

# TAZIO NUVOLARI WINS DONINGTON'S GREAT RACE FOR AUTO-UNION

IMMENSE CROWDS SPECTATE AT A THRILLING RACE. LANG (MERCEDES-BENZ) AND SEAMAN (MERCEDES-BENZ) SECOND AND THIRD.

**W**ELL, the Crisis blew nicely away and the German teams returned to Donington for the postponed Formula Grand Prix, run on October 22nd instead of on October 1st. It was easily the greatest British race ever held. It was started by H.R.H. the Duke of Kent, and attended by Reichsleiter Adolf Hühnlein, leader of motor sport in Germany, Bayer-Ehrenberg, the President of the German O.N.S. (equivalent to our R.A.C.) and a crowd of enthusiastic spectators estimated at 60,000—last year's estimate of attendance varied between 38,000 to 50,000. The thanks of every enthusiast in the land are due to the Derby and District M.C., for staging such a race. It was, of course, a scratch contest, under the International Formula, over 80 laps or 250 miles of the Donington course. There was a first prize of £250, £50 for the leader at half-distance, and £100 for the fastest race lap. And the Continental entries received starting money. To encourage entrants of British non-Formula cars, the first British car to finish won £100—and they were not so far behind the Germans. If the estimate of 60,000 spectators is correct, the "gate" amounted to £15,000 without considering car-park takings and additional special tickets.

Auto-Union arrived early for the training period. Nuvolari established fastest time at first and had a narrow escape when his Auto-Union hit a stag on the Monday. His time was 2 min. 11.2 secs., faster than the lap record of 1937. On the Tuesday, Lang (Mercedes-Benz) did the fastest lap of all in practice, in 2 mins. 11 secs. This represents a new Donington absolute lap record, beating by .4 of sec. the record established jointly before last year's race by Brauchitsch and Rosemeyer with the bigger cars. Brauchitsch did 2 mins. 11.4 secs., equalling his old record, and Seaman 2 mins. 12.2 secs. Other practice laps were: Muller 2 mins. 12.6 secs., Baumer 2 mins. 13.8 secs., Hasse 2 mins. 15.4 secs., Kautz 2 mins. 18.6 secs., Villoresi 2 mins. 21 secs., Dobson 2 mins. 24.6 secs., Dreyfus 2 mins. 25.4 secs., and Raph, slowest of all, in 2 mins. 36.4 secs. Kautz suffered a cold and Brauchitsch a damaged hand. On the Thursday afternoon Auto-Union appeared to make a big effort to pull down times all round. By then the Maserati had not arrived and it only practised on the Friday, coming from Bologna in a most imposing Fiat van with very effective radiator cowlings. Mercedes-Benz, of course, used their imposing Mercedes-Benz diesel lorries and both open and closed cars, Auto-Union their Horch lorries and open tourers, and the Ecurie Bleue the two-storey Delahaye van. Further notes on the practice period will be found in "Rumblings." And the detailed notes on the thorough methods of preparation of the German teams, which *MOTOR SPORT* published last year, apply again to this year's race.

October 22nd dawned misty and remained warm and gloriously sunny. H.R.H. the Duke of Kent flew up from London and was driven to the course in a V12 Lagonda saloon, in which Richard Seaman, mackintosh over his overalls, drove him for two laps of the course. The Duke, himself a fast driver of his 4½-litre Bentley, started the race and walked to Coppice to watch the cornering before leaving the course, conducted round by Dr. Benjafield. The Duke attended the race in his capacity of President in Chief of the B.R.D.C. Reichsleiter Hühnlein was taken round the circuit by Lionel Martin in a Bentley and afterwards watched the race from the blue-and-gold decked Grandstand. After the finish Frau Hühnlein and the Reichsleiter presented the prizes. Capt. and Mrs. Bemrose and Mr. Shields were also present.

