



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

2013 Chinese Grand Prix Friday Press Conference Transcript 12.04.2013

TEAM REPRESENTATIVES – John Booth (Marussia), Ross Brawn (Mercedes), Christian Horner (Red Bull Racing), Franz Tost (Toro Rosso), Claire Williams (Williams).

PRESS CONFERENCE

Q: Claire, how have your duties changed within the team?

Claire WILLIAMS: First, thank you very much for having me here today, I feel privileged to be sitting among such amazing company. They haven't changed hugely. My primary focus has always been the commercial side of the team – to get the budget in, to keep us going racing. That won't change, that will remain my primary concern. Obviously with the Deputy Team Principal title comes some responsibility for the technical side of what we do, so I'm going to be working with our technical director Mike Coughlan to ensure we have the resources we need to get us back up to the top. And then inevitably there's the governance side of the role as well, so working with FIA/FOM issues.

Q: So how does the team structure work now?

CW: It hasn't changed hugely, as I said. We have a board at Williams made up of an executive committee that runs the team and the wider business on a day-to-day basis. That doesn't change but personally I suppose I will be going to every grand prix, so that's a slight change. I used to before. Frank is still our main leader and that doesn't change.

Q: Christian, you might have hoped that Malaysia was dead and buried and we could moved on but your driver has reignited the subject by saying that he doesn't apologise for winning and that he would do the same again. Where does management stand on this?

Christian HORNER: You don't want to talk about Malaysia the race, or the pitstops or anything like that? In Formula One you're always going to have a conflict between a drivers' interest and a drivers' championship and a constructors' world championship and I think unlike other sports you don't have those two elements going on at any point in time. Of course from a driver's perspective, the drivers' championship is everything to them. Sebastian made clear his position yesterday, some of the rationale behind that. As we've always known, the position between our two drivers, there's never been too much love lost between the two of them and it's a situation that's been clear for probably the last four to five years. It's something that we've managed and during that time we've still go on to score over 2000 points, 35 grand prix victories, six world championships. So within the team

it's nothing new. Obviously it's a bit more public, it's a bit more interest for you guys in terms of what's going on but as far as we're concerned it's business as usual. I think, as far as team orders goes, what's happened, happened. Sebastian's explained himself, he's explained himself to me. He's apologised to myself and every individual in the factory and the issues been dealt with. We move on and focus on the challenges of this weekend.

Q: Has he basically been given the green light by the fact the team owner and his advisor have said that there are no team orders?

CH: Well just to be clear, I sat down with Dietrich (Mateschitz) after the race and discussed at length with him what happened in Malaysia and Dietrich is a purist, he's a fan of the sport, he's a... through Red Bull I think, y'know, Red Bull is clear in its intent that it wants to support competition and Red Bull athletes across all different categories of sport. Of course in Red Bull Racing we also have a team. So there exists that conflict of what the drivers want and what the team wants. The purist obviously wants to see the drivers race and race wheel to wheel and in fact as the drivers have done on many, many occasions. Sometimes you get instances that you have to deal with. Our primary concern in Malaysia wasn't the two drivers racing each other, it was the fact we were concerned about tyre degradation from all the information that we'd seen prior... during that weekend in terms of managing the race to the end of the race with the least risk possible. Of course the call that we made at that point in time didn't suit what Sebastian's intent was and therefore you end up in this conflict between driver desire and the team's position and it's something we've discussed, it's something we're clear on going forward where of course we will trust the drivers. We will allow them to continue to race each other, they will have the information, they will know what they need to do with that information.

Q: John, you seem to have a decent car and a decent driver pairing. How much does that contribute to your security in F1, the team's security in F1?

John BOOTH: It does play a part. Our shareholders want to see us going forward and we have to show that progression. We're very pleased with what we've produced this year. We're 170 people in total in Marussia and we're very proud of what we've produced – but we have to keep working and keep pushing forward. Our shareholders expect us to go forward.

Q: Tell us about Pat Symonds' contribution to this year's car and also his influence at the circuits?

