



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

## Press Information

### 2013 Korean Grand Prix Sunday Press Conference Transcript

06.10.2013

#### DRIVERS

1 – Sebastian VETTEL (Red Bull Racing)

2 – Kimi RÄIKKÖNEN (Lotus)

3 – Romain Grosjean (Lotus)

#### Podium Interview (conducted by Johnny Herbert)

**Q: Sebastian, tell us how that race went for you. You had to deal with two pace cars at the same time during that race. How was it for you?**

**Sebastian VETTEL:** Yeah! Not great getting stuck behind the safety car. Obviously we had a little bit of a gap. Extremely happy with the result, great job by the team, we had two very good stops. I think it was quite good to have the safety car coming out the first time, we were just a couple of corners before the pit entry. And then fortunately we had enough pace to always open up a little bit of a gap even though I think Kimi and Romain, to be fair, were pretty competitive the longer the stint was. So I think they did maybe a better job with their tyres, looking after their tyres. But, all in all, yeah, fantastic. I'm just loving what I do. The team is fantastic, I think we all have a good time and just enjoy the moment really.

**Q: Kimi, finishing second, well done buddy. You had to start a little bit further back in ninth place. How was the drive to get yourself back into a chance of getting on the podium?**

**Kimi RÄIKKÖNEN:** It was OK. I mean from the beginning I lost I think one place on the first lap, no, on the first straight, but then there was an accident so get it back. The car was just understeering too much, the whole weekend, even today, so I have to try to look after the front tyre and that was really the limitation on how much I could push and obviously we were stuck behind the traffic after the pitstops and then we decided to stop earlier and it was a good move and obviously the safety car helped a little bit but we had the speed and we could run until the end. So even without the safety car we could have maybe run until the end and still have a podium position. So it was good – but not ideal.

**Q: Tell us about the pass on Romain going into Turn One. It looked rather close.**

**KR:** I think he moved a few times on the left. I got a good run, he made a mistake in I think the second-last corner and I got the good run and I heard that there will be yellow flags at the end of the straight so I knew he's not going to pass me back with the DRS because it's

not open with the yellow flags. So I thought I would try to overtake and it was not too difficult.

**Q: Romain, well done, you did such a cracking drive. Obviously getting yourself into second place, that lovely fight. Tell us the story of the fight with Lewis to start with.**

**Romain GROSJEAN:** Well I think it was pretty good fun. We had a good start, good run for the back straight and then could go for the place with Lewis. Then I think he kept a little bit of KERS to go for Turn Five and I had to defend a little bit but it was pretty good at the start and then after the first pitstop again, same story, so yeah, it was a hard job. And then it was good to be very close to the Red Bull. They didn't go too far away so I think we had a good chance to catch them back but unfortunately for me – and luckily for Kimi, that's good for the team – the safety car came and we had to pit at the same time and the same tyre age. I think we wanted to get a little bit of an advantage. Then I made a small mistake, my fault and Kimi could pass me – and then yellow flags at Turn Four, Turn Three and I couldn't use the DRS. Tried to push hard at the end, good to be back on the podium, good for the team and happy to be here.

**Q: Seb, one thing we kept hearing about was a little bit of concern about the right-front tyre. What was the issue there?**

**SV:** This track, it's known that the limit is the front-right. We saw it the previous years, and basically it's good to have the team on the radio warning you – because obviously you see what's going on, the tyre grains immediately and then kind of stabilises. But when it stops graining basically there's nothing left and that's quite dangerous because it's quite likely to have a big lock-up. You have a flat spot, which could end with pitting the stint earlier than you want or having a tyre puncture. So yeah, they were quite worried, similar to last year. I thought I had it more or less in control but obviously it's good to communicate.

**Q: And what about leaving here, we've got Japan coming up. Looking forward to that? Is that a place you enjoy? By the look on your face yes.**

**SV:** I think it's the best track in the world, to be honest. The fans are crazy – completely crazy in a positive way so really looking forward to Japan. I think all of us who get massive support there, big fans of motorsport, passionate about Formula One and I think they enjoy the whole weekend, so I'm very much looking forward to one of the highlights during the season.

