



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

2008 BRITISH GRAND PRIX

POST-RACE PRESS CONFERENCE – July 6, 2008

1. Lewis HAMILTON (McLaren Mercedes), 1h39m09.440s
2. Nick HEIDFELD (BMW Sauber), 1h40m18.017s
3. Rubens BARRICHELLO (Honda), 1h40m31.713s

TV UNILATERALS

Q: Lewis, you started the season with a win, you won the Monaco Grand Prix, but now the moment's yours. Let's savour the moment, describe your emotions on that slow-down lap, having won the British Grand Prix.

Lewis HAMILTON: It is by far the best victory I've ever had. It was one of the toughest races I've ever done and as I was driving I was thinking if I win this, this will definitely go down as the best race I've ever won, not only because of its history but it's on my home ground, but also I think I drove one of the best races I ever did. But I was coming to the last lap and I could see the crowd beginning to stand up and I was just praying, praying and praying: keep it on the track, just finish and you could not imagine that we're going inside. I wanted to push, I just wanted to get it round and we did. The team did a fantastic job really. I want to dedicate this one to my family because, as you could see, I've had some troubles over the last couple of weeks and it's been really tough, but as always family is always there for you, always give me support. They're all here. I remember before the race my brother said 'don't worry about it, you will be fine in the wet,' so a big thank you to them.

Q: A stunning win by over a minute, great moments, but lots of difficult moments too. Let's talk about some of those, the pressure from Kimi Räikkönen early in the race, the decision about whether to switch to maybe extreme Bridgestone wets when the rain really started to fall, and generally the conditions out there on the track, lapping slower cars and actually being passed by Rubens Barrichello when it got really wet.

LH: Yeah, it was so extreme out there. It was probably as extreme in some cases as Fuji last year. Obviously there wasn't as much rain but such tricky conditions: the first sector maybe dry or not so bad, and then in the second sector you could see big drops of rain on your visor. I was having big problems with my visor, I couldn't see a thing, especially the right side was fogging up, so always between turn one and two I would have to put the visor up and clean it on the inside and then put it down, and then I would have to do it again before Stowe. I had to do that nearly every lap, just to be able to see, especially when it started to rain. When Rubens was catching me, I didn't even know. I couldn't see in my wing mirrors, I could barely see out of my visor. All I could hear was the tone of two engines: my engine and someone else's, and for a second, I thought 'oh God, just let him past.' So I stayed on inside and braked early and he came flying down the outside. But it was so slippery, it was so tough, it was a real mental challenge.

Q: And when it did start to rain, what was the thought process on staying on the Bridgestone wets rather than perhaps changing to the extreme wets?

LH: Obviously we started on new wets, new intermediates or new standard wets and then we had a scrubbed set available which we were looking to use, and obviously it got pretty tricky out there, but fortunately the team took the decision... I just focused on making sure I didn't make any mess-ups

and mistakes and they were doing such a great job in analysing the weather forecast and making sure that we were on the right path. As I said, a big thank you to them.

Q: Nick, congratulations to you, your third podium of the season; what a recovery for you personally and equally for the BMW Sauber team after what looked to be a relatively difficult build-up to the race.

Nick HEIDFELD: Yeah, I don't think you can say recovery because two races ago we had a one-two. I hope Magny-Cours, the previous race, was a one-off. Here we did look a lot stronger. I seemed to get over my qualifying problems and then just had a good race today.

Q: Very, very quick in the middle phase of the race, putting pressure on Lewis to some extent in terms of stopwatch times. Tell us about the conditions then and how the car felt for you?

NH: I think you could see during the whole race that there were different drivers quick at different times. In the beginning, I couldn't hold Alonso. I think there you could quite clearly see which drivers are harder on the tyres and heat them up better. So a bit later he struggled when it got drier because his tyres were destroyed. Mine were still alive and that was why in certain phases I was pretty quick.

Q: Very difficult to manage the pit stops and the tyres for those changing conditions.

NH: Yeah, it was very difficult. Before the stop we were discussing it on the radio. They said it should only be a short shower but I was going down Hangar Straight and I thought how could that become just a small shower, it was so dark and the rain was getting stronger, so I told them I think we should go on new inters and don't keep these ones on. But I said this is your decision, you have the better overview and then luckily we chose new inters which I think was the most important thing today.

Q: Rubens, first podium finish for Honda in 2008, your first podium since 2005, unbelievably, and it happened with Ross Brawn again in difficult conditions here at Silverstone. A bit of the old magic again.

