



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

2013 Chinese Grand Prix Sunday Press Conference Transcript

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DRIVERS

- 1 – Fernando ALONSO (Ferrari)**
- 2 – Kimi RAIKKONEN (Lotus)**
- 3 – Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes)**

PODIUM INTERVIEWS

(Conducted by David Coulthard)

Fernando, congratulations. A fairly dominant victory in the end and your 31st victory, putting you fifth in the all-time list just behind Ayrton Senna. What does this one mean to you?

Fernando ALONSO: Well, hello everybody first of all and thank you for the support all weekend. Amazing fans all weekend and it's very nice to race here. About the race: yes, definitely it was a fantastic race for us, from the start to the end, without big problems with the car. The tyre degradation was better than expected probably, so we managed more or less the pace. Yeah, it feels great after the retirement in Malaysia, we had some pressure to finish the race. The two races we finished this year; one second place and today the victory so definitely the start of this 2013 campaign is looking good so we are very optimistic.

We heard the team talking to you during the grand prix telling you not need to push. They were trying to slow you down in some respects and you were saying 'I'm not pushing'.

FA: Well, you always push. In a Formula One race it's impossible not to push but it's true that we had some pace, maybe, in the pocket. Not easy to know when to use it depending on the state of the tyres. A little bit more potential and hopefully we can show it in Bahrain in one week.

Kimi Raikkonen, that's your 20th consecutive finish in Formula One. You're certainly Mr Consistency. You had to work hard for that second place today. You had some damage to the front wing of your car after some contact, so tell us about that and also how it affected the balance?

Kimi RAIKKONEN: I think in the end it was a pretty okay result. Obviously we want to win but after a bad start the car wads handling well but then overtaking Perez, I was next to him and he just pushed me on the kerb but I tried to avoid him but I went on the grass and hit him on the rear I think and damaged the front. That didn't help but luckily it didn't affect so much the handling, it was just a bit too much understeery but we could still fight for second place. For sure without the damage we could have been quite a bit faster. Anyhow, good points and we try to do better next time.

We come to Lewis Hamilton, our pole-sitter. It didn't quite work out for you there on race pace. You really dropped away towards the closing stages, under a lot of pressure from Vettel but some great racing nonetheless.

Lewis HAMILTON: Yeah, I'm really happy with today's result. Great result for the team, very happy with the points. The team did a fantastic job all weekend. Unfortunately, we didn't have the kind of pace these two have but still very fortunate to get on the podium.

Fernando, a closing question for you. Only one week until Bahrain. What are you expecting in terms of performance there and what's the celebration going to be like tonight with your Ferrari team?

FA: I expect a tough race again. In Bahrain I think we will see different conditions and who knows how competitive anyone can be. But definitely, as I said before, from the races that we finished this year the car seems to be able to be on the podium, so we hope to be on the podium again in Bahrain. The celebration tonight? Nothing special. I have a flight very early for Bahrain, so tonight I think some dinner. I think they guys will celebrate more than me.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Fernando, congratulations, well done. You were a winner here in 2005, how does it feel to have won again? It seemed to be a perfect race for you.

FA: It feels good. Obviously a long time from the victory here – eight years. Definitely it was nearly a perfect Sunday for us, with not any problem in the race. The start was clean; it was good. We managed to overtake Kimi. And then in the first stint we managed to pass Lewis as well. The car felt a little bit better on the degradation side let's say. And then in the rest of the race, obviously you need to take care of the tyres a little bit, you need to manage the gap with the guys behind. It was not so easy to understand the race sometimes. We were overtaking the McLarens, Hulkenberg, Sebastian, so it was a little bit of a mix. So it was not an easy race and there were some moments of action let's say and the risk is there when you have to do an overtaking manoeuvre and you have to manage that as well. The team did a perfect job with the set-up of the car for quali and the race, perfect pit stop times and pit stops executed let's say. At the end of the race the victory is a good reward for the team, well deserved after the disappointment in Malaysia and you know, the car felt good. The two races we finished, one was second and the victory today, so definitely it's a positive start to this championship. We need to keep going like that, in this direction, with good weekends, with not any extra risk and hopefully in Bahrain we can score some good points again.

Kimi, obviously a bit of a problem at the start there, tell us about that, and also how much pressure was there at the end as well?

KR: I think we just had wrong settings. The practice start was very good but then it was really bad the real start and we lost some positions and after that the car was okay, but I

had a little accident, some problems with Perez and we damaged the nose and the front wing. I was surprised there was no more damage because I hit him quite hard. Also bit surprised that we didn't have any more problems after that. A bit too much understeer and destroying the front tyre because of that but we still could fight for second place and get quite a good result in the end. Obviously we wanted to try to win but today with all the issues it was not possible.

Lewis it was kind of tight at the end with Sebastian closing on you and obviously you were trying to put pressure on Kimi. Tell us about it.

LH: Yeah, it was a good race for me. Quite happy with third. Of course I would have liked to have won but congratulations to Fernando, he did a great job and so did Kimi. They were both a little bit too fast for us during the race. I was seeming to be able to apply a little bit of pressure to Kimi but not enough to get close to him and overtake. My tyres were shot at the end and there was nothing I could do really to hold off Sebastian. A little bit unlucky with some traffic. Still, to get on the podium, really happy. Really happy with the points as well.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Abhishek Takle – Midday) Lewis, we heard Ross comment on the radio at the end, saying 'we're not quite there yet' but of course a good race for you. What area do you and the team have to work on to give you that little bit extra?

