

# GRAND PRIX

World  
Formula One  
Championship  
1987/88



Philippe Alliot seemed to go off the road at least once on each of his laps, but when he put on together it took him less time than anyone else in the normally-aspirated class. Ligier, drastically short of engines as usual, had a dreadful time of it, and the unfortunate Alex Caffi failed to make the cut, one of his Osellas having burned to a crisp during the first morning.

So, while Adelaide went out to party, the teams considered what promised to be a day of attrition. It was going to be hard on brakes and fuel, that much was sure. And, with temperatures up in the nineties, it wasn't going to be easy on the men, either.

Sunday morning was not as overtly bright and sunny as the qualifying days but it was hotter than ever, despite the haze. As midday approached it was in the nineties, and the drivers prepared for probably the most sapping race of the season.

Berger said he felt better. His ear was still aching, but the cold symptoms had calmed. Still, he added, this was probably physically tougher than any other track on the world championship schedule, with an abnormal amount of gear changing. It was also, at going on two hours, about the longest of all grands prix.

The warm-up was curiously reminiscent of Japan: once again Gerhard had an engine problem in his race car, and opted to take the spare 097 chassis for the race.

Prost, second fastest, said he felt much better, too, that his back problem in qualifying had eased.

Third fastest was Alboreto, but thereafter the list went frequently haywire. Fourth and fifth, for example, were the Brabhams of de Cesaris and debutant Modena. Up in ninth spot was Piercarlo Ghinzani's Ligier, followed by Christian Danner's Zakspeed. And down near the foot was Patrese, whose Williams-Honda was locking its rear brakes to the point of rendering it undriveable. By race time, though, Riccardo was happy.

Team-mate Piquet had decided against using his 'active' FW11B. He got his regular car off the grid to perfection: revs and timing were absolutely right, and before the first turn Nelson was by both Prost and Berger, through into the lead. Was this to be a day when Piquet declared his right to the title of world champion?

Berger, though, was in no mood to mess around. Piquet was in front for less than half a minute. By the end of the first lap the Ferrari was comfortably established. The Williams ran second, but Senna had momentarily zapped Prost for third — a situation Alain rectified in the course of lap two.

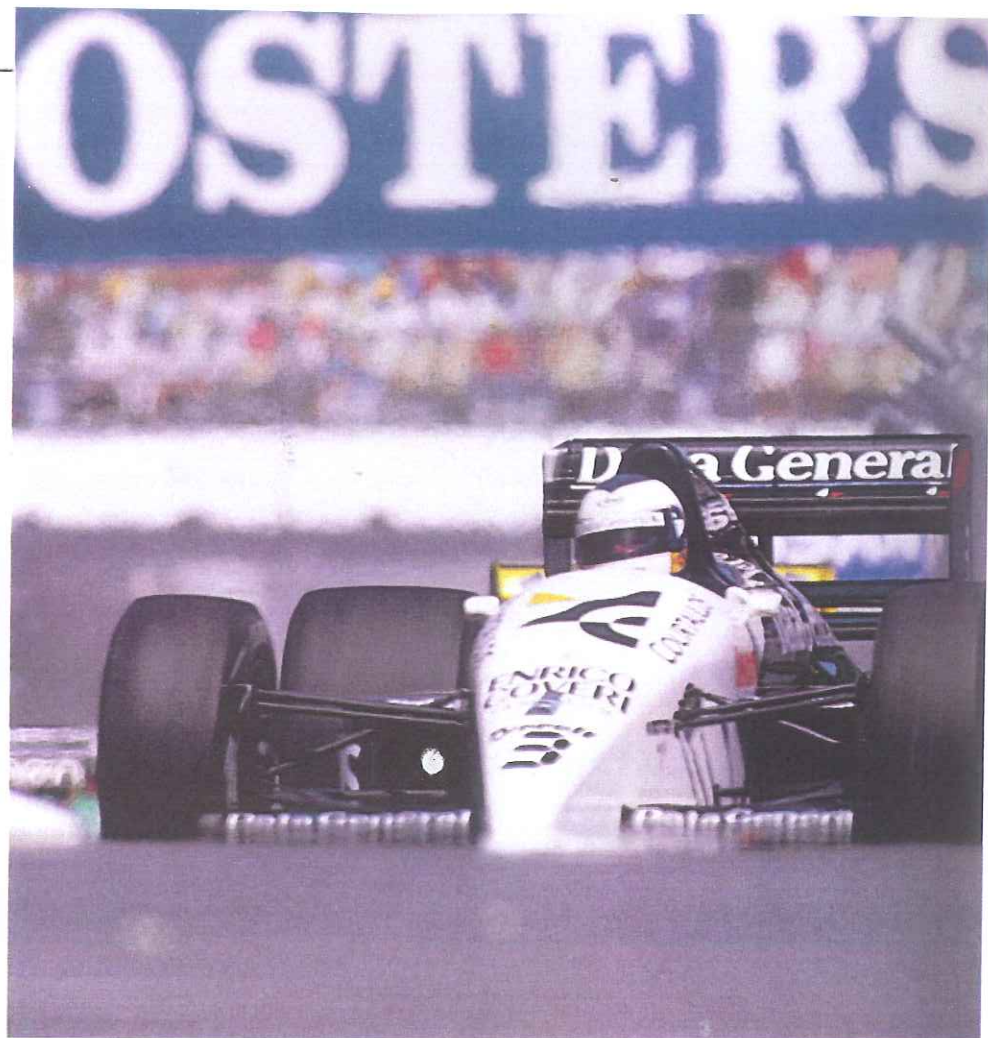
Walking back already was the unfortunate Nannini, who had hit the wall avoiding a Derek Warwick moment in the course of which Derek also clipped Jonathan Palmer's Tyrrell. "The steering was a bit peculiar after that," Jonathan said, "but not a big problem. I think a steering arm must have been a bit bent. I found I had oversteer on right-handers, understeer on left-handers..."

