



RAINER SCHEGELMILCH

Grand Prix of Germany

LOOKING HIS UNFLAPPABLE
BEST,
JACK BRABHAM TOOK THE
NÜRBURGRING AND VIRTUALLY
CLINCHED THE WORLD
DRIVING AND MANUFACTURING
CHAMPIONSHIPS

• Color this year's German Grand Prix murky. The sun was on its traditional vacation in late July, and the nasty black clouds over the Nürburgring were either threatening to unburden themselves or actually doing so. By the time the rain-soaked Grand Prix of Germany slogged to a conclusion, it was evident that Jack Brabham and his Repco-Brabham V-8 had virtually clinched the World Drivers Championship with 39 points and only three Formula One events still to go. Brabham had won the French, the British, the Dutch, and now the German—consecutively—and that was enough to put him almost out of sight as far as his competitors were concerned. Graham Hill had 17 points

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continued

for second place, and Jochen Rindt and John Surtees were tied for third with 15 points each, but they were a long way behind, and the man who was to catch Brabham would have to win all three of the remaining races. It was Surtees, with the potent 3-liter Cooper-Maserati, who seemed the most likely candidate to pull off a last-ditch effort, and judging from the way he shadowed Brabham at the Nürburgring, he has every intention of trying.

It looked like a fairly straightforward race until one remembered that the organizers had decided to include a Formula Two race with the main event. Moans from the F-1 backmarkers. It seems the faster F-2 machinery would overtake them, and that just wasn't right, somehow. I mean, a fella has his girl in the pit and everything, and it just doesn't look good, you know? But that was the way it was to be, so practice was attacked with a singular lack of enthusiasm by one and all. Dark skies, spitting rain, tire indecisions—it was all kind of surrealistic, and the drivers took their time about venturing forth onto the track for their initial practice laps.

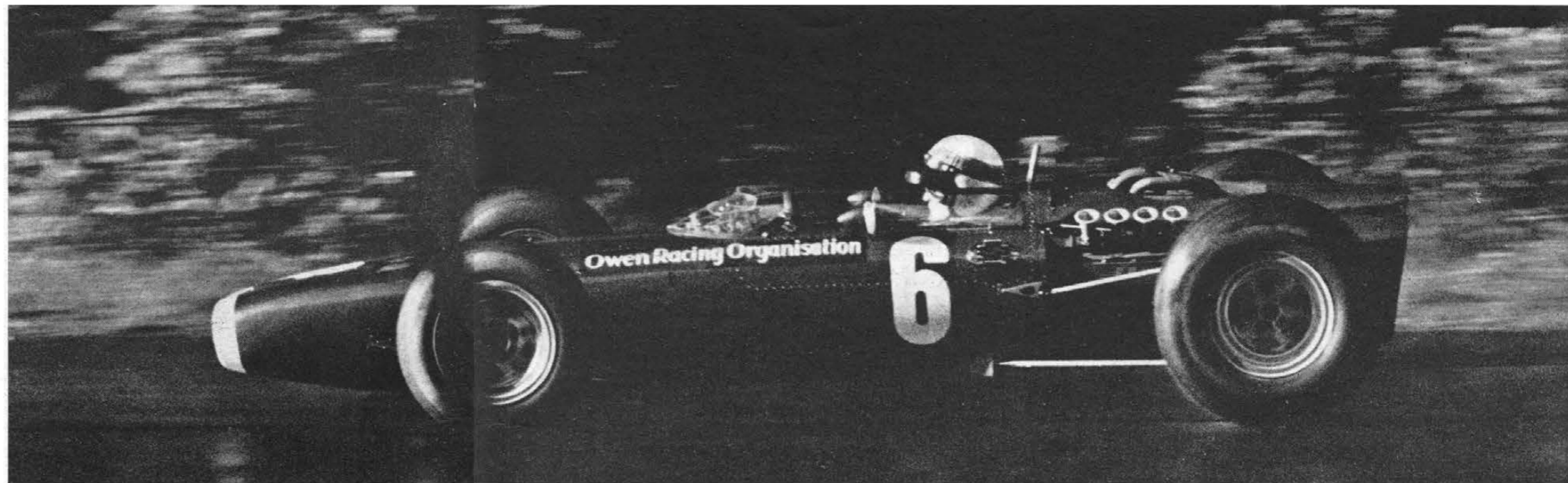
Graham Hill and Jackie Stewart were still flogging the 2-liter BRMs that were so successful in the Tasman series. Both drivers have tried the new 3-liter BRM H-16, but serious problems involving the redesign of some components have thwarted its completion and it has yet to turn a wheel in actual competition. Jim Clark, also waiting for an H-16, had a 2-liter Lotus-Climax; teammate Peter Arundell's car was BRM-engined. Brabham and Denis Hulme had their 3-liter Repco-Brabham V-8s, and the Ferrari contingent consisted of Lorenzo Bandini and Mike Parkes in 3-liter V-12s, and Formula One newcomer Ludovico Scarfiotti in an older 2.4-liter V-6 Ferrari. Dan Gurney had the 2.7-liter Eagle-Climax, and Mike Spence fattened out the front ranks with a bilious green 2-liter Parnell Lotus BRM. Then came the independents, and behind them the faster Formula Two cars (there were eleven in all), led by Jean-Pierre Beltoise in a works Matra-Cosworth.

