



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

## Press Information

### 2014 Belgian Grand Prix Sunday Press Conference Transcript

24.08.2014

#### DRIVERS

- 1 – Daniel RICCIARDO (Red Bull Racing)
- 2 – Nico ROSBERG (Mercedes)
- 3 – Valtteri BOTTAS (Williams)

#### PODIUM INTERVIEWS

(Conducted by Eddie Jordan)

**What a race. Exciting? You loved it? What about this man here? Let's hear it for him. Daniel, if I have to say to you: you are responsible for keeping half of Australia up until this hour!**

**Daniel RICCIARDO:** Yeah, I think obviously back home there is a huge following, but this is nearly as many Australian flag as there were in Melbourne. It's impressive, a lot of Aussies or at least Aussie fans out this weekend, so thank you very much.

**We saw you for the first time... because with the previous two wins you just happened to get in there in the last three or four laps. This time you led from the front. Different task, different pressure? What was it like?**

**DR:** Yeah, definitely a bit different. When you lead the race, I guess, for that long it's more about composure, just looking at your lap times, just trying to be as consistent as possible and once I heard Rosberg came in for a third stop we knew he was going to be quick at the end, I just had to try to keep the lap times up and keep it clean.

**We'll be back to you, please don't go away. I've got to ask: where is the man? He's here – Nico Rosberg, ladies and gentlemen! (*Responding to boos from the crowd*) Hey, come on guys, steady on, steady, steady, Nico drove an unbelievably good race. Nico, I've got to ask you the all-important question: what happened up in Les Combes?**

**Nico ROSBERG:** Well, I got a good run on Lewis and tried to go around the outside and yeah, we just touched in the end, unfortunately, so that hurt both of our races. From a team point of view of course that's very disappointing. And yeah, that's the way it is.

**Not that this is a question of apportioning blame but did you see blame either way or was it just a racing accident, a 50/50 situation?**

**NR:** I haven't seen it yet. It wouldn't be good of me if I would comment now. I need to look at it on TV and then I can comment afterwards.

**We know that you have a lot of fans here but there are obviously a lot of Lewis fans here. I'm just thinking myself about Mercedes. The one-two was there obviously, the domination of the qualifying. Did you actually think it would be a one-two today?**

**NR:** I was pretty confident, yeah, because we had very good race speed, as you saw at the end there, but unfortunately it didn't work out for us today.

**Nico, our championship leader. Ladies and gentlemen, Nico Rosberg! (Responding to more boos from the crowd) Hey, guys, come on, come on. That's not fair. You know it's not fair. He's driven his heart out, like everyone of these three guys and everyone on the grid. I think he needs and deserves a round of applause. Thank you.**

**Valtteri, you're making a bit of a habit of this aren't you. We're going to have to make a special place for you up here. Four podiums out of the last five races, what's going on?**

**Valtteri BOTTAS:** Yeah, why not? The team has done such a good job, we are definitely on the right way: another podium, the fourth one in my career and the fourth one this season. We are still chasing for the highest step but for now, for this season, if we keep like this, it's OK because it's the future that matters.

**The highest step: how far do you think you're away from that, because Williams have got a really great turn of speed? Can you just get that little final extra piece?**

**VB:** I think this season it's going to be difficult. We definitely need to be lucky to achieve that. Mercedes is really strong and even on a track like this Red Bull was really, really quick, we couldn't really challenge Ricciardo, so we have still work to do but we are on the right way.

**Daniel there's a lot of flags, a lot of well-wishers here for you. Your third win of the season. Just tell everybody here what was it like for those final couple of laps, just as you must have known that Nico was closing in on you. What was going through your head?**

**DR:** The first thing obviously that you hope everything holds together. You hope mechanically everything gets you to the finish line. Then it's just trying to hit your marks and keep consistent but always the last few laps the chequered flag can't come quick enough.

## **PRESS CONFERENCE**

**Daniel, you're a three-time grand prix winner now. Obviously the passes early on in the grand prix on Alonso and Vettel were fundamental in setting up the platform for the win today and from there obviously you had to cover Nico off for the rest of the race but tell me, did the boy from Perth always dream of a Spa win?**

**DR:** Yeah, I guess so. You dream of... there's definitely a few on the calendar that stand out more than others and Spa is one of them, but to be honest any win is special in Formula One. Yeah, the first part of the race: we had pretty good pace. On lap one I actually had the inside of Alonso at five but then I locked up and went off so he got me back and then we were able to get in front a few laps later. And then Seb, looked like he just dropped a wheel on the astroturf exit of Turn 10 and obviously with the rain overnight and this morning it was still a bit slippery, so I was able to get him

and then I think Nico came in for a front wing change and we were able to get into the lead and then the pace was pretty good. We were happy with what we were doing and the consistency was there and we were making the tyres last. Yeah, it was just really up to me at the end to stay consistent and stay focused. Yeah, it was good fun.

