



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

2013 British Grand Prix Thursday Press Conference Transcript 27.06.2013

Drivers – Fernando ALONSO (Ferrari), Jenson BUTTON (McLaren) Max CHILTON (Marussia), Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes), Paul DI RESTA (Force India), Mark WEBBER (Red Bull).

PRESS CONFERENCE

Q: Max, your first home grand prix, what are your thoughts coming up to this?

Max CHILTON: It's an extremely exciting moment. To be racing in Formula One is amazing. In Australia, that grand prix was very special but this is the one I've been waiting for. To be in front of the home crowd, all the Union Jacks around the circuit. It's going to be a moment not to forget. The main thing is to keep doing what you always do, not do anything different and just try to do the best that you can do.

Q: How do you think your progress has been so far this year? We're at round eight, you seem to be making quiet progress back there.

MC: Yeah, I'm confident of how we've done. I'm finished all seven races and had a great race in Monaco finishing 14th. You've got to learn as much as you can in your first year of Formula One. I've felt like I've learnt everything that I can and I've learnt everything from every race and taken it into the next race. I'll be doing that for all of the year and maybe next year – I don't know what the plan is. You've got to take in as much as you can and try to take that into the next race and get a better result.

Q: Mark, a two-time winner here. What are the chances of another?

Mark WEBBER: It's been a happy hunting ground around here, in Formula One and also, years before that in the junior categories. I think it's one of the best circuits on the calendar. All the drivers love driving here. A Formula One car on the limit, all the quick corners. And yeah, the Red Bull car in the last few years has also been pretty strong here, so we're looking forward to certainly challenging for another victory. Qualifying also, the last five years I've been in the top three here, so yeah, that's been a good platform to launch a good result off. So, we need to have a smooth weekend and yeah, challenge for the last part of the grand prix. I think again tyres will be playing a very big role – as they always have done the last few years around here. Fernando was strong in Shanghai and in Barcelona – similar types of layout – so we need to be mindful of that, not that we can do much about it but we know we're going to have some opposition this weekend, and looking forward to it.

Q: And a momentous announcement from you today. Tell us the thinking behind the announcement of your retirement from Formula One. And how significant is the year, 2013 to 2014?

MW: Well, the timing is perfect for me. Very, very excited about my new chapter and the new challenge ahead. One of the most famous and most well-respected brands in

automotive and motor racing in Porsche, so that's something which personally I'm very satisfied about taking on. The decision has been there for quite a long time for me actually. So, I've known for quite a while, I've had a plan and I've stuck to it. But still, in the meantime, respecting the profession that I have now at this level and focusing on achieving very, very strong results in my last season in Formula One.

Q: Was it the new engine regs? Did that have anything to do with it?

MW: There's lots of reasons that come into the pot, I think, when any sportsman or woman comes to that time in their career where they want to call it a day. That's another small ingredient: there's going to be big, big changes in this sport next year, so I may as well go and do those big, big changes where my future is going to be. Let's see how the category is next year in Formula One – I'll be interested to watch every now and then and go from there. Watch these guys do their stuff.

Q: Jenson, Fernando, you've raced against Mark for many, many years. What are your thoughts about the announcement today?

Jenson BUTTON: It leaves the seat free for someone else, doesn't it? It's not really a surprise. I think Mark's career's been a little bit similar to mine in a way in terms of struggling in the first few years to find a seat and a drive that you think you deserve and then being with a team that can give you victories. It's obviously the right time so fair play to him.

Fernando?

Fernando ALONSO: Yeah, I think it's a good time for him, good opportunity. As Mark said, he's moving to a very prestigious car brand and probably the most famous race in the world – together with Formula One. I think he'll have a lot of fun behind the wheel, as he's doing now, with a little bit of less problems outside the wheel that we have now in Formula One. We enjoy 19 Sundays a year and the rest of the time is a little bit of a stressful time. With the new series I think he will have a little bit more fun and I wish him the best of luck for the rest of the championship and for the future.

Coming to your own thoughts about these two races, this race and a week's time in Germany, how important are these two races for your championship hopes, given the deficit that exists at the moment?

