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Press Information

2014 Belgian Grand Prix Friday Press Conference Transcript

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TEAM REPRESENTATIVES – John ILEY (Caterham), Andrew GREEN (Force India), Dave GREENWOOD (Marussia), Robert SMEDLEY (Williams), Adrian NEWWEY (Red Bull Racing), James ALLISON (Ferrari)

PRESS CONFERENCE

John, can I start with you? Obviously, a new driver today, tell us how did he go and where do you go from here?

John ILEY: I think Andre's been... possibly he should have been in Formula One 10 years ago. I think he subsequently proved in world sportscars and Japanese single-seaters that he would have been more than vindicated in being Formula One. He's well known to the owners and the management of the team. They rely on good feedback and we're basically getting his experience and feedback on the car during this weekend and he's done a very solid job for us so far. It's important to stress though that Kamui remains part of the Caterham team and they both worked together in the simulator in the week prior to Spa and gave us good assistance for this weekend.

Obviously there have been a lot of changes and restructuring, what's it been like for you on the shop floor as it were, on the technical side of the team? Do you know, for example, what resources you have to work with going forward, that kind of thing?

JJ: It has been a very, very challenging time. The last six weeks, if you include shutdown, has been a transitional period for us. We were struggling a lot prior to that period. We were non stop; we were unable to do what we wanted to do. Fundamentally, the new owners have come in and it's been difficult on the human side – restructuring and various things – but you can see this weekend we're starting to add performance and do upgrades to the car that frankly we've not been able to do for a long time. We've been wanting to do them, we know what we need to do, but we haven't been able to do them. So whether it's aero, mechanical, car characteristics, even some powertrain things, you're starting to see this weekend the beginning of that process.

Thanks very much. Dave, sort of same first question to you as to John really. You had Alex Rossi in the car for FP1, Max Chilton back in the car for FP2. How did you as an operations group of engineers deal with that and what happens next in your situation?

Dave GREENWOOD: Well, clearly we had quite a lot going on yesterday as a team and I'm quite proud of the way we handled it and the guys in the garage have ultimately been very professional and got on with everything thrown at them during the course of yesterday and today. They've done a fantastic job. In terms of the drivers, all three have done a good job today. Alex's first run out in FP1 went quite well for him. We subsequently had a few issues on the car in between the two sessions, which probably hampered him a little bit in terms of his overall performance. But he got right in touch with where the problems were and gave good feedback. From that point, overall it's been a good day and credit to all three drivers and the team for dealing with what we've been thrown at.

Jules Bianchi said here yesterday in the drivers' press conference that the target isn't to try to catch Sauber as far as he's concerned, it's to stay ahead of Caterham, but what's your objective?

DG: Well, catching Sauber obviously, but that's going to be a little bit more tricky. I prefer to look forwards at all times. That's not to say that we don't respect Caterham. They occasionally get closer and we need to keep watching what they are doing as well. They've clearly got some upgrades on the car this weekend, but so have we. We've managed to come here with a few mechanical parts that actually have paid massive dividends to us today.

Thank you very much. Coming to you Rob: one of the notable features as far as Williams is concerned is that most, if not all, of the developments you've brought to the car have worked. Can you tell us a bit about what's gone on to create that situation and your part in it?

Robert SMEDLEY: I think that we've had changes in process if you like, where we've looked at correlation between wind tunnel and track, how we improve the accuracy of the measurements that we take here at the track and the process of that whole thing. I think that being able to have accurate feedback from the start of the year from the track back to the tunnel, not only as to what the parts are doing in terms of correlation but also in terms of what we want from a car – not only from total downforce but from car characteristics as well, in high, medium and low speed – has ultimately paid dividends. That correlation has thankfully been very good, because even when you do all your homework you can't take it for granted that it will be. But I think that the work that has been done by the people back in Grove in the wind tunnel, by the operations group in terms of the accuracy of the aero measurements. It's an ongoing process. We're still improving it and we've still got a way to go with it, but at the minute it's working well and I think we're quite pleased with it.

