



STIRLING MOSS:

"My Goals in Racing"

Rated as a "five-star" man by Britain's authoritative racing publication, *Auto-sport*, Moss has a reputation for driving faster — and more safely — than any of his rivals. For three years — 1955, '56, '57 — he was No. 2 man (behind Fangio) in the race for World Champion on Grand Prix cars. Nevertheless, he won the British Grand Prix in 1955, ahead of his teacher. He has been eight-time British racing champion and four-time runner-up for the world racing crown. With his first-place win at Riverside, Moss ended the 1960 season in third place in international point standing of World Championship drivers.

The following interview was held immediately after Moss' Riverside triumph. In it he makes clear his views on American and European drivers, machines, courses and attitudes. Here is an off-the-shoulder talk which captures Moss' racing spirit.



as told to Jim Potter and Ed Craig

PHOTOS BY PAT BROLIER AND CRAIG AUTOPHOTOS

Q. Which victory meant more to you — '55 at Aintree in defeating Fangio, or the '57 Grand Prix at Silverstone where you were the first English driver and car in 23 years?

Oh, the one at Silverstone, without doubt. However, to me the most important win was in 1956 at Silverstone, a small race where I drove the Vanwall for the first time. This was a 100-mile race in which I drove against the factory Ferraris, Maseratis, Lancias and so forth, and managed to win it against Fangio and Ascari. This to me was the most important race because it was the first time in the whole of my racing career, which at that time had been running some eight or nine years or more, when English cars showed any promise at all. Therefore, it was very significant. It was at this time I realized that now I could start driving English cars again. That was really the most important race to me.

Q. That was just after the Mercedes-Benz season?

Yes, that was in May, 1956.

Q. We read last year of a meeting at the Mercedes-Benz factory to which a number of drivers were invited, some of whom had driven for them before and after the war, and also some of the up-and-coming Grand Prix drivers. Does this mean that Mercedes might return to racing in 1961?

They certainly won't in 1961. They might in '62 and that is only a guess. You always get rumors; it wouldn't surprise me in '62.

Q. Will the intercontinental formula become more important than Formula I in 1961?

I would like to think it will, but I don't think so. I think that we made a grave mistake, and America must share this

equally with us, when we allowed the FIA to pass it through and ratify it as a three-liter. I like the idea of three liters because I think it will be far more exciting, but the trouble with making it three liters is that it frightens people who only have two and a half. They're frightened that the other man's going to get three liters in it and they're going to be out of the picture. I think it would have been far better for everybody if they had said, 'right, two and a half liters for at least another year. They didn't, and I think that as things are at this particular time now, November, 1960, I'm afraid we won't see formula intercontinental races. I think the new 1500cc Formula I is a very bad thing; it's uninteresting from the driver's viewpoint. There are quite a lot of things against it, and I can't see anything to recommend it. But I'm afraid it's going to go through and the big races will be to this formula.

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Stirling Moss

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Q. Do you think that Formula 1 will be increased in displacement?

No, I don't think it will. The FIA are a body of people who have very little understanding of the sport and therefore I can't see that once they've done this, they will ever go back. They won't debate; they won't discuss the pros and cons. They make up their minds and that's it. Bang. They make up their minds without anybody being consulted as far as I can see, except those who know very little, and therefore I can't see that it is likely to come back up. Once a thing gets going and gains momentum I'm afraid the people will accept the new formula and it will be just one of those things.

Q. Were many of the drivers disappointed when everyone agreed to the 1500cc limit?

England never agreed. England, America and Italy never agreed. They were out-voted. Apart from that, I don't know one single driver in Formula 1 racing as we know it today who is not sorry that it is being changed.

Q. What do you think the chances are of Formula 1 cars competing at Indianapolis?

There's no chance in my opinion. I don't know if Jack Brabham and John Cooper will be running a car there. I don't think a car that we know — a Formula 1 Grand Prix machine of today — is really a competitive machine at Indianapolis. I think that with a Lotus or a Cooper... and knowing what one knows about lap times... I think possibly they could be pushed up to 146 or 147 mph, as they stand, without any modifications. If you go to fuel then I think you can go quicker, but the problem of tire wear would be very great. Dunlop has said they could build special tires which would go considerably longer, but really there isn't that much interest in Indianapolis in Europe. The drivers are not particularly keen to go to Indianapolis because it means missing at least three or four important races in Europe.

