



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

## Press Information

### **2015 Australian Grand Prix Grand Prix Friday Press Conference Transcript 13.03.2015**

**TEAM REPRESENTATIVES – Toto WOLFF (Mercedes), Eric BOULLIER (McLaren), Monisha KALTENBORN (Sauber), Maurizio ARRIVABENE (Ferrari), Claire WILLIAMS (Williams), Graeme LOWDON (Manor Marussia)**

#### **PRESS CONFERENCE**

**Maurizio, obviously there have been a lot of changes at Ferrari since the end of last season. How do you feel about the state of the team going into this new year?**

**Maurizio ARRIVABENE:** I mean, I don't want to talk about the past. We made changes. I would like to thank the people that were there before, the guys that left, and that's it. Thinking about the future and the actual situation, I was working a lot with the guys, as I said many, many times, to put them together for a common goal and to work concentrated, with feet on the ground, with the same objective. As I said to them and as I said to your colleagues, I don't want to hear any more talking about engine, chassis or any other people. If we lose, we lose together and if we are going to win we are going to win together. That's my mantra. This is what I said to the team and I saw them calm, committed and motivated. That's important for me.

**You've been involved in Formula One for many years but obviously you've only been running the team since Abu Dhabi. What areas of running a team have provided you with the steepest learning curve and the greatest challenge?**

**MA:** For sure the technical area. You have to know a lot about that, you have to be curious, you have to go around the factory asking questions, meeting people but especially listening to the engineers, learning from them, because you know the engineers they are talking a very special language, they are able to use 1,000 words to tell you what normally they are going to say in 10 words. So you have to extrapolate and to summarise and to make it simple sometimes. I think that was the big challenge.

**Thank you for that. Eric, coming to you: can you tell us what's the latest on your driver Fernando Alonso and his return to the cockpit? We've seen him on social media these last few days and he's been working out quite hard, ready for his return?**

**Eric BOULLIER:** The normal process recommended by the doctors was obviously to stay and rest at home for a few days and this is what he was doing and during the same time he was allowed to train again and start again his recovery and training programme. Now it's up to the doctors of the FIA to decide if he will be ready to race in Malaysia or not.

**Okay. Can you tell us a little bit about the Honda relationship, the steps along the way with Honda this year? When do you expect to have the full potential of this brand new power unit?**

**EB:** Well, it's a complicated question and we don't have the answer yet. We are still in the process, as you can see today, of developing and understanding the car. Obviously we had tough winter sessions, not a lot of miles covered and we still have a lot of parameters to work on and discover. We do our best, we are one team but we are still not there yet. I don't know how long it's going to take. Hopefully not so long.

**Thank you for that. Monisha, tell us, from your point of view, about the events of the past week and particularly the last 24 hours?**

**Monisha KALTENBORN:** Well, that's a topic I can't say anything about. Just to make it clear, any questions about that I will not be able to answer.

**So you won't be able to say, for example, where you go from here for the rest of this weekend?**

**MK:** As I said, I cannot say anything about it.

**Perhaps you could tell us a little bit about the problems suffered by Marcus then today in practice?**

**MK:** It was a very unexpected problem on the wishbone. We're investigating what actually happened there. We just have not got the conclusive answer yet.

**Thank you. Graeme, coming to you: what's the state of play with your team this weekend, obviously you didn't manage to do any running today. Is it a software issue?**

**Graeme LOWDON:** It's not simply a software issue, there are a lot of issues, none of which are a big surprise really when you consider what's been required to get the team here in a very, very short space of time. So I would say that the problems that we are dealing with at present are not unusual for the task we are doing, which is effectively setting up trackside and on-car infrastructure for these cars to run. We'll put our best effort in and deal with each problem sequentially and try to get through them as quickly as we can and try to get running as quickly as we can.

