

RAC Tourist Trophy

Mercedes-Benz 300SLR

17 September 1955, Dundrod, Belfast,
Northern Ireland (GB)

World Sports Car Championship, round 5

Race distance 84 laps of 7.4-mile circuit Race time 7h 3m 11s

Race speed 88.32mph Co-driver John Fitch Car no 10

Entrant Works

This race took place on my 26th birthday and Mercedes was anxious to add to its points tally in the World Sports Car Championship. I was paired with John Fitch, Fangio was with Kling, and Wolfgang von Trips was with André Simon in the third car.

I went straight into the lead at the start, pulling away from Mike Hawthorn, who was driving extremely well in the Jaguar D-type and was locked in a battle with Fangio for second place. I was approaching the time for my first scheduled refuelling stop when an almighty flapping and banging at the rear of the car signalled that the 300SLR had burst

its right-rear tyre. Even though I was doing around 130mph at the time, I did not hit anything. When I came into the pits, the ragged edges of the rear wing were cut away by the mechanics and then John resumed the chase. Now Desmond Titterton took the lead in the Hawthorn Jaguar, well ahead of Kling, and I was a long way back in third.

I knew I had to pile on the pressure and, as rain began to fall, I caught and passed Kling with relative ease to take second place. Then I settled down to nibble away at the leading D-type's advantage. At the 50-lap mark Des handed the car back to Mike, so I was only 25 seconds behind. I took the lead from Mike five laps later and gradually pulled away. It was hard work, but my third victory in the RAC Tourist Trophy at Dundrod was cemented when Mike's hard-pressed Jag blew up on the penultimate lap.

BELOW *Heading to victory in the Tourist Trophy despite rear body damage caused by a flailing tyre tread. (LAT)*

RIGHT *My mother cuts my 26th birthday cake as John Fitch and I talk to photo-journalist Bernard Cabier. (LAT)*

