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Press Information

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DRIVERS – Jules BIANCHI (Marussia), Daniil KVIAT (Toro Rosso), Romain GROSJEAN (Lotus), Felipe MASSA (Williams), Nico ROSBERG (Mercedes), Daniel RICCIARDO (Red Bull Racing)

PRESS CONFERENCE

Can I start with a question to all of you? We had news this week that next season there will be a 17-year-old driver on the grid. Can I have your reaction from a driver's point of view? And maybe we'll start with Felipe.

Felipe MASSA: Definitely, he's a very quick driver. He shows talent in a go-kart, in Formula 3, winning many races; I think he's second in the championship. It's his opportunity. First of all, I think it's great that teams are still interested in the talent of the driver and not the money and I think that's really positive, it's good for the sport in general. I'm happy for that. Seventeen is a little bit young! For sure, we need to wait and see how he's going to perform in his first year. I think the most important thing is that he has the talent; I mean he's quick. I hope he can be clever as well, to learn everything from Formula One. There's a lot that he will learn and I hope he's quick enough to learn and to be consistent in Formula One and that he can stay, not just staying for one or two years and not doing what he's supposed to do. Until now he shows great talent and I hope he can show the same in Formula One, so I'm happy.

Nico, your thoughts?

Nico ROSBERG: The same as Felipe said. All the journalists are always asking 'is it only with money that you can get to the sport?' and things like that. It's great to see that if you have the talent and you really deserve it... there have been many examples recently that have made it into F1. That's important, that's good. Of course, it's very young but I think we'll be OK.

Daniel, your thoughts on this?

Daniel RICCIARDO: Not much more to add. It makes me feel a bit old! Definitely the Red Bull Junior Team and the programme for me worked a treat; helped me get to where I am. Obviously it's good they're now helping out Max. Obviously the age is the question mark but the talent, as Felipe said, is there. It's going to be interesting but, yeah, it's good.

Romain, what about you? Like the three guys before you, you all started in your 20s, what about starting so young in Formula One?

Romain GROSJEAN: It's a wonderful opportunity that he has and it's something quite special to come to Formula One. As everyone says, he has shown great talent early in his career but he will have a lot of homework to do to learn everything about racing in higher categories – tyre deg, speed, a lot of things. But it's good to see fresh blood, but a bit sad for JEV.

Jules?

Jules BIANCHI: Obviously as everyone says it's a great opportunity for him and it's great that some teams still invest in young drivers like that. I'm sure he will be doing well. He's really quick; we saw that in Formula 3. He won everything in go-karts. I'm also sad for JEV, I hope he will find something else but this is how it is now.

And Daniil, you'll be driving alongside him next year, you started at 19 this year, what are your thoughts?

Daniil KVIAT: Yeah well, I think we will see how it is going to be. I think we're going to be teammates. I think it's not as complicated as it looks to all of you. For the rest you just come and see what you can achieve. For every driver it's the same. It's not my job to analyse all the things deeply and so we will just wait and see.

What's not as complicated as it looks?

DK: I think any driver can come to Formula One, can adapt, can get up to speed. I think everybody is coming to Formula One for some reason – because he has talent, because he has been successful somewhere; there is always a reason why someone comes to Formula One but then there are many different things that make the difference, so it's as simple as that.

Jules coming to you. Two classic tracks coming up: Spa and Monza the next two races. One of your relatives is in a photograph over here, driving a Ferrari from the past. But what are your feelings on racing here and the prospects for you and the team and are they pushing hard do you feel?

JB: It's special for me to be in Belgium and here in Spa because of my family; my great uncle won here in GT cars and I feel a bit like being at home again, so I'm good here, I'm happy. We're trying to push hard with the team, trying to stay ahead of Caterham. This is still our target, so we'll try to achieve that. For sure, it won't be easy because they are pushing hard as well. They are not giving up. That's why we will keep fighting. We will have to see how it will be in Spa. Monza will be another challenge but at the moment I'm focused on this race.

Romain, you said you're reviewing you options for 2015. Obviously Lotus have secured Mercedes engines for next year. What are the next steps for you and the team?

RG: I think we still have to understand and analyse a bit more this difficult season. There were many reasons why we started on the back foot but I'm sure we can still learn a lot. The idea is to prepare the future as good as it can be for Lotus. They have been designing wonderful cars in the last two to four years and I don't see reason that it's not the case again in the future. Hopefully things get better but so far we still need to do our job, understand things and what we can learn from that difficult season.