FA: All races are important from now on, especially in the position we are in. 36 points behind the leader, we don't have much more room to do mistakes or lose many more points. But, on the other side, we need to remain calm, we need to do our job, the maximum we can every weekend. If we can win the race, if we can finish in front of Sebastian, will be great. If we cannot do it, we will try to lose the minimum points. Last year after Monza I think I have an advantage of around 40 points [39] over Sebastian and it was not enough – and that was Monza time. So now being in the race for the championship 36 points behind. It's not the ideal position but it's not the end of the world.

Q: The car was on pole position here last year, you finished second. How well is this car suited to Silverstone?

FA: We'll see. I think it should be a good circuit for us. We've been more or less competitive here for the last three or four years. As Mark said before also, it is the first circuit that is a little bit similar to China and Barcelona – the best circuits so far for this year's car and we have some high hopes for this weekend. On the other hand, Red Bull has been quite strong, and dominant here from 2009 so it will be an extremely close and challenging weekend with Mercedes I'm sure very, very strong as well, as they proved in China and in Barcelona with the first row in qualifying etcetera. So, y'know, interesting weekend ahead of us but we approach it with confidence, knowing that we have a good opportunity.

Q: Jenson, it's an unfortunate statistic that you haven't been on the podium here since 1999. Is it just an unfortunate statistic? Are you just unlucky here? What is it about Silverstone?

JB: I'm sure there's more to it than just being unlucky, I'm sure it is. I've still had some really good races here. My first year in Formula One, my British Grand Prix I finished fifth, overtaking Michael at turn one and finished with nine cylinders and still finished fifth, so it was a great weekend, with DC winning. Very passionate fans here so it was a great celebration. But yeah, I agree, being on the podium here is something I would love to achieve. It's going to be very difficult this year but we'll see. We'll fight as hard as we can and get the best out of the car hopefully. And that's all we can do this weekend: we know we're not quick enough but you want to repay the fans for all their support. They're not just fans in the good times, they're fans in the tough times as well. That's really nice to see. Hopefully we'll have a full house of Union Jacks here and I promise we'll do the best we can.

Q: We know you've got a difficult car this year. What can you do to help its progress?

JB: I think everyone knows, when you watch on TV, our car does certain things a Formula One car shouldn't really be doing. I think our ride is an area we need to improve and an area we are improving. So, with a circuit like Silverstone, it is reasonably bumpy. It's not quite like Canada, and I think our car does suit circuits like Barcelona, like China, Malaysia. So, hopefully the flow of this circuit will help us – but still that's not enough. We need to improve in the areas where we are weak. We're not thinking about 2014 already, we want to get good results this year so we're pushing flat out to make sure we do improve – but it's an area of the car that's also very difficult to improve. But we're trying very hard.

Q: Paul, you've had two really good races – the last two races in Monaco and Canada – from low on the grid. So what are your feelings about those two grands prix?

Paul DI RESTA: Obviously coming away with good results, I think, fighting back. Canada was obviously an excellent result. I think everybody raised their game for Sunday and what we achieved was quite remarkable. This weekend, three more straightforward days I think will definitely be on the cards. To build upon that, to move forward really and to finish in the points. We've managed to score on six occasions this year, the other one, where we didn't score was a DNF. If we can keep that up, and equally try and battle with McLaren, hopefully be in front of them, it makes a big difference to a team like us that's battling in the midfield most of the year.

Q: You've had two good qualifying in your two grands prix here. As you say, it's a matter of three days going correctly is it? Getting everything in place?

PdR: Canada was very difficult. I think the whole team felt the pain of that but I think here we'll look to gather some data, starting on the tyres tomorrow. Our car seems to be working well in all circumstances this year. It seems very consistent. I think this is a track where tyres are going to be a question. We're normally on the healthier side of tyre wear and really the focus should be on qualifying because that's the big result of the weekend, and then transfer that into the race where we know we've got a strong package to gain some positions from. But it's a long way away and a lot of work to do in front of hopefully some great British support.

Q: Lewis, are you a bit surprised that you come here at the British driver with the best chance of winning and best placed in the Championship?

Lewis HAMILTON: I guess so, yeah. I was definitely not expecting that when we started the season. But it's I guess a positive.

