



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L' AUTOMOBILE

## 2017 FIA Formula One World Championship

### Monaco Grand Prix

#### Thursday Press Conference Transcript

**PART ONE: TEAM REPRESENTATIVES – Andrew GREEN (Force India), Paul Monaghan (Red Bull Racing), Jörg Zander (Sauber).**

#### PRESS CONFERENCE

**Q: Andy, let's start with you. Stunning start to the season: 53 points; clear fourth place and even breathing down Red Bull's neck in the championship. With the resources that you have, how have you managed to do it?**

**Andy GREEN:** It's been, yeah, it's been a good start to the season but as we proved last season, you can't take anything for granted and our lead over fifth place is a lot smaller than where we were behind the Williams last year. So, reminding the guys that it's a long season and we're only a quarter of the way through it with a long way to go where a lot can happen. So, we need to keep pushing, keep developing, do what we're doing – we're on a good trajectory at the moment – and not to slack and see where we end up in the end. So far it's gone better than expected and I think we've capitalised as much as we could of in those first five races. I don't think you look back at those first five and think 'what if?' I think we've basically got the best out of it.

**Q: In Spain only three cars finished on the lead lap, which is the fewest since 2008 so obviously, does that speak to the problem that the field in Formula One, with these new regulations, has become very spread out? Do you think that's going to remain the case for the rest of the season?**

**AG:** I hope not. It was another point I did make to the factory last week. I hate being lapped. It just shows the potential that there is in these regulations and how much there is to find. We look at it as an opportunity to make the car even faster, knowing that there's that much performance left in it.

**Q: Paul, coming to you, 75 seconds behind at the finish in Spain last time out but a clear and very promising looking P2 in practice today with last year's pole-sitter. What's your overview of today's running and how competitive do you think you're going to be this weekend?**

**Paul MONAGHAN:** It's nice to see us nearer the sharp end than we've arguably been at points this year. Our overall competitiveness... it's still hard to tell. I'm not sure Mercedes showed their full hand today. I think it's going to be pretty tight on Saturday and you need to have a reasonable qualifying around here to then capitalise for Sunday. So, I'm not going to count any chickens yet. We just knuckle down, do what's within our control, get the most out of our car, and get the most out of it on Saturday and see where we end up.

**Q: So where's the shortfall been then in the first five races of this season – some way behind, as we said, in Spain. Is there still belief that you can catch them over the span of the season?**

**PM:** There's belief, yes, and a strong desire as well. I think if we lost belief it would be a fairly early end to our season. So, there's a strong belief, a strong desire and a real determination to get more out of this car and close on the others – because they're not standing still and as such our development rate has to exceed those guys. I think it can. It's fair to say that we've not extracted as much as we can in terms of points-scoring from the first four and there's a little bit of performance coming each race. We set out on a pathway to catch them, let's see if we can.

**Q: But where's the shortfall? It's fair to say you haven't extracted the most from the regulations. You'd have expected, looking at the way they were framed, that this was going to play to Red Bull's strengths, particularly on the aerodynamic side.**

**PM:** Well it's strange thing, isn't it? In that, within our own control is our own destiny and what others do will always be judged against that. And yes, it's fair to say we don't have the leading car at the present time. I wouldn't want to say that it's one area. It's going to be several areas and it's up to us to identify the ones that have the greatest returns that we can alter, capitalise upon those and get the most out of our car. It's only what lies within our control. Can't do anything about what the others do. We will identify the shortfalls – I don't think it's going to be a singular – it will be a plural, and we will chip away at them as we have been for some time now.

**Q: Jörg, welcome to you. Very valuable points, obviously, for your team in Spain that puts you ahead of McLaren in the Constructors'. How optimistic are you that you can stay there?**

