



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L' AUTOMOBILE

2017 FIA Formula One World Championship

British Grand Prix

Saturday Post-Qualifying Press Conference Transcript

DRIVERS

1 – Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes)

2 – Kimi RAIKKONEN (Ferrari)

3 – Sebastian VETTEL(Ferrari)

TRACKSIDE INTERVIEWS (Conducted by David Coulthard and Jenson Button)

David COULTHARD: Lewis, we're going to come straight to you. Fantastic qualifying, unbelievable. You must be feeling good about that?

Lewis HAMILTON: I feel great about it, especially with a great crowd like this all the way round the track. Thank you guys so much for your support. I hope you liked the lap.

Jenson BUTTON: It's the first time I've watched qualifying live and just seeing the cars through Becketts, it just looked awesome. We all love Silverstone, for the circuit itself but these guys... when you crossed the finish line and put it P1, the cheer that went up was absolutely amazing.

LH: I always try and save the last 'til best – the best 'til last. So how much support I've had this weekend; I needed to make sure I got that lap in. I didn't do it the last race so really made sure I saved it this weekend. Thank you guys so much. I hope you're happy with it.

JB: Qualifying, around this track anyway, in those conditions, when it was wet at the start of qualifying, I know what it's like, it's so tough, when you've got a good crowd, you just want it to be dry the whole way through so wet to start with must have been a bit tricky.

LH: I mean, I mean, I generally like it to be dry but I quite like the conditions when they're tricky. These are typical English conditions, this is where I grew up, this is what we grew up racing in, you know, so I felt very comfortable and the team did a fantastic job. And then when it dried up, that's when you can... particularly when it's just quite cool, the tyres were working perfectly and that high speed section, as you said, was incredible.

JB: And Copse is flat?

LH: Copse is not flat! You can do it flat but it's actually slower because you're exiting in eighth (gear) so it's almost flat but what's really interesting is turn 11, 12, 13 is flat.

JB: So Maggotts and Becketts?

LH: Yeah, you go in and the lefthander is flat which wasn't before.

JB: That looked awesome mate and tomorrow, exciting?

LH: Yeah, well it's definitely the best position to start from. The long runs were looking great so I need to make sure I do it for these guys.

JB: Great job, Kimi, how did it feel out there?

Kimi RAIKKONEN: Felt OK. I think in the morning it felt a little bit more tricky. Obviously conditions were not easy, changing a lot but I think the car behaved as good as it could, the best that it's been this weekend but obviously still not fast enough for the first place.

JB: But from my point of view it looks a lot closer to the Mercedes than a lot of us expected. Do you think in the race there's a good chance that you can...

KR: We try, we try, we try and see what happens. I obviously have nothing to lose so we try to make a good race for the team and catch up on the podium.

JB: Good job, buddy. Sebastian! I was saying to Lewis, it was the first time I've ever watched qualifying live and to see the cars through Becketts is just awesome. Last year was good but this year to see the cars... with this much downforce, it must be awesome to drive.

Sebastian VETTEL: Yeah, I don't think we know yet how good it is. One day we will look back and say 'yeah, it's unbelievable.' It's basically flat until – what's the last part? – Chapel. Yeah. It's flat through turn 12, it's eighth gear, it's unbelievable. The car just sticks.

JB: As I was saying to Kimi, you guys seem to be a lot closer than what I expected anyway, going into qualifying. Obviously now I know everything!

SV: Thank you. It felt good this morning, to be fair. The car really came alive. I think yesterday we weren't really happy but this morning was really good. Shame in the last run in Q3 I think there was a bit more but I think in the end we got the best that we could.

JB: I know the fans here are loving that Lewis is on pole, it's awesome for British motor sport but I must say that having you fighting with Lewis makes the championship. It really does and for me, it's been awesome to watch you two fighting and that's what Formula One is all about. So congratulations for that, buddy.