A few laps later Palmer would pit for new tyres — a faulty valve was causing the left front slowly to deflate — and rejoined 23rd. An extremely fine drive thereafter would bring him another normally-aspirated class win.

After three laps Berger was more than four secs up on Piquet, and Prost was showing interest in getting by the Williams. Alboreto, too, was moving along, passing Senna for fourth on lap five, then closing on Prost. This was stoking up nicely, and there was the thought that Berger just might be pressing his hand on full power.

No tyre changes were planned, Goodyear assuring everyone that, unless maltreated, one set would go the 192 miles. But fuel was an important consideration, and so, to a greater degree, were brakes. Tyres, after all, you can change if you have to. So perhaps the others were taking it easy behind Berger, reckoning that the real race would start in the closing laps, when the fast man would be he who could stop...

McLaren had opted, finally, for its thicker brake discs, with suitably modified cooling ducts. "It's the only thing to do," Prost had said after the warm-up. "I still don't have as much brakes as I would like, but at least these might last the race. The other ones... no way. I have to be very careful on full tanks, I think."



Well, yes, up to a point. But being careful and staying ahead of such as Alboreto are difficult ambitions to combine. Alain seemed to find a way, but could not get by Piquet.

So there was Berger, six or seven secs clear of the Piquet-Prost-Alboreto combo, then a short breathing space to another close group: Senna, Patrese and Johansson.

A tyre stop by de Cesaris on lap 14 caused a flurry of speculation about wear rates. The Brabham's rear tyres were badly blistered — was this a portent of trouble for everyone? Not so, it was simply Andrea driving with his usual light touch. Over the next hour or so, he would stop for three more sets...

Actually, that was less than charitable. Fabi needed more Goodyears soon afterwards, and so did Modena. In fact, the young Italian gave Berger an edgy moment immediately after rejoining. At the left-right after the pits he drove his BT56 right over the kerbs to give the Ferrari an uninterrupted line through — and got sideways in front of it as he came

back on the track. But Gerhard made it by without problem.

By lap 20 he was seriously involved in lapping backmarkers, and perhaps Piquet had better luck with the traffic, for the gap came down a little. At the same time Prost had detached himself from the attentions of Alboreto, and was closing again on Piquet. Michele, in fact, was being reeled slowly in by Senna. And on lap 20 Patrese spun, under pressure from Johansson, which let the second McLaren into sixth place. So it was busy out there.

Boutsen, next up, should have played a prominent part in it, but had been in severe brake trouble almost from the start despite Benetton's decision to run cast iron discs. "The pedal went to the floor after only two laps or so," Thierry disconsolately reported afterwards, "and I just had to live with it. A pity, because the car was perfect otherwise..."

