going too slowly and if he couldn't overtake, he needed to let Button have a go.

Sutil, having started seventh, had made his way up to second place, but after coming out the pits for his first stop, found a fast moving Raikkonen coming up behind him. The Ferrari had to take avoiding action and went round the outside at the next corner, but it wasn't quite wide enough, and the pair collided. Sutil was knocked down to finish in 15th, whilst Kimi later retired with engine troubles.

Finally, it was Webber who crossed the line first. Despite losing places at the start, bouncing off a couple of cars here and there, and receiving a drive through penalty, he had fought hard and worked his way back to the top to take his debut victory. He was joined on the podium by teammate Vettel and Felipe Massa. After the race, team boss Christian Horner paid tribute to the Australian: "I think lying in a hospital bed in Tasmania in November, he could never have dreamed about today... The comeback that he has had has been remarkable - and it is testimony to his determination and commitment that he has got himself back, he has got himself fit and he is driving better than ever."

That is all for this episode of our F1 Advent Calendar. We have peeked behind nine doors so far and tomorrow we'll start again with Day Ten.