SV: Thank you, thank you.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Q: Congratulations to Lewis, a fifth British Grand Prix pole position, four years in a row here, sixth of 2017 and, perhaps most important of all, one short of the all-time record. Clearly an inspired lap there, massive challenge with the conditions and pole by half a second. Quite a statement. A statement you obviously came here intending to make, and tomorrow you go for a record-equalling win.

LH: Well, firstly I want to say a big thank you to all the fans that have come out. Every year it's amazing to see how many people are here from the Thursday onwards. I fly in so I get to see all of the campsites and everything and know that they're there way before the majority of us and just every lap, every time I come through the corners I can see them on the left out of the corner of my eye, waving support. So it really means the world to me, and I can feel it, and that energy absolutely inspires me to get laps like that. It's your home

race. I love this track as well. The track just feels incredible. We worked very hard and the engineers did a fantastic job to get the setup where I needed it and, of course, a tricky qualifying as always with the overcast, and a bit of rain – but as I said on the grid, that's the conditions I grew up in, so I felt very much at home. And then when it dried up I was really able to utilise the tyres. That final lap felt fantastic. Of course I wasn't expecting to have a gap like that but the gap... that's what is the target. It definitely felt great and very proud and, as I said, I'm thankful.

Q: Kimi, coming to you, saved the best 'til last clearly. You've always been very quick here but what's it like driving around here with these 2017 cars? And also, given that there's two of you here and Valtteri's starting some way back, opportunity tomorrow for the two of you to try something on Lewis with strategy? Undercuts, overcuts, etcetera. What do you think?

KR: Obviously, there is always opportunities. What we're going to do, and whatever we do, is it going to work out? That's a different story always. The car... obviously conditions were tricky, especially at the beginning. It was getting better and better and it was pretty OK in the end. The car felt OK. I don't know exactly how far we were from first but I have a pretty good guess where we were giving away lap time. I think we have a good car, unfortunately not fast enough but for the race hopefully we can challenge them and give a good run, we're two, both of us there so we try to make the best out of it.

Q: Coming to you Sebastian, it sounded on the radio as you came back in to the pits as though you were unhappy with where you'd been put out onto the track. Was it for that final run that it hadn't worked out for you? Maybe you could clarify that message – and also do you think you've got the race pace between you to have a go at Lewis tomorrow?

SV: Obviously as Kimi said, there's always opportunities, so we'll see. Obviously, the target is to put him under pressure but, yeah, they've certainly been competitive all weekend. Nevertheless, I think it's been a positive day for us. We improved the car. In quali the car was great. Last run, yeah, I was a bit compromised, the first sector especially, because the tyres were not where they should have been. Maybe I should have seen that better on eh outlap but I was a bit in traffic and we were, I think, a bunch of three or four cars. Not ideal but anyways, I think it's a decent result. As I said, the most important is that the car is good. We improved it for today and also tomorrow should be better.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Peter Windsor – F1 Racing) Congratulations Lewis, great lap. Valtteri ran the soft tyre in Q2. I wondered whether that was an option for you, whether the team wanted the split strategy, and indeed with being on the supersoft for Q2 and being able to do that time in Q3 and have the feel for the grip?

LH: Well, Valtteri's on a different strategy due to... he had a gearbox change I believe, so just gives him a bit of a more open strategy tomorrow, being that it sets him back. And this is a track where I think you can potentially overtake so it was not a bad place to take it. It's not the greatest when you are on a softer tyre and then you go... on the soft and then to the supersoft next. The balance generally is a little bit different – but nonetheless I've experienced that in the last race and this one obviously I was able to stay on plan, on a target without any issues, which is very much needed. The car just felt like it progressed really well. I think actually the rain was a blessing at the beginning because didn't have to use the slick tyres at the beginning. Saved them to have two runs in Q2 and then two runs in Q3. So it was just a nice, steady build-up.

