



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

**2013 Korean Grand Prix
Friday Press Conference Transcript**

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TEAM REPRESENTATIVES – Graham WATSON (Caterham), Andy STEVENSON (Force India), Beat Zehnder (Sauber), Ron Meadows (Mercedes), Massimo Rivola (Ferrari), Dickie Stanford (Williams)

PRESS CONFERENCE

Greetings gentlemen, and it's nice to have you at your first FIA press conference. A question for a number of you, first of all: the team manager role, what does it mean, what does it consist of? Perhaps we could start with you Graham?

Graham WATSON: The team manager is basically the orchestrator of the weekend for the logistics side of the team. Obviously directly working with the engineering group to get the desired result by the end of the weekend. It's a fairly full on position, sometimes can be a bit slow, but generally flat chat.

Andy, anything more to add to that?

Andy STEVENSON: Yeah, it's a very similar role, I think, in all the teams. I always look at myself, as well, as a person that gets landed with the jobs nobody else wants to do. When things go wrong I'm at fault and when everything goes right, the team's done a good job.

Beat, I think you're a stickler for the rules as well. You have to know the rule book I think.

Beat ZEHNDER: Yeah of course, this is part of our job, but besides what Andy and Graham said, we're trouble shooters as well. So if everything goes wrong on a weekend we're the first person to contact and we're the ones to solve any problems.

Now, here, Ron, of course you don't have the benefit of the motor homes, the benefit of your trucks. Tell us about how different this sort of race is, these 'flyaways' are, logistically speaking.

Ron MEADOWS: The actual flyaways, the more recent ones are some of the best races we go to for facilities. We have magnificent garages, big hospitality areas. It's really easy compared to a Monaco where you're all compressed and the motor home is half a mile down the road. These races are really quite easy to service.

Massimo, for you?

Massimo RIVOLA: I think the same. It's a different scenario, moving trucks and hospitality in particular Europe is pretty demanding, so I would say that I like Ron's idea that flyaways are actually easier to manage.

And for you Dickie?

Dickie STANFORD: Similar thing for me. The flyaway races, everything's here, so you just literally move in. You're not moving the trucks or anything around Europe. It's quite straightforward to come to a flyaway race.

But actually moving the equipment and stuff such as fuel and that sort of thing?

DS: Well, we move the fuel around Europe, so it's very similar coming to a flyaway race.

Graham, coming back to you. The management of the crews. How do you manage to look after the mechanics and keep them in top-flight trim all he way through?

GW: Yeah, it's a very long season, so it's important that we look after our people. Clearly we are a resource-limited team so we have to be quite clever and wise about how we do that. We try to rotate a few of the guys in and out where possible, Yeah, just keep your health in mind and then over the course of the year, with the help of my support team, just manage the guys as best we can.

Andy?

AS: As the calendars do get longer, with the extra flyaways, the strain on the crew is quite intense. We certainly focus at Sahara Force India focus on fitness and wellbeing. We work very hard on the diets of the guys when we're away travelling and their general fitness. And we've seen this year it has paid off. We've had a lot less injuries this year and the crew are just generally in better shape. So they're able to cope with the job. Also along that we make sure they're comfortable. We try to arrange all their travel schedules and hotels and everything to the best of our ability so that they are comfortable and happy in their work.

Beat?

BZ: This is one of the most important things – that people are feeling well. The good thing in a Formula Team is that all these guys are kind of self-motivating, so you don't have to do an extra bit for that. But, as Andy said, the most important is that they have decent flights and hotels and wellbeing. People tend to get ill towards the end of the season, especially the last two or three races, because travelling through so many time and climate zones is demanding on the body and physics.

Final question from me, to the front row. We're going to see in-season testing next year. How are you going to manage that? What do you envisage having to do for that?

RM: We had a team meeting yesterday, with all the teams involved, and we came up with a schedule and I don't think it's going to be too difficult. We used to have eight filming days, which was an awful lot of arranging for 100kms, where now at least we're going to be in the same venue where we raced and we'll just leave one crew behind and we'll rotate it, so I don't think it will be too bad.

How much equipment do you think you're going to have Massimo?

MR: Well, Ferrari is normally one of ones with the most – more than 40,000 I would say. I agree with Ron. You know that Ferrari is the teams that pushed the most to get in-season testing back and to be honest I think that at the end it will be not so much more expensive than what we had in the past, with aero days and filming

days, so everything will be much more organised for sure. So for us the job it will be, I would say, easier.

Dickie?

DS: You'll use your race equipment and just bring down to the test as little as possible, just trying to keep the cost down.

And personnel?