Rubens BARRICHELLO: Well, it's fantastic. I've never lost the belief that I have in me, this speed and everything. Obviously it was a lucky day with the weather and so on. It seems to always happen to me in a way, because I love wet weather conditions. But it was a perfect race. We had a minor problem on the pit stop, that for some reason I stayed there – I think I had the fuel already – but they just didn't let me go for some reason, but that was a minor problem, because I think it was the very right decision for us to take the extreme wet weather and I could see, I was passing people on the inside, the outside and it was just magic. I thought that was a good decision because I ran off the track at Club and I almost hit the wall. Club and Abbey were the most difficult ones, so for me, I took the decision... I was already there. I said I'm coming in and I'm coming for the extreme.

Q: In terms of where you've been for the last 18 months, what does this podium finish feel like for you?

RB: The team knows – maybe those outside don't – but I have this great feeling. It's like I'm young, it's like I'm smiling at problems, it's like I'm working more. I feel that. I just love the sport, I just love the speed, I cannot live without that. It's not that I want to prove to Ross that I'm physically capable. He knows that I have the speed and I want to keep on racing. I want to take the chance to thank very much – to dedicate this race to my kiddo, to Eduardo, because he, yesterday, he saw how tough it was to be 16th and he said 'oh Dad, I'm going to pray for wet for you to get on the podium tomorrow,' so how magic this is!

Q: Lewis, big smile on your face still. Now technically leading the World Championship, it's a great thing to say, but beyond that, just tell us your emotions when you drew the curtains this morning and you saw what the weather was like and you prepared for this Santander British Grand Prix.

LH: To be honest, I wasn't feeling great this morning but it wasn't until I got to the track and I spoke to my family and then I was feeling great. I saw some kids, I got time to see some of the fans at the gate and all this was giving me energy, and all of a sudden I had so much energy. I went to the Paddock Club, I went to the Mercedes Benz Club and I got to get so much energy, so much support, so I really

have to say a huge thank you to all the fans here, because they have been incredible all weekend throughout, and really without their support we wouldn't have done this. I can hear them outside and I'm looking forward to seeing them. It's the best weekend ever.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Q: Lewis, fantastic drive today. What did it take of you personally - physically, mentally today?

LH: Today it took an incredible amount of energy to stay focused. I needed to be one hundred percent, no more and no less. I had a lot of pressure on me, obviously. I had done a terrible job, really, in qualifying, at least by my standards, but today I just kept saying 'I'm not going out there to... the plan is not to big myself up and say 'I'm going to go out and win and try and do everything on the first lap.' I just wanted to get a point. I would have been happy with eighth today, I would have been happy just getting a point and so with that approach, I just remained relaxed, I remained calm. It was really important that I had three Cs: cool, calm and collected. That's really what helped me keep everything together. It was such a mental challenge out there. You could see the fans, they were getting all excited. The track conditions were changing non-stop and I couldn't see a thing through my damn visor unfortunately, so I had to keep on putting it up and cleaning it, and then shutting it, same and same again every lap. That made it really tricky because at one part of the track, the first sector would be dry, the second sector would be beginning to rain, before Abbey or going into Abbey there was so much water and you could see everyone was going off there, so it really took a lot. I'm just pleased it's over.

Q: I think we saw you have one moment – or were there moments every lap?

LH: No, I only had one moment. Actually, I think I had two moments. I had one going into Brooklands. I just hit the brake too hard and locked up the wheels and I was stuck, I thought I was going straight onto the gravel and that gravel trap is horrible, there is no way you can get through that one. But fortunately I kept it together. And then I think it was into Abbey, it was when it just began to rain, I couldn't see, I honestly couldn't see, especially the right side of my visor, there was no way I could even see what line I was on. I had already gone wide through turns nine and ten. I couldn't see the white line, the car was just skidding everywhere but luckily I just kept it cool, I was already forty or fifty seconds ahead, so I didn't have to get out there and start pushing, I just took it easy from then on.

Q: How much was the car set up for these conditions?

LH: It wasn't. The car was set up for qualifying and then obviously, when you go into the race, even if it's wet, you're not allowed to make any changes, so we bailed out a bit of wing as we knew it was wet and that was it really. The car was great, a little bit over-steery at times but the team did an awesome job in choosing the right tyres and I think I did a better job than I've ever done in managing them and making sure I didn't take too much out of them. You could see, at the beginning of the race, it was pretty tough. I couldn't see where Kimi was and he was closing the gap. I just had to keep my cool and remain calm.