Q: (Sara Palmer – BBC Northampton) How would you feel about Silverstone losing the British Grand Prix if they can't reach a deal with Liberty Media?

LH: Is that to me? Well, I've said it many times, I feel like this is the home of motorsport. The UK, we've obviously got lots of teams here. You see the crowd that we have every grand prix. There's no reason to not have a grand prix. I could understand if there was no one turning up and it was costing a lot – but the fans save up and spend so much money on these weekends. I think it would be a real shame to lose it. I don't believe for a second that we will lose the British Grand Prix because the world would erupt, I think. The world of sport. I will do whatever I can to encourage them and make sure it does happen. We do have a lot of great circuits in the UK, be great to be able to utilise this one and another one. We used to have two grands prix in Spain, the second one wasn't any good – the track – so it would be kinda cool to use another great one here, maybe. Potentially. Who knows?

Q: (Ysef Harding – Xero Xone News) Lewis, you hooked it up out there today and you have a lot of milestones here, you tied Clark in poles today, you could tie him tomorrow in wins. You see the banners, you see the flags, you see your people out there rooting for you, you have a lot of love pushing you tomorrow. Tell us how that feels heading into tomorrow's race?

LH: It's really hard to put into words because... of course I grew up watching TV, I remember seeing Nigel with the support and thinking, "wow, I wonder what that feels like?" I'm sure we've all done that. I wonder what it feels like having all that focus and attention and support pointing into one spot, into me. I've been really privileged over the past ten years to come here and receive that love. I feel like I've really grown with the fans over this time. It definitely helps when you have good results. The fans leave... regardless if we do win they still have a great weekend but of course it helps when you have a Brit win the grand prix and British flags at P1. It really is, it's so energizing. I think Nigel mentioned years ago, I think he said it gives you a second, maybe it's half a second. It definitely feels like it gives you something. You carry that energy. I think that applies to life in general. If you are feeling positive on a day, your day just generally goes a lot better, or if you are around positive people you generally have a better day. Every time I leave the garage, every time I come out of the pit lane, the crowd on the left, go through Brooklands and Turn 7, Priory I guess it is maybe... it's not Priority is it?

SV: Is it Woodcote?

LH: Woodcote? I don't know, but Turn 7, and you can see the crowd on the left it's massively encouraging. This weekend I've got Billy [Monger] here, my brother's here, and others, the Great Ormond Street kids are here, the Starlight children are here, so many inspiring kids as well, so there's just a lot of positive energy, a lot of inspiration around.

Q: (Michael Schmidt – Auto Motor und Sport) Lewis, can you tell us how much different the section from Copse to Chapel is, in terms of gear, speeds. I heard you saying on the TV that Copse could be flat but it's better not to, can you explain it?

LH: Yeah, I mean the downforce is incredible. One of the reasons also why this track is so great is that we always generally have through that section a headwind. So it's like being in a wind tunnel with just the optimum downforce package. Copse... obviously we were building up to it because it was a little bit damp at the beginning. You can take it flat in eighth but it's not necessarily that quick, you scrub quite a lot of speed off and then the RPM potentially would drop a little bit too much, so I don't personally do it flat and it didn't seem to cost me any time. And then when you come through Maggots and Becketts, that section is just on fire, you just can't imagine how incredible it is when you come through 10, 11... 10 is obviously always flat, 11 has been flat for years, 12, from 2007 to now, just bit by bit, you're letting off later and later and now you're kind of still on the gas through 12 or into 12 at least. And then 13 is a fantastic corner because it's very bumpy through there. You've got maximum downforce, a lot of compression on the tyres and it's all about the exit. And then obviously coming down to Stowe, which is again, the way the corner is it,

you're turning already as you start to brake and you're trail-braking all the way in. You only dab the brake and you're straight back on the gas. It's unbelievable! There's great G. I don't know how much quicker we are through those corners but I'm assuming we're 10k, 20k faster than previous years.