**So what are the next steps going forward? Do you expect to run this weekend and what about the next few weeks and months?**

**GL:** We literally have to deal with the problems one at a time and I think as we steadily get through them we'll be able to put a little bit more accuracy on any kind of prediction. At the moment it's quite difficult to predict as you have binary problems – things are either going to work or they're not going to work. But what I'm confident about is that we are not seeing anything that's unusual, just things that have to be dealt with in a very short space of time and also once these problems are solved we wouldn't expect to see them again.

**Thank you for that. Claire, coming to you now, obviously the expectations around your team are very different now from this time last year. Has the culture changed within Williams? Is it more now winning mentality?**

**Claire WILLIAMS:** Yes, it's great to come to the first race of the year a little bit excited about it rather than dreading it. So it's great to be in Melbourne and even better to be at the top end of the paddock than the bottom end of the paddock. There is I suppose more expectation on us and there is that internal pressure that we have all put on ourselves at

Williams to make sure that we improve this year. We clearly had a great year last year but we know that we are back to square one, back to zero, and we've got to do it all again and hopefully do a better job and take the fight to Toto and his Mercedes.

**We've seen a lot of activity already this weekend around fans, drivers, interaction. Do you feel that your Promotional Working Group is starting to make some progress?**

**CW:** We've had quite a busy winter with the PWG and the teams just coming together to see where we can support. Formula One is a fantastic show as it is but just the work that we can do behind the scenes to support promoters and to engage fans and we've been trying to do. To see Melbourne and what the promoters have done here, with their red carpet and having a bit more accessibility to drivers, the heroes of our sport. Bringing the drivers to the fans has been great to see. It'll be interesting to see what the PWG can do to support those initiatives moving forward.

**Finally, coming to you Toto. Obviously you're the defending world champions. Do you feel that you've gone from being the challengers to having a giant target on your backs, albeit one that seems to still be at some distance from everybody else?**

**Toto WOLFF:** Yes, obviously it's a completely different situation than last year. It's normal that you are being the one that is the target if you set the benchmark the year before and it's quite a challenging situation. There wasn't such a big technical revolution like there was from 2013 to 2014. You have to find little gains. I think we are in a good position; we are in a good state. We had a solid first day and it's just about proving that we can do it again.

**Now last year at certain points you were a little bit anxious about your drivers getting a bit too close to each other and you had to talk to them. Now that you've won the world titles is the pressure off a little bit? Are you going to be a bit more relaxed when things get edgy between them are you going to let things play their course a bit more or are you still going to be just as on top of it as you were last year?**

**TW:** Of course the pressure was very high last year. We wanted to win it. I guess the situation is a little bit more relaxed this year. We have maintained our philosophy of letting them race, always respecting each other and respecting the framework and we have no doubt that they will do that. I think we have to start the season and see how it pans out and I have no doubt it will be OK.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Mathias Brunner – Speedweek) Monisha, we had no Sauber on track in the first session and two of your cars on the track in the second session. What made the difference?**

**MK:** The sessions. It's a topic I cannot talk about. That's all I can say.

**Q: (Ian Parkes – Press Association) Monisha, I appreciate the legal circumstances that you are currently going through at the moment and you can't talk per se about certain matters but can you talk about your position at the minute? Do you feel that you are still competent enough to run the team given what has happened? And also, could you just explain about the morale within the team and what this past week has done?**

**MK:** Well, it's definitely a very negative impact on the team because the situation was for a while unclear, we now have certain actions taken against the team and we are acting accordingly so there's nothing much more I can say to that.

**What about your position?**

**MK:** I don't see it having any effect.

**Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Maurizio, clearly Ferrari over the last couple of years it's lost its way in a sporting and technical manner, which is why you were brought in. However, there is also a perception that it had lost the political initiative that it once held very, very strongly. How do you intend rebuilding the political side of the team, it's overall standing in the Formula One structure.**

**MA:** I don't think Ferrari lost a kind of central role first of all. I would like to see how many people would be at the race without the Ferrari team competing and this is part of the political role. Before me and even now I think that our president, Sergio Marchionne, he was working very hard and he plays himself in the first line and with a lot of effort, not to regain the position, but at least to keep the position in terms of political weight that Ferrari deserves. I am following him 100 per cent and I am learning also from him because his strategic view with his experience is very important for the team and for the company.