Stewart, Clark and Scarfiotti, in that order, posted the fastest times in the first practice session. Hulme and Surtees had engine troubles, so their mechanics dropped new powerplants into their respective chassis for the next day's session. It was raining fairly hard on Friday, and Guy Ligier (Cooper-Maserati) wasted little time proving that the 'Ring can be deceptive when wet. He wrote off his car and injured a knee and a foot. Rindt was extremely fast in this untimed practice, but the next day the attention was on Scarfiotti, who outdid his teammates to post third fastest time.

In the final session, Clark and Surtees whittled down earlier times very respectably, with Clark taking the pole at 8:16.5, and Surtees and Stewart beside him on the first row. Brabham, Bandini and Parkes shared the second row of the 4-3-4 Nürburgring grid. Gurney lapped at 8:22.8, which was good enough for the third row, and Hulme, who was experiencing differential trouble, was back on the fifth tier. As the final practice period neared completion, Scarfiotti and Hill went out to improve their times—with regrettable results. Scarfiotti ran out of road and restyled his Ferrari's body, while Hill nicked an abutment, and afterwards abruptly ended the session with a blown engine.

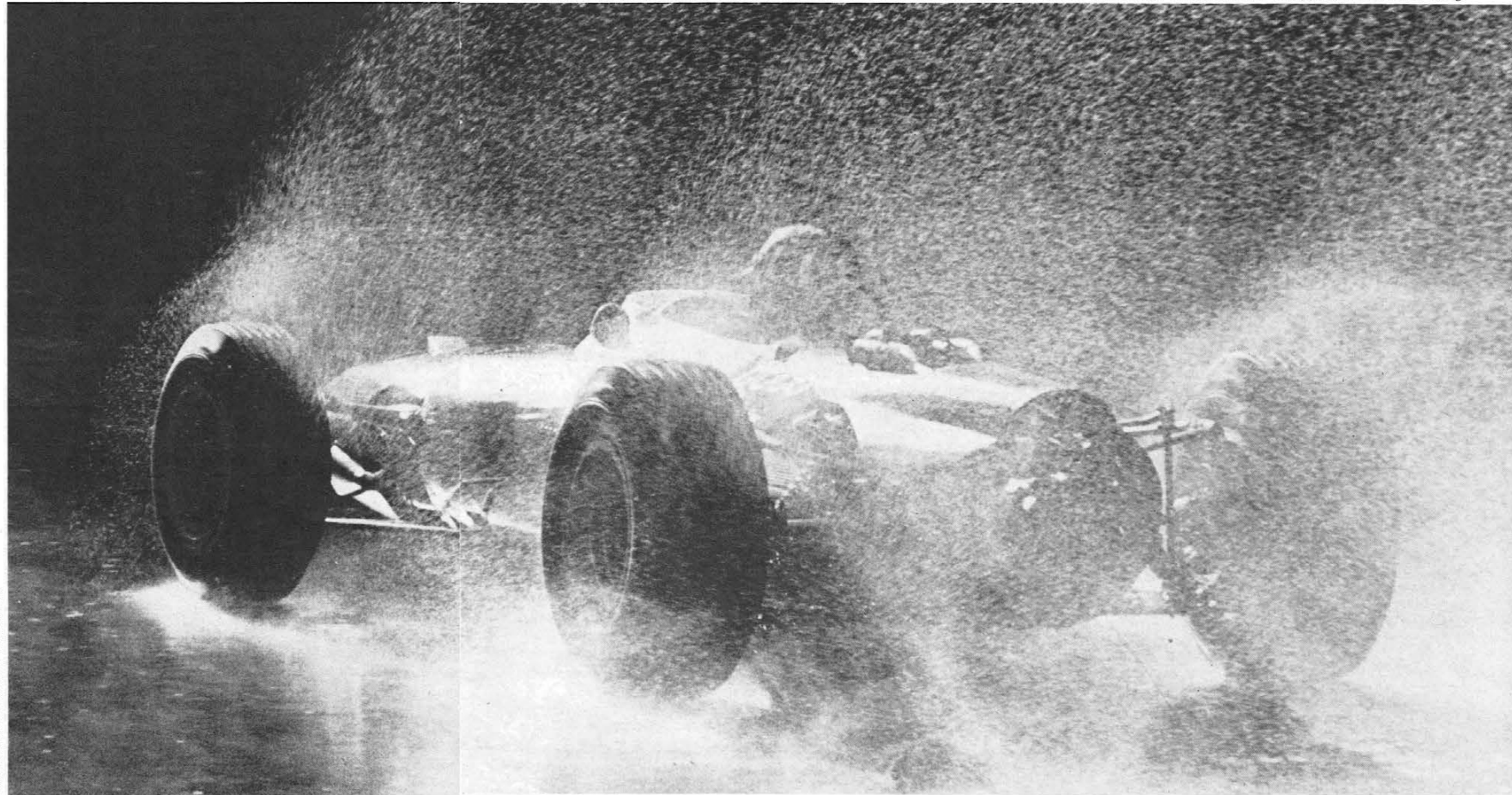
As race time approached, the photographers hustled off to Flugplatz, near Brünchen, where the cars get all four wheels off the ground. The drizzle drifted down on cue, and rain tires became the hot set-up.