**Q: Nico, obviously there is only one real talking point for you at this stage: the incident with Lewis early on in the grand prix. We've obviously seen the crowd's reaction to it. In making history and fighting for championships there are always going to be difficult moments. This is your chance to explain how you saw it.**

**NR:** To be honest I'm not in a position to comment on it at all because I haven't seen it and, in the heat of the moment... I need to see it on TV before I say an opinion or anything as such. Of course very, very disappointing from the team's perspective, for sure, because we could have done a lot better than just finish in second place, y'know, with the car that we have, because our car is really... has been very, very special this weekend.

**Q: Valtteri, your fourth podium in five grands prix, quite a streak for you. And a similar story really, a recovery for you after quite a disappointing qualifying session, I imagine, yesterday. Starting sixth on the grid and, again, some big overtakes in the story of your race today.**

**VB:** Yeah. It was, again, a really nice race, nice to be in it. Obviously yesterday the weather played a role in the qualifying and we knew that in the dry we would have better pace than in the wet, so we were really hopeful for today. I have to say that we are little bit surprised by the pace of Red Bull and Mercedes. They were quite a bit far away. Of course our race was a bit compromised after the poor start. I was quite a long time stuck behind some other cars and couldn't really go at the pace we had. But yeah, had some good overtakes. We had good pitstops and good strategy by the team and that allowed us to come up a few places and again to the podium.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Ian Parkes – PA) Nico, Niki Lauda has made it absolutely clear that he feels you were to blame, he's gone on record saying that already. Toto Wolff has turned around and said that what happened was "totally unacceptable" – that something like that should not have happened on lap two of the race. What you did, was that deliberate? Because we've seen before that when a front wing collides into a tyre it causes a puncture. Just give us your thoughts on that please.**

**NR:** First of all, I haven't heard it myself from the people that you have mentioned but of course I respect and I will respect their opinion. I myself, I don't have an opinion yet because I haven't seen it on the TV. All I know is that I was faster and I gave it a go. The inside was blocked so I gave it a go around the outside. Of course it is very, very disappointing from a team's point of view.

**Q: (Dan Johnson – Daily Telegraph) Nico, whatever happens in a race, no-one likes to see people being booed on the podium. I just wonder how that felt from your point of view, given that, whatever happened between you and Lewis, it wasn't a blatant thing.**

**NR:** As I said, I respect the opinion of the British spectators. They definitely were not happy, so that doesn't feel good. That's very clear.

**Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action / National Speed Sport News) Dan, where do you do from here. The car wasn't supposed to be fast here but how do you see the rest of the season unfolding for you and the team?**

**DR:** I see good things, obviously good things ahead. If we can collect maximum points around here, y'know it gives us a bit more hope for the circuits that are going to come later in the season: Singapore, Suzuka, just a couple to mention. Obviously it's great. We're really motivated right now. It's been a really good day for us on a track we didn't expect to get maximum points from, so yeah, it'll keep us smiling for a while. At the same time we'll stay grounded. Monza we know will be tricky again but obviously the package we brought here was pretty racy, so, try and take something from here to Monza and then I think, as I said, Singapore and Suzuka will be pretty good for us.

**Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Valtteri, how was your fight with Kimi for the podium in the last laps? What was your feeling, was it something special?**

**VB:** I think it was a nice and fair fight. First I nearly had a go into Turn Five but wasn't really quite as close, so then I just had to wait for a couple of laps to really prepare for it, then went for it and it was nice, clean racing with him. So, yeah, really enjoyed it.

**Q: (Oana Popiou – F1 Zone) Nico, we saw the incident when something got stuck on your antenna; can you tell us something about it?**

**NR:** It was a big piece of... I don't know what it was and it just got stuck right in front of me, it was flapping in front of my eyes which made it difficult and I couldn't get rid of it either. I tried, because it was just stuck on the front but then after a while it came loose but it was really difficult to see at that time. Sometimes I couldn't even see where I was going because it was in the wrong place so that was not good.