A few points have gone begging along the way, but on the other side pit stop times have improved a lot. Looking at the whole picture then, how far off being at the level you want to be are you operationally?

RS: Miles away! It's an ongoing process. I've said before it's an ongoing process. The team is on a bit of a journey. We've already made inroads as to where we need to get to but if the team wants to make good on its ambitions of eventually winning races and then going on to win world championships again, as it has done in the past, then we still have a way to go. But the good thing is, the encouraging thing is that there has been progress made already and the team, as a group of people, there's great synergy there. Everybody's on board with it and everybody is pushing forward with it and every new target that we set, however big or small, the team gets on with it and gets it done and that's really encouraging.

Thanks for that. Coming to Andrew Green. Your team has always been a strong performer around this Spa-Francorchamps circuit, what do your prospects look like after today do you think?

Andrew GREEN: Yeah, we've always had fond memories of Spa, we've had some good results in the past. I think as a general rule we always look forward to Sunday more than we do Saturday. I think we've got a good race car and I think it will be the same here. I think come Sunday afternoon, regardless of where we are on the grid, we can score some good points and keep the pressure on the people around us. That will be the aim for this weekend.

We talked to Rob there about development steps. With your team it's not quite so clear to read as the season's gone on. What's been happening behind the scene and in your mind are we reaching an important point in that Constructors' battle with McLaren – only one point in it?

AG: Yeah, it's going to be a tough with the likes of McLaren; they've got a huge amount of resource compared to us. We've obviously got next year's car to think about, which is looming. But yeah, we'll keep the fight with them as long as we can. It only needs a couple of good results and we can stay ahead of them. Like I said before, I think definitely on a Sunday afternoon we can race well. I think it's going to be difficult, no doubt about it, but we'll see what we can do.

Thank you. James, can you spell out for us what you and Marco Mattiacci have identified as the things that need to be done to make Ferrari win again?

James ALLISON: I don't think Ferrari's ever lacked for resource, it's never lacked for quality of people, quality of drivers, so we have many of the key parts of being a successful team. What all of us are trying to do, and Marco is spearheading that, is to identify the areas where we are not championship-leading material and to put them right. Most of those weaknesses are organisational and a tendency to have worked a bit short-term in the past. That's the main area where we are trying to make sure that we bring out the best from all the manifest good things that are there at Maranello.

You've worked with both the drivers that you're with at the moment quite a lot through your career. Obviously what Fernando is doing this season is fairly clear but can you spell out or put your finger on what's characterised Kimi's season so far?

JA: Well, I would say that we have had a car that is not especially easy to drive – that's certainly true. Particularly in Kimi's case he doesn't much like the front end of the car and Kimi's a driver who likes to have a very strong and predictable front end to the car and then he's able to make the most of the skill he had. That isn't something he's found yet in Ferrari and we haven't yet provided for him. That's, I think, what we're looking at.

Thanks for that. And finally, Adrian: where are we now on the evolution of your new role with Red Bull Racing? For example, have you been involved in the early laying out of the 2015 car?

Adrian NEWEY: Very much so. At the moment I'm still full time at Red Bull Racing and will be certainly over the coming months as we finalise the general layout of the car, so it won't be until Christmas that I start to really get into new roles let's say. So at the moment it's full concentrated.

Obviously two wins so far this season, the only team to break Mercedes' stranglehold as far as that is concerned. What do you think are the chances of adding to that tally in the remaining races? Which ones do you target as being possibilities?

AN: Possibly Singapore we have a chance. Difficult to forecast. I think it goes without saying that the circuits that have the shorter straights are the ones that suit us best.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) James, as Fernando and Kimi, they have different kinds of driving style. Is it possible to build a car that suits both of them next year?