Q: But an amazing first few laps when you were trying to get past Heikki.

LH: Yeah, that was some close racing. I got a great start at the beginning, but to be honest, I lifted too early into turn one. Heikki had the outside line, so he had the grip but unfortunately I was on the inside and I was just sliding, sliding across. There was nothing I could do to avoid him, I think we tapped or we touched and I think it was no problem for him. Then I had another opportunity on the exit of the last corner but that's not a place to overtake really. We were almost side-by-side and I had an oversteer moment and the last thing I wanted to do was take my team-mate out, so I just tried to keep it on the track.

Q: Nick, I'm sure you are pleased with second place today, in spite of all the second places you have already.

NH: Yeah, I think second is a good result for today. Obviously Lewis was quite a bit quicker and from a certain point on in the race I was looking backwards rather than forwards. I think the important

choice today for the teams and guys who got it right was the tyre choice, obviously. We were thinking about keeping the old inters on or switching to new ones. Luckily we took the decision to go on new inters and that was a good move.

Q: Really, qualifying changed things for you. The fact that you've now sorted your problems there, is that going to carry through to the next race and future races?

NH: I believe so. Obviously it's impossible to look into the future, but at least since we've been working hard on it, have tested a couple of things and first introduced those at Magny-Cours, qualifying was OK. Here was OK, Magny-Cours was OK, still not perfect, there is some more potential to be extracted but at least I'm at a reasonable level now.

Q: Many dramas out there?

NH: The biggest moment I actually had was when Bourdais and Barrichello passed me. I also didn't try to fight them too hard because they were just so much quicker but as Lewis said earlier, you could not see them. You heard them, I saw a little bit in the spray and I just hoped that we would not crash because the difference in speed was so big but you can also not pull off line because there was so much standing water. Once before Abbey, they both got by and I just backed off because I saw nothing and I knew there were some puddles somewhere and then I nearly spun because I didn't see and there was a lot of standing water, so that was the biggest moment for me and I nearly lost it there.

Q: Rubens Barrichello and a wet Silverstone seem to go well together!

RB: Well, 2003 was actually dry but I think the wet and myself... there's no specific reason. To be honest, I wasn't good in the wet in my very first race. I wasn't at all good in go-kart and I remember the strategy was that the next time it was wet at Interlagos with a go-kart, to take slicks and go learn in the wet. That's what I did for half a day and then when I put on the wets, I was a master, it was unbelievable.

LH: What year was that?

RB: Oh man, don't ask me the year because you were definitely not born. It was '82! You see, I'm still young. I love the wet and I think it's just the spirit. When some people look at situations where they don't like it - it doesn't matter what - it's already bad, it's already a negative influence. You have to take it as it comes. Today it was obviously very difficult at the beginning with the visibility, coming from behind. There was a moment I touched the white line and I spun. My team-mate went by at Club. But then from there on, there was a minor problem at the pit stop and I still don't know what happened, because I was there for more than twenty seconds. And that obviously cost me one position on the podium. That was minor. I still have to understand what it was. But the decisions to take the tyres at the right moment were fantastic, and the decision to come in... the radio was working fine. I had everything under control. Once I almost hit the wall at Club when I decided to go for the extreme wet tyres. They told me you've got to stop for some other tyres even though it might be five laps or so, in those five laps you can conquer ten seconds a lap and that's what happened, didn't it? I was going so much faster than people and I could overtake. I had to be patient because as Nick said, I was so much faster than people that you could overdo it. I had to take my lines carefully and it worked fantastically well.

Q: And a great reception as well.

RB: Yeah. Since I joined the team... I've joined them for a purpose. I always thought they had a fantastic 2004 season. They didn't do very well in 2005, so I thought that it was just going to come back in 2006 because they have fantastic engineers, fantastic mechanics, the organisation, the whole policy of the team is good, but they need a technical leader, so it took a long time until Ross came. Everything calmed down a bit and now we have a lot of respect between ourselves and I think the work is nice, very nice. I think the podium comes at a good time. I have no intention of stopping. I will only stop if I have nowhere else to go, but my intention is to stay with Honda. I have no contracts just yet, but I feel young. I love racing more than I ever did. The day that I find that I'm actually slower than in that first race at Kyalami is the day I will stop. Right now I'm just feeling that I'm faster than that day.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Bob McKenzie – The Daily Express) Lewis, you mentioned that the last couple of weeks you've had troubles. Has that been tough and how much has today justified what you've been saying?