**Jörg ZANDER:** First of all there was obviously a massive boost for the morale and motivation of the team. We actually didn't expect us to be there in Barcelona. The upgrade package which we planned for Barcelona, we moved to this event. So somehow things seem to have been turned upside down. We didn't expect us to be on P19-20 today. It was a bit more of a difficult start for us, into the season and it was affected by various parameters. As you know, we didn't have Pascal for the first two races, so we had to go with Giovinazzi and, of course, that introduced quite a bit of a change to the operational side. So we had a very young, new driver into the car, which we needed to get adapted – but obviously, let me say, from a development point of view, we do understand that the car is behind, compared to our, let me say, defined competition, which is the midfield, primarily because we started pretty early in the season to develop that car, so we have to try and catch-up. But the parameter we fight here, of course, is time and it's difficult to gain time over the competition. They have a certain time available as we have, so there's not any difference. The thing is, of course, about resources, and these resources, we're just about to configure and to adapt. We have made plenty of recruitments but these are all new people so there is a human factor involved, with regards to getting more out of this operation – and these are the kind of difficulties that we are fighting at the moment, let me say.

**Q: You mentioned today P19-20. It looked a bit of a struggle, lap time-wise. I was out on circuit. The car didn't look too bad but the times were a long way off the next-slowest car. What's going on?**

**JZ:** There's definitely something wrong. It's a little bit more work ahead of us. At the moment we don't seem to get the tyres to work, at all. So, as I said, it was a bit of a surprise. We came here with a new aero upgrade which works according to the data, actually quite fine. So, as expected. We thought we could draw some more potential from it. Of course, now while the tyre temperature management worked very well in Barcelona

and panned out very well for us on both compounds, supersoft and the medium, yeah, we do seem to struggle at the moment. The same is true of both compounds: ultrasoft, supersoft. We don't really seem to be able to put the energy into the tyres that it needs to develop the grip which is required.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Ralf Bach – Autobilid Motorsport) A question to Paul. I read last week that Adrian Newey said that he was more or less not involved in the new cars. Not his car. Can you tell us how much involved he really was?**

**PM:** In terms of hours, I can't tell you how he's split his time. He's part of our team, has been for a long time and continues to be so. He was involved in the process of developing the car and continues to be so.

**Q: (Jerome Pugmire – AP) Question for Andy. Esteban was saying yesterday that he's confident that he can get a podium this season. How confident are you that he can do that and how impressed have you been with his start?**

**AG:** Well, I can tell you how impressed I am: very, very impressed with the way that he's come into the team, adapted, the speed at which he acclimatised himself to this track especially this morning, for me shows what a talent he is. Undoubtedly. I watched him for quite a long time in the simulator last week, pounding around the lap here, and his car control was incredible. He could put the front wheel through the barrier by an inch every time. He just needed to bring it back an inch! He's an amazing talent. Can he get a podium? Well, we need to give him the car to do that – because ultimately on our current car pace and ranking, if everybody finished we would never get a podium so it would need a big slice of luck. But he has an uncanny ability to finish races. He races really well on a Sunday. He has a lot of mental capacity remaining, when he's driving the car, which is a really, really good sign. If he's given the opportunity, I'm sure he'll take it.

**Q: (Peter Farkas – Auto Motor) A question to Paul. I think if you look at qualifying in Barcelona, corner speeds of the new Red Bulls were quite encouraging. If that is so, how encouraging is that regarding the new upgrades. And also, has there been a change of philosophy towards more downforce versus less drag with the new update introduced in Barcelona.**

**PM:** OK, the first part of your question then. The changes made to the car for Barcelona yielded improvements to it, undoubtedly. There's always a simulation target and then what the real car delivers – and the testing of the real car is usually imperfect. So, as far as we can tell, they've done what we expected to do – I'm encouraged by that – we did pick up a bit of speed. I think it gave the drivers more confidence and that's another little bonus that you can take. In terms of change of philosophy, no, not really. We have efficiency targets that determine do pieces go on the car or not. It's perhaps easier to judge that than it is your expected lap time gain of an update package. We're not changing our philosophy: you can see how the car is set up; we've been pursuing that for some time and that remains. I think a change of philosophy at this stage would be, for us, unwise. What we do longer term is entirely our choice and our business.

**Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Jörg, if we look at your career, you've always worked with very, very well-funded teams: Toyota, Honda, in sportscars Audi, with BMW-Sauber when it was manufacturer-backed. How difficult is it to reset the engineering mind set to operate and work in a team with a more modest budget the way that Sauber is right now?**

**JZ:** First of all, I think we have actually quite a good budget, so we have all opportunity that you can find in other midfield teams to do a decent development and do over those

development processes. So, from that perspective I think we are not too badly adjusted at all. The other point is that, the way I see Sauber is actually, from the point of talent level, actually quite good. We have very experienced people, very, very... people have a good talent, they are very competent. They have been in the sport for a long time, so I think you may want to look into the economic side of things, which are really decent but you have to look from a human resource point of view as well: what kind of quality level of human resource do you have available for your developments. I think Sauber is actually placed very well in that regard.