Later in the race he would encounter another problem — in the shape of his petulant team-mate, whom he was trying to lap. Teo Fabi had not responded well to being blown away by Boutsen or





A lato, Gerhard Berger taglia vittorioso il traguardo per la seconda volta consecutiva, ripetendo il successo di Suzuka. Il ferrarista è stato sempre al comando tranne che al via (sotto) quando si è fatto sorprendere, ma solo per tre curve, dallo scatto di Piquet partito dalla seconda fila (foto Burgess-Ansa)

LA CRONACA/Non succedeva dal Gp del Canada dell'85

# Doppietta!

Le Ferrari ai primi due posti della classifica: Berger domina la corsa dall'inizio Alboreto, terzo al traguardo, eredita la piazza d'onore grazie alla squalifica di Senna. Così sale sul podio anche Boutsen. L'Agis, con Moreno, conquista il primo punto

**ADELAIDE** — Il warm up non fa altro che confermare tutto quello che è successo nei due giorni di prove. Anche con il pieno Gerard Berger è imprevedibile precedendo Prost e Alboreto. Il pilota della McLaren continua però a lamentarsi per il difettoso funzionamento dei freni, che surriscaldandosi rendono problematica qualunque staccata. La sorpresa viene, comunque, dalla Brabham. De Cesaris e Modena ottengono il quarto e quinto tempo, ma a molti resta il dubbio che entrambe le vetture non abbiano mai provato con il pieno di benzina. L'usura dei freni resta, comunque, il pericolo maggiore, mentre le gomme dovrebbero nei piani della Goodyear consentire tutto il decorso della gara senza effettuare soste. Quando Berger si prepara sulla griglia il 6 cilindri Ferrari emette un rumore poco rassicurante, e dopo un rapido colloquio con Postlethwaite, l'austriaco decide di prendere il via con il

muetto. All'accendersi del semaforo verde, Berger ha un momento di difficoltà, fa patinare troppo le gomme, mentre dalla seconda fila sbucca fuori Piquet che entra per primo in chicane. La supremazia della Williams dura solo tre curve. Poi Berger si installa al comando. Alla fine del primo giro l'austriaco ha già più di un secondo di vantaggio su Piquet, seguono Senna, Prost e Alboreto. Manca Nannini uscito al primo giro dopo una collisione con Warwick. Al secondo giro Prost supera Senna, mentre il vantaggio di Berger continua a aumentare al ritmo di un secondo al giro. Alle spalle dell'austriaco infuria la battaglia tra Piquet, Prost, Senna e Alboreto, mentre Patrese fatica a tenere il ritmo del gruppo di testa. Alle sue spalle rinviene velocissimo Johansson che ottiene subito il giro più veloce in 1'23"480. Al quinto passaggio il vantaggio di Berger è di quasi sei secondi, mentre Albore-

to supera Senna, partito con l'intenzione di non forzare troppo i pneumatici. Si ritira Streiff per un'uscita di pista, concludendo nel peggiore dei modi il suo rapporto con la Tyrrell. Al decimo giro il vantaggio di Berger è di sei secondi, ottenuti tutti nella prima parte della corsa. Seguono Prost, Alboreto, Senna e Patrese; mentre dalle retrovie rinviene bene Modena che occupa la dodicesima posizione alle spalle di Fagi, in difficoltà con il cambio. Il primo a entrare ai box per cambiare le gomme è Palmer, con la copertura posteriore destra forata. Il pilota inglese sarà poi protagonista di un'esaltante rimonta. In testa non si registrano cambiamenti di sorta, mentre al ventiquattresimo giro Riccardo Patrese deve cedere la sesta posizione a Johansson a causa di un testacoda. Al trentesimo giro Berger, autore del passaggio più veloce in 1'22"259, dispone di quattordici secondi su Piquet, mentre il terzetto formato da Prost, Alboreto e Senna è ormai nella scia della Williams. Al trentacinquesimo giro Piquet entra a sorpresa ai box per cambiare le gomme usurate in maniera anomala. Quando il brasiliano riparte, occupa la sesta posizione. Nel frattempo si sono ritirati Brundle per rottura della leva del cambio, Warwick per cedimento della trasmissione dopo essersi toccato anche con Palmer, Nakajima che è rientrato ai box con la macchina che strisciava per terra a causa della rottura delle sospensioni elettroniche, e Ghinzani per cedimento del motore. Così si accende la grande bagarre tra Prost, Alboreto e Senna. In questa fase Michele è scatenato, ottiene il giro più veloce in 1'21"668. Prost si difende come può, ma entrambi finiscono per sforzare oltre ogni limite le gomme e i freni, mentre Senna controlla da vicino la



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