



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

## Press Information

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

21.09.2013

#### DRIVERS

1 – Sebastian VETTEL (Red Bull Racing)

2 – Nico ROSBERG (Mercedes)

3 – Romain GROSJEAN (Lotus)

**Q: Sebastian, biting your nails at the end there. You took the decision not to go out and do a final run. Does it sit comfortably with you, being a gambler?**

**Sebastian VETTEL:** Yeah. It's a weird feeling. You stand in the garage when there's roughly two minutes to go in the session and you know that it's too late. But then it's much worse when you see the others at the final attempt and you know there's nothing you can do. Because you stand in the garage. I was watching the sector times very closely with obviously Romain, Nico and Mark in particular. Mark started with a purple sector one, very close in sector two, then Nico had a purple sector two, then Romain had a purple sector two. Then fortunately my last sector was strong enough to – yeah – just stay ahead. It was very close in the end with Nico. That's a great feeling then, obviously, because it could go wrong but very happy obviously with the result. The car's been phenomenal all weekend. Yesterday I think the gap was a bit of a surprise. Today's been more what we expected – especially with Mercedes being very close behind.

**Q: The gap is a tenth of a second Nico. You've had the upper hand over your teammate here but not quite over the Red Bulls.**

**Nico ROSBERG:** Yeah, unfortunately Sebastian especially has been really quick the whole weekend but it was very, very close in the end. A pity, because one tenth more, with the way they gambled in the last qualifying... One tenth more would have been possible somehow, y'know? That would have been great but anyway, second place is still a good result. A great result. And it gives me a good position to start the race tomorrow and I'm also very confident about our race pace. It's looking OK so I think a great result is possible.

**Q: Romain, a confident decision from you in the first part of qualifying not to use the faster tyre. Were you feeling confident today?**

**Romain GROSJEAN:** Well, I think the car's been OK today. If we look at how many laps we did in the whole weekend so far, P3 in the quali is not too bad. We knew we were strong this morning. I think we got a little bit caught by the night coming on and it was a little bit less quick than the fast time we expected in Q1 but nevertheless I think the team did a good decision about the strategy and the cut-off and everything, so then we had two attempts in Q3. It's good to be at the front in this grand prix.

**Q: Sebastian. You've won from pole the last two grands prix. Is it more of a challenge to do it around this Marina Bay circuit tomorrow?**

**SV:** Yeah, definitely. It's one of the toughest races we face all year. I would say the toughest – physically and mentally – because it's so long. One lap is so long, there's so many corners, there's hardly any room for mistakes, it's very bumpy and, as you can see, we're all sweating pretty much even though we only did a couple of laps in qualifying. So the heat obviously and the humidity plays a factor. It will be very tough. Surely pole is the best position to start from – very happy with that as it is tricky to pass on this track. But because it is such a long race I think there is plenty of opportunities for all of us. Usually we get a safety car at some stage in the race. Yeah, as I said, happy to start from pole, try to have a good start and then settle into a nice rhythm and see what we can do.

## **PRESS CONFERENCE**

**Q: So Sebastian, your 41<sup>st</sup> career pole, sixth of this season, three in a row now after Spa and Monza. You've had a great record around here, won the last two times at Singapore. What is it about this Singapore circuit that really gets to you?**

**SV:** I don't know. We race at night. I think even though it hasn't been in the calendar for many decades but still it seems like a classic and it's a very nice place to come to. The circuit is a big challenge for all of us. It's so long, so many corners, very difficult to keep the focus for the entire lap. Tomorrow's race will be very long, it's usually the longest race we have with two hours duration. So, yeah, it's just... you hate it and love it at the same time. Obviously in qualifying if you get the lap right it feels fantastic. I think it's the challenge that I love – that we love – when we come here.

**Q: A quick word on your main title rival – Fernando Alonso seventh today.**

**SV:** Yeah, obviously, I don't know. We don't really look at what the others do. At least I don't. So, I think the race is long, as I touched on, especially around here. I think the Ferrari was struggling the last couple of events in qualifying but they have a very, very good race pace. I think the last couple of races Fernando always finished on the podium, so I'm sure they will come back. So, yeah, obviously it's no harm for us today but first of all we have to look after ourselves and look at what we can do in the race. And then we see where we are. But I'm confident Fernando will do everything he can tomorrow in the race to fight back.

**Q: Nico, it was reminiscent today of Monaco back in May. Another street track and very competitive again for you.**

**NR:** Yeah, I really like street tracks generally. Always been quick on them and again today I felt comfortable with the car. Really the whole weekend, the progress has been nice. Starting on Friday, I wasn't very happy with the car and everything, wasn't feeling very good. We just worked through it, and really optimised it and it was just perfect in qualifying then. It's just everybody together: me with my engineers, the mechanics, everybody working together well. I'm pleased with second. I think Sebastian was out of reach this weekend, all weekend, so second is OK. And with a good race pace, should be good tomorrow.

**Q: A quick word on how it went from a second [off P1] after FP2 yesterday to less than a tenth this evening.**

**NR:** Well obviously they gambled a bit. I'm sure they were still quite a step quicker than that lap time if Sebastian would have done another set of tyres. But for sure we've closed the gap again as we always do on weekends. And that's good to see that we're able to do that.