**Q: (Sam Collins – Racecar Engineering) There's been a lot of talk about the frontal cockpit protection system being introduced for the 2018 season. What have you heard from the FIA and their research institute about what form it will take, in terms of technical regulations. Also, what's the latest in terms of monocoque design and lead times in manufacturer to start working and introduce it into the car?**

**AG:** Well, there has been a meeting a couple of weeks ago, the first meeting for the installation of the Shield. We weren't part of that meeting but there is another meeting tomorrow that we are having with the FIA to discuss it further. We've seen some preliminary models. We've been looking at how we integrate those into the chassis next year. There are a lot, a lot of question marks over it. There's a lot of work to do in the timeframe that we have been given. So we need to make some smart decisions going forward. Hopefully we'll be discussing that tomorrow, with a view to how we answer all those questions in the time period we've got.

**PM:** To answer your question, 'what's the deadline?' I think it depends which colour shirt you have on. We, as a team, can be amongst the later, but we are going to very, very tight to get this on to a car for '18. I think the research into its functionality and protection, it's got to happen almost in parallel with the installation, which makes it quite a tricky job, because whatever they change in terms of screen then has an implication to a chassis and if you have cut your patterns then you are in a fairly awkward situations. I think if it all happens in parallel then the cut-offs are going to be somewhat team dependent. As Andy said, there is a hell of a lot to get through to ensure that this is a thoroughly developed and sorted package to put on next year's car.

**JZ:** With regard to the deadline, so usually we would by the end of July, beginning of August, define the monocoque. Of course the fundamental question here is about the integration of the shield and the attachment, so there is a question about structural integrity, but again, as my colleagues said, we are going to discuss this tomorrow, so we need those detailed informations of course. At the moment, as far as I know, we want to test this system at some point in September, which I think is good. I think the enhancement of safety, improving safety is a fundamental let me say job of ours and I think we should support that, we do support this. But of course we have to makes sure that these things are worked out sensibly and that they fit within the time schedule. But we are working together with the FIA in order to achieve this, don't we Paul?

**PM:** Absolutely.

**Q: (Jerome Pugmire – Associated Press) I just wanted to follow up on what I was asking about Esteban before. Could you just talk about his capacity and desire to learn, because he has said that he does hours and hours of simulator work and, quote, "intense debriefs with engineers", so that shows his application. Could you talk about his desire to learn and willingness to improve?**

**AG:** He's like a school child. He's like a sponge and he just absorbs information as fast as you can give it to him. His want and his desire are unquestionable. He absolutely wants this and he has the talent to do great things but he is going about it the right way. He's doing it a step at a time. He's doing the learning at the pace he wants to and that we allow

him to do and I have no doubts that he is going to get to where he wants to be in a few years' time.

**Q: (Silvia Arias – Parabrisas) A question for everybody. Did you need to change the jack support at the back of the car after Laurent Mekies' document, and what do you think about it, will it really help in the case of accidents?**

**PM:** To answer your first question: yes, we were requested to change, so we have changed. We've taken a bigger step than some of our competitors by the looks of it and we have done a new jack, we've modified the associated receptacle on the back of the rear impact structure. As for the note, well, it's given to us, and it's up to us to interpret it, deal with it, liaise with the FIA, achieve a design that design that satisfies them and equally that we could get here, and with a lot of hard work and dedication we've got a solution here.

**JZ:** It's the same for us. It added a little bit of complexity to our operations as well, but that's what we have done. Of course, we have a Ferrari gearbox, so there's a rear impact structure that is homologated by Ferrari. So we had to work this out in co-operation with our colleagues in Italy. So there was immediate action required which we did and yes, of course, we have had extra support here to make sure that it all works nicely. But then again, as I said before, it's a safety critical subject, so we do understand and if there is urgency because of that then we would support that. That's what we did.

