



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

2013 Spanish Grand Prix Post Qualifying Press Conference Transcript

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DRIVERS

- 1 – Nico ROSBERG (Mercedes)
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TV UNILATERAL

Nico, two in a row. Just looking at the lap there on the monitors, it looked like a very clean lap. Tell us about where you found the speed today?

Nico ROSBERG: It's just been... things just worked really well the whole weekend, just optimised everything. Of course, after Bahrain thinking about the race a lot, also, so surprised that we could be that quick today. But it all went perfectly in qualifying and I had a really good lap in the end. I'm really, really happy with that. It's always a good motivation boost and everything, especially for the team – front row, fantastic. But of course I have to be a bit cautious because of what happened in Bahrain, so for sure, nice but to be enjoyed with caution.

Lewis, as Nico said a one-two for Mercedes and for you just a couple of tenths off Nico. Where did it get away from you?

Lewis HAMILTON: Firstly, congratulations to Nico, he did a great job, so very happy, but also really happy for the team because it's down to the great work that everyone is doing back at the factory, so I'm very proud to be able to get a front row for the team. But, as Nico said, we've got to approach it with caution because tomorrow is going to be tough but today I didn't have two option sets at the end, which would have helped a little bit but I think was just quicker today.

Well done and Sebastian – final sector it would appear where Mercedes had it over you today, just two or three tenths of a second, I think, on the final laps. Is that where it got away from you today?

Sebastian VETTEL: To be honest, no. I was pretty happy with the last sector because historically it has been a bit weak for me. After a couple of years now I finally understood a little bit better the last couple of corners. I'm quite happy to be honest because yesterday and this morning I wasn't really happy, particularly in the last sector. I think we improved the car. Things calmed down and we had a pretty smooth qualifying session. Again a little bit different approach than the majority of people – using option tyres only. Whether that helps us tomorrow we'll have to wait and see. But for sure it will be an interesting race. It

will be all about tyre degradation. I think we've seen this in the winter. We didn't really get very far, all of us. So now I think with the conditions it's helping a little bit but still it's a tough challenge and the tyres don't last as well as we'd probably all like but that's the challenge we have to face tomorrow. I'm happy with today's result. It's good historically to start this grand prix a little bit further up, so let's see what we can do tomorrow.

Nico, let's talk a little bit about the race tomorrow. You mentioned that you don't want to get too overconfident after what happened in Bahrain, but tell us a bit about the work done behind the scenes to avoid a repeat of what happened to you in Bahrain?

NR: Yeah, for sure, everyone has been working really, really hard back in the factory to understand even better our problems. You know it's really an ongoing process, understanding how to get the most out of these tyres. It's really, really complex, for us drivers, for the engineers, for everybody and we're just a bit behind at the moment. I'm sure we've caught up now. But then you come here and there's different issues again because here it's more the graining of the tyres that's the main issue. And so then again here we were trying to catch up and make the most of that situation. I think we've improved things. This morning things were looking a little bit better, so I'm a little bit more confident for tomorrow but still the race is going to be a whole different thing, with the tyres it's a big challenge.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Nico, pole position has been vital here in the past. Do you feel that's still the case? I guess you're hoping it is?

NR: For sure it's a benefit to start first. Yeah, definitely. Clean air – hopefully – after the start, starting on the better side of the grid, so that's all great but the race is very long. To win it's not good enough to start from pole, you need to have the fastest race car. As we've seen, there's so many differences in speeds through the race and strategy and everything. And if you don't have a very, very quick car there's no chance. So, just really need to wait and see.

Lewis, give us your thoughts on how you feel the race will evolve tomorrow. Obviously you starting on the front row of the grid, historically it's the place to be.

LH: It is, but my side of the grid isn't really the place to be. These two have a good position on the cleaner side but we'll do the best job we can from the start but I think more the concern is tyre degradation. Looking after those tyres is going to be an interesting one. I really hope that we can try and get into turn one first, in a 1-2, that'd be really good for the team.

Sebastian, still no pole for you in Barcelona. What is it about this place?

