



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

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DRIVERS – Jules BIANCHI (Marussia), Charles PIC (Caterham), Giedo VAN DER GARDE (Caterham), Jean-Eric VERGNE (Toro Rosso), Sebastian VETTEL (Red Bull Racing), Romain GROSJEAN (Lotus)

PRESS CONFERENCE

Jules, can we start with you? Ten races into your Formula One career you've got some solid results. Do you feel you're established as an F1 driver now?

Jules BIANCHI: Obviously the first part of the season has been really good for me and the team. The second part a bit more difficult. Now we're going into the last part and I feel confident. I was really happy with the first result we had but we still need to push and improve.

What do you feel is the right move for you? I know the Marussia team are keen to keep you for next season. Do you think the right move for you is to stay there or are you looking beyond?

JB: Well, I think the right move is first of all to think about this year, finish the season and let my manager and Ferrari see what we can do and they will decide and they will a good call but for sure I'm happy and pleased with Marussia.

Giedo, moving to you now. A bit of a tough start to the year but things have really seemed to turn around recently, particularly in the last race. What was the secret of that turnaround?

Giedo VAN DER GARDE: I think it's a lot to do with the workload. I've been working really hard. Of course, it's for rookies not easy to come in. I think Jules was a little bit better than me at the beginning. But it went better and better and you see a good direction going, especially the last race, it was going really well. Happy with the team, happy with the performance and we keep on pushing like this.

And your own thoughts about next year?

GVDG: Next year is still far away. I still want to focus on the next following races, do well, maximise myself. I think the new tyres are helping me a little bit, with my style of driving, so then we'll see where it ends up.

Moving to you Sebastian, I was going to ask you about highlights of the season but I see you've gone out and got a few highlights of your own, under your cap, you're hiding it now. You obviously have a comfortable lead in the championship but after the performance of Hamilton [in Hungary] and with Mercedes winning three of the last five are you beginning to feel less comfortable?

Sebastian VETTEL: I think we had a great first part of the season. Very good results, unfortunately one DNF, but all in all I think we can be very happy with the first half. Now entering the second half and looking at the calendar I think it will be very busy for all of us but I think we have the same reason to be confident as we had starting the season. I think we have a great car, a great team, a strong package, which hopefully is good enough to fight for victories in the next couple of races.

Obviously things are hotting up in the search for your new team-mate – lots of discussions going on. What, to you... what do you feel would be the ideal characteristics of the person sitting in the car on the other side of the garage next season?

SV: At the end of the day I think it doesn't really matter too much. I think ideally you would like someone who is competitive, as competitive as you are, so that we are pushing each other. You don't have to be best friends with whoever is racing next to you. At the end of the day you have to work for the team. I think that's one of the most important bits, so you work in the same direction and hopefully ensure that the car gets faster, you pull in the same direction in terms of car development. I think that's the most important thing. Whether you like each or not is not that important. If it's the case, then probably it's a bonus, but I don't think it's absolutely necessary.

Romain, first of all congratulations from all of us on the birth of your son. How does it feel?

Romain GROSJEAN: It feels like good entertainment, the best thing ever in the world.

Will it change the way you drive?

RG I think I have a different mind from the past. I have been trying to progress a lot. It may not change lap times but I'm still trying to improve myself.

Twenty-three points in the last two grand prix, your best form of the season. What's brought that about?

RG: We had a decent run since Bahrain, where we found out what I didn't like on the car at the start of the season. In Silverstone we had a little bad luck. I had a bad Monaco, that was myself, but then I think I was getting better and better and we had in the last two races fights for victory, which is always good. The car was performing well in quali and the race, so happy with that, happy with the progress we are doing and the updates that being brought by the team. Just trying to do my best and giving 100 per cent every time.

You've had a clean sheet in race starts this season but obviously coming back here everyone remembers 12 months ago, what do think about that now?