LH: That's a good question. I'm not really sure where we're losing out. Today, overall pace was just not there and there's definitely a couple of areas that we can focus on on the car but we've got to bring some more updates and keep on improving but the team is working on that. But at least, after this I will go and analyse a little bit and try to figure out whereabouts we're losing the time and see if we can zone in on that and try to improve there.

Q: (Frederic Ferret – L'Equipe) Fernando, who is your main rival for the title, as a driver and as a car? Is it Kimi and Lotus or Sebastian and Red Bull?

FA: I think it's a little bit too early to say. We need to wait until maybe after the summer break or something like that to clearly see the real contenders. Hopefully we are in that group after the summer. Hopefully Felipe can be in that group as well, that will mean that the car is going well, and I think at the moment Lotus, Red Bull and Mercedes are in the same position as us, let's say. I don't see anyone has a clear advantage. Maybe Red Bull was very dominant in Australia in all free practices; in qualifying and the race they were suffering a little bit of degradation but definitely very fast. In Malaysia, they were maybe a little bit more in the groove but here they were similar to the others so let's wait and see what the updates of every car brings to the pace, and we will see how luck plays. It happened to Nico in Australia where he didn't finish with car problems, it happened to us in Malaysia. I think hearing Kimi's comments today... you never know whether the front wing will remain there and finish the race or if the front wing will go underneath your car and you don't finish the race. The same with Webber, who had the problem with the tyre today and didn't finish. This can happen to anyone and this will also dictate who are contenders as well, so the luck factor is there.

Q: (Trent Price – Richland F1) Fernando, despite the problems in Malaysia, since Melbourne Ross Brawn has been singing the praises of Ferrari's long run pace. Do you think your win today with the margin that you had confirms that?

FA: I think it's normally one of the strongest points for us, not only this year, also in the past two or three years, we are normally more or less OK on Sundays. On single lap pace we struggle a little bit, so whatever reasons, the long runs are normally good for us and tyre management but we don't also really know the reason so we need to be careful on that and maximise these type of weekends, when everything goes well, but I'm sure we will struggle on some other weekends and we need to maximise the points there. Sometimes we can win, sometimes the maximum is third or fifth but we need to do the job. I'm looking forward to next weekend because it's a very good test with very high temperatures and we will again see some problems and we need to deliver when the tough moments arise.

Q: (Michael Schmidt – Auto, Motor und Sport) Kimi, how much lap time did the problem with the nose and front wing cost you and did it compromise your strategy, would you have gone for or tried a two stop strategy without it?

KR: There's no way to tell or not how much the front wing damage affected the whole race but obviously the car is not designed like that so it's not going to help. But I cannot tell you if it's a tenth or half a second per lap. I was surprised how good the car was, even with quite a lot of damage. It was unfortunate, but I think we also have to be a bit lucky not to lose more. Hopefully next race we can have a normal race and be up there again fighting for a win.

Q: Was it your decision not to change it?

KR: Actually I wanted to change it and wasn't sure if they changed it because... I think they looked at the wing at the first pit stop but they probably thought that it would take too long or... I don't know really. I haven't talked to them. Also, the reason why they probably didn't change it was that the car was reasonably OK, I could still overtake people.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – O Estado de Sao Paulo) Kimi, can you please describe your view of the incident with Perez?

KR: I got the better run out of turn three and was on the outside on that little kink through to corner four. I thought that he would leave me enough space but he just pushed me off the circuit. I tried to avoid him but there was first grass and then the kerb and then the kerb saved me, I got grip but I couldn't slow down and I hit him at the rear. I don't know if he didn't see me or what happened, but there was no way for me to avoid him any more because I was there next to it and I ran out of road.

Q: (Andrea Cremonesi – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Kimi and Lewis, in your mind, with this tyre situation, is the most serious candidate for the title now Fernando and no longer Vettel?

KR: He didn't get it but he has the same challenge. But as Fernando said, from race to race, one team is a little bit stronger at one race and the next race is a bit of a different story. I think all four teams are close to each other so whoever gets it best on Sundays and Saturdays I think will win, so it will be interesting.

NH: As Kimi said, I think it's a bit open at the moment, but obviously Fernando is doing a great job, but as you can see from the last race, you finish the last race and some of us may have those problems in the future – who knows? But it's far too early to say, I think.

Q: (Luigi Pernia – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Fernando, was there maybe extra psychological pressure for you in this race, did you feel it or not?

FA: Not really. I think there is pressure at every race I start. Every year, especially in Ferrari, especially every campaign you start people expect only wins from you, the World Championship. Every race is more or less the same. Every season I've started in Formula

One, this is the 13th, there is a battle with teammates, always discussions. So this year is no different. I think pressure is always there sometimes. As I said, you can deliver a good result, everyone is happy. Sometimes you cannot do it and you need to improve. I think we've been working very hard this winter with the team and after the first two races as well, these three weeks were very useful for us in Maranello, working out a little bit which way we can perform a little bit better, especially in qualifying which is one of our problems normally at the weekends and also looking very carefully at driving style and what we can do to improve the performance with each year's rules which they keep changing and you need to adapt a little bit, so I'm very happy with the job done and I'm in the best team, so I should be confident that everything will go in the right direction.

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