The spray flew as Surtees screamed away in front,



Although the 2-liter BRMs can't hope to catch the 3-liter

Brabhams and Coopers, they can hold off the 3-liter Ferraris through sheer driver virtuosity. Jackie Stewart was fifth overall at the 'Ring.



PHOTOGRAPHY: JULIUS WEITMANN

Graham Hill has demonstrated driving finesse by pushing

a relatively underpowered 2-liter BRM to second place in the drivers' standings. In the German GP he finished an excellent fourth overall.

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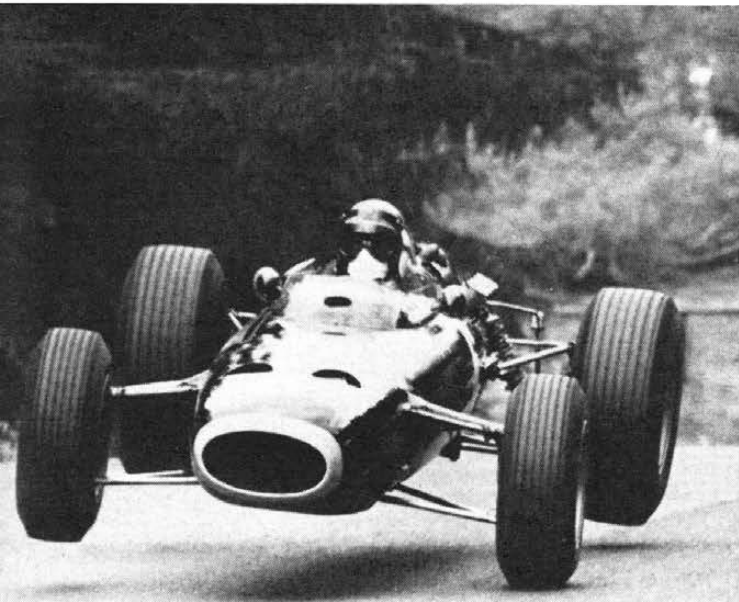
and the 26 other cars funnelled down off the broad pit straight into the bumpy two-lane road. Brabham soon caught Surtees, passed him, and found that he couldn't get away from the Cooper. These two would maintain this tight formation for most of the race. The long wait for the first 14.2-mile lap ended with Brabham and Surtees followed by Rindt, Clark, Gurney, Stewart, Bandini, Parkes, Hill and Hulme leading a jockeying pack. For the next three laps, Surtees clung tenaciously to Brabham's tail, while everybody else disappeared slowly astern. Gurney, whose suspension modifications made a few weeks before were really paying off, passed Jim Clark to take over fourth place. Hill, meanwhile, slipped professionally through the traffic to overtake first Stewart, then Clark, whose Lotus was behaving strangely (tire problems). Third-place Rindt found himself 17 seconds off the pace being set by Brabham, and the Ferraris were well back in ninth, tenth, and eleventh spots, with Parkes' engine sounding lame. Denny Hulme began a run, taking Stewart, Clark, and even Hill before his distributor drive broke and he began the hike back to the pits. On lap 9, Parkes abandoned his misfiring Ferrari out on the circuit, and Scarfiotti's battery went flat, leaving him stranded. Only Bandini was left to carry on the good Italian fight.