Daniil, coming to you. As this Daniel was saying, just picking up on his points from earlier on, you know with the Toro Rosso programme you've got around about two years to prove yourself and obviously in Jean-Eric's he moves on. Tell us, when you're in that situation, does it feel reassuring to know that you've got those two years, you've got that time to prove yourself or does it add to the pressure?

DK: It all depends on how you take it. Obviously you can take it from two sides. Obviously you have to think that you've been given the chance and you just try to use it as good as you can. You cannot really be thinking too much about there is some limited time about it, but yeah, so I've been given a chance and I'm just doing my best all of the time, trying to make the best out of it. There's no special trick.

Felipe, on paper this race and the next one should be two of your strongest tracks this season. What are you and Williams hoping to take out of these two races, particularly coming off the back of the strong result you had last time out? What's your minimum expectation?

FM: Well, I hope it can be more than just on the paper. I hope we can show good performance on the track in this race and in Monza. But I would say maybe most of the races we can be competitive. Maybe Singapore will be the most difficult one but I would say that at most of the tracks we can be there, we can be competitive. I hope that we can show that and I hope that we can be... still growing, still improving, like we did from the first race until now. It would be great to have a very competitive car and very good race here and Monza but also in the second part of the season. We're still fighting. We know how important is the points. We're going to fight; we're going to do everything we can to be competitive.

Daniel coming to you. The first win obviously is always special. The second one, four races later, suggests it's becoming something of a habit. Tell us about your confidence level at the moment and how you see the second half of the season for yourself and Red Bull in terms of opportunities and objectives?

DR: Yeah, just keep building on the first half of the year we had. It was really nice to get a couple of wins in the first 11 races, so yeah, for confidence, for motivation, for myself and the team it's obviously really high. Spa and Monza are circuits which on paper aren't circuits that are going to suit us the most but we're coming in with a bit of momentum so we'll try to pull off a good result here and in Monza and then we've got a few tracks that will really come to us after that. So not much changes, just to keep building as always, keep learning and keep enjoying it. That's important: that's what I'm doing this year, I really am loving it, and just let that continue.

Q: Nico, a number of talking points coming after the Hungary race, going into this one, one of them the team saying they're not going to bother giving calls to either driver to let the other one through, even if there are strategy considerations. What were your own learnings from Hungary and what were you taking on from here?

NR: I gather it was a bit of a mess afterwards, after Hungary, so it's best I don't add too much I think and I continue to not give too many details. In general of course we discussed it after the race – just because it's important to review a situation like that and know how to move forward. Now we're moving forward but of course, I have also learned various things from that race which I will try to adapt for the future.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Mike Doodson – GPWeek) To follow up the first question you were asked today. All six of you were racing as teenagers – one of you actually in Formula One – but a couple of you had to take a holiday from Formula One for a while. My question is, to all six of you, do you think each of you would have been ready for Formula One at the age of 17?

Nico – didn't you test an F1 car at 17 or 18?

NR: Yeah, I tested an F1 car at 17. Driving-wise I would have been ready, I feel, but the limitation at the time was physically. That was a big limitation because at the time it was still V10, big downforce – I'm not sure if more downforce than now but the tyre grip was higher, y'know? That was the big limitation at the time for me as, a 17-year-old. But nowadays it is a little bit easier physically, definitely, so that will help.

Dan, I think you were 21 when you came in – would you have been ready at 17?

DR: Let's say... no. I think I was still racing karts at 16 and then, yeah, I hadn't driven many formula cars when I was 17, I think it was maybe my first season, so then I didn't feel ready, no. Obviously my path was probably a bit different as well. I grew up a bit later.

Romain, similar story for you?

RG: 17 I was competing in my first races in single-seater. It was a Formula Renault 1.6l and no, I wasn't ready.

Daniil?

DK: It's an interesting question. I think I was racing in [FR] 2.0 at 17 and, if I have to come back again and do some pole laps that I did that year, maybe I couldn't even do them again. In terms of pure performance, pure driving it's a very similar driver: me now and me back at 17. But, many factors, of course from mental side and physical side. But, like I said, everybody's different, so we just have to wait and see.

Jules, you have a similar kart background to Max but you put a few years in, in the junior categories. What do you think, where would you have been at 17?