DS: Personnel? Probably like Ron we'll rotate the crews.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Alex Popov – RTR) It's about the first Russian Grand Prix next year. We have a new date of 5 October. Beat has just been in Sochi just one week. But the question is for all of you. What's your impression, what are your thoughts about this first Russian Grand Prix. Which difficulties do you expect from this?

BS: I can comment on the facilities on the Olympic Park and it's very, very nice there. The track looks nice and all the new buildings that are set up... it's fantastic.

You were there last week?

BS: I've been there last weekend, yes, for a demo event. It's a little bit windy.

Andy, what sort of thing will you do? Will you do a reconnaissance? Have you been there already?

AS: We haven't been there yet but I'm sure we will do a reconnaissance before it's time for us to get there but we – and certainly I – always look forward to new events: the new challenges, the new tracks, to find out our way around. There are a lot of circuits that we go to year in, year out. I don't want to say that's boring but it's much of the same each year so I'm always excited when we have a new venue.

Graham, what sort of problems do you envisage, what special demands may come from racing in Russia?

GW: Well, hopefully there's no problems. Generally FOM are pretty good at paving the way for us to get our equipment in and out of the country. There's always small issues with the new races that come up when you arrive but generally – hopefully – it'll go alright.

Ron, are you planning a reconnaissance trip?

RM: We'll certainly do a recce, though I'm not sure what date that will be but we're really excited to go to Russia – we've never been as a team, it's a very interesting country and recently had a driver in Formula One and hopefully soon will have some more.

Massimo?

MR: Yeah, the same. And in addition, we have a sponsor in Russia so we're very keen to do that. To be honest, any time there is a new race venue we always keen to exploit the new chances that come up and collect more sponsorship. It's good to go to new places.

Dickie?

DS: We'll be doing a recce at some stage early in the year. I've been to Moscow to do an event there and thoroughly enjoyed that. I'm sure the teams will enjoy the new race.

Q: (Kate Walker – GP Week) Question for all of you. You touched on the logistics of adding in-season testing but we're looking at a possibly 22-race calendar next year. Adding the in-season testing to the far-away pre-season tests plus the longer calendar, what kind of headache is that going to be for you logistically but also financially?

RM: Logistically it's obviously going to be more of a challenge than this year but the biggest issue at the moment looks like being the triple-header. So we need to speak to FOM but in FOM we have a fantastic partner who arranges all the logistics. They do a fantastic job so if they think it's achievable it must be achievable because they've never failed us yet. And as far as the financial aspect, it's give and take really. It opens up more doors. We probably will spend a bit more on logistics but we're going to get to see people in Russia, go back to Austria, we're going to go to Mexico and it opens up a lot more doors for sponsors, drivers, team members.

Massimo, is that the major concern for you? The triple-header?

MR: To be honest I'm still hoping we come back to the 20 races as per the current sporting regulation. We will see. At the moment the calendar is not the best calendar possible in terms of logistics. So, even the first race in Australia, alone, is not ideal. From the logistics side I would prefer to stop and do a race in a back-to-back coming back from Australia. For sure there are some good commercial reasons behind this that I am not aware of but we will see. When the calendar is 100 per cent fixed we will manage it.

Dickie?

DS: Yeah, the triple-header is looking a bit interesting! But I'm sure we'll find a way around it. We always do.

Beat?

BZ: For us the biggest headache is definitely personnel because we as a small team, we have to cover all races, tests and even demo events with the same number of people, the same crew. The more events you have, obviously the more difficult it gets. Then the triple-header... I think we would have to start packing up on Saturday in Monaco to make it to Jersey.

Andy?

AS: The schedule looks very interesting and certainly challenging. As I said earlier, we like new venues and enjoy the challenge. For our team certainly the thing that we are going to find very difficult is the in-season testing. The four in-season tests are going to stretch us and that's something we're not looking forward to.

Graham?

GW: I agree with Andy. It's the in-season testing that's probably going to push us to the edge. We had the meeting yesterday with the other teams and discussed the venues we were potentially going to go to. We started putting that down on a calendar and it started to look quite a daunting task. Obviously again we'll have to manage the personnel as best we can to achieve that. I think like all regulation or rule changes that happen in Formula One, we all start off thinking 'how are we going

to do that?' and year in, year out we seem to achieve it: get to the end of the year, look back, think 'OK' and move on to the next year.

Q: (Alan Baldwin – Reuters) I want to ask about the triple-header but more for specific detail. Monaco is a race where cars get smashed about quite a bit and you have to get them, in theory, to New Jersey within a matter of days. Could you give more details about the complications of that and also how you plan for a triple-header when one of the races may not happen?