The rain really began pounding down on lap 10, and Clark, whose car was handling worse each time around, spun off into a ditch and retired unhurt. Brabham and Surtees were still less than three seconds apart; Rindt was way back in third, and Gurney's Eagle was in firm command of fourth. Suddenly, the gap between Brabham and Surtees widened dramatically. Surtees passed the pits frantically gesturing toward the rear of his Cooper—he was locked in fourth gear, and could only hope to hold his position. By the next-to-last lap, Brabham was leading by 40 seconds, although Surtees was still in no danger of being caught by Rindt. Poor Dan Gurney; he was about to post his best finish this season—a well-earned fourth—when his distributor cut out and he coasted to a halt. Desperate fiddling located the problem. He borrowed a Deutschmark from a spectator, effected a hasty repair and returned to the fray, but by that time he had fallen to seventh.

At the end of lap 15, the flag fell on Brabham, then Surtees (44.4 seconds back), then Rindt, Hill, Stewart, Bandini and Gurney. Next was Beltoise in his Matra—top F-2 finisher and eighth overall for a remarkably good drive.

As the teams packed up to return to their respective bases, two questions loomed large. One, would Brabham go on to make it five consecutive GP victories, thereby ensuring his combined Championship titles (and repeating his own five straight F-1 wins for Cooper in 1960)? And two, who else would have a 3-liter engine ready for the Italian GP? Would BRM solve its H-16 problems in time? Would the Gurney-Weslake V-12 be off the bench? What about McLaren (who didn't show at the 'Ring)? The Honda V-12, stuffed lengthwise in a very British-looking monocoque chassis, had been seen flying around the test track in Japan with Richie Ginther aboard. The Honda recorded some very respectable times (see FYI, page 103), and was expected to make the Monza scene. And finally, would the latest Ferrari V-12 engine, with three valves per cylinder, be ready to give the Italians a homeground victory? With almost a month between races, anything was possible. Only one thing was certain—the 3-liter Formula was off to a slam-bang start.

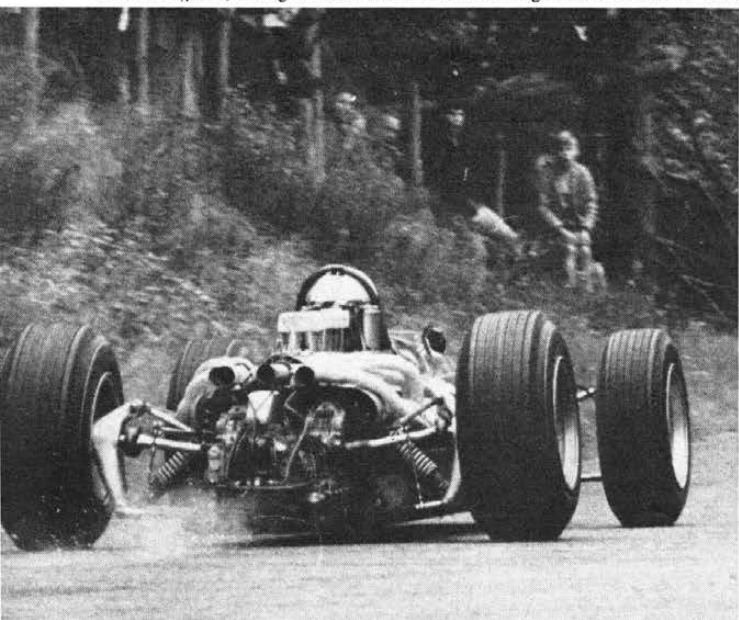
CPD



One of the dodgier landings at Flugplatz was Jackie Stewart's.



Surtees (fore) hung on Brabham's tail until gearbox stuck in 4th.



The 'Ring's bumps play havoc with suspensions. Parkes bottoms.

MICHAEL COOPER

JULIUS WEITMANN

MICHAEL COOPER