Q. The money wouldn't bring them?

No, it's not that. The price tag doesn't mean a thing because even if you managed to win Indy, the winner would get presumably about \$40,000 — pretty good money admittedly, but the driver takes his cut, 50 per cent usually. This is if he wins it, and if he doesn't win it, he doesn't get much. By the same token, if he goes for three or four races in Europe over the same period, he, being a European driver, would have a good chance of success in those. A driver gets paid starting money in each race in Europe, and anyway, if he takes home \$40,000 to \$50,000, the government takes two naughts off the end and he's left with next to nothing. It doesn't make that much difference to us. If in a year I do 20 races or 40 races, or as I did last year 42, my actual income at the end of the year is very little different. In fact, one is influenced to do races for other than money, though naturally you've got to make ends meet. But there are other things that are more important.

Q. Did your accident last June make any difference in your driving or your attitude toward racing?

No. I was just a bit upset when the wheel came off. It was the fault of not being strong enough. No two ways about it now. Since then we've been crack-detecting the wheels and we find them cracked after every race. Therefore something needs to be done about it. But it didn't worry me because it wasn't an error in judgment. If I'd lost the car at that speed — about 140 mph it was — due to an error in judgment, then I think that I'd have been very shaken and I might not even have made it back. I didn't, and I knew exactly why it was and what had happened. In fact, I saw the wheel going off just before I crashed.

Q. What was the extent of your injuries?

I broke both legs just below the knees and I crushed three vertebrae in my back and broke my nose — that's just about enough.

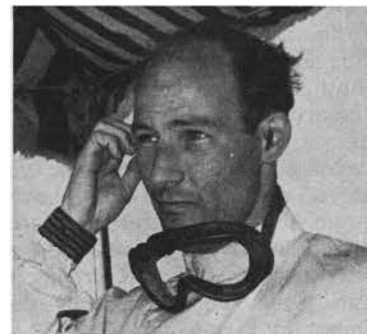
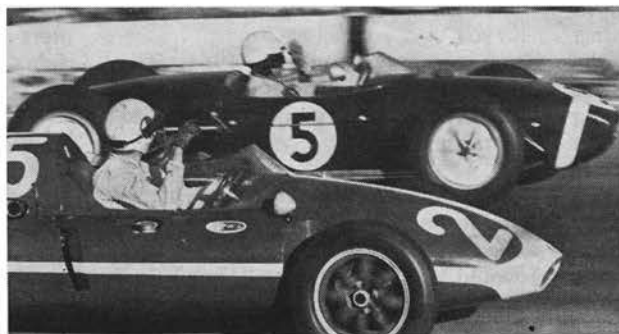
Q. And you were back racing in a couple of months?

Yes, less than that. I was testing in five

weeks. They wouldn't let me race at five weeks, unfortunately. I had to sweat it out for about eight weeks.

Q. Can you think of any reason for your "bad luck" and car failures?

Well, you see, you get a lot of criticism levelled for mechanical failures, particularly if you're in a position where anything that happens is made public. In other words, the year that I had a lot of gearbox trouble — actually, Maurice Trintignant had just as many gearbox failures as I did and nothing was made of it — the gearbox that we used we were forced to use because Cooper was not in a position or didn't want to sell us the factory gearboxes. We either took the car with no gearbox or we didn't take it. We took the car and we built this gearbox called the Carloti. Since then it's been very considerably modified and was used this year at Watkins Glen. Olivier Gendebien and Jo Bonnier used it and both of them broke their gearboxes. I would say that these facts haven't been written up anywhere before. Both the cars were out with the same trouble. Since what I do seems to be newsworthy for some reason — particularly if it's my private life — the thing breaks, quite frequently when I'm in the lead, and because I was in the lead, people felt I was taking too much out of the car. For instance, at Sebring, I hadn't gotten within 5½ seconds of my practice lap time and in effect, I was driving slowly, but I was in the lead by 12 seconds in six laps when I had car trouble. I don't see that it's relevant. Frankly, I could have gone a lot quicker if necessary, but then things like wheels come off, or brakes fail. I've had nine or 10 wheels come off and I think eight or nine complete brake failures. I don't believe you can blame the driver for these things at all — unless he hits something — which I haven't done. In each case, when it happens somebody comes up and says, "Jolly bad luck! My soul, but you do have bad luck!" Then a couple of months later it gradually swings around that you didn't finish, and it gets around so that you didn't finish because it was your fault. Then people look back to 1959, when I lost the Championship to Jack Brabham in the last race at Sebring.



That year I did 42 races. I got 22 firsts and yet people turn around and say it was an unsuccessful year. To me it wasn't, but because the places where the car broke were important races, of course it gets that much more publicity.