JB: Pat's only been coming back to the circuit this year, made a couple of appearances and very welcome too – but I rather hope he stays at home more and makes the car go quicker that attending circuits. He's a massive influence in our drawing office: brings a lot of discipline, a lot of knowledge and a lot of experience, particularly with the wind tunnel programme that we've been pushing on with for the last 18 months. It's made a massive difference to us.

Q: Franz, a new technical structure headed by James Key, tell us about the changes.

Franz TOST: There were a lot of changes from the technical side, from the personnel side. James reshuffled the team, he bought in much more people in the aerodynamic department – in the wind tunnel as well as in CFD. He also brought in some more people in the design office and the way, the method of working has changed as well. I'm quite positive and convinced we are on a correct way and I also expect a successful season because James has built up quite a strong team around him and as you can imagine it takes a little bit of time. But I think from the middle of the season onwards all the positions should be fixed and people will work concentrated and so far I must say the performance increases and I think we are on a correct way.

Q: And that goes hand-in-hand with the physical expansion at the factory as well?

FT: Yes. We built up the new composite building, which is finished now. That means we've bought in much more people in the composite department. We are producing now in-house the monocoque, the front wing, rear wing, nose, bodywork, the engine cover as well as the brake ducts as well as the floor and diffuser. That means we are much more flexible. The reaction times are much shorter and from this point of view, the team has really increased.

Ross, your imposition of what might be seen to be a team order has also been perceived to be establishing a hierarchy within the team. What do you have to say about that?

Ross BRAWN: There is no hierarchy in the team. Both drivers have exactly the same status. Inevitably in a hard racing season on driver may start to get the upper hand and that may become a factor to take into account towards the end of the season. We would expect a driver who perhaps didn't have a great chance to win the Drivers' Championship towards the end to help one who perhaps does. I think that's our expectation of the drivers. Certainly we don't have any different status between the two drivers. In terms of our situation in Malaysia, I think there are some similarities with Christian's situation. We had... certainly Lewis was very tight on fuel and Nico was low as well. Not as bad as Lewis but still not in great shape. So it seemed that it could lead to a problem where we had both drivers racing each other, because one gets past and then you can slipstream and use the DRS and start saving fuel when you get past and I could foresee a situation where it could get very delicate at the end and for me there wasn't a great deal to gain, because we were third and fourth and no threat and no real opportunity to catch the cars in front. Fortunately our driver, because it mainly affected Nico, respected the request and did what he was asked to do. But it's a very emotional situation when you tell a driver he has to back off. He has the bit between his teeth, he's charging and he feels he has an opportunity, that's what they're there for. As I think I said afterwards I would have been disappointed if he hadn't been upset, because they're very, very competitive individuals and that's what we pay them for. But it's a very delicate situation and I've been there several times. I think what we mustn't do is push it underground. I think if we have clandestine team orders then that makes us look far worse than accepting the situation we have, which is that it's both a team sport and an individual drivers' sport and the teams will try to find the balance between those two objectives. And they don't always marry easily. We want our drivers to race. The rule is don't hit each other and that's all we ask of them and we want them to race. We have demonstrated many times that we're happy to let our two drivers race. But

there will be occasional circumstances where the risk is very high and for the good of team we'll make a team decision about what we need to do.

One more question. There is a new management structure at Mercedes, how is it working?

RB: OK. I think we all know Niki, he's quite a colourful character and I'm not talking about his hat. He has a lot of input, often a lateral view on different things, which is worth listening to. He doesn't have an active day-to-day role. Toto is now based in Brackley, taking over a lot of what Nick Fry did, thus getting more involved in the sport and politics as Nick did in the latter few years. I think we have our areas to look after and on that basis I'm happy.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Ian Parkes – Press Association) Christian, coming to you first. Obviously Sebastian has apologized, as you've mentioned, but yesterday his remarks were basically as if that apology never existed. As Bob has mentioned he said he would probably do the same again under the circumstances, that he'd effectively undermined you as team principal and that it was indirectly, quote-unquote, payback for what Mark had done previously in not helping either himself or the team. On that basis, has your authority been shattered and do you have a driver who, when he sticks two fingers up to you and the team, is uncontrollable?