**Q: (Sven Heidinger – Sport Woche) Daniel, did Red Bull change the philosophy of the car because usually you were very bad at those circuits and now the speed on the straight was very good?**

**DR:** Yup, we pretty much came here with a low downforce setting. We knew it would maybe affect us a bit in the second sector but we believe the car has a good base of downforce to sort of get through the second sector good enough and then what we lose naturally on the straights, running this type of wing, was something that put us back in with a fighting chance for sector one and two. Yeah, I guess on TV you could see by the images that the rear wing was pretty simple, there wasn't much to it but obviously it was a good package here and we'll see if the Monza wing can get any smaller – I don't know, otherwise we'll just run with DRS open all the time!

**Q: (Barua Zsoldos - Nemzeti Sport) Nico, do you honestly think that you can keep up the harmony inside the team after what happened today?**

**NR:** Yeah, I'm confident that we can, yes. It is always going to be an intense battle, that's clear, it was clear from the onset and there will always be difficult moments and just as we did after Hungary, we had a discussion and moved on. I'm sure again we are going to have to discuss today for sure and we'll review it and then we'll move on.

**Q: (Leigh O'Gorman – Walker Watson) Nico, the early incident with Lewis, did that dramatically change your tyre strategy today? You had to pit on lap eight or was a three stop with an early change always the plan?**

**NR:** No. My strategy was all over the place because of the various things happening so completely changed everything.

**Q: (Daniel Johnson – Daily Telegraph) Daniel, you're 35 points behind Lewis now and I think about maybe 65 behind Nico. With double points at the last race, do you consider yourself firmly in the championship hunt now?**

**DR:** If I'm within fifty coming into Abu Dhabi then yeah, but there's still a few races to go. While it's still mathematically possible, yeah, we'll keep fighting. Today was a big day for that. To come and steal some points on a circuit where let's say we weren't supposed to is nice but I think what's important, looking ahead, is to capitalise on the circuits that we should be strong on and if we can take maximum points, let's say, at a couple of those then it's never over.

**Q: (Ian Parkes – Press Association) Nico, you talked about Hungary and the meeting that was held there. I think this weekend we've seen different body language from yourself: you've clearly suggested that you weren't happy with what was expressed in the meetings that you've had with the team personnel and with Lewis. Was there any suggestion today that for once you went into this race with perhaps an uncool head, perhaps, an unclear mind?**

**NR:** I can't agree with any of your impressions that you've got this weekend. We had a very good discussion after Hungary and it was reviewed and clarified who did what, what was wrong, what was right and then we adapted our agreement to move forward. And that was really behind us. To be honest, I was very relaxed this weekend and just looking forward to it, because with this awesome car that I have at the moment, it's such a pleasure to go to a track like Spa where I know that I can be on pole on Saturday and win the race if I do a good job. I was very much with that frame of mind, not thinking about the championship either, just really this race, wanting to win here in Spa with the Silver Arrow and that was it for the weekend.

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – Universo Online) Daniel, twelve races is a representative number of races and you've won three times and your teammate not once, being a four time World Champion. What does it mean for you?**

**DR:** Yeah, obviously for me it's great, it's what I wanted to achieve, to get some race wins. To have three in twelve races I think has exceeded a few expectations. Let's say the in-team battle has gone really well. Obviously I've showed speed throughout qualifying and also races now. I've demonstrated good racecraft and good consistency so I think let's say the team has been really pleased and I've been pleased so we're in a good place. I'm enjoying it more than ever. Each race that goes on I'm having more and more fun so yeah, just having a good time.

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – Universo Online) Nico, in the discussion you had with the team after Hungary, did you predict situations like you faced today with Lewis?**

**NR:** I'm sorry, I don't want to go into more details. It's not a good idea. You asked what was agreed and things like that.

**Q: The question was did you envisage situations like today in your meetings?**

**NR:** Not in specific detail but of course the battle between us is something that we have discussed many many times, yes of course, and the guidelines from the team... we know what they are and they're quite clear. In fact it wasn't that specific to Hungary at all, just generally, of course, it's been discussed, yeah. Especially after Bahrain, for example. That was a discussion topic.

**Q: (Silvia Arias – Parabras) Nico, you haven't seen the incident but anyway, I think maybe you can feel good because there was no FIA investigation, the incident was not under investigation, that means something. Maybe it was just because it was a racing accident.**

**NR:** I don't know. I haven't seen it. I'm sorry, I don't want to... I need to watch it on TV before I... because really, when you're in the moment, it's very difficult now, afterwards, with where I was sitting, to comment.

Ends