



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

2013 Korean Grand Prix Thursday Press Conference Transcript 03.10.2013

DRIVERS – Paul DI RESTA (Force India), Jules BIANCHI (Marussia), Esteban GUTIERREZ (Sauber), Romain GROSJEAN (Lotus), Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes), Felipe MASSA (Ferrari)

PRESS CONFERENCE

Paul Di Resta, you've had a bit of a drought over the past five races or so. Do you put that down to bad luck?

Paul DI RESTA: I suppose you can, but at the same time we've had some unfortunate issues. But I think the important thing is to keep pushing on. Singapore was obviously looking like it was going to be a great result from a difficult qualifying session, the speed was in the car, but it wasn't to be. Hopefully this weekend we can get it together and get points back on the table, which is always the goal within the team.

The team has suggested that you've been affected by the change of tyres since the British Grand Prix, would you agree with that?

PDR: I definitely think the tyre hasn't helped but I think at this stage, and this far in with the new tyres, can you blame that? We've not optimised it like we did the last set, but I think everybody within the team has a great handle on tyres and it's just about unleashing the potential of them. We've maybe not got it over the whole weekend but the way we managed the tyres in the race in Singapore was obviously better than most people were able to. We just need to try to get the qualifying performance and I think if we can do that then it gets us back on track and we start having a good weekend again.

I hope so, thank you. Jules, obviously you've signed, we've had the news of that this morning that you've signed again for Marussia, although there were several other seats available, but you've resigned for Marussia. Your feelings about that?

Jules BIANCHI: Obviously it's a great feeling for me. It was a really late call this year and I've already signed for next year so it's amazing for me. I'm really happy to stay with Marussia because I feel really confident with them, I feel like at home. So I hope it will be a great season next year and I really want to thank them for that.

How do you feel about the potential for next year, particularly with the Ferrari engines. And also your own potential, how are you going to develop?

JB: For sure, I will feel a lot more confident because I will have a lot more experience in Formula One, I will have all the winter testing. We will have new rules, with new engines, with Ferrari. For sure that will be a great thing for the car and for the team. I don't know what to expect but for sure we will have an improvement.

Esteban, you had your best qualifying in Singapore. Was that the circuit, just everything coming together? How important was that for you?

Esteban GUTIERREZ: It was very important, because it was getting very critical not being able to qualify properly. Obviously when you start P9 or P10, there's a huge difference between starting P10 and P16 or P17. It also changes a lot your perspective because you're fighting with better drivers at the front as well. It was, I think, a great experience, a good step and a very solid one and I'm looking to keep this in a consistent way until the end of the year.

And obviously we've got a Mexican Grand Prix on the calendar for next year. Tell us how important it is for your country to have that grand prix, for motor sport in your country. But also, about the circuit itself, because I think you've been there. Is it ready for a grand prix?

EG: It has to be adapted. They have to do some work. Now there is a closer chance it will happen but it's not yet assured, so they're working very hard and I'm sure that the promoters are trying to find a way to make it happen. Obviously for us it would be a very special one.

Q: Felipe, it is four weeks since the announcement regarding your future with Ferrari. Can you tell us more about your future in Formula One?

Felipe MASSA: Well, not yet. So it's to concentrate to the last race. We talk with a few teams, y'know, and I don't think it's the right time to speak about that. I think it's the right time when you know where you are going. For the moment we are aware, I think, of some good opportunities. It's better to wait and say at the right time.

Q: You're getting on quite well with the current car it seems. You've out-qualified your team-mate five times this year, last time in Singapore. How do you feel about the current Ferrari?

FM: I feel OK, I feel good. I mean I feel comfortable inside the car and managed to put some points in the last races. Important for me, for the team. Just concentrate to carry on like that these last races and try to get some more podiums, some more better results even from what I had until now. I think qualifying is going well as well, so let's try to do everything we can to get some good results now in these last six races and finish well with Ferrari after our long and nice time together.

Lewis, last year you had an incident-packed race here but at the same time you've had a couple of second places as well at this circuit, included that wet race in 2010. What are your memories of this circuit and what are your feelings about this race?

Lewis HAMILTON: I don't really remember any of my races here! I remember qualifying at the front on one race but otherwise we've had some half-decent races but I haven't won, so there's nothing really good enough to remember, I'd say.