CH: First of all, the drivers need the team. They're an essential part of the team and one element of 500 or 600 people. Has my authority been undermined? In that race he didn't do what I asked. Was I happy about it? Of course I wasn't. Did we discuss it? Yes, we did. Did he apologise? Yes. Has he learned from it? I'm sure he has. Would he do it again? I think he'd think twice but I think as he explained yesterday there is an awful of history between those drivers. It's something that isn't new. It's something that's been there between the two of them for the past four or five years. Let's not forget they are one of the most successful pairings that the sport has ever seen. They have won three successive Constructors' World Championships for the team and Sebastian, of course, has become the youngest ever triple world champion. Is my leadership undermined? I don't think so. I've led the team from the time that Red Bull entered the sport to those 35 victories, to those world championships. Of course there have been lumps and bumps along the way, there have been incidents between the two drivers. But we retain them because they are both fiercely competitive individuals, they drive each other forward and they bring the best out of each other and at some points of course it's uncomfortable for the team. But I think it's a healthy rivalry, even though they took things into their own hands. They gave each other just enough room and whilst it was uncomfortable for us on the pit wall to watch, it was spectacular driving, just giving each other room to work with, as they've done on numerous occasions. What's happened has happened. We can't change it, we can't go back and it's a question of looking forward and focusing on this event and obviously the next 16 events after this. As a team we're working as closely as we've ever done, as in both drivers to work closely together, to continue to improve, to continue to give their feedback to the team to keep moving forward because our competitors aren't far away. Sebastian hasn't achieved the success that he has in his career by being submissive. He saw an opportunity, he took it into his own hands, he'd saved a set of tyres from the previous day and he wanted that victory more than anything else. I think he justified

to himself that previous events that had taken was part of his judgement on what he chose to do that day.

Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action/National Speedsport News) John, Jules has been doing a good job; what has impressed you most about him and what do you think his potential is?

JB: His calmness has impressed me immensely. Very likeable guy, we thought he may have been disappointed to lose out on the Force India drive, but he's just been positive from day one. As for his ultimate potential, it's very early to say. I've worked with him for two races and one and a half test days so it's a bit too early to see, but the potential certainly looks very good.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – The Citizen) I believe the president of the Federation circulated a letter last week to all team principals regarding its role in the cost-cutting process or cost control process and that it no longer intends playing a regulatory role in the process. This seems to be an about face after last year having called various meetings about this issue. How do you feel about this?

CH: I think it would be inappropriate to comment because it's a letter between the teams and the FIA. It's a private letter, I don't see there's any reason to comment in public about it.

RB: Well, we support the RRA (Resource Restriction Agreement) for instance, or we support a means of controlling costs in Formula One and we have to find a way forward, so we support whatever can be done to try and control costs or contribute towards controlling costs in the future.

JB: I'm not sure that Formula One is sustainable, the way it's heading, so the Resource Restriction is very important and we fully support it going forward. But I wouldn't want to discuss it, it's a private letter.

FT: The Resource Restriction Agreement – there were numerous meetings. We have the Resource Restriction Agreement for the chassis which is not so important because we more or less have the chassis costs under control. We didn't manage to come up with a power train Resource Restriction Agreement which would have been much much more important because next year the costs will increase by eight to one hundred percent regarding the power train, and there we should have worked and should have come up with something but the manufacturers, as usual, had some meetings, pushed a little bit but brought nothing to paper because everybody is doing his development and is thinking of getting an advantage over the others. The teams, the customers have to pay, they bill them at the end. This is reality and as I mentioned just before, next year will become very very expensive.

RB: I obviously can't comment on whoever Franz's supplier is but in our case, taken over a reasonable number of years, the costs will be no higher than existing costs so of course there will be a peak at the beginning because there's going to be a lot of activity but with the homologation procedures which are in place and it's our objective to bring the costs down, so I don't accept that the costs are going to be eighty to a hundred percent higher, not in our case anyway. We're doing the whole package with the drive train. It is a new project, I think Formula One needs a new engine, I think we've all heard the stories that Honda are coming in and there are other people looking at joining Formula One. I think it's regenerated that area, which it needed. That's our position.