AS: We haven't focussed on it too much just yet. It was only announced last week to the teams, or to the public in general, and we'll wait until the calendar has been ratified before we put any resource into understanding exactly how we will deal with it. As always in Formula One, if a challenge is put before us, we will make it work. So, we'll wait until it has been ratified.

Beat?

BZ: Technically, it will be very difficult to have a back-to-back from Monaco to Jersey, because normally the freight will leave for Canada, let's say, on the Saturday before the race. And so that's why, if you're only able to send your freight on a Monday or a Tuesday, it compromises your weekend quite a bit.

Graham, how does it affect a smaller team, something like that?

GW: It's probably not dissimilar to everybody else. They've still got to pack their pallets and pack their cars up and move their personnel around the world. So, it's probably slightly more challenging but we're all in the same boat. I think we all carry pretty similar freight weight and sea-freight and so forth. But it is difficult when the calendar's not 100 per cent fixed and you're trying to pre-empt what's going to happen – but the Monaco to New York does look particularly challenging...

MR: I can say that even for a top team it's something almost impossible, to be honest, to be done. But as I said, we will see the real calendar and then we figure it out.

It could be said it's even more difficult for a top team as you have more equipment.

MR: At the end, as I said, we have more freight. It's not that a top team has such a big advantage having such a back-to-back. It's going to be almost impossible to do it.

Q: (Frederic Ferret – L'Equipe) Dickie, you knew of the good old days when Williams were winning; how different is the mood in the team nowadays and as an old pillar of the team, how can you help and motivate all the team to bring Williams back to the top?

DS: That's a difficult one! Yes, I've seen the winning days and the current days. To motivate people – as the guys were saying earlier on – you look after them, you try and do your best for them. You're still trying as hard as anybody up and down the pit lane so you just have to try and keep the guys motivated by any means possible. They're all there, they want to win. I think everybody in the pit lane is there for that reason.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – RacingLines) Gentlemen, under the old Concorde Agreement you were obviously members of the Sporting Working Group which has now been replaced by the Sporting Working Committee, which is

more a discussion forum rather than one that can actually take decisions for forwarding up to the Formula One Commission. Does this change or in any way jeopardise or prejudice the decision-taking process from the sporting regulation point of view?

MR: I think that so far, as a group, we won't change our approach, so if we have a guideline from our team principal or the strategy group it doesn't matter, we will have the guideline. With the guideline we have we will try to sort out the best rule wording or the best rule to apply in certain conditions. I don't think it really changes (anything) too much but at the end, it's just the fact that you have to be co-ordinated even better with your team principal so it's part of the normal job, I would say.

RM: So far we haven't seen any difference since we haven't had the Sporting Working Group since the Concorde Agreement was signed between the FIA and FOM. So maybe ask the same question in two or three months time and see if anything's changed but so far, this year, we've been operating as previous years.

Q: How often do you actually meet?

MR: Six (times) per year, roughly.

Q: (Stuart Codling – F1 Racing) Gentlemen, I'm led to believe that it was the sporting directors who ultimately vetoed the putative Pirelli test in America. I was wondering if you could clarify what the difference is between Ferrari testing a 2011 car in Barcelona three weeks before the Spanish Grand Prix and McLaren testing a 2011 car in Austin, three weeks before the US GP? Maybe Andy you could take this as we understand that Force India rounded up the posse?

AS: I would like to take it on, yeah. We had absolutely nothing to do with it. I believe it was an FIA decision. The first I knew that it wasn't going to happen was when McLaren told us that the FIA had notified them that they weren't happy with the test.

RM: We read about this morning in *Autosport*. There was no discussion yesterday at our meeting.

BZ: I think the difference was that we didn't know about the Ferrari test. At the time.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – RacingLines) The two responses that I had about my question came from teams whose principals are actually on the Strategy Working Group whereas the others are now excluded entirely from that input because their team principals are not on the Strategy Group. So how do you people in the back row, for example, feel about it?

GW: I can only vouch for what I've seen so far which is that we still have our meetings that we've been having for the last few years in the same format. We proposed a question to Charlie (Whiting) individually about where we stand going forward and he's very adamant that our meeting will continue in the same vein, helping to structure the sporting regulations going forward into 2014/2015. Most of the rules that are in for next year have been decided through the same group. Obviously, as Ron said, we'll give it three months and see what happens but at the moment, it's continuing as it was. Yeah, clearly we don't have the voice at the strategy table but we'll hopefully get people to use common sense in the right direction.

