
Snapshot, 1976: Bernie Ecclestone and his busy bees at Brabham-Alfa Romeo

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It's 1 August 1976, and in the pit lane ahead of the German Grand Prix at the Nürburgring, Brabham-Alfa Romeo team owner Bernie Ecclestone has the unusual task of running three drivers in the race instead of two, thanks to legal action from a disgruntled driver...

It's not often you see *three* Works-entered Formula 1 cars at a Grand Prix these days, but such is the way at the Nürburgring this weekend. German Rolf Stommelen has been drafted in to drive the spare BT45 for Brabham-Alfa Romeo after the privateer RAM Racing outfit's Brabham he was supposed to be driving was impounded by police. Don't ask. Needless to say, this won't be a day Bernie Ecclestone, designer Gordon Murray, and fellow drivers Carlos Pace and Carlos Reutemann will forget anytime soon. On just the second lap of the wet race, championship leader Niki Lauda will have an awful accident in his Ferrari that will very nearly kill him. What no one will know, however, is that the crash will go down in time as a prologue to one of the fiercest rivalries in Formula 1 history — that between 'The Rat' and British playboy James Hunt.

Photo: Grand Prix Photo via Getty Images

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