

HANNO DETTO:

TERRY FULLERTON



« E' molto importante vincere a Jesolo! Francamente non pensavo di riuscirci. Ho avuto fortuna nel finale ».
« It is very important to win at Jesolo! Frankly I didn't think I could do it. I had a bit of luck at the end of the race ».

AYRTON SENNA DA SILVA

« Credo di essere il vincitore morale. Fullerton ha giocato sporco: se provocavo un incidente avrei vinto io comunque. Ho preferito lasciarlo andare anche se il modo col quale mi ha superato è stato scorretto ».

« I think I am the "moral" winner. Fullerton played dirty. If he hadn't caused an accident I would have won. I preferred to let him go even though the way he overtook me was against the rules ».

Two drivers' divergent views of Jesolo '80 race

◀ you'd said to me, 'On the first day do you think someone could turn up and go faster than you or be better than you?'; I'd have said 'no'. I was completely confident that wasn't possible, because I was a very complete driver. It wasn't based on bullshit. It was based on years of beating everybody else in the world. So I was very confident that wasn't going to happen."

What Senna *did* do, though, was get Fullerton's attention right away – and that of any attendant media. They first met at a test in Parma, Italy, and the records show that on the day, Senna's time was faster than Fullerton's, by a couple of tenths. This fact, or, more accurately, the reporting of it, still rankles somewhat: "He was very, very quick from the first test, no question, and he was *desperate* to go as fast as he could. He did go a couple of tenths quicker, but he was running 10kg lighter... so [there's a smile in Fullerton's voice here] he wasn't really quicker than me. But he was very happy that he'd done a faster time."

That Senna *needed* to be best, or fastest, was, says Fullerton, one of his most defining

characteristics, as was his uncommon intensity – both traits that would remain strongly in evidence throughout Senna's later career. "He would spend hours with his mechanics, helping them build up wheels and working on his kart," Fullerton recalls, before relating a trip to Japan in 1978, where, as guests of Yamaha, he and Senna were invited to a company-owned trials course and given a couple of bikes to fool around on. "It was a beautiful little course," he remembers, "with logs and perfect jumps and I was having a really good time as I'd ridden a lot of bikes when I was younger. So I get up on this log and ride along to the five-foot

drop at the end, give it a little squirt, took off, landed on the back wheel, nice and safe, then finish with a little spiny-turn. Done.

"Senna comes along and he obviously hadn't ridden that much, but he was young and wanted to be flamboyant and take risks and he wasn't going to be outdone at all. He went along the log, gave it a proper big squirt, came off too fast, landed hard on the back wheel, virtually went over the wrong way, but

just about held it and dropped it down. It was brilliant, I have to say – but he obviously wasn't going to be out-done by anything I could do. That was the significance of it."

This intense approach to off-track downtime was merely an extension of Senna's racetrack modus operandi. He would, Fullerton recalls, strive to be fastest in any and every session, thinking nothing of bolting together the best engine-chassis-tyre combo in practice and using them hard throughout, only to find Fullerton going faster on less abused machinery when it came to the final qualifying runs. "I did that for quite a few years before he twigged," grins Fullerton. "That was his Latin temperament – he had to see the times. When you're more secure and confident, you know the time will be there when you need it."

There was, though, far more to Senna than naked competitiveness. He was smart enough to ask Terry after their first test in Parma: "What do you think of my driving?" Fullerton replied that Senna's aggressive style was provoking too much oversteer at corner exits, costing him revs, power and speed. "He took that on pretty fast," says Fullerton, "tuned into it straight away." And Senna's sheer ability was never, ever, in question. "He was naturally gifted at everything you needed to be a great driver and you had to be his equal in all those departments if you wanted to race with the kid. He was quick in the wet, great car control, great in quick corners, fast round slow corners, he had a gift for overtaking, was great at seeing the opportunity, or creating the opportunity to overtake. When you drove with him, he didn't



Senna da Silva chases Fullerton (55). Inset: poster celebrates their rivalry

THE KINGS OF KARTING

AYRTON SENNA DA SILVA TERRY FULLERTON
I protagonisti del Campionato del Mondo 1980



DAP Shell

To MY DARLING TOMMY
"MY LOVE ALWAYS"
DAD
Ayrton Senna

Coppa dei Campioni 1978-1979-1980
Campionato del Mondo 1979
Gran Premio della Svizzera 1980
Gran Premio del Nord America 1980
Gran Premio del Middle East 1980
Gran Premio dell'Australia 1980