MOLSHEIM
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90 YEARS AGO: BUGATTI WINS THE GRAND PRIX OF NATIONS IN 1929



It's a material battle like no other. Two years after the opening of the Nürburgring, 33 pilots fiercely fight for victory in the Eifel region. In the end, it is Louis Chiron who wins the "Grand Prix of Nations" at the Nürburgring, with a Type 35C. This victory, taking in consideration the difficulty of the circuit and the roughness of the competition, weighs more compared to other races of the calendar.
Unlike nowadays, the drivers drive on the Nord- as well as on the Südschleife, named "mountain-, race-, and test track". One lap is 28,265 kilometers, of which 7,7 are on the Südschleife. The drivers must complete 18 laps to finish, 508,77 kilometers in total. The circuit isn't correctly asphalted and the stopping lanes rather small. Furthermore, the attendance is strong. Initially, the Eifel race was to be called "German Grand Prix", but the name was chosen for high performing cars. The race of the 14th of July, was open to other drivers and other categories.

2026 BUGATTI AUTOMOBILES S.A.S.

BUGATTI STARTS WITH THREE LIGHT CARS

Mercedes starts with four powerful SSKs equipped with 7,1 liters compressed engines. The German Rudolph Caracciola is on pole position. The Bugatti factory sends three light cars, but other private owners participate with other Bugatti models. The lap times during the free practice in that period had no influence on the starting position, only the time of registration and the category counted.

Caracciola starts well, lets his monstrous 7,1 liters compressed engine do the work and takes the lead of the race. Not far behind, the first Bugatti Type 35 are closing in. After 4 laps, the light and easy handling Bugatti cars take over. Indeed, the Nürburgring is special because of its short and leveled straights, but also because of its curves, dangers, bumps and height variations. The cars with good handling, such as the Type 35, have the edge. And this, even though they start in the lower category of engines between 1,5 and 2 liters, in contrast to the Mercedes in the ''over 3-Liters'' category.

THE BUGATTI TYPE 35 IS ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL RACE CAR OF ALL TIME

The Bugatti Type 35 is one of the most successful race cars of all time. Between 1924 and 1930, the car of the French constructor wins over 2000 races. This is why the period is called the ''golden age''. The famous Type 35C of Louis Chiron runs from beginning to end without any complications. The open Grand Prix car impresses by its straight 8-cylinders compressed 2-Liters engine which produces roughly 130 bhp, as well as by its top speed of over 200 kph. Furthermore, and it's its greatest advantage, its reliability and lightness seduces everyone. The engine and transmission are in aluminum, just like the body work and wheels. The direction axel is forged in the middle hollow, which still is massive. This allows to reduce the weight to 750 kilograms — on the hilled Süd-Nordschleife, the Type 35C corners with great agility. With no surprise, Louis Chiron is the fastest around the track in 15:06 minutes with an average speed of 112,31 kph. The heavier cars can't keep up the pace.

After 4 hours and 46 minutes, Louis Chiron crosses the finish line first, followed by the French Georges Philippe, also driving a Type 35C, who arrives just 12 minutes later. The two German drivers August Momberger and Max von Acro-Zinnenberg cross the finish line only 15 minutes after Louis Chiron. Fourth and fifth place are also Bugatti, as well as seventh, eight and tenth. Caracciola has to abandon the race on the fifth lap because of engine issues.

Of the 44 registered, 33 start the race and only 14 finish. Amongst the latter, half of them were driving Bugatti. During this ''golden decade'', Bugatti proved once again the speed and reliability of his cars. This was 90 years ago.