Members of the German Embassy drove up from London in open Mercedes-Benz and B.M.W. cars. Mercedes-Benz sent their Grosvenor Road engineering staff up by special coach, and a coachload of the R.A.F. also attended. Lots of aircraft brought visitors, including a war-time 504K Avro. And Donington had room for all of us, and all our cars, in comfort.

The field for this great race comprised: Tazio Nuvolari, Hermann Muller, Rudolf Hasse, and Christian Kautz with Formula Auto-Unions; Hermann Lang, Manfred von Brauchitsch, Richard Beattie Seaman and Walter Baumer with Formula Mercedes-Benz, Villoresi with a Formula Maserati, René Dreyfus and Bodoignet Raph with Ecurie Bleue Delahayes, Arthur Dobson's E.R.A., Ian Connell's E.R.A., Billy Cotton's E.R.A., Cuddon-Fletcher's M.G., Percy Maclure's Riley and Robin Hanson's Alta.

Mercedes-Benz had put in Baumer because Rudolf Caracciola had a damaged foot and had not come over. Auto-Union had Luich Bigalke as reserve driver.

The Mercedes-Benz cars have 60° V12 engines of 2,962 c.c., with four valves per cylinder operated by four o.h. camshafts. Twin Roots blowers suck from Mercedes carburettors and the solid crankshaft runs in split roller-bearings. The cylinder blocks are of alloy, with steel liners and the crankcase is also of light alloy. The camshafts are driven from the rear end. At the rear end also are twin Bosch magnetos. The engines peak at around 7,500 r.p.m., and give off 400 to 450 b.h.p. There is an oil-tank in the crankcase and the fuel storage comprises two separate tanks coupled by large-bore pipes, one in the tail and one as a saddle round the scuttle. The front tank fills first and the combined capacity is approximately 70 gallons. The latest tankage ensures that weight distribution remains correct at all levels. The chassis has alloy oval side members braced by four tubular cross-members. Transmission is via a single dry-plate clutch and off-set propeller shaft to a five speed and reverse gearbox mounted on the frame and controlled by right-

hand lever. Suspension at the rear is by torsion bars parallel with the side-members, controlled by hydraulic shock-absorbers adjustable from the cockpit. The jointed driving shafts are tied by a De Dion type tubular axle. Front suspension is independent, by pressed steel wishbones and coil springs with four coils, controlled by hydraulic shock-absorbers. Separate steering drag-links are used. Lockheed hydraulic braking is used. The exhaust-pipes have been brought outside the body for recent races and some cars now have stubby tails. The average weight is approximately 978 kilos., but it is said that the cars are now lighter. They consume fuel at under 2 m.p.g. For Donington 7.00" x 19" rear covers were used. The Mercedes-Benz team is under the control of Herr Alfred Neubauer and their head engineer is Herr Uhlenhaut, who committed lots of practice lappery at Donington. The head mechanics are Zimmer and Lindenmaier. Geier is a timekeeper. Dr. Glesser is medical adviser to both teams.

The Auto-Unions have rear-placed V12 engines of 2,986 c.c., with overhead valves actuated by three o.h. camshafts and a single Roots blower driven from the rear of the engine and sucking from twin carburettors. Light alloy construction is used throughout. Tubular openwork frame side members are used, and through them the cooling water circulates from engine to radiator. The transmission incorporates a five speed gearbox mounted on the rear axle. Front suspension is independent, by torsion bar, and at the rear a De Dion axle is sprung by torsion bar, hydraulically damped. Lockheed hydraulic brakes are used and the driver sits ahead of the engine. The Auto-Union equipe is governed by Dr. Feureissen. The head technician is Robert Eberon von Eberhorst, who speaks English, and his chief assistant is Sebastian. Nuvolari brought his personal mechanic "Nini." The latest Auto-Unions have sharper noses than the older cars. It is believed that different shock-absorbers have been used since Rheims. On the eve of the Donington race Rolls-Royce Ltd. of Derby undertook some special work for Auto-Union with which the equipe was highly delighted—we believed it concerned drilling out the carburettor jets. It led, of course, to the usual stupid daily paper stories that "British firm ensures German success," etc.