Q: What are your thoughts on the progress Mercedes have made this year?

LH: I think it's incredible what they've been able to do, it's very difficult. Watching my previous car evolve over time, over the last few years just to see how much improvement you can make over a winter. To see what they've done is pretty impressive. They've done an incredible job but it's because they've got a great group of guys. They've got some very intelligent people coming up with great ideas and new innovations. It's a team to be reckoned with.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Alex Popov – RTR) Mark, you will be missed and I don't think I'm alone in thinking this. How much will your approach change for the remaining races?

MW: I think going forward, for the rest of the season, it doesn't change a huge amount to be honest, because I've known the decision... nothing changes for my approach now because obviously it's now out for everybody, but in terms of the last few races, obviously challenging for the top steps and when you get everything right, obviously we want to get wins as well. I don't see that being a huge huge difference. It's in my interest to keep the motivation up until Brazil and work hard with the guys. That's important. At this level, I'm fully respectful of the effort that goes in to get the car out there, so I need to keep pushing, for myself and for the team because they put in a lot of work, obviously, at the factory at Milton Keynes, Renault, everyone.

Q: (Alex Popov – RTR) Mark, during your first career at Le Mans, we remember a couple of crashes.

MW: Le Mans, yeah, in 1999, that era, those cars were very very... I think the regulations were quite dangerous. We had a lot of cars having some big shunts in that era. I think all manufacturers had issues with keeping the cars on the ground, just because of the way the regs were written and they were quite quick. Look, motor racing is dangerous, I accept that, we all know that. Motor racing is dangerous. Le Mans is a classic race. The cars are not slow there now but I'm not a guy who wants to wrap myself in cotton wool either. I'm looking forward to the challenge and yeah, it's something which was in my thinking in terms of the safety factors, all those things which have improved since we were there last and they will continue to improve as well, not just the circuit but the cars. We've gone forward since 13 years ago.

Q: (Bob McKenzie – Daily Express) Mark, why did you chose to go that route of announcing it this morning on Twitter before you told the team?

MW: Well, it was a Porsche announcement. I informed Christian before the announcement which contractually I should do, so that's what we did.

Q: (Bob McKenzie – Daily Express) It was just the guys in the factory didn't know.

MW: Well, it wouldn't have been an announcement then, would it? So you've got to get the balance right. Obviously I will talk to the factory of course at some stage. They've been superb for me on the floor there but Porsche were very keen to make the announcement. It was about Porsche and Mark Webber today.

Q: (Bob McKenzie – Daily Express) It wasn't about scoring a point back at Red Bull over things that had happened over the years?

MW: No. I think I helped the team today. They know they've got to make some decisions in the future. Dietrich (Mateschitz) has been completely up to speed with my thinking in the last six to eight months, so Dietrich has been absolutely on board and on message with where I've been at. He's certainly encouraged me not to rush my decision when I approached him earlier in the season. I think basically all of the right channels and avenues that we went through to get the message across as subtly as we could in terms of the announcement was done in the right way.

Q: (Jens Wolters – ARD Radio) Mark, do you actually care about the next guy who succeeds you in your position at Red Bull and maybe what should he bring into the team?

MW: I'll watch with interest, mate. Yeah.

Q: (Rosie Baillie – F1Plus.com) You've spent many years in Formula One, Mark, what will you miss most about Formula One when you leave?

MW: Probably being with some of these guys to be honest. We all strive to get to the pinnacle, and I've been with JB, Lewis, Fernando, these guys for a long time, racing. We all know where we've come from. I'm very proud of where I've come from. I don't forget the street that I grew up in in Australia. Formula One is seen as the pinnacle. Working with people like Adrian Newey, there's things like that which of course won't go un-noticed but as any sportsman or woman will know, you're not 25 for ever so you've got to get the decision right and the timing right and stopping when you're still performing well. I believe that's absolutely correct for yourself and that's part of the course that I will miss. The drug on the grid when the guys walk away from the car, that's the best legal drug you can get. I'm ready to go racing so that's brilliant. Like I say, you've got to be real with yourself and know there's a day where you need to roll on to the next chapter and that's what I'm very excited by. You can't kid yourself and say it's going to go on for ever. Yeah, and your performance is important so... yeah.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – O Estado de Sao Paulo) Lewis, in Monaco you didn't have great tyre degradation and also in Montreal. OK, they are circuits that are not demanding in terms of tyre wear. Here it is. If you don't face this kind of problem, do you think people will relate that to the test that your team did after the Spanish Grand Prix?