JA: Yeah, I think so. There's no reason why we shouldn't, put it that way. Any driver responds to more downforce, any driver responds to more horsepower, any driver responds to more mechanical grip. We're putting all of those things into next year's car and I hope that both the drivers will be satisfied with the outcome.

Q: (Ted Kravitz – Sky Sports) Adrian, are you looking outside for somebody to take on your sort day-to-day chief technical officer responsibilities at the track – a sort of de facto technical director – or do you think you've got that talent within the team, that you can bring someone in to take over your responsibilities in terms of making those big technical calls at the track?

AN: I think that at the track in Paul Monaghan, 'Rocky' [Guillaume Roquelin] and Simon [Rennie] we have three very able technical people and I see no reason why they shouldn't be able to take those decisions, no.

Q: (Edd Straw – Autosport) Question for James and Adrian please. Formula One cars aren't as quick as they once were, not just looking at the very short term past but ten years ago. Is that right for Formula One? Should grand prix racing always be about ever-faster cars or is it OK that it's about the fastest car within set regulatory parameters?

JA: I have to say I don't spend a lot of time worrying about where they sit in the grand scheme of things. I'm mainly concerned with how fast mine is relative to these guys'. I think it's important that Formula One cars are fast, it's important that they look dramatic on the track, that the best drivers in the world find them exciting and challenging to drive. I think all those things are true. It's easy to design a set of regulations that would allow them to be massively faster – but I think what we have at the moment is fast. I think it looks dramatic, I think it requires skill from the drivers and I think it's producing fairly good races. So I don't really see any big problems in that regard.

Adrian, do you share that view?

AN: I think lap time per se is not necessarily the be-all and end-all. I think, as James says, the critical thing is the cars should look fast and, if you're sitting there watching television that it should be "wow, those guys are superheroes, I couldn't do that." If I'm honest I don't think the current cars really do that. I think if you watch MotoGP then you certainly have that feeling, that those guys are superheroes, whereas the current crop of cars, their power-to-weight is not fantastic. Going back to the 1300hp in qualifying Formula One cars that were quite a bit lighter than they are now. Then those things, you had to bolt on some fairly special appendages to drive them in qualifying. I think the fact that young drivers – no disrespect to them at all – that they can jump in and instantly be at the front, or competitive certainly, is an interesting one. I don't think there's an easy answer but I think

it would be good to make the cars a bit more difficult to drive in truth. I think the extra torque of the new engines is good in that respect – although there's obviously lots of ways of producing more torque. I think the way the old regulations had gone was very much with a small capacity, high-revving normally aspirated is bound to be low on torque. That's my personal opinion.

Q: (Rodrigo Franca – VIP Magazine) Question for James, Adrian and Rob please. Formula One technology is being used to improve performance and product innovations, not only in our road cars but also in our lifestyle and day-by-day. How important is this work in your teams? I know McLaren, for example, has McLaren Applied Technologies. I would like to know if Ferrari, Red Bull and Williams have this kind of work.

RS: Obviously with Williams we have the Advanced Engineering arm of the business. There are some crossovers to electrical hybrid power there. The vision of Williams at least is that, although you've got two standalone businesses, there should be cross-pollination of that knowledge between the two and there's absolutely no reason why we shouldn't do that. As to the wider range of a car manufacturer as Ferrari are, I'll leave that up to James to answer – but certainly the vision of our business is that we grow both the Formula One team and the Advanced Engineering group together and we're able to exploit both of those businesses from a knowledge point of view.

Adrian, is that important to Red Bull, and is that what you'll be heading on to after this?

AN: I think to use the technology that's developed in Formula One in other avenues, other applications is without doubt an interesting one and one which other teams have demonstrated the value of in all sorts of diverse areas. So, yes, it's something that Red Bull are certainly looking at.

James, from a Ferrari perspective.