LH: Yeah, it's just the last couple of weeks I've been flat out, working very hard and just a lot of travelling and many different things, and different emotions going on in my life. We'd obviously had a couple of bad Grands Prix and coming to my home Grand Prix it would have just been nice to start with a clean slate and then get some points or even a win. I know the country deserves it and the crowd deserves it, and the team does as well. I thought that we would be coming here and that a one-two was possible. I haven't seen the results as yet, I don't know what happened, but it's just been a great weekend for all of us. It's all been in the right direction, there's been no negativity, for me it's just been very, very positive and I get a lot from that and I'm very much thankful. Things happen for a reason. I stay true to my faith, things do happen for a reason and I'm here for a reason, so I'm very thankful.

Q: (Ian Parkes – The Press Association) Lewis, many congratulations. Your great hero Ayrton (Senna) was a master in the wet. Did you learn anything from him when you studied all those video tapes or is it just your natural ability to drive in the wet?

LH: There was not really a lot that I could take from Ayrton. All I knew was that he was spectacular in the wet, and growing up, it was something that I wanted to master as well. I think there was a time he said, or just from the way he drove. He just showed that if you can drive in the wet you can do anything and really the top drivers rise to the top and so along my career, I just worked very, very hard to be sitting here where I am. But it does come very naturally, I'm very sensitive. I feel very comfortable in the wet, knowing where to push, where not to push, and I think that's the result today.

Q: (Jon McEvoy – The Daily Mail) Lewis, you said that the last few weeks have been hard and that your family have been with you every bit of the way. I was just wondering today what maybe your father or Nick or whoever it was said to you and how they managed to get your mind right for the race?

LH: I think my mind's always been right. I just have had a lot on my plate really. It's some of personal life... it's nothing too serious but it's just life in general. I want to win, so working very, very hard, making sure there were never any doubts of my abilities. It was just biding my time and keep working hard, keep chopping away and you eventually get there. Just before the race I spoke to my brother, he came to my room and he sat there and I said 'I just hope I keep it on the track.' And he said 'don't you even worry about that.' He said 'you're the master in the wet.' I just said 'thank you for that.' He's always there, my whole family, my dad's always on the grid. He would never miss a race, and he's been there since day one. We still do the same handshake as we always did from the first race I ever did, and that means a lot to me. Just like family, even for you, I'm sure. Your family is there through thick and thin, and there's nothing that they won't stand next to you for.

Q: (Paul Turner – South Wales Evening Post) Lewis, you seem to be able to keep your head in those conditions when at least half of the grid are losing theirs. What's your secret?

LH: No particular secret, it's just the way I am. As I said before the race, I managed to get a lot of energy and I was able to control that in the right way and use it when needed. But today was not a physical challenge, it was just mental, just mental. I don't know how I've done it but I did it and that's the most important thing.

Q: (Takeharu Kusuda – Lapita Magazine) Rubens, could you tell us about your feeling in the car when you passed the finishing line?

RB: It's obviously been a long time without that but up to now I've had a great career. I know the feeling on the lap just before you conquer something. It's just a great feeling. You could hear on the radio my engineer Jock Clear saying 'you don't need to take those risks in keeping the lap (time) down.' I wasn't taking any risks at all, so if you're certain of that, because it's so funny that people outside are so scared. Oh man, he's going to put a wheel wrong or something, so it's very nice to be

in that situation. When I crossed the line, I wanted to shake every hand of the Honda personnel, and I almost stopped the car to put my hand up to them because they deserve it. They work flat out and the lack of results is not just bad for myself but it's bad for the whole team. So for them to get that - the factory is literally two minutes away - and in such a good way, it means a lot to me and to them.

Q: (Jon McEvoy – The Daily Mail) Lewis, we wondered if you were a bit busy over the last few weeks. You were going to see Nelson Mandela almost every other night last week. Were you ever worried with the sailing that you did, the schedule that you had? Were you worried that maybe you would lose a bit of energy and should we have been worried?

LH: No, I don't think you should have been worried, and that wasn't what it was about. Meeting Nelson Mandela was the most overwhelming experience. It took a lot out of me to really understand what was going on. Then I had a job to do, which I always want to perform at my best, not only in the car but away from the car. But to be honest, I think the biggest emotional build-up was just not wanting to let down the fans. I know how much support I have, I know how much my team believes in me and I've got a fantastic team-mate who's pushing me all the time. That whole build-up... you try to contain it but there's so much excitement and that emotion is just overflowing all the time. Just trying to balance that out... Then I had this big cut on my face, nearly knocked myself out earlier on in the week. Then you're worried that you've got this fat lip and everyone's taking pictures of you all the time. It was just dealing with everything. I think I've done a good job, I'm very, very happy in the end.