Q: I particularly remember in the wet, when you were going around and around and around behind the safety car and you saying "C'mon, let's go racing."

LH: Ah yeah, I remember that. But that's normal, that sort of thing.

Q: Since Silverstone you've had a good run of points as opposed to your team-mate who hasn't had quite the same run of points. What do you put that down to? A difference in driving style between the two of you?

LH: Well, the last couple of races haven't been so good for me. But before that, yeah, again I've just grown with my understanding of the car. Growing an understanding of how to really extract the most from it. Working better each time as we're growing as a team in terms of how we communicate and everything. So I hope this weekend is even better in that sense. We're constantly making changes, even after the last race weekend, there

were some things we can improve on, particularly on communication. So we're hopefully going to see a better weekend this weekend.

Q: Is there one type of circuit that's better than another?

LH: No, no. I'm actually really surprised this year that the car is good everywhere. It's been a real blessing and I anticipate it should be strong again here this weekend. Whether or not we can keep up with the Red Bulls, we'll see – but my target really is to get these guys, the guys in the red.

Q: Romain, Eric Boullier in his preview of this race gave you a big vote of confidence saying that you had really come together, that you performing extremely well. How do you feel about your performances recently?

Romain GROSJEAN: Pretty good to be honest! I knew we were on a good run since the Bahrain Grand Prix except Monaco where I had a bad weekend and Canada where we struggled a little bit – but things were going together and I think it shows up in Germany that the final things came together and it was better and better. Singapore was a good race as well. We came back with a more normal package, the car was back at the front, which is enjoyable and hopefully it's going to be the case for the last six races of the season.

Q: Was Singapore a track that you liked or do you just have the confidence now? Has there been a breakthrough in some way?

RG: Well, I think it was not a track that I liked or disliked. It doesn't change much on the lap-time or the driving style. I tried to get on with everything I can and the car is getting better and better. I think we had a very slow start to the season. Since then we worked hard and it's like we lost all the testing and the first three races. So, started on the back foot but bring things together and Singapore was back to the normal wing level after let's say after Spa and Monza where we struggled a little bit more and should be good for the rest of the season hopefully. And, y'know, just keep doing the same thing as we're doing.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR.

Q: (Abhishek Takle – Midday) Felipe, following on from the earlier question about your future, how optimistic are you in terms of your chances of getting a competitive drive next year and should you not get a competitive drive next year, would you still want to continue in Formula One?

FM: Well, I think I'm quite optimistic that I'm going to find a good direction, a good solution. As I said, I will not change my mind. I want to have a car that can give me some good possibilities to fight, not a car in which I would not have a chance to fight. So if I have that, I'm not interested, as I said.

Q: (Frederic Ferret – L'Equipe) To all of you: first of all, how do you rate this track as a driver, and secondly, what do you think of next year's calendar with 22 Grands Prix?

RG: It's too far from Seoul.

FM: I think it's a very nice track, I like to drive here. Regarding the calendar, I think it's a lot to think about because it's not really comfortable, not just for us as drivers but for the teams, so I think if there were a little bit better thinking behind it they can do a much better calendar for next year.

LH: I really love the track, they did a good job. It's nice to drive. You don't get as many people coming to watch as we would like but as Romain said, it's quite far from the main city. Just arriving today, seeing how beautiful the weather is, the scenery around it, it's really quite a peaceful place. In terms of calendar, I love racing so I would do many more if I had to but as Felipe said, it's difficult on the team. The year's getting so long. I think we're

already testing in January so there's not a lot of down time for the guys back at the factory or us people who are travelling.

FM: I think the problem is that there are races where you go to Japan and then you're not going to another race straightaway, so you're going back to Europe and then you're coming back here. You can do many races – not a problem – but you need to do it in a better way.

Q: Esteban, your first impressions?

EG: Well, it's going to be an interesting track to get to know, it's my first time driving this track and I've already had a look at some media footage and it looks quite an interesting track.

JB: Well, I did FP1 last year with Force India. It was a good track, I liked it so now we have to wait and see how it is in racing.