## **PRESS CONFERENCE**

**Q: Sebastian, how important was it right at the start of the race to get that cushion?**

**SV:** Yeah, it's always tricky here because the way to the first corner is quite short but then you have two big straight lines. To be the first car is the worse because you have no tow. I had a good start and could focus on the first corner. I had a very good exit and was able to get a couple of metres between myself and Lewis and then I think Lewis was in more trouble with Romain from behind into Turn Three and I obviously benefit from that and had a little bit of cushion and again for the next straight and then kept the lead – which I think was crucial. After that I tried to build a gap and keep it quite consistent. I knew that on the soft tyres it will be tricky and yeah, obviously with the safety car later on it got quite busy.

**Q: And did you expect to do only around 11 laps on the soft tyre right at the start?**

**SV:** Well, to be honest I think we came in last. I think we reacted to the other people behind. I think Lewis pitted lap nine, Romain lap 10. In that regard we had to react because

obviously a ten, twelve lap-old supersoft tyre is slower than a new Prime, so we were responding to them. I think we could have stayed out another two or three laps but yeah, it didn't really hurt our strategy. I think we estimated more or less to pit around that time.

**Q: And given what was going to happen, with that last safety car, when you came in for a stop did you have new Primes and how hard were you pushing after that?**

**SV:** The safety car came in. Fortunately we were... I think I was turning into Turn 15 and I saw the safety car coming out so we pitted immediately. So did Romain. I think Lewis... Kimi pitted a couple of laps before that so his tyres were a little bit older but obviously took quite a long time before the safety car came back in and then there was another safety. So I think in terms of tyre age it was no problem. Obviously the cars get lighter towards the end, so fortunately we didn't have to challenge the absolute maximum out of the tyres because I think the Lotuses were probably a little bit better in terms of endurance. Yeah. So, I think the speed was there and in the end obviously I tried to build up a little bit of a gap to Kimi and keep it quite consistent.

**Q: Kimi, eighth in the early stages, could you imagine being second at the end?**

**KR:** We have done that before, so obviously... it's not ideal to start so behind and not having maybe the best weekend. Bit similar to the last race really but the car was a bit better in the race. Still not ideal, a little bit too much understeer and I lost one place or two places at the start and then got them back in corner three. And then I was able to pass people and then sat behind them again after the pitstop. I had more speed but I couldn't get past and then we decided to stop a bit earlier and when the safety car came for whatever it was, five laps or something, obviously it helped a little bit for us to close the gap in the front but we managed to pass all the cars apart from these two guys already, before the safety car. So it maybe helped a bit in the end because my front tyre was in quite a bad way, it kind of ran out of the rubber in the end. So I couldn't go much longer any more – but obviously that's the part of racing. Sometimes it helps you a bit.

**Q: I'm sure you were pushing hard right at the end but just nothing you could do about Sebastian?**

**KR:** No, I mean. Let's put it this way: even if we would have started behind him, we still don't have the speed of him. Not far off from him in the race with a little bit from all the tyres but I mean it's so difficult to overtake if you're not massively faster. So, I think that was pretty OK what we did today.

**Q: And a pretty good result for the team.**

**KR:** Yeah. I think that's the more important. For them to get their... not the maximum points but not far off. I think we scored quite a bit more than the guys in front of us in the championship so it's good for them.

**Q: Romain, that chase in the early stages, were you absolutely on the limit there when you were trying to catch him?**

**RG:** No, I think we played it pretty well. It was a good first lap and a good exit of the first pitstop fighting with Lewis who was very quick on two, three laps but I think then he had an issue with his tyres. I looked at the board at one stage and think from one lap to another one, I had the feeling he lost 0.8 seconds to me. And it seems that every time there will be a battle with Seb, there's a safety car coming. Same as Germany unfortunately. We had the plan to pit quite early, just a few laps after the safety car came, trying to jump him and go for a very long last stint – but it didn't work because of the safety car. But basically the car

was very good. I mean at one stage we thought that we will switch to three stops because the front was going away – so I pushed a bit harder and then the team told me, “can you try to make it to two?” So I backed off a little bit but the car came back even better and I was looking consistently quick and so on. And then I think bad luck for me, a safety car came. I did a small mistake on the restart, Kimi could go into Turn One. I was going to use the DRS to get the place back and again, bad luck, Turn Three was yellow. It is what it is. It’s my fault, I went a bit wide in Turn 15, not the end of the world I think. What is good is that Seb has not been flying away today. We were always within four seconds of him and looking pretty well on the long stint. It’s not a track that is favouring us with the front-limitation. We all suffer with front-right tyre graining and that was the problem, the main problem. We know we take care more of our rear tyres. So, it’s good to be back on the podium, good to score a lot of points for Lotus and let’s go to Japan which is the most beautiful track of the world.