**AG:** We didn't need to change our rear impact structure, we just changed our livery.

## **PART TWO: TEAM REPRESENTATIVES – Jonathan NEALE (McLaren), Gene HAAS (Haas), Franz TOST (Toro Rosso)**

**Q: Jonathan, can we start with you? P11 and P12 in free practice and Jenson Button, not having sat in a Formula One car for six months or something is three one hundredths of a second slower than Stoffel Vandoorne. Tell us about your day?**

**Jonathan NEALE:** Yeah, it's been a good day for us. We've run problem-free, which is nice. Everything that we brought in terms of changes to the car seem to be OK, from what I know, we're still crunching some of the data. There's certainly some more lap time to come. I think the drivers are some way off the limit at the moment. It was nice to see some confidence in Stoffel and rookie JB back in the car is good, yeah.

**Q: So it's the race of two worlds you're calling it this weekend. It's going pretty well so far for Fernando Alonso starting fifth on the grid for the Indianapolis 500. But here in Monaco the pressure is kind of on Jenson and Stoffel a bit after Sauber got those points in Spain. You don't want to be sitting there in P10 with zero points for much longer, so you've got to turn this into some points haven't you?**

**JN:** That would always be the aim, but looking at a couple of points here or there, or whether it's P10 or P9, yes, it's a matter of fact but our issues are larger than that. We came off P6 at the end of last year, should have made a step forward and didn't and that's far and away the biggest issue, which is what we're working on. Without being too discounting about it, we're taking those issues much more seriously than that. But here, where anything can happen and with a car where perhaps some of the power unit plays less of a determining role, it's exciting to see what we can do.

**Q: So finally, what is the latest on Honda's recovery strategy? When will see a significant step in performance and reliability from them?**

**JN:** I think that's something that's better addressed by Honda actually. Let's see what happens; let them talk about their plans.

**Q: Gene, coming to you, your second Monaco Grand Prix as a Formula One team boss. How have you analysed the value of your presence in Formula One to your business, as obviously that's why you came in? And what do you make of the new owners of Formula One and their push to get a second US Grand Prix and maybe even more than that?**

**Gene HAAS:** Well, I think the new owners are doing everything correctly that I see. They've visited us several times in our hospitality suite, so they're making an effort to find out what we think is important and ask our opinion. They seem to have lots of ideas. Some of them are becoming more evident, small ones, more access to video clips and things. I think all of that is very, very positive. As far as the relationship to my business, it's given us an impact, a notoriety. It's a premium product and we associate a premium machine tool with a premium product, so I think that's good. It's a long-term strategy. We are more here to learn than to race at the moment. As we go forward... it's a process. I'm very happy where we are right now. I don't really know what the future holds, but right now we're content.

**Q: Now a bit like Jonathan, you're also racing in two worlds, you're at Charlotte this weekend with your NASCAR team. There's clearly a lot of focus on Indianapolis as well, so what do you think of Fernando Alonso's performance so far on his first experience on an oval? You're very experienced with ovals, so you're probably best qualified to judge how impressive his performance has been so far.**

**GH:** Well, I can't speak in terms of what a race car driver would think about Indy, but I do know that it's a very, very nerve-racking type of drive. You're basically talking 230mph on the straightaways and you slow down to 225mph in the turns. Most Formula One driver don't experience that, with very little grip. The way you set up the cars is you put a lot of grip in there and then they keep removing it until the driver just can't stand it anymore, because he thinks he's going to hit the wall. So it's an incremental process very unlike what you would find in Formula One. That kind of racing I think is different. One driver once explained it as like driving on black ice. Trying to control a car that's on the verge of spinning out all of the time is not easy to do. I think it's great. I think everybody wants to see how a Formula One driver does in Indy, just as much as they would like to see NASCAR drivers in Formula One.

**Q: Franz, P4 and P5 today in free practice, out on the track the car looks nice and supple. Are you feeling optimistic this weekend?**

**Franz TOST:** Yeah, I think we have a very competitive package together. The car works well. We found a really good set-up here for Monaco. Both drivers like Monaco, they're also experienced and I hope that we can repeat this performance on Saturday as well as on Sunday because this is what counts.