SV: I think today we can be very happy. Mercedes was too quick, both Lewis and Nico. So, I think we can be happy with the result, as I said. Historically, I didn't really like the last sector and the new corners they implemented a couple of years ago. This year it seems to be that, for the first time, I found a better way around, after trying so many times – which is quite funny if you think that we come here more than once a year. So, I'm happy with that. And for tomorrow hopefully I can prove statistics wrong. I know it's very important to start from the front row. We just missed it – but I'm confident for the race. I think this year will be a lot about tyres. Nico touched on it earlier. I think generally everybody is suffering quite a lot, so let's see if we can make our strategy work and have a fast race from where we are.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Nico, congratulations for the pole. Did you practice to take it already during pre-season testing?

NR: Did I practice the pole position? No. But I mean of course. We practiced with lower fuel during the winter to simulator pole position – well, not pole position, to simulate qualifying. Just as for the car, us drivers, y'know it's also good to practice a little bit – so I was quite confident coming here because I know that I feel comfortable with the car on this track and things went really well today, definitely.

Q: (Livio Orrichio - O Estado de São Paulo) Both Mercedes drivers, your team said many times that you must better the car in race conditions – and all the improvements you try to do for this race was in this direction, and the free practice yesterday and today morning. Do you think the car can be in race condition better than the previous race?

NR: Better for sure, yeah. Because in Bahrain the temperatures and the circuit and everything exposed our small weaknesses in a very extreme way. So a) we're in a different track and everything so naturally it's going to be a bit better, and b) we also really tried to understand what went wrong in Bahrain, and we do understand better what's going on there and have improved things. But still, for sure, I'm not going to sit here and say I'm very confident that I can go for the win tomorrow. No, the target needs to be a little bit less than that I think – maybe a podium – but there are so many unknowns for tomorrow because the situation is completely different again, with graining. And so, we just have to see how it goes.

And Lewis, your thoughts on that and whether you've had to adapt anything in terms of the way you drive, in terms of looking after the rear tyres on the Mercedes?

LH: Not really, it's the same as the last race for me.

Q: (Barna Zsoldos – Nemzeti Sport) Nico, in the past few years, Lewis' team-mates were just blown away by him in the qualifying and now you're beating him on a regular basis. How does it feel?

NR: Of course I'm pleased, yeah, to be ahead of Lewis, very happy with that because I know that he's very, very high level in terms of his driving. He's one of the best out there. When I can be in front of him I'm extremely happy.

Q: (Adrian R. Huber – Agencia EFE) Question for both Nico and Lewis. Did you guys expect in the pre-season this beginning of the season – or is this working out much better than you expected? Less?

LH: I don't think we expected it, definitely not. Especially for Nico, in the last couple of years have had a really difficult time in the team with the cars, and me coming to the team I definitely didn't expect to have such a competitive car. But obviously massively pleased that we do and it's great to be able to put on performances like we have today for encouraging the team and the guys back at the factory to keep pushing to improve and bring more developments. We're not there yet but this is a good starting point for us.

Q: (Pierre Van Vliet – F1i.com) Sebastian, you had only one run in Q3. What's the point of saving tyres and how do you expect that to play a role tomorrow in race pace?

SV: What's the point? I think it's pretty easy: the tyres don't last so the fresher the tyres are, the longer they last. Ideally they are new. That's why we decided to save as many sets as we can. Obviously a bit different to other people but that's the idea behind. Whether it works or not we'll know tomorrow. Tomorrow will be the big challenge – as both of them

touched on – to look after the tyres and make them last, try to suffer as little graining as possible, which I think we all do suffer, some people more, some people less.

Q: (Leonid Novozhilov – F1 Live) Lewis, do you have a problem with your car today? When will we see you win in a Mercedes?

LH: Generally this weekend I haven't had the best of weekends up until now. Obviously this is still great for us today, to be one and two on the grid but I've just been struggling all weekend generally. Even my long runs have been pretty poor but on one lap pace, the car doesn't seem to be too bad but I've just been a little bit lost generally, not really knowing what things to change and which direction to go, so I kind of didn't really make many changes into P3 and into qualifying, I just left the car the same. I didn't really make any changes to it, I wasn't one hundred percent comfortable but I knew that it was good enough to do what we did today. As for the win, we've got improve our race pace but obviously we have very good qualifying pace. I hope in the near future we will get our win, but we'll work for it tomorrow.