**Q: Romain, you touched on the fact that you had a lot of problems yesterday but it's another big improvement from the Lotus team from Friday through to today and from your own point of view overcoming those difficulties. How did you do that?**

**RG:** Well to be honest, yesterday didn't look that bad on the few laps we did – I think we had ten timed laps, something like that in total in the whole day but we were something like P5 yesterday evening and the lap wasn't great. So I knew we had a good baseline to start today and this morning went pretty well. And Quali, yeah, we had a good strategy again. In Q1 it was tight because I guess the Prime tyres were less quick than what we expected but then we had a very good set of tyres for the Q2 and Q3 and we did manage to have good runs. We could compare between the two cars, what they were doing and what we were doing and try to get the best of both. It's good. I think we could have tried to have a go at Nico but yeah, it was just not quite good for the first few corners.

**Q: Is it fair to say you're driving like a man who knows that his team-mate is moving on next year and you want to be the lead driver of the team next year?**

**RG:** I don't really care. Relation with Kimi has been always... not very 'speaky', and I just do my best on my own. I like the team, I'm sure they're quite happy with the way we work so far and yeah, just focussed on what I have to do and then we'll see for the future.

#### **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR.**

**Q: (Abhishek Takle – Mid-Day) Sebastian, I think you had a gap of around 0.6s after the initial runs in Q3. You chose to sit the last run out; were you surprised by the amount of time these guys gained? In the end the gap was less than a tenth.**

**SV:** Well, it's difficult to expect. I knew that obviously we had a cushion which is why we decided not to run again but the thing you don't know is how much the track improves so I'm sure that there was a little bit of track ramping up plus the fact that if you run again you get a better feel for the tyres, for the track and you get a little bit more out of yourself, so we thought it was good enough and in the end it was good enough. But yeah, it was probably a bit closer. Both of them, Nico and Romain, had a very strong middle sector but fortunately my last sector was strong enough to keep them just behind.

**Q: Just for clarity, on the radio you said you thought you could find another tenth when you were asked, and you didn't look 100 percent convinced when you got out of the car, so was it a team decision rather than your decision?**

**SV:** No, it's a decision we, we... obviously Rocky (race engineer Guillaume Rocquelin) asked me whether I was happy not to run again and stay in the garage and I said 'yes, I'm happy.' He asked before that how much I thought I could improve if I went again. I told him that probably there was a tenth, maybe two. You take a little bit of track into account, a little bit of yourself, how much the track ramps up is difficult to know so I thought there was a tenth in me – it is the most famous tenth in the world, that all the drivers seem to have in their pocket but they couldn't get it out in qualifying so it's still there somewhere. It was very close and it's not the best feeling when you stand there and watch.

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – O Estado de Sao Paulo) Nico, we have some similarities between this race and the Hungarian Grand Prix until now, that Lewis starts better than Sebastian, got the lead in the first corner and then finished the race, he won the race. Do you think you always have the pace in race conditions to keep in front of Sebastian or here the overtaking possibilities mean that he can't overtake you?**

**NR:** Lewis was on pole in Hungary, I'm second here so it's a bit different. Not sure. I'll give it a go. For sure, he's quicker on race pace, we saw that on Friday so if I can get by, then it's possible that I can stay in front but it's all down to the start. I think the left hand side has a little bit less grip than the right hand side on this track at the start but we will see. It's possible.

**Q: (Michael Schmidt – Auto, Motor und Sport) Nico, where did the big jump from the first outing to the second come from? Was it just the circuit being better, was it because maybe you have been a bit conservative in your first outing or did you change something on the wing setting or whatever for the last outing?**

**NR:** Very difficult to explain. I don't know. I didn't expect such an improvement either but I think it was the same for everybody so maybe it's down to the track ramping up or cooling down a bit more, track temperature dropping or something of the sort. I'm not sure.

**Q: Were you surprised by how much quicker the used supersofts were when you went out on them the second time at the beginning of Q2? Sebastian maybe take it first.**

**SV:** I didn't go out on them.

**NR:** Was I surprised at the time I could do? Not really, no, because I knew the track was getting better and I saw what my teammate did in Q1, pushing, so no, I wasn't surprised.

**Q: (Don Kennedy – Hawke's Bay Today) Sebastian, you've won the last two races here, you're on pole and you're probably anything from half a second to a second faster than everybody else. Do you think now we can expect you to be more confident about not only winning this race tomorrow but also the championship?**

**SV:** I think it was quite close. Whether... I think the track ramped up, whether we could have gone with that we don't know because we didn't do the run but I'm sure we had a little bit of time in hand. But yeah, for tomorrow I think the car feels fine, the race pace looked very strong on Friday, yesterday, so yeah, if all goes well we should have a very good chance to get a strong result but to be honest with you, I try... I'm not just trying... I do keep it very simple. I've got to do my homework. Just because of the fact that the last couple of races were pretty good doesn't mean that there's a guarantee that this one will be good again and the next one and so on and so forth. I think it's the wrong strategy to lean back and see what the others can do. You might get surprised, so we keep going flat out, I keep pushing myself 100 percent. The target tomorrow is to win, not only for the championship but more so, to be honest with you, because it's such a nice race. That means a lot to me. As I touched on, the challenge around here is one of the biggest we face all year so that's why it means a lot to finish this race on the podium and even better if you can win it. You don't have to be a genius (to work out) if you win, you score more points than the others and it feeds on itself.

Ends