**Q: (Paolo Ianieri – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Monisha again, I remember in São Paulo last year when the issue about the drivers came out, you say “we knew exactly what we were doing.” Now, it looks like you do not really know what you are doing, since all of the troubles that has happened in the last few days. Do you really feel that you have the strength and the capacity of running a Formula One team, looking at the things that have been developing in the last few days?**

**MK:** We have a very clear view of what we did. We had taken action, after a while we thought about it very well and for us that was very clear. The outcome here is different and that's all I can say to it.

**Q: (Ian Parkes – Press Association) Question to Graeme Lowdon, Graeme, are you able to give us any information on whether you're able to run tomorrow? Do you know that yet? Do you have any confidence that you can get the car on track? And secondly, looking at the weekend as a whole, do you feel that it might have been better with hindsight that you didn't appear in Australia and had perhaps done something different this weekend back at home to ensure that perhaps by the time you got to Kuala Lumpur you would have been much better prepared that you have been here?**

**GL:** To answer the second question first, I think it's really important to be here. This is the championship that we're part of, and we want to be part of it from the start, right the way through to the finish. I think for those who have seen the task that the team has addressed, it has been an incredible job by an awful lot of people. Not just people within the team – but we've had huge amount of cooperation from all the other teams here, from the FIA, from Jean Todt, from FOM, from Bernie. It's not a small task to do what's been done and an awful lot of people have helped to get it to where it is. The cars and the systems are incredibly complicated and what's been achieved in an incredibly short space of time – the company only came out of administration two weeks ago – has really been tremendous. We're racers and we want to race. That's what we want to do. There's nothing that we're doing that would possibly slow the process down. We want to be on the track as quick as we possibly can. As far as taking time to do a test or something like that, that would have been great but it was just impossible in the time that was available. We'll keep pushing as hard as we can, together with all of our partners and I'm pretty sure we'll be there sooner or later and then we can just move forward.

**Chances for tomorrow?**

**GL:** I honestly don't know. But what I can guarantee you is, in terms of commitment and rate of problem solving, we'll be absolutely flat-out maximum.

**Q: (Vincent Marre – All Race) Question goes to everyone except Monisha. What's your personal feeling about the Sauber situation and it's impact on Formula One?**

**TW:** We haven't really got an insight. What we hear or what we read, we don't know what is true or what isn't true. Certainly starting the season with this kind of news is not perfect but in Formula One there has always been controversy and... gonna see what the outcome is.

**Maurizio?**

**MA:** I agree with Toto. We saw many, many situations like this in the past. I don't want to enter into detail because I don't know, as Toto said, all the details and all the stories but it's not the best way to start the season but in the past we saw many, many things like this. We have certain waves up and down, so I hope the situation is going to be clear as soon as possible and to go in the right way for the common need.

**Eric?**

**EB:** I think everything has been said, y'know? This is not the kind of news we would like but we don't know nothing about it so no opinion on this. Just want to clear the situation for both Sauber and Formula One as soon as possible.

**Claire?**

**CW:** Same.

**Graeme?**

**GL:** Same.

**Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Question to the two gentlemen in red. First Graeme: do you have all the necessary hard and software from your engine or powertrain supplier that you need to run? And secondly, if not, to Maurizio, why doesn't Manor have all the necessary hardware and software if they don't have it?**

**GL:** We're perfectly happy with what we've got. We've got a number of issues that we have to solve and I know there's been lots of – and I don't know where it all comes from – there's a lot of speculation about whether it's Ferrari software or not. We've got a number of things that we need to sort out. We're not knocking on Maurizio's door saying "where's this?" There's no problem there at all. I think we're working very, very well together. Of course, I've answered first!

**MA:** I can confirm what Graeme said. They were in the rush, they got the licence to take part on the championship quite late, so we are working together with the best effort to make sure these guys can run as soon as possible. As Graeme said, it's not only a problem about the software. With the engine, even last year's engine, they are quite complicated to set up. It's not an easy task. We have a list of things to do but we are going through the list and we are really pushing very hard altogether to make sure that these guys, they will be able to run.

