



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

## Press Information

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

12.10.2013

#### DRIVERS

1 – Mark WEBBER (Red Bull Racing)

2 – Sebastian VETTEL (Red Bull Racing)

3 – Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes)

#### TV UNILATERAL

**Mark, congratulations. It's been a long time this pole position this year. It's your first time fastest in a qualifying session.**

**Mark WEBBER:** Yeah, it's a great track. We all enjoy driving here. The laps weren't too bad to be honest. You always want a little bit more here and there but in general it was pretty good. Sebastian had a problem in qualifying, so a little bit of a hollow pole position if you like, because he still did a phenomenal lap, but I'm happy to be on pole. You've got to grab the opportunities when you can and still put the laps in. Bit of a mixed session, people were throwing options and primes all over the joint in Q2; people were on scrubbed and unscrubbed. So it was a bit of a mixed session in terms of trying to predict who was showing their hand. But in the end we did the laps when it counted and that's what was important. Very, very nice farewell for me to have pole here on my last attempt at Suzuka on a really phenomenal circuit. I'll never forget the first sector today. That's what us guys strive for and yeah, our profession is all about that so it was a real highlight for a lot of us out there today.

**You said yesterday you needed to find performance. You obviously found that performance. How did that come?**

**MW:** To be honest we needed to check the car this morning with the different wind conditions. That's important. I think you'll see everyone today went a lot quicker. So we were factoring that in. The circuit had changed a lot. Also, it's a very strange circuit, it's a very out and back track, it's a very narrow circuit, a lot of kilometres but in a small gully, so obviously that was something we have to take in mind in terms of our preparation today for the wind. I think we did what we could. We've still got some quick cars around but in general we've got a good car for the race. Head down tomorrow.

**Well done. Sebastian how much do you think losing that time this morning hurt you?**

**Sebastian VETTEL:** Well obviously we had a problem this morning but I don't think that made a difference in terms of finding the rhythm, I think we've done plenty of laps around this track. First of all, congratulations to Mark, I think he did a very good lap. We did have

an issue in qualifying but I'm not a big fan of 'without this, with this, if this'. It's always unknown. As a fact, we are P2. So, happy, obviously, with the result. Front row for the team, which is great. The car was phenomenal today, as Mark touched on. The first sector – I think you realise afterwards that the car was fantastic through there and you don't get many days like that, where the car feels great and you can really push it to the limit. Enjoyed qualifying and happy with second place.

**In fact, in the two laps you did in Q3 it looked as if you just went a little bit wide out of Spoon on one lap and I'm not certain what happened in the middle sector on the final lap.**

**SV:** Nothing. I kept it on the track. Obviously I tried hard on the first attempt, a little bit too hard. Tried hard on the second attempt but managed to stay on track. Obviously you gain a little bit before you go off track in the first attempt and then you lose down the straight and obviously the second time around I was a bit more conservative but gained down the straight, so overall it was a net gain. But, yeah, I think we were all pushing to the limit today, as Mark touched on. Again, with the wind it was tricky, some gusts here and there but in the end we are pushing and mistakes happen.

**Q: Lewis, I don't know how happy you are with third place. You've been a major challenger all weekend.**

**Lewis HAMILTON:** Yeah. No. I'm really happy. I think the team did a great job so far this weekend and realistically it was difficult, or almost impossible, to finish ahead of these guys. They've had a much better package generally for a long, long time but I think we've come a long way and to be as close as we are, I think is a huge compliment to the team. The car was feeling good. My car felt awesome so I can't imagine how it felt for them – and congratulations to Mark. I'm looking forward to racing them tomorrow.

**Q: What's going to be the major factor tomorrow? A lot of people talking about tyre management and making sure you don't lock-up – that it's too easy to lock-up at this circuit.**

**LH:** Well, there are not many big braking zones but locking is always an issue. Degradation is going to be really the key tomorrow. I hope we can get a good start, being on the cleaner side and be able to at least put up a little bit of a fight for these guys, don't let them walk away with it too easily.

## **PRESS CONFERENCE**

**Q: Mark, it's usually you who makes a really good start away from the press conference but the important thing is can you make a good start away tomorrow?**

**MW:** Yeah! Haven't been too bad of late, I don't think. We're doing the prep we can, the clutch is in good shape and we should be able to get away well and head down after that for a good race.

**Q: Who's going to be the major threat do you think tomorrow?**

**MW:** At the front of the grid in the grand prix there's no-one ahead of you so it always has to come from behind if there's a chance, so I'll focus on myself and try and get some gaps if I can. Obviously Seb, Lewis, Lotus as well in the race. Who knows? You've just got to be mindful of the fact of tyre management, get the strategy right, execute a clean grand prix from driver, pitstops, everything together. It's got to work. We're more than capable of that. Obviously a super-experienced team, we know what we've got to do tomorrow. Looking forward to it.

**Q: Sebastian. What was the problem this morning? What actually caused you to lose so much time this morning?**

**SV:** We decided to change the batteries on the car because we had an issue with KERS. Unfortunately we had the same problem in qualifying – so I think we have a little bit more time after qualifying now to have a look and see whether there's something else broken or damaged. The whole team was pushing very hard. Obviously my car crew but also Mark's car crew helped out to fix the car in time and get it out for qualifying – so we tried everything. It worked sometimes and as I said I'm sure we'll find the problem tonight and hopefully it works tomorrow.