CW: With respect to Dieter's question, Williams is an independent team so we're always in favour of cost controls in Formula One but with regards to that letter, no, we don't have a comment. It's not appropriate to discuss that.

Q: (Andrea Cremonesi – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Christian, today we saw Vettel didn't go so well, so brilliantly as the last two weekends. Do you think that's a factor of what happened recently? The second question, which is also for Ross, is about the soft tyre; Ferrari was very fast today on the soft tyre, do you think that they are serious candidates for pole and then starting in front, for leading the race?

CH: First of all, your question regarding Sebastian. Both drivers were working to different programmes today. It's an opportunity for us on a Friday to explore different set-ups and developments so obviously the information will be looked at this evening and set-ups will either converge or diverge over this evening into tomorrow but it's certainly been a productive day.

As far as your question on the tyres; it looks like the softer of the two tyres is certainly quicker but not particularly durable and obviously it's a question of finding that balance between what's right for Saturday and grid position and what's right for the race on Sunday. Felipe Massa certainly looked quick today on the soft tyre, but again, we've seen so many times that Friday times are meaningless in many respects unless you understand the programmes that each of the teams has been running to.

RB: I'm presuming pole position will be set on the soft tyre, because it's over a second faster than the medium tyre but it has quite a short life, so you've got to work out your strategy over the whole weekend, from qualifying onwards and there may well be people who chose, in Q3, to conserve tyres or plan to start on the more durable tyre. But I think pole position will be set on the soft tyre because it's so much faster.

Q: (Kate Walker – Girl Racer) Christian, you've spoken extensively about the history between your two drivers and the successes that you've had as a team. However, with his comments yesterday, what Sebastian appeared to make clear was that he feels that he trumps the team. Formula One being both a team and a driver's sport, the drivers are still team employees; how do you intend to make him understand that his position is as your employee, not as somebody who has the right to decide whether or not to follow your orders?

CH: Well, I don't think Sebastian for one moment thinks he runs the team, he knows what his job is, he knows what we employ him to do, he knows why we employ him to do it and he's been with Red Bull for a long time now, as a junior driver and as a Formula One driver and now as a multiple World Champion. He recognises, more than anybody, the value that the team has behind the success that he's achieved in the car, and he knows that he can't operate without the team. So he doesn't put himself above the team or think that he's running the team for one moment. He's made a decision in a race as a hungry driver and obviously based that decision on all kinds of emotions at that point in time. I think that he's made his position clear, that he's apologised to the team, he's apologised to myself. It's happened and we move on but it doesn't change anything.

Q: (Chris Lines – AP) We move on from here to Bahrain; there are still ongoing political and human rights issues there. Are you concerned at all about how this reflects upon Formula One and how it reflects upon your sponsors?

CH: I've got enough problems with my drivers, let alone Bahrain. We've got our own issues.

FT: I don't see any problems going to Bahrain, like it was last year. I'm looking forward to going there. I think that it's very important to race over there. Formula One is entertainment. We should not be involved in politics. We should go there, we

should do our race, we should be concentrated there and the political side and political topics should be solved by someone else.

Q: (Trent Price – Richland F1) John, Jules was able to settle down to a very quick pace, early on in that session and had quite a handy margin over his direct competitors. Was the programme that he was on a reflection of that pace?

JB: Yes, you have to allow so much time for tyre evaluation in P2 now that the schedule tends to be changed around from previous years so we were on a qualifying simulation quite early.

Q: (Michael Schmidt – Auto, Motor und Sport) Christian, Mr Mateschitz said that he doesn't want to see team orders any more in his team. Are you afraid that a situation might come up where it's necessary to have a team order, possibly a situation like Ross just described where the two drivers are down on fuel or let's say that one driver has a better chance at the end of the season to win the championship over the other?