Billy Cotton, Connell and Cuddon-Fletcher were out on the Thursday, but Arthur Dobson and Villoresi had then not appeared.

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The morning of October 22nd dawned misty but fine and Epsom Downs crowds drove into Donington's beautiful park. "God Save the King" over the broadcasting apparatus told of the arrival of H.R.H. the Duke of Kent, who afterwards was driven two laps in a V12 Lagonda by Seaman, whom King Farlow described as the greatest British driver

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who has ever lived. They say the second lap was quite rapid.

The cars were now lined up on the starting grid. In the front row, reading from the Grandstand side, were Lang (Mercedes-Benz), Nuvolari (Auto-Union), Brauchitsch (Mercedes-Benz) and Seaman (Mercedes-Benz). In the second row: Muller (Auto-Union), Baumer (Mercedes-Benz), and Hasse (Auto-Union). In the third row: Kautz (Auto-Union), Villorosi (Maserati), Dobson (E.R.A.), and Dreyfus (Delahaye). In the fourth row: Connell (E.R.A.), Cotton (E.R.A.), Fletcher (M.G.). Behind: Maclure (Riley), Hanson (Alta) and Raph (Delahaye). The Maserati was a Formula 3-litre straight-eight with twin-camshaft twin-blower engine, which had given the German cars its dust briefly at Pescara. It has torsional independent front suspension and reversed quarter-elliptics at the back. Raph's Delahaye we had seen at Brooklands, but Dreyfus had the single-seater with independent front springing. Both had V12 4½-litre unblown motors with single o.h. camshafts per block, three carburettors, twenty-four plugs and seven-bearing roller-bearing crankshaft. They were of especial interest because a production version, the Type 165, will shortly be available in this country.

The drivers got into their cars, awaiting the electric starters, and Nuvolari, in blue overall trousers, short-sleeve yellow jumper and red helmet, was last to climb in. Seaman wore white overalls and a green helmet, Brauchitsch a red helmet, Lang white and Baumer blue.

The little Union Jack fell and in a crash of sound they were off round Red Gate. Already Nuvolari had a nice lead from Brauchitsch, Seaman and Lang. Maclure was last away, but the Maserati made a bad start. All eyes on the straight and the order was seen to be: Nuvolari, Muller, Brauchitsch, Seaman, Lang, Baumer, Hasse, Kautz, Dreyfus, Dobson, Villorosi, Connell, Fletcher, Raph, Cotton, Hanson and Maclure. Another lap, and the Germans were up to 170 or so along the straight, the whole circuit sang to the sound and the almondy boot-polish fuel fumes became quite pungent. Villorosi had passed Dreyfus and Dobson and Cotton had come up two places, while Raph had passed Fletcher. After only two laps Kautz found his Auto-Union throttle staying wide open into Melbourne when it should have shut and he rammed the bank, bent the car badly and retired. He had left the road at Coppice just beforehand. On lap 3 Raph visited his pit and the bonnet was removed. He was in again on lap 8 and out of the race with no oil pressure by ten laps.

At ten laps Nuvolari, arms working like pistons, led from Muller by 14.6 secs. at 81.57 m.p.h., with Seaman third. Lang was wilder than Seaman, likewise Brauchitsch, whose gear-changing was sometimes rough. Villorosi now went out, as the Maser. had smashed a piston and Maclure's Riley stayed on the grass after Melbourne with a broken rear-axle. Dreyfus also retired the single-place Delahaye with a broken oil-line, so