JB: I was not ready at 17. It was my first year in Formula Renault 2.0, so I cannot say I was ready, for sure. I was doing mistakes there. So, if you still do mistakes in the previous categories, you cannot be ready for Formula One.

Felipe, you were 20, I think, when you made your Formula One debut.

FM: Yeah, I think when I started, when I drove first time the race car, I was 15. It was a Formula Chevrolet in Brazil. I think it was never a problem to be quick, it was a problem to understand – especially in Formula One. I was 20, I think it was a little bit too early for me. I really agree with what Nico says. Physically, at that time, it was a lot more difficult than now. Now I would say the race is very easy from the physical point of view, which is easier for a young driver to learn and understand – but at that time it was a lot more difficult from the physical point of view.

Q: (Paolo Ianieri – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Coming to what Felipe and Nico just said, also Lewis said in last few days that he feels this F1 is too easy for him, he would like to come out of the car exhausted, pushed to the limits. With these new cars it's not the same any more. Would you also like it to be more difficult, more challenging, this Formula One?

NR: In the first instance we're here for the fans, yeah? So we need to do great racing. At the moment we're seeing great racing, so that's a big positive. That's the first and most important thing – and then we need to work on the sound, which seems to be quite important to the fans, which I can understand. So those are the sort of things that are important. Then, from a driver's point of view, yes, in an ideal world... I mean it's great as it is, that's a fact, but maybe it was a little bit better if I could do quali laps every lap with the tyres lasting forever, just proper qualifying every single lap in the race and harder physically. All of that would make it slightly better, yes, but I don't really think about that because it is the way it is now, and that's great, the way it is now.

Daniel, do you agree with Lewis' point of view?

DR: Yeah, I think not much more to say. The racing is the first thing that needs to be good and it is. And maybe we should sweat a little bit more than we are. We'll see.

Felipe, you come from an era when you did sweat quite a lot. What are your thoughts?

FM: I agree 100 per cent with what Nico said but the physical, to be harder or easier is related first of all to the refuelling. This is the first point. And on that time we had a lot more grip on the tyres as well. I think that's the two things that make it more difficult to drive the car. To have more grip,

and when we had the refuelling to have maximum 60kg in the car, 55kg all the time. It was a lot quicker, most of the laps. That's why it was a lot more difficult from a physical point of view.

Jules, this is the only F1 you've known. What are your thoughts? Would you like it to be a little bit more physically challenging?

JB: Yeah, it would be good. I have no problem with that, for sure we are not like completely dead at the end of a race. We still have energy. So maybe it would be better for the people outside to see that when we get out of the car, we fall down, I don't know what they like but, for sure, it's not like this at the moment, so if we can improve this, yeah, let's do it.

Your perspective, Daniil?

DK: Well, I testing last year's car so I can rely on that a little bit. For me it wouldn't be a problem, to be honest, to drive last year's car in terms of the physical point and speed-wise as well. But in the end I don't think the cars of this year are easier to drive than last year's cars in terms of just driving because we lost some downforce, we have to fight. I'm pretty sure this Eau Rouge corner here is going to be quite interesting and challenging again. It's been so easy flat the last few years. I don't think it's going to be so easy now. It's always some negative and some positive sides everywhere. Everybody has a different opinion in the end, so it's hard to make everyone happy.

Romain, your view.

RG: Yeah, well I think the first point is that the last few races have been really cool. I could watch, unfortunately, a bit of these grands prix. But on the other hand, don't get us wrong, the cars are not easy to drive. They're still performing very well. And yes, physically they are easy, but there are other challenges. I think it's still a tough job. I remember my time in 2009, and already then the cars were physically harder to drive. I would like more: the quicker it goes the more we enjoy it. We are racing drivers. If you give us 200 more horsepower and more grip, we will take it – but what we want is to really have good races.

Q: (Ian Parkes – Press Association) Nico, you mentioned earlier about the talks that followed the Hungarian Grand Prix regarding the team orders situation. First of all, were those talks resolved to your satisfaction? Secondly, you also mentioned about learning things but you didn't really expand. Are you able to expand at all on what you did learn, going forward now for the rest of the season in your battle with Lewis?

NR: Yeah, sorry, I don't really want to go into much more detail than that. As I said, we sat down, discussed it all. That is important after such an occasion, such a situation, and then review, if we need to change something for the future and that's what we've done.