LH: Probably. That's something we will have to face up to but I'm not really expecting us to have an easy weekend. I don't think we've really made a huge step since Barcelona. The last couple of races have been a little bit easier on the tyres so we've definitely made a small improvement but I don't know whether it's going to be good enough this weekend to come out ahead of the Red Bulls and the Ferraris but time will tell. We definitely have some components that we've developed since Barcelona to help with the tyres, so I'm hoping that they will help this weekend.

Q: (Kate Walker – GP Week) A question for everyone except Mark: if and when the time comes for you guys to move on and to retire, are there any series that you find particularly appealing? Anyone want to try their hand at NASCAR, motocross? What gets you guys excited as future possibilities?

LH: I don't know. I haven't any plans for leaving for a while. I've not really thought about it. I love quite a lot of the different sports that are out there but I don't know whether I would consider doing any other sports after Formula One. This is the pinnacle of motor racing and I think that for me personally, anything after this would be a little bit boring for me.

FA: I don't know. I will think when I arrive at the time.

JB: Yeah, I haven't thought about it a lot to be fair. Categories that I would like would be... I think Le Mans is a very special race, a very big team race, big team effort. I also like Super GT in Japan. I think that's a good category with the new regs that they have it looks pretty exciting.

Q: Paul, you've been in DTM, would you go back?

PdIR: Yeah, I had some great memories there. I don't know. Hopefully my journey has only just started here. It's a few years away. There might be new series by that point.

MC: I've planned to get success in Formula One first. I've done a Le Mans race before and loved every moment of it so I might go down that route and maybe go on to touring cars after that because I started – after karts – in a thing called a T-car so I'm used to the

weight transfer. It was quite nice to drift a car without doing stupid speeds but I'll think of that when I've gone through my twenties.

Q: (Graham Keilloh – F1Plus.com) Fernando, do you have any thoughts on this being the first race weekend after the sad passing of Jose Froilan Gonzales?

FA: Well, obviously it's sad week and a sad news for all the Ferrari family and for the motor sport family. I remember two years ago when we won the race here, I spoke with him on the telephone after the podium ceremony because it was a very special day for Ferrari and we dedicated the victory that day to he who is a legend at Ferrari. Obviously this weekend it's important if we could do a good job to dedicate again to all his family and all the passion and the fans that he brought into Formula One from his country and we would like to do a good job for him and for all the Ferrari fans.

Q: (Michelle Foster – PlanetF1.com) Mark, will you be walking away with any regrets?

MW: No, no I don't think so. At this level, you're always open to some adversity here and there and challenges, that's how this sport is, any top flight sport is going to be snapshots of different things which you could probably have done better here and there, but there's no career which is like this. You're going to have ups and downs and getting off the canvas is part of the rules, so I've been very fortunate to have some very very special memories for sure. How long is a piece of string? You could have more in terms of championships or whatever, but 2010 was a very very big battle with lots of quality drivers and it went to the last race so of course I remember that, I led the championship at the wrong race but it was... I'm looking back with very fond memories and I've still got races to go obviously this year so still looking to add to those great memories and helping Red Bull still achieve very very good results.

Q: (Jens Wolters – ARD Radio) Lewis, for me it's seem like since the decision in Paris that you and your team are the new bad guys in Formula One. Do you feel that? Do the other drivers still talk to you, how do you feel after this decision?

LH: So far, everyone still seems to be speaking to us. I feel that it's one of those experiences that we've gone through that if anything it's made us stronger. It's been quite encouraging to see how the team has pulled together and how they've turned a negative into a positive and now moving forward and hungrier than ever to win, so that's encouraging for me, that brings me great energy to come here with and hoping that we can get some good results moving forward.