PdiR: Again, like everyone, I think it's a good track to drive, it's got a nice flow in the last sector. Equally, it's got some good opportunities if you're attacking or defending in the first sector. For the calendar, I think it's obviously a great thing to go to new countries and new tracks and let other people experience the sights of Formula One, so very positive and I think like Lewis, driving's important and however many races that will be, I want to be the one who's taking part.

Q: (Trent Price- Richland F1) Felipe, Fernando's been relatively vocal about saying that it was the tyre construction that affected Ferrari mid-year and Nicolas Tombazis says no, it was more of a development curve that we took in the wrong direction. You've done a lot of Friday work on the car; where do you see where the issues are?

FM: For sure, if you don't have the car to win the championship you didn't do the perfect job, it's clear. We've had so many little things that either didn't work as you expected to fight for the championship, but I don't think you need to put names on the table. I think you need to speak about the whole group of work. I think that's the most important thing.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – O Estado de Sao Paulo) To all of you: since the Spa race, Sebastian Vettel set three poles and won three races, even on a circuit where he couldn't be so fast, Monza, for example. What's your point of view about that; how can he get such a big advantage from one moment to another one?

FM: Well, I think if you look at the last race, how his pace was, qualifying and in the race. If you appreciate that few teams will have new pieces on the car from now until the last race; similar to what he did in the last race, he's going to have some more victories, I think. For sure, his pace was better than everybody in the last races. It depends on the track, especially in Singapore. We're going to tracks where you need more downforce and they always show great performance as well. We will see. I hope it won't be like that but the chance is pretty much in their favour, that he can have more victories.

LH: I agree, there's not really much more to say.

RG: Well, they look quite impressive. They did a good job to bring them something that brings them a decent lap time gain so no, P2 is almost like a victory.

PdiR: I think all you can say is that the combination has not only worked this year but it's worked over the last four years. The difference that they've made from the beginning of the year to now is obviously working out in their direction and nobody is challenging them.

Q: (Abhishek Takle – Midday) Felipe, Pat Fry said in the run-up to this race that you're going to be using the Friday practice sessions to test 2014 parts, so how involved are you going to be with that programme of testing those parts?

FM: I hope I can test everything they give to me for next year, to have some experience, to understand a little bit. I don't know. To be honest, this year there's not a lot to be done for next year so the car will be completely different next year. So many things will be different so I think it's not so easy to try things on Friday for next year because everything will start from zero next year. But if we have some new pieces, I hope I can have them.

Q: (Simon Cass – Daily Mail) Paul, is your contract situation sorted out with Force India for next year, do you have a contract, because Vijay (Mallya) says he's going to leave the decision late as he usually does? I was just wondering where we were with that.

PdiR: The team's policy is not to discuss contracts at the moment, so I think you need to go to the press office and speak to them. I'll concentrate on this weekend and the driving part of it.

Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action and National Speedsport News) Lewis, is it possible to do a perfect lap and then, if you do that, how do you improve on it? Not just here, anywhere.

LH: I don't think there's a perfect lap. I think you can always improve, even if you do pull off a great lap, there's always some areas where you feel you could potentially gain, but then perhaps you lose in other areas. So getting a perfect lap like in the simulations we have are generally perfect laps. I think that's something we're all trying to do every single time we go out and the closer you get, the more exciting it gets.

Q: (Ben Edwards – BBC) Lewis, quick question: just looking back at the Singapore race. When the team analysed the performance of both you and Nico and Sebastian, you were so close to him in qualifying in terms of team pace, then he had that two seconds a lap advantage when he was sprinting, but do you think that was a bit of a false picture because he was very much pushing to open up that gap and maybe you guys were obviously in a different position in that race. Do you think that the gap we saw open up was a slightly false picture?

LH: I don't, personally, think so. No. I think that's the true pace of their car. Perhaps they have a lot more in the bag than we get to see, so it's just cruising, generally. I think in the race on the restart everyone's pushing flat out so there should be no reason why they should be able to pull away that much quicker. If you look at their on-boards, he's on the power, full throttle at least twenty meters before everyone else which is a huge advantage.

Q: What sort of reaction does that make you have and the team have; what can you do about that?

LH: There's nothing we can really do, we're always asking for rear downforce, always want to be able to get on the power sooner. But the last time I was able to put the pedal down that quick was what, 2007, 2008? 2007 when we had traction control, so it's a lot different.

Ends