Q: (Thomas Bastin – La Derniere Heure) To the most experienced - probably Felipe and Nico - we are now in the second part of the season with the new cars. Do you think that for the fans they are more spectacular to see and are they also more difficult to drive?

FM: Well, I think it is definitely very nice for the fans. They see a lot of overtaking but maybe it's the noise. The noise is really something that makes it more spectacular, like we had in the past. But the fights, they can see. Every race there are always big fights between the cars. I think it's really interesting for the people. The noise is definitely something that we're missing.

Q: And your thoughts, Nico, particularly picking up on the point that Daniil made a moment ago, that with much less rear end downforce this year, corners like Eau Rouge can be much more of a challenge, right?

NR: No, it's that we have a little bit less grip in some places, but it's not really... It depends on which car, of course. I think to watch from the outside it's still awesome to watch these cars. They're still the fastest cars that there are in terms of corner speed and things like that and just the sound... I understand that we need to keep on working on that and hopefully we can find a

solution. Maybe we just put some big loudspeakers on the car. That's the direction of electric cars in the future anyways.

Q: (Paulo Ianieri – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Nico, I've see that you've been pretty active the last few weeks, hunting for pizza in Napoli, having parties in Ischia or Capri. How badly did you need this break for you in such a hard and tense season, fighting every second weekend for victory?

NR: Needed, not really. After Hungary I wanted the next race to be the next day and just continue like that so it's not like I needed a holiday but of course it was there and it was great. We had a great time with friends and family. I find it quite good that there's the two weeks where everything is shut down because otherwise, even on a day off, there's still e-mails with the team and this and that coming through and like that there is nothing. In those two weeks there's really nothing happening and it's quite a good thing for everybody.

Q: (Angelique Belokopytov – AutoDigest) To all of you: you know every driver has his beliefs to have luck during a race, someone wears white shirts, another doesn't shave, so what about you? What will you do or not do before a race?

JB: Well, there's one that I won't tell you, there's one that I can tell you: that I always get into the car from the right side. That's it.

DK: There's no luck, I think.

RG: I used to have superstitions when I was younger and once I forgot things that I used as superstitions and I won the race, so I thought that was useless but there are certainly routines: I always put on my suit the same way, I always jump in the car from the right hand side and with the seatbelts always the same way. It's just the fact that you get ready to race.

DR: It's an excuse for something to go wrong! It's nonsense.

NR: I keep my underwear from qualifying if I'm on pole for the race! And they're not allowed to be washed either.

FM: Yeah, me too! Not to be on pole, you know, because otherwise I have just one this time. If I start the weekend in a good way and I use the same on Saturday and Sunday. I also go inside the car from the left side, to put my right foot first in the car. So many things that don't change anything but you just feel well.

Q: (Oana Popoiu – F1 Zone) Daniil, your team will have the youngest line-up next season; could that be a bit of a disadvantage when it comes to developing the car?

DK: To be honest, this season is still going on for me and there are eight races to go and I'm still not thinking about that. I think, as I said, getting up to speed is not such a big problem so then there are many many different details and factors that decide what's going to happen for the future of the driver, whoever he is, so I think obviously it's good, getting as young as possible to Formula One because then you have plenty of time but it's all up to how you can develop. At the moment, I really don't know how to say. I don't think it's going to be a big problem. We will develop OK.

Q: (Daniel Johnson – The Daily Telegraph) Nico, you said at the beginning, when James asked you, that there was a bit of a mess after the last race, given what happened with the team orders. Is that why you seem fairly reluctant to elaborate – which is fair enough – but is that why you're reluctant to explain more about it?

NR: No, sorry, let me make that more precise. I gathered that there was a bit of a mess in the media and so it wouldn't be useful for me to give another extra bit to that at the moment, it's better to let it all calm down. That's what I meant.

FM: You fight, after the race, with...?

Q: (Silvia Arias – Parabrisas) For Jules Bianchi: there are a lot of people saying that you deserve a better car than the Marussia. What are your expectations for next year? Do you feel the same?

JB: Well, I'm trying to do my best now while I'm with Marussia because it's the same I'm with at the moment and I'm happy to be with Marussia, for sure. They gave me the chance to get a Formula One drive so I can't complain. Obviously my manager and Ferrari has to work out what I will do next year, it's still not sure yet so we'll have to wait and see but for me, at the moment, I just want to finish the championship well. I will try to do as we started, stay in front of Caterham and then we will see.

Ends