

Written by Allan Besselink
Thursday, 01 May 2014 13:38



May 1, 1994 is a day that will forever stand in infamy. If I close my eyes and pause for a moment, the memories come flooding back with great clarity. They still remain vivid yet at the same time sad and haunting.

May 1, 1994 is when the world lost Ayrton Senna at Imola.

Time, as we all know, passes us by quickly. It is hard to believe that two decades have passed. Today I share a few thoughts and reflections on the legend that is Senna.

I can go back to that fateful moment 20 years ago like it was yesterday. The memories today are still as vivid as when I wrote [this post](#) five years ago.

Since then, we have been given the beautiful movie "Senna", which did an amazing job of showing the many diverse sides of "Eye-Air-Ton" Senna (the correct pronunciation per Murray Walker). I went to see it on opening night and have watched it a number of times since then. But I have yet to be able to watch the whole movie without shedding a tear or 10 during his fateful weekend at Imola. It's that powerful a movie. Who needs a plot line when you have a real life timeline from which to work?

I had the opportunity to watch Senna race live, and I will be the first to say that back in the day, I really wasn't much of a fan. He was ruthless on the track, much like Michael Schumacher and, well, all the greats before and since. Let's face it - to succeed in F1, you have to be ruthless to some degree. You have to be convinced that you are the best in the world at any given moment. One pause, one hesitation, is the difference between first and second. As a race fan,

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he was a very polarizing driver. It was easy to develop a "love-hate" relationship with him.

Over time though, you come to truly appreciate his burning desire to be the best and to push the envelope, to take the car well and truly past its limits, to put it on the pole when it probably should have never been there. When you look at those that followed him, you further appreciate his amazing skills, especially as the "rain master". He was the fastest, he was the best in the rain, and he exhibited a passion that we've not really seen in Formula One since then.

That's not to say that Formula One is any less spectacular than it was. The technology is light years beyond where it was in 1994. The safety is as well. The lives lost over that fateful weekend at Imola in 1994 (let us not forget Roland Ratzenberger's death on April 30, overshadowed perhaps by the loss of icon Senna the next day) instigated the research and development of the driver safety that exists today. Though there have been plenty of epic shunts since then (Robert Kubica at the Canadian GP in 2007 comes to mind), no lives have been lost in F1 since Senna's passing.

But with all of that said, Formula One just isn't the same without a Senna. It lacks the fire and the passion of a Senna.

Today, I can only wonder what Senna might have achieved in 1994 and beyond - in F1, and in his home country of Brazil.

We all have our memories of Senna that have stuck with us all these years. Twenty years later, we reflect on your passing, Ayrton. We miss you. And we thank you for showing us what it is really like to watch a truly brilliant driver - in the sun, and in the rain. It was a spectacle that will live on in our hearts and in our minds.

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