RG: Well, as I say, a different state of mind and I think I've progressed a lot and worked on that and I think the 2013 starts prove that I did my duties. No, I'll keep pushing and trying to do my best in every circumstance. When every eye is on you, it's easier for the others to play with that. But I'm here today to give my best, trying to win races, what I've been trying to do in the last two grand prix and it's getting close and closer, which is good. So I'll keep progressing, keep working and keep doing the same things and I'll keep doing clean starts.

Q: Jean-Eric, moving to you, we saw the interview you gave to L'Équipe just before the summer break. Perhaps you could spell out for us the situation as you see it between yourself, Toro Rosso, Red Bull and the future?

Jean-Eric VERGNE: The situation is pretty clear. I don't have much to say. There have been absolutely no [statements] from Red Bull Racing or Toro Rosso. I'm happy where I am. I try to focus 100 per cent on my season and all the races that are going on for the rest of the year. Therefore I don't want to think too much about next year.

Q: There was a quote from Franz Tost saying you are secure at Toro Rosso for next year, you didn't have to worry about your future.

JEV: Yeah, absolutely I'm not worried. Of course as a driver I wish I could have a car to win races but I will be more than happy to stay in Toro Rosso. It's a good team. It's a team building up, just getting better and better. We have a new factory, a lot of good people coming in and I would be more than happy to stay in Toro Rosso next year. Nothing else to say really.

Q: Give us your thoughts on this race. Obviously a lot of support coming across the border from France, obviously always a very special feeling as well, racing on this historic track – a track on which Toro Rosso have done reasonably well in the past, certainly in qualifying.

JEV: First of all I love this track. I've always loved racing here. For some reason I realise I've had quite a decent car here with Toro Rosso. Especially this year I hope will be even better than the other ones. We are aiming for a good weekend, scoring some good points and ending all the bad results we've had recently.

Q: Charles, how do you feel about what you've been able to do so far this season?

Charles PIC: I think it was a good first half of the season for us. The two first races were difficult and for sure we were not at the pace we wanted to be but I think all the team, including the driver, made a good job and progressed race after race to become stronger and stronger after races. We finished in Budapest, I think our highest level of the season. So I think that is quite positive. Still not where we want to be so we need to continue like that and push it forward. But I think it was a good progression.

Q: This is the time of year where teams and the drivers and their managers are all thinking about the jigsaw puzzle which is who drives where in 2014. What are your feelings? Would you like to stay where you are? Do you see a move? What are you thinking?

CP: My job is to try to get 100 per cent out of my car every weekend. So I will be focussed on this for the next races and I will let my management do the rest.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Julien Febreau – Canal Plus) Question to all of you except Romain Grosjean: do you feel ready to be a father?

SV: Oof. I don't know. Maybe. Obviously Romain is a father, so maybe he can comment on what made him think he's ready or not. I think in the best case it doesn't take too long to get the job done! I think in that case we are all ready!

JEV: Well, following what Seb says, I will be ready to do the job but not the rest.

GvdG: I think when Seb does one he will have a nice boy or girl with the same hair. Just kidding. I don't know. First of all, I've been with my girlfriend for quite a long time. We're getting married this year and after that we will see what comes. I think we'll wait for a few more years.

SV: We are still in free practice!

JB: I think it's the same (for me); I don't feel ready at the moment but I'm practising!

CP: For myself at the moment I'm focusing on racing and my season and after that we will see.

Q: (Pierre van Vliet – F1i.com) Jean-Eric, do you still believe that you have a chance for the Red Bull drive next year?

JEV: It's a difficult question. Obviously I don't know much more than you. I don't want to think too much about it so it's difficult for me to answer this question but I still believe in our

chances to have a good car next year, whether Red Bull or Toro Rosso but if I'm at Toro Rosso I'm sure we will have a good car. I don't have much else to say.

Q: (Kate Walker – GP Week) Sebastian, I've been bothering you for the past few races asking about the prospect of racing against Kimi in the same car and you were quite positive and enthusiastic about the challenge. How does it feel now that you know that prospective challenge has been taken away and that you might be racing somebody entirely different? Are you looking forward to it?