France and Italy had finished. Fletcher left the road in the M.G. and decided to spectate—already the field was thinning. Came intense excitement, for, after leading Muller by 21.8 secs., at 20 laps (82.07 m.p.h.) Nuvolari came to his pit six laps later. The Maestro stood up in the cockpit while a single plug was changed, a mechanic holding the bonnet expectantly above the engine. The car was stationary for 53 secs. and Nuvolari fell to fourth place, Muller now leading from Seaman and Lang. The German cars were passing the E.R.A.s in all sorts of impossible places and sending the on-lookers into fits by their immense cornering and terrific rush downhill to the Hairpin. The flag marshalling was well conducted. Came drama! Hanson's Alta broke up its engine and dropped much oil by the approach to the Hairpin. Every German car left the road as a result! Nuvolari slid off to the right hand grass verge, recovered, and got away round the hairpin. Then Brauchitsch slid, turned round twice and took the hairpin in a broadside. Hasse now skidded to the right, shot across the road, hit some fencing on the outside of the course, which uprooted as if struck by a bomb, missed a hut in which sat Mrs. Craner, and smote the safety bank. Hasse was unhurt, and, they say, at once leapt the fencing and shook off the ambulance men. But his car was badly damaged and another Auto-Union was out. Alas, Seaman left the course on the inside, came back across the road, and ended up beyond the wrecked Auto-Union. Officials pushed him off, but much time was lost. Lang and Muller also slid. As a result Muller now led by 5 secs. from Lang, with Nuvolari third and Brauchitsch, Baumer, Seaman and Dobson behind. Actually, on the had lap Muller had led Seaman by only 2.8 secs., with Lang a close third, but now Dick was a lap in arrears. On the previous lap Dobson refuelled his E.R.A. in 68 secs. Hanson had refuelled before his blow-up. The pit-stops now came on. Lang stopped first and, amid a mass of mechanics and dense fumes, refuelled in 33 secs. The splash-cover was forgotten in the excitement and Lang flung it clear as he accelerated away, still in second place. Brauchitsch was next, stopping at Neubauer's black and red flag and cleaning his screen as fuel went in in 30 secs. The Mercs. refuel at the rate of about 5 gallons per second. Connell now replenished and gave Monkhouse the wheel, a cushion being needed in the cockpit.

After 40 laps, Muller (Auto-Union) led Lang (Mercedes-Benz) by 48.4 secs. and Nuvolari by 58 secs. He now refuelled and had the rear wheels changed in 40 secs. Lang consequently went ahead, having made his stop. Baumer came in on lap 41 for fuel and plugs, leaving in 79 secs. Seaman now lost 44 secs. in refuelling. Lang had stopped on lap 38, but Nuvolari waited until lap 42. The stop was immensely exciting, and all four wheels were changed and fuel put in in a mere 35 secs. As before Tazio accelerated out of the pit area in a great cloud of dust, but Muller remained ahead. A lap later Baumer's Mercedes-

Benz came round misfiring, and barely took the rise beyond Melbourne. As it breasted the rise a dull glow broke out round the engine and the car was on fire properly as it got to the pits. Baumer leapt lightly out before it stopped and the flames were soon out, whereupon the car was retired. At 50 laps, with 30 laps to run, Lang led from Muller by 21 secs. and Nuvolari was 58 secs. behind Lang. Wilkinson, who had been driving Cotton's E.R.A. very well indeed, now returned the wheel to Billy as the car was refuelled. Ten laps later Nuvolari had passed Muller and was 21 secs. behind Lang, having made up 37 secs. The little Italian was astounding. He went out of the wood and down to the hairpin in his inimitable style, arms bowed out and flashing like pistons to head-level, the car in full control, yet never straight for a moment. Strong men sang his praises. Indeed, one well known motor scribe was so moved as to write: "He came through the bends with his elbows flashing up and down . . . steering wheel jerking quickly from side to side . . . yet all the time the car ran as if on rails, front wheels always pointing dead on the line of travel"—actually, the Auto-Union's steering was quite in order!