JA: From a Ferrari perspective, I'm fortunate that the F1 part of Ferrari is right next door to the road car part of Ferrari and that we have the opportunity to mix our ideas and we benefit a reasonable amount from some of the work they've done over the last few years and they certainly continue to benefit from some of our know how. It's just a relationship that works both ways and long may it continue.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) There's a possibility that by 2016 Formula One will be racing on low profile tyres – be that 18, 19 or 20-inch. From your own teams' perspectives and also given the relatively short timeframe, is it the right move that F1 should be making? Possibly from 2016 onwards?

JJ: I think from my point of view, the aero aspects, as it's close to my heart, is one of the key areas. The simulation of tyres in the wind tunnel and CFD environments has come on an awful long way and I think that's a key aspect for us to adjust or adapt the F1 platform to that. It also begs the question, the legality areas around the much greater space within that rim and how that is managed going forwards. Going back quite a way now, it was brake duct area but it is now very much more aero performance area. So, how those regulations are drawn up and how quickly that's implemented, and how soon we know enough information to come up with a good, solid platform around that format I think would be key.

Andrew?

AG: I think the key for us is just making sure we have enough time to adapt to the new regulation. It's not something that we can move forward with over a short term. It needs quite a lot of development, a lot of work. Like John said, windtunnel; mechanical systems. It's reasonable change, more than happy to go in that direction, to be honest it would suit the way that we're set up, so yeah, more than happy.

Dave?

DG: Yeah, I think as engineers we'll be very interested in it from the point of view of it being the next challenge, and everybody likes to be involved in changes like that in terms of just the engineering challenge, if you like and definitely as a team, so long as it's properly managed when it's introduced and not rushed in, then I'm sure with the right timescales and delivery of certain parts of the product from the supplier – whoever that is – at the right times then I'm sure we'll all get used to it and it'll be another step forward for Formula One.

James, your thoughts, and any thoughts on appropriate timescales?

JA: Well, we're halfway through 2014, we're talking about something to be introduced in 2017, so there's certainly adequate time. The tender process for deciding on the new tyre supply is something the FIA looks after and have been taking the trouble to consult among the teams for what type of consideration should be built into the timing of that so that we can manage the engineering of it. So I think there is enough time and as long as the various inputs from the teams are heeded, it will all be fine – and it will be exciting and fun for us to have a change in the geometry.

Adrian?

AN: I agree with all those points. The only thing I'd add though is that I think, and maybe I'm ignorant of what's been going on, but as far as I understand, then the only reason for proposing this is to suit... to make it look more like the road tyres that that particular tyre manufacturer makes. So it's not being done for technical reasons, it's not being done for performance reasons, it's being done purely for styling and commercial reasons and I think that to me does not seem the right reason to make a technical change.

Rob?

RS: I think I'd probably second what Adrian just said to be honest. We have to really question the reasons for doing that, and what does it actually bring to the sport? As an engineering exercise then all the teams are big enough to be able to just get on with it. It's not a great engineering challenge, it is an engineering challenge as most things in Formula One are – the question that Formula One has to ask itself is: what are the reasons that we're doing it for, and are they the right reasons, does it bring anything to the sport?

Q: (Sven Heidinger - Sport Woche) Question for James. You had huge problems with the wind tunnel in the past, you revamped it. Are you happy with how it works and are you using the one in Cologne any more?

JA: No, we've not been using the one in Cologne for really quite some time and all the development work we've done on this year's car, the in-season development has been done in our facility at Maranello. We've been pretty happy with the output from that. The stuff that we've been saying should be an improvement has been an improvement and that's the main thing you want from a wind tunnel.

Q: (Nicolas Carpentiers – F1i.com) We are at the stage of the season where there is a balance to find between development and preparation of next year’s car. I would like to know if the reduction of the time you are allowed to spend in the wind tunnel, and CFD – so the 30:30 rule – will force you to switch on the preparation of next year’s cars sooner than previous years.

AN: No, I don’t think so. It means you’ve got to be more careful in the way that you use your runs, be it CFD or wind tunnel, but I think in terms of timing, that’s much more led by the manufacturing and design deadlines than it is by the aerodynamic research.

