



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

## Press Information

### 2013 Chinese Grand Prix Post Qualifying Press Conference Transcript

13.04.2013

#### DRIVERS

1 – Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes)

2 – Kimi RAIKKONEN (Lotus)

3 – Fernando ALONSO (Ferrari)

#### TV UNILATERAL

**Lewis, a fantastic, last-minute shoot-out for pole and you won it for your new team.**

**Lewis HAMILTON:** Yeah, an incredible feeling, so happy to have our first pole for some time. I'm just ecstatic really. The lap was great. The team performed well all weekend so far and I hope that we can carry that into tomorrow.

**And quite a margin too.**

**LH:** Yeah, really surprising because obviously in P3 the Ferraris were very, very quick – didn't know where they'd be in qualifying. Obviously we had really good pace for Q1 and Q2 but that last lap is so difficult to get. Obviously in qualifying we had 10 minutes but we left it down to right to like three minutes to go or something like that. You've got to get the perfect out lap, you've got to do the perfect lap to get yourself up there and I really can't complain about the laps, so I'm really happy.

**Kimi, you held pole briefly but you were just pipped by Lewis.**

**Kimi RAIKKONEN:** I think the gap is quite big still and we don't have that speed right now. So, second is not bad, I think it's the best that I've been with the team ever. Not too bad, but of course you'd rather be in first place but I guess we don't have the speed. I think we are missing downforce in the middle sector a bit, but we'll see what we can do tomorrow.

**Great speed from Ferrari we've seen today as well, with Felipe and then you this morning and now third on the grid this afternoon Fernando. Are you happy with that?**

**Fernando ALONSO:** Yeah, very happy. I think the weekend has been very good for us. The car felt completely different Friday. This morning we made some changes and the car is responding well and I think we have a good set-up for the race as well, which is more important than qualifying always and I think tomorrow if everything goes well we should be able to fight for the podium, hopefully with both cars, so this is good news so far for the team.

**Back to you Lewis. You've won this race twice already but tomorrow could be a real tactical race when it comes to the tyres.**

**LH:** Yeah, these tyres are very tricky this weekend. Making the option tyre last is almost impossible so it's probably going to be quite a short stint at the start. But everyone has the same... except for this guy on the right [Raikkonen]. He seems to be able to look after them a little bit better than most people. Still, I think we'll have a competitive race. We've got good race pace so I expect a really tough race but I hope that we can maintain position.

**Q: Lewis, you mentioned yesterday you weren't particularly comfortable in the car. Were there a lot of changes that really worked overnight?**

**LH:** Yes. Just generally this season being in a new car, just getting the car optimised to your feelings. For me I was struggling a lot on the brakes, losing a lot of time on the brakes, even the last couple of races and so made a bit of a breakthrough there with some improved braking system, so I'm much happier with that area – but there's a couple of other areas with the setup and really there's so much more information than I probably even expected that I need to get on top of, and I'm still learning as I go on.

**Q: How much was it the team hitting the ground running, having led here for the last two or three years, winning last year etcetera? How much data was there that they were able to just go straight into this meeting with a lot of data, a lot of knowledge.**

**LH:** I don't really think that's affected us. I think the knowledge we've had and the experience from the last two races really is what mostly counts with where we've put the car. I think obviously last year they had a very competitive car here but at least from what I've seen, none of last year has really come into this year. Of course the car is competitive, as it was last year, so that's a big plus for us and I really hope we can maintain the kind of pace that we have today, going into tomorrow.

**Q: Kimi, updates on the car – how much have they worked?**

**KR:** Erm... We have very small update. The car, I would say, is almost the same as it was in the last races, or the last race. It seems to be working OK. We have some issues with some stuff but bit similar story than in Malaysia but we choose to take than chance now and we know that car works the way how we want to run it but it's not easy to keep it on that order or in that setup all the time. It's been a pretty tricky weekend to get things exactly right. It's very sensitive but we're happy to be where we are now so hopefully it helps us in the race a bit.

**Q: You said yesterday the car wasn't quite so good on the mediums: good on the soft but not quite so good on the mediums. Is it better now?**

**KR:** I don't know really. We only used the soft once in qualifying and the car wasn't the same this morning as it is now so it's a bit of a question mark because the things that I've just told, that we have to play around a bit with the car. I think it should be... went pretty OK yesterday so should be OK. I don't know if it's good enough to fight for a win but at least today we put ourselves in a pretty OK position.

**Q: Fernando, it almost seems as though there were a lot of updates on the Ferrari and it was a matter of choosing the right ones. How difficult a choice was that?**

**FA:** Not too difficult I think. Friday you test some new parts. Some of them, they work as you expected and you put on the car for the rest of the weekend. Some of them they're not working as expected and they're a little bit worse than the previous ones, so you remove it and you make some modifications for the next race or the next time that they go in the car. So, is a normal job for Fridays and obviously we brought here some new parts and as we said now, some of them are positive, some of them were not so positive so we need to keep working on that if we want to have the pace of the leaders. Especially in qualifying:

on Sunday normally the pace has been good in the first two races. It happened also last year: normally we improve on Sundays. But definitely for pole positions it is not, at the moment, perfect.