Q. We were wondering about Americans in Europe. How do American drivers stack up in your opinion?

I rate Dan Gurney and Phil Hill in the top six or eight in the world. It wouldn't surprise me if Dan would get the World Championship within the next year or so if he has the right car. The only thing is that we have two English boys, John Surtees and Jim Clark who, I reckon, are also equally terrific.

Q. What do you think of American racing cars?

I don't think that American racing cars have much chance at the moment, mainly because their builders can't make up for their lack of experience in this field. I think Lance Reventlow has made a very brave effort and I think what he's done has been very creditable, but he is a long way off winning. He knows it. Everyone at home or in Europe anyway gives him what assistance they can, because we'd like to see his car go well, but I think that he's quite a way off yet from actually winning. The drivers we see over there, of course, are very European in every respect. Their whole outlook on life is, shall we say, non-American or more European. I think that of those who race over here, there are certain drivers who obviously would do well in Europe. But, I think quite a lot of them would have to change their attitudes slightly, because there is a very high code of sportsmanship among drivers in Europe.

Q. Do you think it's their sporting attitude which would be hard to change, or is it that they have learned to drive American style?

Well, it's possibly the same sort of thing, but you see, in Europe you don't get one driver pushing another. That is, I don't mean to say — never — but it is terribly rare. Drivers don't chop each other off. There is a sort of code that you work out between you and the other driver when you're going into

corners — who's going to go first — unless it happens to be the last corner of the the last lap, in which case it's every man for himself. If you race against the same drivers every week, you get to know how they drive and you know them well. Over here in America I rather felt in the sports car races that if you weren't prepared to push, then you wouldn't get by. If they want to play that way, this is fair enough. I'm not against it in that respect except that I feel it's unnecessary. Racing has enough hazards; racing should allow the best man to win rather than the one who is prepared to literally push other people off the road. Frankly, we were quite surprised at how difficult it was to pass some people. Broadly speaking I think the drivers over here have the same sort of courtesy when they know someone is following. The point is this: Unless drivers have raced in really fast machinery, it's difficult for a man driving a medium-powered machine to know how fast a modern Formula 1 or modern high-powered sports car comes up. It's tremendous, really, particularly a Formula 1 car.

Q. What about the tracks in America? Laguna Seca is the best I've been on.

Q. How about Watkins Glen?

I like Laguna Seca better. I would say that Golden Gate most likely is another one that would be as good. Riverside isn't bad but is doesn't compare with Laguna. The long straight at Riverside is bad. You see, at a place like Laguna Seca you've got fast corners where you just have to ease off ever so slightly. You really keep on it and the quicker you go through those — particularly when they start climbing uphill — the wider the gap is going to be between a really fast driver and just a good driver. And this is the thing that we want — to spread them out a bit.

Q. How do you like endurance races such as the Sebring 12-hour event?

Well, I don't think much of 12-hour races anyway. When you have to share a car with another driver, there are certain problems which mean you've got to have twice as many drivers for a certain number of cars, and there are not that many drivers. That's the first thing. Second, when you're racing 12 hours, you always have to under-rev the machine — you can't really race. And personally, I like to race, that's why I do it. Trying to outsmart the other bloke, out-drive him and so on, that's what I get out of it. But, to go on a 12-hour or 24-hour race, you lose a lot of this.

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STIRLING MOSS' 1960 RACING RECORD

Date	Name of Event	Machine	Position
Jan. 1	South African Grand Prix	Cooper-Borgward	2nd
Jan. 9	New Zealand Grand Prix	Cooper-Climax	Retired
Feb. 7	Argentine Grand Prix	Cooper-Climax	3rd
Feb. 28	Cuban Sports Car GP	Maserati	1st
Mar. 26	4-Hour Sebring	Sprite	2nd
Mar. 26	12-Hour Sebring	Maserati	Retired
Apr. 10	Bruxelles Grand Prix	Porsche	2nd
Apr. 18	Goodwood	Cooper-Climax	2nd
Apr. 18	Goodwood	Porsche	2nd
Apr. 18	Goodwood	Aston Martin DB4	1st
Apr. 30	Aintree 200	Porsche	1st
May 14	Silverstone	Jaguar	2nd
May 14	Silverstone	Cooper-Climax	Retired
May 22	Nurburgring 1000 kms.	Maserati	1st
May 29	Monte Carlo Grand Prix	Lotus-Climax	1st
June 6	Dutch Grand Prix	Lotus-Climax	4th
June 18	Belgian Grand Prix	(Crashed while practicing)	
Aug. 7	Karlskoga Grand Prix	Lotus-Monte Carlo	1st
Aug. 20	Tourist Trophy	Ferrari	1st
Aug. 27	Brands Hatch (Kentish 100)	Porsche	9th
Aug. 27	Brands Hatch	Ferrari	1st
Aug. 10/11	Danish Grand Prix	Porsche	4th
Sept. 18	Austrian Grand Prix	Porsche	1st
Sept. 24	Oulton Park — Gold Cup	Lotus-Climax	1st
Oct. 2	Modena Grand Prix	Lotus-Climax	Retired
Oct. 9	Watkins Glen Grand Prix	Lotus-Climax	1st
Oct. 15/16	Riverside	Lotus-Monte Carlo	Retired
Oct. 23	Pacific Grand Prix	Lotus-Monte Carlo	1st
Nov. 20	U. S. Grand Prix (Riverside)	Lotus-Climax	1st
Nov. 27	Nassau Tourist Trophy	Ferrari Berlinetta GT	1st
Dec. 17	Cape GP (S. Africa)	Porsche F-2	1st