**Q: Lewis, Were there big changes in conditions today, what with the wind? And also drivers were reporting more grip as well.**

**LH:** Yeah. The wind direction changed, I think 180°, so you had a tail wind down into Turn One but then massive headwind going through the Esses, so it changed the characteristics of the circuit massively. I guess every car will have gained a lot more downforce, so it got a lot quicker today.

**Q: And how much has that changed for the race itself?**

**LH:** I believe... I was told it's going to be like FP3. I think it was a little windier this afternoon, potentially. Hopefully it should be the same tomorrow.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Frederic Ferret – L'Equipe) Mark, did you put the black cat on Seb's car and do you think that this is the end of your bad luck curse this year?**

**MW:** You just have to look forward. It's tough enough as it is to see the results that you lose, the amount of points that we've lost, there's a lot of things which are out of my hands which you can get frustrated by but at the end of the day you have to look forward because it takes energy if you look back, so looking forward. Yeah, we have a great opportunity tomorrow. When I started up the last lap, when I came out of the last chicane and I thought it's my last lap in a Formula One car here at Suzuka – come on, let's really enjoy it but also put the car on the limit. I did my best. I enjoyed today; tomorrow will be the same mentality. It's a beautiful circuit in a Formula One car, the tyres are finishing the lap which is also brilliant for us to push for most of the lap so in general it's a nice day, and as you say, let's hope it continues for another 24 hours and in India and so on and so on, to finish off as nicely as we can.

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – O Estado de Sao Paulo) Mark, there's no way not to ask this question: your teammate needs a victory to maybe – maybe – become World Champion. Here you are in front of him on a difficult circuit to overtake. Would you consider to work for the team?**

**MW:** I think it's such a long year. Seb's had a phenomenal year. He will do his race tomorrow, I will do my race. It's not like it's the last race of the championship, obviously, in terms of what can unfold or whatever. Sebastian has a big points lead because of the work that he's put in up to now. He can't qualify on pole for every race. Tomorrow is a new day and let's see how it's looking at the end of the race. Normally you talk about these things and they never happen but in general, yeah, we'll be there for ourselves tomorrow.

**Q: (Abhishek Takle – Midday) Mark, we saw some replays of you exiting the pits in front of a McLaren, Perez. Can you explain what happened? Were you aware... were you told he was on a flying lap?**

**MW:** He backed off so the engineers told me that he had finished his lap so we could pull in front of him because he was going to pit. If he was on a quick lap obviously I would have got out of the way.

**Q: (Trent Price – Richland F1) For all of you: we've seen a lot of drivers lose a lot of time in the chicane over the weekend; have you guys opted for a compromise set-up for that or is it just something in the characteristics of the cars?**

**MW:** The chicane is a normal compromise problem for this circuit. It's a very slow chicane, it's from a big speed in terms of braking, there's also a bit of rise in there if you want to use the kerbs, and things like that and then the traction is also very important. As usual, with every Grand Prix track we go to we try to compromise the car as best we can. We're aware there's a lot of lap time in the chicane but there's also a lot of lap time in the first sector so we do what we can. The driver sometimes has to fill the pockets in terms of those compromises.

**SV:** Sorry, what was the question again? I have the results here. Sorry. I think Mark has... I think you lose a little bit of the tyre towards the end but I'm sure that's what he said.

**LH:** Same.

**Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action and National Speedsport News). Mark, you said it's a bit of a hollow pole because Seb had problems but out of the 12 (poles) how does this rate? Is it still quite sweet because it's at this track?**

**MW:** Yeah, you're right Dan. You've got to take them when you can get them. It's not like they hand them out. It was still a big lap. I've had a few laps in qualifying where I've had to attempt to qualify as best as I can without all the weapons as well and today we had the weapons sharp and we did a pretty good job on a phenomenal circuit. When you drive here... this is the links golf course of the golf world or the big wave stuff for the surfers or whatever. For us, it's a really testing circuit. Unless anyone sees a Formula One car here live to see what happens in a sector, it's very hard for them to understand how quickly we go through there.

**Q: (Ian Parkes – Press Association) Seb and Mark: McLaren team principal Martin Whitmarsh has confirmed that Peter Prodromou has signed for the team, potentially for next season, certainly for 2015. Can you two guys give us an idea of what Peter has brought to Red Bull over the past few years, given the titles that you've won?**

**MW:** Peter's a great guy, obviously a huge amount of experience. Always enjoyed working with him. Obviously he's an integral part of the team and did good job, been there a long time. It's the first I'm aware of how formal you're talking about it but these things happen in Formula One. There's a lot of good guys moving around in teams. We're open to that and that can happen. If that's the case, I obviously wish him all the best. That's the small industry that we work in.

**SV:** I only heard of it just now. As Mark touched on, he's obviously been a very very strong character in the background responsible for a lot of good stuff that has happened to us over the last couple of years. Whether it's more than just a rumour or not I'm not sure. Independently, he's a very nice guy and whatever he decides to do, as Mark said, you wish him all the best. For sure I hope he stays with us but I don't know. I only just heard, when I got out of the car.

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – O Estado de Sao Paulo) Mark, you have been facing problems at the start of the race in many races and here, maybe, it's one of the most difficult because it's downhill. Do you have any special preparations for the start?**

**MW:** Do my best, mate. Fingers crossed and go from there. We've had a few good ones. Obviously some pretty average ones: Seb in Singapore, it was not the best for him but Lewis has had some good and some poor ones as well. At Nurburgring we went straight round the outside of him so it can happen but I love taking the challenge on and tomorrow we will face it and do what we can to get into turn one first and then the race starts from there.

Ends