On his 56th lap Tazio did 82.96 m.p.h. and on his 63rd lap 83.71 m.p.h.—best lap of the race, winning the Craner Trophy and £100. Lang's Mercedes seemed to be slowing, and, 21 secs. away at 60 laps, Nuvolari closed to 12 secs. at 63 laps, 10 secs. at 64, 6 secs. at 65, 3 secs. at 66 and on lap 67 the Auto-Union got past Lang on Starkey straight. At 70 laps, Nuvolari led Lang by 17.4 secs. at 80.29 m.p.h., Seaman was third, very dirty but driving as well as anyone, and Muller was fourth, with Brauchitsch, also oil-begrimed, fifth.

The race was now never in doubt. Arthur Dobson, surprisingly close to the Germans, led the British contingent, refilling again on his 57th lap in 61 secs. Muller had another stop to fix his bonnet, losing 38 secs. So the race ran on, greatest race we have ever had. Nuvolari crossed the line, winner for Auto-Union at 80.49 m.p.h., by 1 min. 38 secs., after 3 hours 6 mins. 22 secs. hard work. He stopped, received a wreath of honour, and drove another lap. Lang finished second in the Mercedes-Benz, and Muller stopped rather confusedly at the end of the pits, flagged off in fourth place with a lap to go. Seaman, who held Nuvolari on the closing laps, came in third, also a lap behind, and hairpinned round to run up to his pit before cutting his engine. As he did so, the "Deutschland Uber Alles" rang out and our biggest motor-racing crowd, now rapidly invading the course, stood most impressively to attention. The "Giovinezza" followed, in honour of the greatest driver of all time—Tazio Nuvolari. Nuvolari was deeply touched by his welcome, but at rather a loss, as he speaks neither English nor German. He was presented to Herr and Frau Huhnlein, as was our own Arthur Dobson. Dobson finished sixth, only six laps behind Nuvolari. Nuvolari grabbed a bottle of champagne as he was carried shoulder high from the Grandstand. He went over to Auto-Union's big garage



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continued

on the Melbourne side of Coppice Farm and was later driven, in coat and cap once more, to Derby in a closed Horch by Dr. Feureissen, looking a sad, nervous and very subdued little man. Other placings were: Brauchitsch fifth, Dobson sixth, Cotton-Wilkinson seventh, Connell-Monkhouse eighth. £50 for leader at half-distance: Muller. Team Prize: E.R.A. team. The Mercs. seemed to give their drivers a dirty ride and oil from the engines on the exterior of the cars is still evident and the Auto-Unions had quite dirty tails.

Thus ended the best motor-race Britain has ever had. We look hopefully forward to as great a race again next year.

The race had a happy sequel on the Monday evening, when the B.R.D.C. gave a cocktail party at the "Rembrandt," which was attended by Seaman, wearing his Gold Star, Brauchitsch, Lang, Muller, Dobson, Maclure, Eberhorst, Neubauer, Dr. Feureissen, Lord Howe, Dr. Glesser, Geier, Ebbelwhite, Fane, Aldington, John Cobb, Eason-Gibson, and Secretary Scannell. Cobb had earnest conversation with Feureissen and Eberhorst and apparently expects soon to see them in Germany, and Muller was giving away Auto-Union pin-badges, notably to the lovelier of the ladies who were present.

Of course, all sorts of "ifs" arise in analysing the results. Last year it was Brauchitsch's tyre; this time the oil patch. Some say Seaman would have won had he not left the road and stalled—certainly he drove magnificently, holding Nuvolari at the end. Between fifty and sixty laps Seaman, however, lost 15.2 secs. on Nuvolari and between sixty and seventy laps he lost another 15.8 secs., and was 2 mins. 21.4 secs. behind. When fuller figures are available slide-rule wallahs can grapple with the whole problematical story.

British Movietone News deserve especial praise for putting on a special film of the race at their Shaftesbury Avenue News Theatre, during the week following the race.

It was a truly magnificent race and all peace-loving peoples will join with us in hoping that we may still be at peace in October 1939, and that Germany, France and Italy will again compete in our only Formula Grand Prix.

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