**Q: (Paolo Ianieri – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Maurizio, we see today Ferrari behind Mercedes. It's only Friday, and only the first Friday of the season but do you think this is something that we could see even tomorrow and perhaps on Sunday, looking at your data and the way you have been progressing and working?**

**MA:** If Claire and Toto, they give order to the team to stop somehow Sunday I think we will appreciate that! They don't do it for sure. We closed the season last year in the fourth position. To think about the first you have to overhaul the guys that are nearby you, first, that is Claire, then there is the Red Bull, and afterwards, if you are able to go there, and I think these guys they are fighting to make sure we are not going there, then the other programme is Mercedes. We need to go step by step and try to be realistic and to do all our best to get nearby the guys of Toto as soon as possible. But it is not easy, of course.

**Q: (Abhishek Takle – Mid-Day) Question to Monisha. How involved has Peter Sauber been in helping sort out the current situation and do you feel you still have his confidence to continue in your current capacity.**

**MK:** This whole matter does not have any effect on the way we work, the way the team works and Peter Sauber is the chairman of our company and he's continued to be in that position. His role has not changed.

**Q: (Ian Parkes – PA) Question to Graeme and Maurizio. It emerged during Manor/Marussia's administrative process, the list of creditors and it showed that Ferrari was the biggest creditor, owed \$16million, I believe, of the grand total of \$60million. Presumably via the CVA agreement, the two of you have managed to come to a satisfactory outcome which is why you're able to work together again. Or is there still something ongoing in the future that needs to be resolved?**

**MA:** We don't have to mix up things. Last year, we deal with one company, and we are still working to get back our money as everybody knows. Now we are dealing with a new company so it's a completely different story. We are doing our job now to support them, also because they showed to us they stick to what is agreed into the contract and they are serious on the project. Otherwise, I said to Graeme in a very simple way, and he remembers, I think: "guys, we are more than open to help you, but no money, no honey."

**Graeme?**

**GL:** That's very true, and I do remember it!

**Q: (Kate Walker – motorsport.com) For all of you: obviously costs remain high in this sport, they're always on the agenda. We've heard Christian Horner raise the possibility of a wind tunnel ban. I was wondering what sort of avenues for cost control options each of you might be interested in pursuing over the course of the season ahead?**

**MK:** Well, in the last few weeks and months, the FIA has been particularly active in this area and different options were looked at. I think since all teams have the opportunity to actually give their input into it - a very vast area I would say was considered so there are a couple of options at the table. I think what we have to just make sure is that costs come down to a sensible level which allows teams to be sustainable and yet the show is not compromised, the competition is not compromised and it remains very challenging technically.

**CW:** I think Monisha has said it all. I think all teams have worked hard over the past few months to come up with the variation on the cost control measures that we can undertake moving forward to ensure the sustainability of this sport and everyone is working hard on

that. The process isn't finished yet but we're looking forward to the result of it. As Williams have always been very vocal about it, we're committed to cost control measures in Formula One and finding them.

**EB:** Well, there are some discussions, there is a cost reduction group actually which is very active, including all the teams, the FIA, the FOM and McKinsey. As far as I am concerned, McLaren... we are obviously happy to push for some cost reduction. Formula One needs to spend less money. We just need to define the objectives. If you want to save a couple of millions or you want to go over 20 millions for example, which is obviously a more drastic change, we definitely need to protect the show, the sport, the industry of the sport. Obviously respect the history and the teams which have been involved in the sport since many years and have been part of building the sport, so that means the question is very very complex and I think there is more and more understanding about the needs: do we need to make all the teams more competitive or let's say the access to competitiveness cheaper, which is what I guess is what we want to achieve? We definitely don't want to help the big teams and not fix the issue of the small teams, so that's obviously very complex.