Q: Nico, you used the word confidence before. Did you use a used set of tyres in Q2 to get through?

NR: I used a used set...

Q: Yeah, because Lewis was tearing it up in Q2 and you came in Q3 with a new set of tyres, so you obviously felt very confident then?

NR: Confident, yeah, in general, confident, yeah. It was more a question of Lewis didn't quite manage to get his lap right with the used set in Q2 and I managed to get it right so it was enough to go into Q3. That was the difference.

Q: (Jerome Pugmire - Associated Press) There's some talk about this penalty points system being discussed; something could be implemented in the future. I just wanted to get each of your opinions on what you think of this proposal if it happens.

SV: I don't like it. I don't know, maybe I'm a little bit too old fashioned, I don't want to make this too long but I think we had a lot of penalties in the past. I think from a drivers' point of view we've been pushing for penalties and right now we are probably in a situation where we have more penalties than we would like so it's a little bit of a vicious circle. I think the catalogue is not released entirely. I've seen some sketch of it but I think you have the potential of scoring points for some things that are not entirely in our hands and small things and at the end of the day the consequence could be very big. I don't know if that's the idea. Surely, if you want to adapt a system that everybody uses on the road, which is the idea, there might be some logic behind it, but at the end of the day we are not driving on the road, we are racing.

LH: I'm not really bothered by it. I don't really have much of an opinion about it.

NR: I don't know enough about it so it's not worth commenting on.

Q: (Rosanna Tennant – Pole Position) A light-hearted question: Lewis, how's Roscoe finding his race?

LH: Go and ask Roscoe! He's much better. He was a bit ill – not ill, but he was injured earlier in the week but he's recovered so I might bring him down later on or tomorrow, with his new team coat, yeah, race suit.

Q: (Andrea Cremonesi – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Sebastian, taking account that maybe the other two guys have a problem with long pace, the long race distance, who do you think could be your main challenger tomorrow, Kimi or Fernando?

SV: Well, I think first of all them (the two Mercedes drivers), they are in front of us right now so to be honest, I think they had some long runs and they didn't look too bad. Historically the Mercedes is pretty aggressive when it comes to looking after the tyres. How that turns out tomorrow we will have to wait and see. Other than that, eye-balling the

long runs yesterday, I think Ferrari and Lotus were pretty competitive, so I think we can expect them to be very strong in the race as well.

Q: (Ralf Bach – Sport Bild) Nico and Lewis, what kind of help do you really expect from your new development driver Daniel Juncadella?

NR: For sure he's been doing a good job in the simulator from what I hear but why he is here this weekend is mainly as a gesture from Mercedes DTM to give him race experience and to see what it's like at the pinnacle of motor sport. For sure, in DTM, there are a lot of things they can learn from where we are in F1.

LH: I think that's a good answer really. It's good fun to be here to experience...
(interrupted, inaudible)

Q: (Valenti Fradera – El 9 Esportiu) Following on the question about Nico beating you in qualifying, Lewis do you feel somehow disappointed to having been pipped by Nico again?

LH: No. Sometimes you get beat, sometimes you get ahead. It's the name of the game and at the end of the day he was quicker today and it just means for me that I have to work harder. Simple.

Q: (Sarah Holt – CNN.com) Hallo everyone: Lewis, you in particular seemed to be fastest in the final sector, as did you, Nico as well, that's where the Mercedes seemed to find its time which is interesting because it's the slower part of the track. So that might bode well for Monaco, perhaps, but what about this track tomorrow, which might suit the Red Bulls more which are faster in the first two sectors? Talk about tomorrow and Monaco if you like.

NR: I don't think you can understand something from that for how it's going to go in tomorrow's race in terms of degradation and race speed. Of course it is an interesting thing to have a look at and OK, it's definitely not a bad thing for Monaco to be quick in that last sector with all the tight corners and last year we had a very good car in Monaco, I think the fastest of everybody, so I'm looking forward to Monaco, but in general we have to really play it low because it's always great to be in front on Saturday but then if you're not able to win on Sunday – which has been our issue and our weakness, has been our race pace, so we need to be very careful and just try and do better than the last race. Last race, I think Lewis managed to finish fifth and the target is to be a bit better than that.

Ends