Rob, is it in any way a leveller between the bigger teams and the smaller teams?

RS: I’m not sure. Possibly is the answer but I couldn’t give you a definitive response. Possibly it helps the smaller and midfield teams with slightly less resource. And I think that’s the whole point of it, isn’t it? How effective it is, I think you’ve got to look at the spread of the grid over the last years with the old ratio and look at it with this one and see whether or not there’s been a change.

Q: (Silvia Arias – Parabras) To all of you: I would like to know how difficult you find it – or not – to explain this Formula One to a teenager of 16 or 17 years old?

DG: Well, most 16- or 17-year-old teenagers I’ve met are pretty bright so I’m sure they know plenty about technologies and they know the resource of the internet to go and look where you can find out about it. I think definitely as a sport, what we’ve done this year with the power trains is complicated for sure but that’s the way the future of hybrid road cars is going to go so clearly this is the technology of the future so from that point of view, then yes, we do need to make sure we explain to them but I’m not so sure we do as slightly older people. I’m sure they’ve already worked it out for themselves and they use the internet to find out exactly what it means.

Q: James, you have teenage children. Do you have trouble explaining it to them?

JA: I think probably the only 16-year-old people I talk to are my children so I don’t have a very broad span of experience there and they’ve had to put up with me all their lives so they’re probably better equipped than many to cope with any explanation I might give. But it’s not that complicated. We fill the things up with fuel and then we race them as hard as we can and then someone finishes in front and hopefully it’s fun along the way.

AG: I don’t tend to have an issue explaining to anybody to be honest. I explained it to my parents and they understand it and I think that’s harder than explaining to a 16-year-old who can probably Google most of it and understand it in a few seconds. So no, I don’t think so.

JJ: I think there might be an opportunity to look at how Formula One’s portrayed maybe in your areas more, going forward, whether we’re attracting the youth market as much as we could be in an ever increasing market place for attention and opportunity for them to be looking at other things but so long as I think we provide a good show and something really interesting and exciting for them to watch, and I think that’s something going back to an earlier point, I think Formula One in any format needs to be exciting as well as being fast. MotoGP was mentioned and I think the racing and overtaking in MotoGP is probably one of the big attractions so I think giving entertainment and something that they want to watch in the right places where they want to watch it is probably key.

AN: I think that in terms of complication then I think it’s not a problem, in fact I think it makes it more interesting for the people who start to get into it. If you look at something like American football then despite having lived in America for a few years, I still have no clue how that works but a lot of people take the trouble to learn that and to become very

involved in it and I think it's a similar thing that very often the sports that are most rewarding to spectate are the ones where you take the trouble to understand the complications of how it works.

RS: Yeah, I personally don't see the technology that we have at the minute with the power units as being particularly complicated to understand anyway, and especially not for 16/17-year-olds. I think that they are more apt and more equipped than anyone to understand that level of technology. Again, what you have to question is what does it bring to Formula One? What does it bring to the man who's sat at home, not the 16/17-year-old but all age ranges, when they sit at home on a Sunday afternoon and they watch it, does it make it more exciting, does it bring a bigger audience, does it create a bigger interest? And if it does all of that then it's good for the sport, because that's what we have to do because they are, at the end of the day, the people who keep the sport alive.

AN: Just to interrupt, I think possibly we're all talking in slightly different ways because in truth, when you watch it, then you've got all sorts of aspects: you've got the tyres, DRS, how the power units are used, etc, etc and if you really want to get into it, you've got break down which bits do you think are involving to understand and which bits, as Rob said, are probably actually in truth not relevant to the satisfaction of watching the show and I think clearly the tyres are working well this year, in terms of the degradation and the opportunities that offers with different strategies and so forth. So many other bits – how the K is used around a lap, is that really important or not? – I think that's more debatable.