Q: (Jens Nagler - Bild) A question for Sebastian. Without the problems you described do you think you would have had a shot at Lewis' time in the end?

SV: No.

Q: (Jens Nagler - Bild) Was he some kind of unbeatable today?

SV: Well, I think the time he put in especially in the end was very strong. I think the one he put in before we were able to beat but yeah, obviously the gap at the end was bigger, around half a second, a bit bigger, so I think he owned the pole position today.

Q: (Ralf Bach – Autobild Motor Sport) A question for Lewis and both Ferrari drivers: the engine mapping you used in Q3, can you use it in the race as well or do you have to turn down?

KR: We don't have much to push in qualifying. At least from what we have seen in the past it's a bit of a different story with them at least what we have seen in the past and I think probably [*inaudible*] I dunno if you can run the same settings in the race, so I have no idea.

LH: I didn't actually follow what you said there but for me, we are able to use it in the race but the engine has to last a long period of time, so it depends how you want to share it. But I think it's the same among us all, I think we all have a max power setting and you have to divide the spend over those races, so...

SV: I'm using the same engine as Kimi.

Q: (Phil Duncan - PA) Lewis, I don't want to dampen your afternoon, but you are under investigation by the stewards for blocking Romain Grosjean during Q3. Do you know anything about the incident. Did you block him?

LH: I need to watch the replay. I was coming round to start my lap, Valtteri was up ahead and I was, as we all do, trying to get the space. Behind me was one of the Force Indias who then came in, so there was no one behind me. Literally, as I was about to get on the gas I looked in the mirror and I saw there was a car coming so I went as quick as I could. I don't know if I got in the way, and if I did I apologise. I obviously wasn't... I had no indication from the team that there was anyone coming. I think I just got away without blocking him but, as I said, I need to look at the footage... I don't think he was that close when I had pulled away but I will have a look.

Q: (Peter Windsor – F1 Racing) Lewis, you were just describing that section with the head wind and the downforce effect. I think yesterday, with the crosswind, you had a bit of a moment going into Becketts and I wonder if you would just describe that characteristic of Silverstone as well: the effect of the crosswind? Because for us, even on motorways, when we feel the car move, it's pretty scary, and I wonder what it's like at that speed and how you can react to that?

LH: Yeah, I think, at that point you're completely sunken into the seat so you feel absolutely everything, more than ever. You're just squashed into the car. Every moment, every bump you really do feel that. Yeah, every now and then you commit to 12, as you attack it, sometimes you have... whether it is a crosswind or just the back just gets loose, it's actually quite easy to correct it. It's much harder in the rain, for example. I had another similar... I went in turn 9, Copse, big snap and that's a lot harder to catch because it

happens quicker. I think when you're at the high speed, I don't know, maybe just prepared, it's easier because the grip comes back easier but yeah, the correction, I find doing the correction is not too bad. I might be good at rallying.

Q: (Agris Lauzinieks - Kapitals) Lewis, do you miss competing against Nico this season or Sebastian is offering enough of a challenge? And why?

LH: No, to your first question, and the second, I think Sebastian and Kimi are putting up a serious fight. Ferraris have been exceptional this year, they've not really made any mistakes. Consistency is really why they're in the lead, they've got a great car and they're performing on the top level. It's great that we have this battle going between us all: at some points to practise within a tenth, just the top three, which is great to see, I think, within Formula One. To see Red Bull picking up their pace as well but I really think you generally have the top top drivers in the bunch, really fighting it out at the front. Obviously there's a couple of others that could be there if they had the car but it's obviously not the case.

Q: (Daniele Sparisci – Corriera della Sera) To the Ferrari drivers: do you expect tomorrow to be closer to Mercedes and do you (inaudible) as it already happens in the other races?

SV: Yes. I think we've always been close on Sundays so I think sitting here, having expectations I think the answer is yes, but we will see tomorrow.

KR: Nothing more to add.

Ends