BZ: Well of course we're still meeting on a regular basis and we have a voice and sometimes we have to maybe raise our voices and to speak up, not that one side of the paddock is going to sleep. We, as a group, have to work out proposals which will be accepted or not by the Strategy Group.

AS: I think for me it has changed quite a bit and certainly from our point of view, since the Monaco agreement was signed, things have been very different this year

and I think carrying on into next year it's going to be the same. I don't think the process is as good as it used to be and certainly for the smaller teams, we don't have as much say as we used to.

BZ: But the problem there obviously is that in the absence of a Concorde Agreement we have a simple majority vote at the moment and so it's not what it used to be with the 70 percent majority or unanimity.

Q: (Chris Lyons – AP) Ron, you said there was a meeting yesterday regarding in-season testing. Are there any changes you can update us on? What details can you give us on that?

RM: We did schedule some dates for next season for in-season testing but we need to speak to Charlie Whiting first to get clarification that he's happy so I think we'll let Charlie announce them.

Q: (Kate Walker – GP Week) I wanted to get back to the sexy subject of logistics and finance and in-season testing because I've been told that it's going to cost about an extra ten million a year on the team's budget but also you've got the problem of rebuilding a car post-race, doing the test and then rebuilding it to send it off to the next race. To what extent is that actually going to be possible, especially for those teams with smaller budgets who are finding it a bit hard at the moment?

DS: Actually rebuilding the car after a race or test actually doesn't make any difference. We tend to do that now between the double-header races so it's not going to make that much difference. On a flyaway, after the race, you strip the car down, you rebuild it on Sunday night before you pack it up to go to the next race. In Europe, you'll strip it down, rebuild it completely and then send it to the next race. On costings of the extra races, we don't know yet. We haven't costed anything out. The calendar's only been out for a week and so we haven't got that far.

MR: Well, I wouldn't employ the guy that told you ten millions more for a few tests. To be honest, I don't think it's going to be like that. To be honest, I think it's going to be more efficient, in general, for testing, but obviously if you have more flyaway races, that would cost (more) because of the freight costs but that's not a huge difference.

RM: It's obviously going to cost more than this year because we didn't have any in-season testing, we just had filming days but I think you're going to have a bigger bang for your buck, you're not going to be driving to some airfield in north Yorkshire, hoping it's not raining. You're going to be going to Barcelona and doing 500 kilometers of useful testing.

AS: We think there is going to be quite a large cost implication, especially in the way that we run our team and with the resources we have available to us now, it won't be possible for us to attend the four tests as planned. We have brought to the table other options, cheaper options that wouldn't give us an advantage but they couldn't be agreed so we're either left with the choice of attending the test or not attending the test. We've put calculations together that we would estimate around eight million for us to attend the four tests.

BZ: I think the difference is the different points of view. Obviously the eight in-season test days are replacing four straightline tests or aero tests, three young drivers and six out of the eight PR days but we, as a small team, we've hardly done any straightline tests – we have a fantastic 1:1 wind tunnel which is as good as a straightline test. We've done the three days young driver test and every year we've done one PR day to get rights-free footage. Obviously if you do eight PR days and possibly straightline tests it's going to be more expensive and for us it's definitely – I

wouldn't say a killer but it's going to be much more expensive than we were used to over the last three years.

Q: (Alan Baldwin – Reuters) Just for a matter of interest, on the calendar – and I suspect I probably know the answer already – but does Mr Ecclestone consult you guys on the calendar for your input on logistics or does it just come out of the blue as a *fait accompli* and you have to deal with it?

DS: No, he doesn't consult us. Whether he consults team principals I don't know, we wait until we see the calendar before we know what's going on.

MR: No, we are not involved in that.

Q: (Ted Kravitz – Sky Sports) Just back to the pre-season testing for next year, the second and third tests will be in Bahrain. What concerns, if any, do you have on both the working conditions – a lot of guys having to work all day in very hot conditions – and on general safety and security?

BZ: We're here to organise events and to organise them as well as possible but whether we should go there or not is political and I am not here to do politics.

MR: I think we should get a little bit of mileage on our new engine so Bahrain is a venue where you normally have good weather so that was the priority. The priority was to go to the Middle East; to chose Abu Dhabi or Bahrain was not a matter for us.

AS: Again, the same as Beat. I don't think we're here to comment on the politics, but as far as the test venue and for pre-season testing with the new power units, I really couldn't think of a better place to go. The temperatures aren't going to be that hot, we're probably going to expect 22/23 degrees at that time of the year, and it's actually a very good way of bringing the crews up to the speed, ready for a hard season so I think that the dates that are scheduled are pretty good.

Ends