Q: (Angelique Belokopytov – AutoDigest) Adrian, as far as I know, you will leave Red Bull but in doing so, will you accept that Mercedes is stronger?

AN: Well, I'm not leaving Red Bull the family. I will be spending much less time – much less involvement in the Formula One team. I think our cars have been competitive in certain aspects this year, as we showed in Hungary. But to chose when you step away from something, based purely on where you are at the time, is a dangerous game. I made this decision some time ago. Yes, of course it would be nice if we were about to win the championship this year but that's not going to happen but that's the nature of timing. I'm looking forward to what I'm going to be doing next, not worrying about even where I am at the moment, if you like. It's the future that's the exciting bit.

Q: (Oana Popiou – F1 Zone) Adrian, will this weekend just be an exercise in damage limitation for Red Bull?

AN: Unfortunately, probably yes is the answer. I think it's unlikely that it will be... certainly unless weather plays a part in the race and we manage to get that right or unless we are plain lucky, then given a sort of normal dry race, it seems very unlikely that we will be battling for the win, so as you put it, at that point it becomes damage limitation.

Q: (Ziv Knoll – F1i.com) Adrian, we've been talking about 16-year-olds; what are your thoughts about having a 16-year-old in the Red Bull stable?

AN: I don't think age per se is particularly important. Over the years we've seen a huge spread in driver ages: Fernando is still one of the very top drivers but has been in it for many seasons. I think Nigel Mansell was 40 years old when he won. So Formula One as a sport - where actually drivers, providing their motivation, if you like, remains, can have a very long career so you could argue that when they enter is not that important. I think what is a much more concerning question personally is the effect on education that happens for these drivers to get there at that age. A lot of the drivers in karting and in junior formulas frankly just aren't going to school. They don't go to school at all. The parents then hide

behind that by saying that they have private tutors but I think in many cases – not all, I'm sure, but in many cases - that's actually a complete sham and I think if you asked a lot of those kids to sit their baccalaureat or GCSEs or whatever it might be that the results would tell a fairly depressing story which means that the few kids that do get through, fantastic. Being at a motor race and so forth, the kids do learn in a different way – not an academic way but they learn in other ways - but I think for many of those children that don't quite make the grade, they have spent all that time not going to school, not having a proper tuition and then what happens to them afterwards is altogether another question. It's something which motor racing as an industry urgently needs to look at, because personally I think we're being irresponsible allowing that.

Q: (Alberto Antonini – Autosprint) James, as you're probably aware, there were some remarks in the press from a former member of the team, saying that the power unit had to be compromised to accommodate the taper of the rear end and there is no adequate tail-off in terms of aero downforce. What is your comment on this?

JA: Well, I wasn't actually at Ferrari during any of that period and I would prefer not to comment on that. What I would rather do is to look forward to what we're trying to do at the moment which is to make sure that we're getting absolutely the best possible result out of our vehicle, taking our power unit and our chassis development and trying to bind the two together in a way that gives us a good result. There are any number of compromises that need to be made when you're making these cars and my focus is on trying to make the right ones together with our team for 2015.

Q: (Craig Scarborough – Scarbs F1) Adrian and James: looking at the development path between now and going into next year, you've got relatively stable aero regulations but you've all got the potential to reappraise your power unit layout. What opportunities have you got in apportioning your resource development between this year and looking into next year?

AN: Well in our case, well obviously we have an engine partner in Renault and therefore the division is very clear. We make requests in terms of what we'd like from the engine architecture point of view and how that would best install in the chassis. Renault are able to accommodate some of those requests - some of them. Others they say no they can't do that in the time available or they don't believe it's the right thing to do anyway.

JA: Well, the aero regs are stable but they are also still young, relatively young. I would guess that there's as much to be had out of - in the time between the '14 and '15 cars – there's as much to be had out of making the aero better as there is out of making the power unit better and we're throwing as much weight as we can behind both those things.

Ends