**Q: Obviously it comes off the back of a double points finish in Spain but it looks like you could still do with a bit more horsepower; when do you expect some more from the Renault upgrade coming along?**

**FT:** We will see. Renault is making some small steps. First of all, they have to get everything under control from the reliability side. We must not forget that Renault came up with a completely new design of an engine and this takes time. We all know that the power unit now is very very complicated and I'm convinced that within the second half of the season they will provide us with a very good, powerful engine. I must say that so far we are quite happy with the performance with Renault.

**Q: So there's no frustration there, because obviously you went from last year having an old spec engine that wasn't going to develop and you've gone to something you thought was going to be... there's no sense of frustration here, you can wait to the second half of the season can you?**

**FT:** No, there's no frustration. It always depends where you are coming from. Last year we had a one year-old engine and now we are even happy to have this year's engine and as I just mentioned before, I'm convinced that Renault will do the steps forward which they promised.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Peter Farkas – Auto Motor) Jonathan, could you please share some details of how well Jenson has settled back into the rhythm and how different he found the car from last year's car and what did he say after the first few laps?**

**JN:** Great questions. So I think the... Jenson elected not to do the test after Bahrain because he was confident enough in the simulation tools. I think as well the car is still and was then developing quite quickly so whatever he got into and adjusted to was subsequently going to be different again by the time we got to Monaco. So he's been in and... you know, Jenson's been with us for some time now so we know the pattern, the rhythm and how he likes to set himself and the car up, so we've had several simulator sessions, seat fits, system checks, just sort of running through the basics. He's a World Champion, so we don't need to do that much so that feel and that competitiveness is still there. He's a relaxed individual until you get him in the car, put somebody next to him who's close in terms of speed and then the internal competition starts and that's fun for the garage as well as for the fans. In terms of from last year to this year, of course the cars are wider but everybody apart from one this morning was off the barriers. I think that there's still quite a bit to come from both drivers and from the car but there's so much more downforce this year compared to last year so the brake points are all completely different. But as he said before he came in, he's having fun and as he said it's fun to be in the car. He was going to be with us but it's a lot more fun driving than just sitting on the side.

**Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action and Speedsport) Gene, towards the end of last season, you jokingly said that if you had known how difficult F1 was you might not have entered. The team knows the ropes a lot better now, but is it a case of actually being more difficult because the more you know, the more you realise what a challenge it is?**

**GH:** Yes, I really didn't know the depth of the technical challenges in Formula One and probably like most of the fans, they really don't know how complex these cars are but it's intriguing, it's fun to get involved in it. We have great partners and I think we're doing OK. We were a little bit lucky last year and now our luck has got more normal, it's more normal luck that you typically have in racing so it's a challenge. It's very hard competing against some of these... all these teams, they're all very good at what they do. We're weak in areas like tyre strategy and we're a little weak in our pit areas. We get caught behind cars that cost us positions. All these ten little things that all add up to a tenth of a second. That's really where we lose a lot of time and I think that as we develop, we get better at that.

**Q: (Silvia Arias – Parabrisas) For Mr Jonathan Neale: is there any possibility that we're going to see Jenson next year if Fernando retires at the end of the year?**

**JN:** I think that's really a question for Jenson. I think in the recent media, Jenson's been saying that this is a one-off. It's a question for Jenson. In terms of speculating about what he feels at the end of the season, or what might happen to Fernando, maybe it's just that, it's speculation.

**Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) There have been suggestions from Liberty that they're going to move away from a fixed-term contract, Concorde-type agreement into an open-ended partnership or constitution, possibly even with equitable revenue distribution. How do you feel about this and how will this impact on your teams?**

**FT:** If we get more money I'm more than fine.

**GH:** I understand that the new owners are typically going to do what new owners do: go out and raise revenue and cut costs and that's exactly what they'll do and since we're on the cost side of it, it's a little nerve-wracking what they have in mind. On the other hand, F1 is kind of a crown jewel so maybe they'll tread lightly and everything will work itself out.