CH: Of course. It depends what you define as a team order, at the end of the day. During a race, you have a hundred different things that you have to manage, whether it be fuel, whether it be tyres, whether it be reliability, whether it be KERS – so many parameters that you have to manage and that takes very close interaction between the pit wall and the car. Of course, the drivers have to follow those instructions. What Dietrich is keen not to see is a situation where the drivers aren't allowed to race each other. As I said, our concern in Malaysia was not the fact that the drivers were racing each other, it's what the consequence would potentially be on tyre wear and the outcome of the one-two position on circuit that we managed to get ourselves into. From a Red Bull perspective, of course we want to see the drivers race and compete fairly and equally but at the same time, the drivers equally know that they need to respect the requirements from the team, whether it involves any of the elements I just discussed. Team orders are something that aren't new to Formula One, they've existed in different guises through pretty much every year that the sport has existed, and while you have a team and a drivers' championship, there will be that conflict on occasions between the two championships and the aspirations of a team and an individual driver.

Q: (Peter Stebbings – AFP) Christian, you said how there was no love lost between the drivers in the past. How would you describe their relationship now, in light of everything? Are they even talking to each other, for example?

CH: To be perfectly honest, it's no different to the relationship before Malaysia in many respects. They're both professional guys, they're both very driven, they're both very talented race drivers. Right now, they're sitting in a meeting, debriefing, across from each other about what the car is doing and how they, as a pairing, can improve the car with their team of engineers. Of course they will continue to work professionally, to benefit the team and ultimately obviously themselves. But I doubt very much they will be spending the summer break together or Christmas, but that's not what we pay them for. Why we pay them and employ them is because we believe that they're the best and strongest pairing in Formula One, as they've demonstrated consistently over the last three or four years.

Q: (Ian Parkes – Press Association) Christian, following on from that, we've seen many times in the past when a driver pairing basically cannot stand the sight of one another – Prost and Senna, Piquet and Mansell – that it just

doesn't work. At the end of the day, something has to give. Do you have any confidence whatsoever that your driver pairing this season, will be your driver pairing next season, or are you already casting your net for a potential replacement of either of your two drivers for next year?

CH: Well, first of all, Sebastian is on a long term contract so he's committed to the team. Mark's contract has been renewed on an annual basis over the last three or four years and that's something that we tend to address just in the same way again this year. Of course emotions are still fairly raw from the events in Malaysia, but they're still a very effective pairing and we won't make any decisions until later in the summer when Mark and the team will sit down and discuss the future. But after two races, it's far too early to even be contemplating what our driver line-up will be for 2014.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – The Citizen) Ross, you have a fairly controversial suspension set-up. It was a couple of years ago here that you had double-decker diffusers etc. At that stage, there was a proper governance procedure in place to look at the matter, investigate it and decide whether it was legal or illegal. How would the procedure work now in the absence of a Concorde Agreement, technical working group etc?

RB: Well, first of all, there's speculation but nobody knows what our suspension system is and from what I know, it's not uncommon throughout Formula One. The old days of simple rollbars, springs and dampers are long gone, and they've been long gone for several years and I don't think it's controversial, I don't think there are any issues. On the separate matter of what would we do in the case of a dispute, then I think the situation would be exactly as it has been before: somebody would go to the stewards, complain, they'd look into the matter, it would be resolved one way or another. If people weren't happy with that, then it would be appealed and go to an appeal court. The sporting and working groups are continuing as they did before, in the absence of a Concorde Agreement, which I think is showing good spirit from both the Formula One teams and the FIA. I know our technical director attends technical working groups, our sporting director attends the sporting working groups and they are following the same voting procedures and approaches which they did before, which, as I say, I think is showing good spirit from the teams and the FIA, and the FIA have advised the teams that's how they intend to continue until the Concorde Agreement is concluded.

Q: (Ian Parkes – Press Association) John, we spoke to Max yesterday and he informed us that to fund himself for this season in Formula One, he's basically giving away part of his future earnings. Could I just get your thoughts on that first of all as team principal and whether you feel that that's a good idea going forward for a young driver to boost himself up the ladder, rather than a driver who perhaps would bring in sponsorship for a team?

JB: It's nothing new. There are lots of schemes that have been tried over the years. I think Justin Wilson was the last one that I know that had a similar scheme; and sometimes it's required to find a way into Formula One. If it becomes self-funding then it's a great idea.

Ends