SV: Well, first of all, I didn't know how realistic it was or not. Obviously I've learned similar to most of us from the press that as it looks, it's not the case (that Kimi will be my teammate). For sure I'm talking with the team, but as I've said many times, it's not my decision and also I don't want to get too involved. As I've said, I think Kimi would have been nice in many ways. Now it's not happening so it doesn't make much sense to talk about that but who knows? He's still young, I'm still young so I don't know. A lot of things can still happen. Never say never but probably for next year it's not going to happen.

Q: (Jerome Pugmire – Associated Press) Sebastian, after Hamilton's win in Budapest, do you now see him as your most dangerous rival for the remainder of the season?

SV: Well, I think he's one of them. Obviously, like I said, we had a good first half of the season. We can be very happy with that. We just need to go step by step, race by race and then not get distracted by too many things happening around the outside, outside of the team. I think Mercedes has been very competitive, not just Lewis, also Nico who has won two races already this year. We know that they are very quick in qualifying. Hungary, in a way, for the first time – not really the first time – they had the ability, let's say, to show their speed in the race as well but really since Monaco, in a way, they've been competitive in the races. As I said, Nico won the race at Silverstone. Lewis was in the lead when he had the tyre failure. Surely, the last couple of races they were most competitive but then I think Lotus has always been there scoring points with Kimi. Romain is fighting his way back. Ferrari, I think, has a little bit of a low at the moment but still they've got good points so I think all of these teams and the drivers, you still have to keep them in mind but as I said, for us it's not that important to pick one particular driver or person or team. As I said, first of all we have to get our own stuff sorted and then we will see what happens.

Q: (Paolo Ianieri – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Sebastian, there are rumours about Kimi that he might go back to Ferrari. Do you think that he and Fernando could be a more threatening couple for you, or would you prefer him to stay at Lotus?

SV: I don't know. I get along quite well with Kimi so I would be happy in a way if he finds a spot where he's happy. I think he has a good seat at the moment with Lotus but if he can improve then I would be happy for him. I think Kimi is very straightforward, you don't get any bullshit with him and politics so in that regard I don't know how realistic it is for him to return to Ferrari. Obviously he has been there and then Fernando came and Kimi left to go rallying. I think he's very uncomplicated.

Q: (Peter Farkas – Auto-Motor) Jules, can you make it clear if you're running for the Ferrari seat, and what other options are there for you apart from Marussia?

JB: Well, obviously I don't know. Actually I am just focused 100 percent on my season and I just let my manager decide it for me. I think it's not the moment to look at that, but for sure I will be ready if Ferrari call me, but for the moment I feel good at Marussia.

Q: (Luke Smith – NBC Sports) Romain, there are rumours of Kimi Raikkonen leaving the team at the end of the season; do you enjoy the prospect of potentially leading Lotus next season, in potentially a World Championship-leading car?

RG: Well, I always say that losing Kimi would be a loss for the team, he's very good, he's a World Champion, it's good to have him as a teammate. We push each other to the limit but if he leaves then we still have to do the job and to try to win races and score a lot of points. So at the moment I think we have a good way of working together but yeah, if he leaves then I would be more than happy to get the deal and try to keep Lotus where it is or still improve.

Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action and National Speedsport News) Sebastian, we're at Spa, a track you guys all love and we're going to Suzuka, a track you all love. What is your most memorable race at Suzuka and why?

SV: So you're not... you don't want to talk about Spa? Correct. Nice introduction though! Looking back to Suzuka, I think I've had fantastic races there. I've been very lucky. I think the last four years I've always been on the podium: won three out of four races there so yeah, I really like the circuit, it's fantastic. The first sector is great, similar to here: you have some corners which are very similar. I think we all enjoy the fact that when we get to challenge ourselves, not only ourselves but also the cars, and really get the cars to their limit and feel, once or twice, on these special types of circuits, what the cars can do and the corner speeds we have just through the first sector at Suzuka is very impressive. I enjoy that a lot, to feel the speed, to really get that sensation. It's just a great level of satisfaction and that's why it's like a drug, you want more and more every lap and if you have a great car which fortunately I had the last couple of years, then it's just great to go for another lap and another lap. I think the best memory I have is winning the championship there in 2011, even though I didn't win the race but still it was a great experience, a crazy day and crazy karaoke at night after that.