**JN:** Yeah, I think it's a question of... if you look back over 15 or 20 years then Formula One as an investment, as an entity, has done very well for itself, but what got us here won't get us there. The world is changing, the business is changing, the nature of partnerships, commerciality is changing and I think for some time a number of us, yourself included Dieter, have looked at the grid: well how many sustainable business models are there, in terms of the teams' structure, forget the FOM side of things, just the teams structure? We know that there have been pressures in that sustainability. To your point about whether some read baseline of the cost structure or the income line grows as has been said by my colleagues here, then I think it's a question of looking at the package as a whole and I think that's what the new owners are doing which I think is really exciting. I think they've got the right people – by the looks of it – around the table but if Formula One does what Formula One has historically done, which is: see the big picture and then take a very narrow fix and do a one thing and then wonder why the consequences over here were not what was expected, then I think it will be extremely difficult and very challenging but it looks to me like the whole thing has been thought out and we'll see what gets put to us. But we're open-minded and I think generally supportive of the way that the Liberty guys and the new owners are going because we recognise that what has been has had its time I think.

**Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Gene, that comment of yours that what they have in mind is nerve-wracking – sorry, could you expand on that please, it's rather an intriguing comment you made?**

**GH:** You know most savvy businessmen in the US are public companies and it's bottom line, let's face it, it is very much to it but since we're the newcomers in this business, our revenue stream from Formula One is nothing so anything we get will be greatly appreciated but I think we just have to be very very careful in how you redistribute the wealth because there are some teams at the top that have spent fifty years doing this, that have earned some entitlement to how the costs are distributed. I'm not saying that the teams at the bottom don't deserve more but I'm still saying teams at the top deserve more. You can't just arbitrarily redistribute that because quite frankly winning races should come with rewards and it should not be a socialistic type structure. Other than that, everything else is open to negotiation but I think in racing, even in NASCAR we're having struggles with that. The team owners are typically on the bottom rung of the income stream and they're struggling - as viewership goes down, sponsors go down. It's been very very difficult in NASCAR and I think to some degree that teams that rely on sponsorship are starting to find it's very very difficult to attract a major sponsor. A \$25m sponsor is a huge sponsor. Today, that is practically non-existent. Most of the sponsors – at least I know from NASCAR, they're more in the \$5m to \$10m range and you have to have multiple sponsors on your cars at different races. There's some adaptability to that but at the same time there's a lot of demand from media, so how that money gets redistributed seems to be the question but unfortunately the teams don't have a real strong position there to speak up about how it will get distributed because we don't own Formula One.



**Q: (Peter Farkas – Auto Motor) Sorry, this is more of a technical question maybe but are this year's tyres even more tricky to manage than last year's, because they were supposed to be a bit easier to manage but there are lots of complaints, from team to team, that they are very hard to get into the temperature window? Is it just a new challenge and it's alright or it's a bit like playing roulette, it's too arbitrary?**

**JN:** I don't think it's... it's easy to get it wrong but I don't think it's the tyre issue. We don't find it particularly challenging. Sometimes when we've brought a harder compound – I mean the medium compound in Barcelona, on the nature of that tarmac was a bit trickier to get to work but I don't think the tyres are a big or detrimental story to Formula One this year. I think the racing's been good, I think the general direction of the technical regulations in introducing more downforce was the right thing to do and closing up the gap on the power unit manufacturers... I think that's been the... it's still the dominant stories. I don't think tyres are an issue for us.

**FT:** The tyres are a challenge, to understand them, how they work, but it's good for the engineers as well as for the drivers to find out in which window they can get their earliest peak and they can get the most out of it. But in motor sports they have to understand the tyre because it's a performance differentiator and therefore I can only say positive (things) about Pirelli because in my opinion they do a good job and today I saw the same for all the teams and we have to find the best possible solution and get the most out of it. And there are always complaints; either they are too soft or they are too hard or this or that. Forget it, they should sit in the car and should push. That's it.

**GH:** Well, in Barcelona, when the safety car came out, we came in and we went on the medium tyres which were about a second slower than the softs and we stayed way too long on the medium tyres and we feel that cost us a chance at some points. We had done some degradation testing in the pre-practices but we didn't get enough time on them, we only got like five or ten laps but if we had a better tyre strategy we would have stayed out on the mediums a very short time. The tyres do have a lot of differences between the different ones that are available and you have to know how to gauge that in order to make time. As much as the tyres are very good, tyre strategy is key.

**Ends**