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Lancia D50 (Retro-Speed archive image)

MUGELLO 2020 : Ales Norsky

Was this really Ferrari's 1000th Grand Prix? Words by Ales Norsky

During the Tuscan GP, we had the opportunity to witness celebrations for Ferrari's 1000th Grand Prix. Official title for the race was 'Formula 1 Pirelli Gran Premio della Toscana Ferrari 1000' and a special logo was created with the Scuderia Ferrari crest next to a statement 1000 GP.

No wonder then, that the media and fans alike were under the impression that at Mugello, Scuderia Ferrari attended its 1000th Grand Prix. A closer look reveals that this fact is not as straightforward, as it may appear.

First of all, we need to clarify that we are talking strictly about the F1 world championship here, because in reality the Ferrari cars (factory and private) took part in a number of additional pre-1950 and non-championship Grands Prix and other F1 races. So, now we can begin at Tuscany, world championship race No. 1027. Due to various internal and external reasons, the factory team did not participate in 28 of them. Ten were Indy 500 races in 1950, '51, '53, '54, '55, '56, '57, '58, '59 and '60. Fifteen more were GB '50, GB '59, US '60, US '61, FR '62, US '62, ZA '62, GB '66, MX '66, ZA '67, MC '68, DE '69, NL '73, DE '73 and AT '76, plus FR '50, BE '82 and CH '82, where Ferraris took part in practice or qualifying, but not in the race.

Well, 1027 less 28 gives us 999, which is the number of races attended by the factory team, and private (green) Ferrari in the above mentioned FR '50 brings the total to 1000. Which means that Mugello was 1000th world championship race with a Ferrari car in it. Yet even this could be complicated by the possibility that model D50 really was not a Ferrari, but Lancia. This car was exclusively present in four races: BE '56, FR '56, GB '56 and IT '56.

One way or the other, we can state with certainty that Mugello was not the 1000th race for Scuderia Ferrari, and neither was it the 1000th GP for a Ferrari car, because this total includes the 1952 Indy 500, and the races in Indianapolis (although world championship rounds) could not be classified as Grand Prix.

This season actually marks several 1000th occasions for Ferrari, depending on which angle one takes. When, for example, it comes to the 1000th world championship event (as opposed to race) in which the Ferrari name was featured in some way, we need to apply further calculations. To make it simple, let's go back to Mugello, race No.1027 and 1000th for a Ferrari car. At least one Ferrari took part in qualifying for BE '82 and CH '82, and in private hands in 1954 and 1956 Indy 500 practice. In addition, US '60 and GB '66 featured customer Coopers with Ferrari engines. To be exact, in US '60 it was a Castellotti engine, but since that was modified and rebranded Ferrari, perhaps we can look the other way a bit, same as with the D50 cars.

It all adds up to the 1000th world championship weekend with some form of Ferrari presence occurring six races prior to Mugello. And race No. 1021 was in Hungary, where it all passed without any fanfare whatsoever. As for Scuderia Ferrari in particular, its 1000th world championship event is yet to come. As already noted, Mugello was race 999 for them, and we need to add the three events where they only participated in practice or qualifying (FR '50, BE '82, CH '82). This brings us to number 1002, but we have to subtract the six races, where the factory cars were not entered by the Scuderia. In five cases (US '64, MX '64, CA '69, US '69, MX '69) it was the North American Racing Team, and in ZA '65 the team was entered by then team manager Eugenio Dragoni under his own name.

To sum it up, the fourth race after Mugello will be the 1000th world championship event attended by Scuderia Ferrari, and looking at the calendar, race No.1031 should take place in Imola. Maybe it is time for the folks in Maranello to chill some champagne once again?