Q: (Marc Priestley – F1Times.com) For anybody who has been to do a track walk today; you will have noticed that the first few grid slots have had some drainage channels cut into the track surface. Has there been talk amongst your teams, firstly about the different strategies for the start procedures and secondly about the possibility of even doing practice starts at some point over the Grand Prix weekend before we get to Sunday?

RG: Well, we noticed it while doing the track walk but we haven't spoken with the start guy yet. It's true that it looks different when you do the walk but I think the first eleven grid positions are more or less the same so there is no disadvantage; the advantage will be more with the eleventh, twelfth positions if there could be any problems, but I think from the first few rows, it should be the same for everyone.

JEV: Actually, we had a meeting just before the press conference and we were discussing it. I think we will probably bring it up during the drivers' briefing or team managers' briefing to try and ask if we can have a practice start to see if there is a difference or not.

SV: Yeah, we've noticed it, we've talked about it, we don't know the difference because we've never had starts on that kind of surface. I don't expect it to be a big difference. Obviously I think we are not allowed – at the moment, at least – doing any practice starts. Maybe that will change, to have a look for all the teams. If it's wet, it's better, if it's wet for all of us for sure, but I think that's the reason why they did it. Like I said, no experience so we don't know.

GvdG: I think we are at an advantage then.

Q: (Paolo Ianieri – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Romain, talking about Kimi, one thing that his manager said is that it depends a lot on Lotus whether he can stay or not, from what Lotus can offer technically and also financially. I think this is also something that interests you; have you spoken with Boullier and with Lopez, what do you know about next year? Do you feel secure about this?

RG: Well, I was a bit busy the last few weeks to be honest. I didn't have much time to make phone calls. I feel very happy with the team. It's no secret that I would like to stay

there. I think we are on a good progression. There's a lot of talk about Kimi but to be honest, at the moment I am just trying to focus on the way back and having the races that we've had in the last two Grands Prix and doing a good job.

Q: (Andy Young – Richland F1) Question for the back row: it's forecast to rain on Sunday, are you hopeful that it does and therefore gives you a chance to maybe get a point or a decent result?

JB: Well, obviously when it's raining I think it's better for us because it's like kind of crazy races so we have more chance to finish in the front but it's also a chance for us to be out of the track, so it's not easy. I would like to have some rain on Sunday.

CP: I think, as Jules said, each time you have changing conditions, for us it's good because it means that if you take the right decisions you can take advantage from it and try to get a finishing position that you are not able to get without changing conditions. I think it's good but then after it's the same for everybody so you still have to take the right decision and a better one than the one (driver) you are fighting against.

GvdG: I think it's a good opportunity for us. I think it's always nice here in the rain. I think our car performs quite well in the rain and with that, a lot of things can happen in the race so we will see. I think it would be nice for us to have a little rain, a little luck here and there. Hopefully we can get back our tenth place in the team championship.

Q: (Andrea Cremonesi – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Sebastian, yesterday Alonso tweeted impressive numbers about his training during the summer break. Could you tell us what you did during the break?

SV: What did I do? Holiday, so rest a little bit and for sure, you use the time to... soon enough, hopefully, get back into rhythm and train. I didn't log every kilometer that I did on the bike or run or swim so I don't know what he did. I know that he's quite active on Twitter but I'm not following him. I don't have the... I don't know if you actually need the application or not on your phone or if you... I don't know, if you have to subscribe. I don't know. I'm not a member, I'm not part of that exclusive club but yeah, I think he's pretty fit, no doubt, so I'm sure he was training pretty hard.

Ends