Q: (Michael Casey – Associated Press) Lewis, talking more about this weekend, you had a good race in Canada. You're obviously still in the hunt. How are you feeling about the prospects for a title this season, even with the tyre issues?

LH: Yeah, like Fernando was saying, we're even further behind Sebastian and it's quite a big deficit so to catch that up, it's going to be very difficult, especially with the pace that they have, but we're not giving up, we're going to keep pushing and we'll just push as hard as we can until the last race and the last opportunity we have. But I feel positive, we're there or thereabouts and we're trying to make improvements. Those guys are extremely quick, Ferrari and Red Bull but it's not impossible to catch them, at least that's what we believe so we are going to keep pushing.

Q: (Gary Meenaghan – The National) Jenson and Mark, Williams are celebrating their 600th race this weekend, I was just hoping you could talk about how impressive a feat that actually is.

JB: Why, because I've done so many races as well, you mean? Yeah, Frank and Patrick are both legends. I raced for them in 2000, they gave me the opportunity to race in Formula One. I've got great memories with them and with the whole team as I'm sure Mark

does as well. It's an amazing achievement, it's not a manufacturer, it's a true racing team and that's what I love about it, how difficult it was for them to find the money in the first place, to go racing, but with belief and determination, he's achieved or the team has achieved so much in their career. 600 Grands Prix, wow, it really is phenomenal. Fair play and hopefully they will be here for many many more years.

MW: Yeah, I agree with JB. I think it's an incredible achievement, under the sensational beacon that Frank has been. Obviously the adversity he has personally been through to still be in the factory week in week out are pretty much known. When I was there he was doing six days a week, he was very excited when he saw you arrive at the factory on a Saturday for whatever reason, even if it was for nothing, just to say hallo, he was excited to have you there. An amazing guy for the sport so under him, as Jenson said, the team has been a real force, mainly remembered for being towards the front of the grid obviously in those Canon Honda days and they were obviously the eras when I was watching the racing as well, but I think moving forward, obviously Frank's slowly handing the reins over a little bit now and of course I wish Claire (Williams) all the best and the rest of the team. Claire is a super operator, really down to earth and a bit of a tough cookie as well, so she's got some of the traits of Dad. I hope they have good success in the future.

Q: (Luigi Perna - La Gazzetta dello Sport) Fernando, last year, during the summer, Ferrari made a big improvement in its performance. Are you confident you can do the same this year in order to close the gap, or is it more difficult?

FA: I think we will see. This year we are a little bit dominated by the tyres' performance and the tyre issues that we face every weekend. Some weekends are hit by some tyres against the others but it seems that if you have a weekend where you make the tyre work properly and last properly throughout the race you have a better chance to win, so despite the performance of the car in the high speed corners or low speed corners, I think it will be a weekend over the next couple of races to make the tyres work in the maximum performance in qualifying and in the race, because sometimes you hit one of the two and it's not enough so we need to improve in that aspect. I think the team performance needs to be a little bit better in the tyre preparation on Saturday and Sunday

Q: (Michael Casey – Associated Press) Fernando and Lewis, in terms of Sebastian after the race he had in Canada, is there a little bit of a sense that he's starting to pull away, that a fourth title could be his at some point?

FA: I think he's doing a fantastic job. I think he's been nearly perfect in all the races with no negative races, always performing well in qualifying and doing very good races. Obviously I had two unlucky situations, one in Malaysia, one in Bahrain. Kimi was leading the championship or very close until he had two unlucky situations, one in Monaco and in Canada was a little bit of a mixed race for him. So we need to keep fighting, we need to keep pushing and we need to recover from these bad races that we had now. As Lewis said before, I think Red Bull is performing really well, it's improving compared to the first part of the championship, so we really need to raise our game if we want to catch Sebastian because he's doing a fantastic job.

LH: Yeah, same as what Fernando said: Sebastian's doing an incredible job. He's performing as the World Champion that he is and they will be difficult to catch but I don't think it's impossible to close the gap. From our side, we've already closed quite a huge deficit already so we're happy where we are but of course we want to do better. Fernando's a lot closer. I think once they sort out their qualifying they'll be able to match the Red Bulls if not beat them so we need to do a lot more work.

Ends