Q: (Mike Doodson) Lewis, before you were born, 24 years ago, Nigel Mansell was racing at Monaco in very wet horrible conditions. I know you've studied a bit of history. I wondered if you knew about that. He was going too fast and he spun off. At one time in this race you were going six, seven, ten seconds faster than everybody else. Did you slow down because of your own decision or were you getting advice from the pit?

LH: I had to slow down because the team were telling me that it was forty seconds, 48 seconds, you're five or eight seconds or whatever it was faster than the guy behind and I'm thinking, hold on a second, what's going on? I'm not even pushing. I'm driving to a comfortable pace. I didn't want to slow down because the moment you slow down, you perhaps lose concentration, so I just said 'I'm comfortable at the pace I'm going' and even then I was a silly amount quicker than everyone. So I really had to be very, very sensible. Imagine I was a minute, sixty seconds ahead and I came off, and I didn't win. There would be no way you could come from that. That would be the most embarrassing thing. You would have to retire. I was comfortable with the pace I was doing but I asked the team 'how much slower can I go?' They gave me a margin which I was comfortable with, yet I still did a 1m36s and that was quicker than I'd been in my last stint. But I was comfortable there. The car felt good, I felt comfortable where I was. I think I lapped quite a few people. It was easy enough for me to back off but by the time I got past Heikki it was too late to take the risk of backing off and coming together with him, so I just had to keep on going forward and so it was just about managing it.

Q: (Will Buxton – Australasian Motorsport News) Rubens, 1993, your third race ever, I believe, Donington Park in conditions not too dissimilar to this. Just your memories of that and the fact that the British Grand Prix is going to return there in 2010 and whether you hope to be there?

RB: Well, conditions were actually very similar. The visibility in both was very difficult and so on. Obviously, we were in different cars in different eras. But when it comes to this question, it's like I have a wall and I'm on top of the wall. One side is Silverstone, the other side is Donington because I have great memories from my Formula 3 times and from Formula One at Donington and so on. But I love Silverstone. I think that Becketts is one of my top three corners in the world. Obviously, when it comes, I think I will just open my arms and just take it. I think Donington is a great circuit if they make it safe for Formula One. It's going to be a lovely event. But I cannot just say that I will forget Silverstone. Silverstone has been quite important for me.

Q: (Ian Parkes – The Press Association) Lewis, it's said that many people learn more about themselves in times of adversity. You've touched on the fact that you've had a really tough

few weeks. Just how much will these past few weeks help you in going forward, and just exactly what have you perhaps learned about yourself?

LH: Yeah, I think that's true. There's a quote that Martin Luther King made and I can't remember it word by word, but he was saying something like: it is not the times where we triumph and are successful that make us who we are but it is the times where we are at our lows and we are going through our troubles that really build us and create you and make you who you are. That's a long way off the actual quote he gave but I remember reading it and that is a very important thing. Today, and this whole week has been tough but when you take all that in, you learn more and I think even when you're racing, when you lose, you learn a lot more because you learn how to improve.

Q: (Alan Baldwin – Reuters) Lewis, you've led the championship twice this season now and each time you've lost the lead. Is this now third time lucky? Can you hold it to the end of the year?

LH: It's difficult to say. I don't believe it's going to be third time lucky. I think it's a work in progress. We're doing a good job and I've just got to keep on building on it. As I said, I would have been happy with a point from this race, which would have just put us in good stead for the next race, but we're in a good spot now but you can tell that there's a lot of competition and we've just got to keep on scoring points.

Q: (Ian Stringer – BBC Radio Leicester) Lewis, your thoughts on the Grand Prix moving from Silverstone to Donington?

LH: You've been asking me this question all weekend and I've not given you an answer! I totally agree with Rubens: this is a phenomenal circuit. For sure, I will be sad not to have a race here in a year because just as drivers in general, you're very comfortable when you got to circuits. You have some that you prefer more than others and this is one of my favourite circuits. But times change and Donington is a fantastic circuit. I've had some great memories there in the lower categories, so I'm sure that as Rubens said, if they can make it safe enough for us, I'm sure it will be a great event. But I hope one day we can still come back here and re-live the Silverstone experience.