**Q: We were talking about your confidence earlier on in the weekend. I guess it’s been given a boost. What’s it going to be like in Suzuka.**

**RG:** Hopefully we go for P1! I don’t know. I think it was good to have a good start, to be able to fight at the front and it’s good to have a strong qualifying, a strong race. I don’t need any luck to be there. It just goes how it goes and it’s looking pretty good. The car is suiting me more and more and I think we can still learn a little bit but there we are.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Ian Parks – Press Association) Seb, at the start of the second safety car period, were you aware that between turns one and two the car ahead of you was not the official safety car? Did you have any thoughts about it at all? Was there anything on the team radio, did they say anything, because Bernd Maylander was actually at the back of the field?**

**SV:** I saw... I think it was a BMW or... no sorry, it looked like a BMW. I think it was a Hyundai or Kia SUV. You want the number plate? It was not Bernd Maylander’s, so it was not the safety car. I saw that. Obviously then the team said ‘yellow flag’, it wasn’t quite clear that it was the safety car but then the safety car board was flashing and I lifted and obviously saw that there was another car on the track, took quite easy to make sure I got past. I didn’t know what the incident was until I saw the smoke and so on. Obviously they said there was a crash. So I knew it was not the safety car.

**Q: (Ian Parks – Press Association) You now have a 77 point lead in the championship – I don’t know if you’re aware – but you can now win the title in Japan next week. What does it mean to you now to be standing on the brink of that fourth successive world title?**

**SV:** Yeah. I’m trying not to think about it to be honest. I’m trying to focus more on the present I think we obviously had the incredible chance, I think two years ago, to do so. We did it but I think there are still a lot of points to get, even though it looks very good for us. There’s still a chance for Fernando, I think, so we have to stay on top of our game but to be honest, I think I said on the podium, we’re just having a good time. We enjoy the fact that the team is working very well. The car is working... it’s on the edge to be honest, more so than you would probably think from the outside but it’s obviously nice when you get the results like Singapore or this weekend. To be honest with you, I don’t really care. I look forward to Japan because it’s one of the nicest tracks of the whole season.

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – O Estado de Sao Paulo) Romain, can you describe to us the conversation with the team when you were in the situation to fight with Kimi? We could hear some parts of the conversation but not all of it.**

**RG:** Our radio is quite bad, I have to say. I don't hear most of the conversations either. I just made a mistake, Kimi could go for it and the unfortunately there was a yellow flag at turn three so I couldn't get my place back. I was quicker today but then we have rules not to fight. It's a track where it is most impossible to overtake even though there are long straights. I mean in sector two and three there is so much issue with the front tyres so you cannot get close enough and then lose a lot of downforce, lose a lot of lap time. I should have avoided that astroturf in turn 15 and it would have been the end of the conversation.

**Q: (Abhishek Takle – Midday) Sebastian, you spoke earlier on the podium about this circuit being a little bit difficult on the front right tyre and we heard radio transmission from Rocky(race engineer Guillaume Rocquelin) saying 'it's opening up, take it easy' but then you set the fastest lap. Was it perhaps more of a concern on the pit wall than in the cockpit?**

**SV:** No, I think they obviously have a lot of data that they go through and they could obviously follow pretty well what was happening on the track. Obviously I have my eye on the front right, it's quite easy to see. It's more tricky with the rear tyres in the mirrors, but we know that this track is pretty monster for the front tyres, especially front right, also from previous years. And then obviously – Romain described it pretty well – once the tyre does come back, inside the cockpit at least you have the feeling that the car is alive again, the car is alive but actually the tyre is dead, there is no more rubber to grain so the tyre is more or less worn, so it's quite tricky, because if you have a big lock-up, that could mean that it's the end of the race. You have to come into the pits because you have a massive flat spot so I was aware but I could see that there was still a lot of rubber left and that the tyre was still graining. I think I was aware of the risk but it was still OK.