**Q: It seems here that some cars are better at treating their softs better than others, some are treating the mediums better than others. How's the Ferrari working?**

**FA:** We have no big issues with any of the tyres to be honest. Obviously the soft, they degrade much more and they will last not too long but in the long runs we did nothing that was surprising us, let's say. Hopefully we can have a good race, a clean race and be on the podium at the end of 56 laps.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Kate Walker – Girl Racer) Lewis, I know that there are no points available on Saturday but how much satisfaction do you derive from answering those critics who said you were a fool to make the move that you did at the end of last year?**

**LH:** Yeah, well you can't really answer it in one result but definitely, bit by bit, the more and more we impress and improve they have to stand to be corrected. Obviously the team are just doing an incredible job and I'm just grateful, because it could have gone either way. Of course, people have an opinion, but I'm just really grateful that I'm here and I'm in the fight. Today is such a blessing to be here, because it was such a big change for me, and a big step for me. I think I made the right choice.

**Q: (Abhishek Takle – Middy) To all three of you, in the first session we saw a lot of drivers using the softer tyre, which we don't usually see. Was that just because you guys were saving a set of mediums for the race?**

**LH:** I think everyone was really saving their tyres for the race. The option is the one that we don't really want to use and there was no point in saving options or using a prime considering everyone will probably want to use them tomorrow.

**Q: (Michael Schmidt – Auto, Motor und Sport) Two drivers out of the top ten start with a different strategy tomorrow, they start on the harder tyre. Is that a concern for you, did you think about the same strategy? And why didn't you do it?**

**LH:** I've got really great strategists, I just trust them, if they make a decision we still stick by it. I think everyone, no matter what strategy you're on, everyone's going to struggle on the option tyre, whether it's high or low fuel.

**KR:** Obviously we believe that our choice is the best, that's why we do it. If we would have thought that starting with primes and qualifying with the primes would have been the better choice we probably would have done it.

**Q: Fernando, do you think it varies from car to car?**

**FA:** I don't think so. I think the strategy choice that you make, as Lewis said, in some parts of the race you are maybe looking good and some other parts maybe not looking so good - the times when you are putting on the options probably.

**Q: (Luis Fernando Ramos – Racing Magazine) To all of you: we have a kind of racing now which is all about managing and controlling your pace, whereas if you go back to 2008 with different aerodynamics and refuelling, it was a sprint all the time. Which type of racing was more challenging and which type of racing did you enjoy more?**

**LH:** It's quite easy: it's more challenging now with the tyres that we have. For sure it's much tougher for all of us, but it was definitely more enjoyable previously, I would say.

**KR:** It is what it is, really. We have to get our best out of it. Years go by and rules change. It's not easy to get things right, last year and this year, but it's the same for everybody and it makes a big challenge but it's also part of F1.

**Q: Which did you enjoy more?**

**KR:** It makes no difference, because this is what we have and you'd better like it or do something else.

**FA:** It's more challenging now. We maybe enjoy different times in Formula One; I enjoyed 2003/4 more with the V10s for example, but they are no longer. As Kimi said, we need to make the maximum of what we have now and try to enjoy it now also.

**Q: (Michael Schmidt – Auto, Motor und Sport) Fernando, you had been fastest in the last sector by a big margin; was it all about tyre management in the first two sectors, to have the tyres right in the last, or is the car just good in that sector?**

**FA:** I don't know really. I think it was something that we were looking at this morning as well and we don't have a clear explanation either. We will see tomorrow. The last sector is the very long straight so maybe we have a little extra speed in the car but it's not so clear. Tomorrow we will find out.

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – O Estado de Sao Paulo) Kimi, considering the history of your car, which is able to look after the tyres, do you think that a better first run than your competitors will help you significantly during the race?**

**KR:** Like I said a little bit earlier, it's a big question mark because we were pretty happy yesterday but the car is not exactly the same as it was then. For sure, we had some issues with the front tyres yesterday but that should be pretty easy to change. Every day seems to be a bit different, so I don't know if it's going to be OK or not. Usually we've been pretty OK, apart from the last race when we had some issues. Hopefully it turns out to be good tomorrow but I think it will be very close and whoever gets things exactly right might make enough of a difference to win.

**Q: (Ted Kravitz – Sky Sports) Lewis, you mentioned your allergy on Thursday. Were you afraid at the time that it might affect your vision, you might be affected in terms of driving for the rest of the weekend?**

**LH:** No, I've been healthy for the last two weeks and then came here and felt ill. Of course, it worries you a little bit, thinking you might not be a hundred percent but I've just been getting plenty of rest and this is definitely the best day I've had for a few days now and hopefully tomorrow should be even better so I'm quite happy.

Ends