**MA:** I think my point of view is very simple. We are all working together to try to somehow solve the situation but it's also important to remember that we are talking about Formula One that is considered the pinnacle of motor sport competition. So we need to keep up that concept, to work in a way that will enhance the show. I've said many many times to take Formula One closer to the people but I think the group is working very well in this direction and you know, as Eric said, it's not an easy compromise because somehow you have to work on saving certain costs but on the other hand, you want to preserve the development, the technology, the novelty etc and in some words I want to say that if you want to play in the Premier League, you have to prepare to do so, otherwise you play in another championship. And this is what I think. I think we need to work on the show, as much as the show is growing and growing and growing and we have financial income for everybody. At a certain point, we also need to have a can of buttercups. If you look at football, they have a kind of financial fair play; this is acceptable but they are not transforming the Champions League into the Europa League. The Europa League is the Europa League and the Champions League is the Champions League. That's my point.

**GL:** Yeah, it's interesting looking at the sports who address this in lots of different ways. Sports differ and the financial mechanisms that can be used differ. It's been said by everyone on the panel, there's a lot of work, a lot of really interesting work being done, looking at cost control in particular. I think the overall thing is not just looking at cutting costs but looking at increasing value and that's really the most important thing is that if everything that we do increases the value of our sport, then that can bring sustainability. Ultimately, that's the objective of this, it's to increase the sustainability within the industry.

**TW:** We have discussed this topic many times and a lot has been said. There is an intelligent initiative from the FIA involving McKinsey and it's a good process of defining factors where we can reduce costs. That is going pretty well. Then we have to look at your own situation, from our team we have customers and we are trying to support them wherever we can within the commercial framework and this is what we do and take it from there.

**Q: (Will Buxton – NBC SN) Monisha, given the situation your team finds itself in, have you considered resigning your position as team principal, and if not, at what point does your position become untenable?**

**MK:** I've not considered that.

**Q: (Ralf Bach – Sport Bild) Maurizio, did I understand you right, that it's not a problem for Ferrari to keep on working with Manor because it had nothing to do with the former Marussia team? It's a brand new team.**

**MA:** Yes.

**Q: (Ralf Bach – F1-insider.com) Mr Boullier, why is McLaren not able to give us information about the reasons for Fernando's accident in Barcelona?**

**EB:** The reason is that he had an accident which happened in testing. We first, obviously, cared about Fernando being cared by the doctors and as far as I know that's a personal thing, so nobody has access to the medical files except the doctors. And the second thing, technically, on the car, we have conducted all the investigations, very transparently and openly with the FIA and everything we have conducted so far, we couldn't find anything wrong or which has implied the accident. So we're still looking for further investigations but we have given our report to the FIA and we are working with the FIA so nothing else can be said but this. We have nothing to hide

**Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Graeme, based on the answers that have just been given about different companies etc and no money, no honey etc, I believe that last year you entered under Manor GP Ltd. If it's a new company, what company has entered you this year please?**

**GL:** Just to be absolutely clear about the process, the team that competed last year, the entrant was Manor Grand Prix Racing Ltd. That company suffered financial issues and sought protection through administration. The process to settle the arrangement with its creditors, with unsecured creditors, was done using a company voluntary arrangement, very standard practice, the CVA and that mechanism is used to take care of the outstanding debts to those unsecured creditors. That allows the company then to return to trading with a fresh start if you like and I think what Maurizio is referring to is the fresh start. So we have a new contract with Ferrari, one that we're very happy with. Hopefully it's one that Maurizio is very happy with and it allows us to go racing which is what we want to do.

**Q: (Paolo Ianieri – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Eric, when you say that Fernando is not giving any updates to the team or things about his medical condition, is McLaren not worried about putting a driver in the car whose state of form you don't really know? Is that not also a safety concern for you?**

**EB:** No. I'm going to re-formulate what I said: any medical information stays within the medical field so we have a doctor in McLaren which has access to the information but this is not public, so as far as we are concerned, the doctors are happy with all the checks, all the scans, everything which has been conducted to Fernando so the only thing is the final decision for Fernando to be back after having respected this delay for recovery is for the doctors of the FIA.

Ends