**Q: (Frederic Ferret – L'Equipe) To Romain and Sebastian, do you think the Lotus had the pace to beat the Red Bull today without the safety cars?**

**RG:** I don't know how much Sebastian left in his pocket. I figured it was pretty close after the... well, while I was close to him, I didn't want to close the gap too early, because you know that if follow a car by too much, we are all aware that the front tyre is the issue so you lose a lot of downforce from the fronts so you grain even more. So every time he was a little bit ahead I was giving a gap and then following the gap and I was surprised how our pace at one stage... I thought the front tyres were going away but I was surprised our lap time was still improving, so I was catching a little bit back and I think the last stints would have been pretty epic without the safety car, because that was basically the longest one on the tyres and we were going right to the end of their life so that could have been either the gamble to go for the lead... maybe both of us... I don't know if we would have reacted but it would have been close and no more rubber on the tyres.

**SV:** Yeah, I think it would have been close. You never know whether the safety car helps you or not. I think Lotus probably had more range today. I think we had a little bit more pace initially but I think Romain could have afforded for the last stint to pit a little bit earlier than us. Maybe we could not react to that immediately because we know that it will be tight for our range, so I think it would have been close without the safety car, but in the end, I think Kimi was obviously quite consistent, doing lap times around 1m 42.0s and we just had two or three tenths in hand. Maybe at the very end, a little bit more. I think he was also controlling the gap to Romain behind but as I said, maybe in terms of raw pace we were a little bit quicker, but in terms of range, the Lotus was again very strong.

**Q: (Trent Price – Richland F1) Question for both Lotus drivers: you said after the first initial graining phase that the times were improving but that safety car... was there anything on your Friday data to suggest that you might have actually made it to the end, without the safety car?**

**KR:** We would probably have tried it, or looked at some point at how the tyres... without the safety car we gained a lot of time and lap places if we'd stopped earlier in the last pit stops, so who knows? In the end we didn't stop again now. You can always say that if but it makes no difference. You have to react and do what you think is the right thing and sometimes certain things help you. My front tyre was pretty done in the end but we finished the race in a pretty good position. We would probably try to run until then anyhow.

**RG:** Well, I think we hold the long runs on Friday to see how it goes and we choose which tyre we preferred. I think everybody did, it was the medium tyres and now we know after one stage it would balance the car a little bit. The question is how much to push at the beginning because the first few laps are the most critical from the front tyres. Yeah, it more or less looked as it was on the plan and then once you fit the prime tyres and you do your second stint, you know how much you can extend the last one and they can try to calculate the degradation and so on to give you the best chance to have the longest stint possible.

**Q: (Luigi Perna – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Kimi, you had some action moments in this race, coming from the back, first with Fernando Alonso, then with Romain. From the start of the race to the finish of the race, can you describe it and did you enjoy it?**

**KR:** Yeah, it was nice, I think we had pretty OK speed and then we made the most of it after yesterday. The car still wasn't ideal today but we managed to be a bit faster on used tyres than some others. At the beginning I managed to overtake a few cars and then I got stuck on the second... after the pit stop I got stuck with the same cars again and then decided to stop earlier. I was pretty OK after the restart. Romain made a mistake and I managed to pass him and just didn't have enough speed at the end and not enough tyres were left compared to them, because they stopped later. It was good fun but I would rather start in the front and finish in the front. It would have made our life a bit easier.

**Q: (Abhishek Takle – Midday) Sebastian, the three world titles you've won so far have all come at different circuits. At which circuit would it be the most special for you to win your fourth World Championship?**

**SV:** To be honest, I don't think it really matters. I think it's an exceptional situation anyway. Even though it looks very good, it's still not over so we shouldn't feel too comfortable. Which track? It's not really important. Sure, there are a couple of tracks that probably mean a little bit more to the drivers than others. I think generally there's no track on the calendar that I dislike but there are a couple of highlights. I think I mentioned on the podium next week, Japan, is one of the highlights in the year, but regarding the championship I think our target is to win the championship and not to win it in one place in particular.

Ends