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Q. What things are more important to you? Is your goal in racing still to bring home the Championship as an English driver in an English car?

Yes, I'd certainly like to get the Championship, but I do a lot of races that have nothing to do with the Championship. In fact, Championship races are the worst payers. The main reason is that if you are as we are at home with taxation as it is, the only thing you can do, really, is to build up a name that is worth something for you when you want to retire. That's what I want to try to do. And therefore, to this end, it's quite often important to go and race in places that are a bit out of the way and inconvenient, such as New Zealand, Australia, South America, South Africa and so forth. It isn't really the World Championship only. That, of course, is what everybody would like to get and I'm the same as anybody else. But I think the important thing is to get respect from your fellow drivers. If they respect your ability, this I think is the highest honor you can get. This is what Fangio had, and it's something that I'd like to feel I've got. I get a lot out of racing — exhilaration, excitement — the opportunity and the challenge against the other man and the forces of nature and so on. I just don't think there is anything else that compares. I've done other sports and I just can't find any that compares with racing; I can't find any other sport which has men in it whom I enjoy being with as much as in motor racing.

Q. What about team sports?

I enjoy team sports, but I'm an individualist and it's difficult for an individualist to play a team sport. I enjoy racing in teams, but I think individuality is something I like as well.

Q. Even if you have to be No. 2 man?

I don't mind being No. 2 man if the man who is No. 1 is better than I am. This is the lucky situation I was in when Fangio was No. 1. To play No. 2 against a man whom you know you could beat would be a very frustrating, heartbreaking situation.

Q. Were any of those races, when you were teamed with Fangio, that you really thought: "Now, if I hadn't been ordered to stay here, I could win this race?"

No, because you'd never know. The point is this: Fangio to me was the greatest driver in the world, and it may be that he was going slower than I thought I could go, but I know very well that he wasn't going as fast as he could go; therefore, it doesn't really

mean anything. We were both driving so much within our capabilities — a lot or a little depending on circumstances — but I know very well that if the chips were down, Fangio could always pull out that little bit more. It may be that if I had a really good day and he was feeling ill, I might have been able to beat him — I wouldn't know. I have sufficient respect for him, however, that I wouldn't consider trying to take the lead. When I started at Aintree, I didn't know whether I was supposed to win or not; frankly, I don't know to this day.

Q. Do you find that crews and drivers in a foreign country have any problems because of nationality?

No, because motor racing is so international. It doesn't make any difference whether a man's an Italian, Frenchman, a German, Englishman, Spaniard or Dutchman — if motor racing is there it solidifies their relationships and gets rid of all the problems. True, they may like different types of girls but, basically speaking, drivers are all the same sort of people.

Q. When are you going to drive for Ferrari?

Oh, I don't know. I might. You never know. I'm getting more tolerant as I get older. I would not have up until about a year ago. But today, you just never know — I might. At least I have now gotten over the animosity and the old feelings that I had toward Ferrari. I've always respected him for building what I think are the finest cars in the world for the moment.

Q. What do you think is the reason for Ferrari not coming here?

Not enough loot. All of us who have come here now, forgetting prize money, don't make anything for racing in the U.S. The cost of what we have to do to get here, the depreciation on the machinery, etc., limits the take-home pay. There's simply nothing in it. We, on the other hand, would love to see Grand Prix racing get going over here, and that is why we come out. Everyone is therefore keen to come along.

Q. What about the Grand Prix circuit over here?

Well, if they run one, it would be great.

Q. Would most drivers go along with the sports car races sandwiched in between the Formula races?

Yes, they would.

Q. What are your plans for 1961?

I really haven't formulated my plans for 1961. I believe I will be racing again for Rob Walker, but that's about the extent of what I now know I'm going to do in the coming year. •