



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

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DRIVERS – Charles PIC (Caterham), Max CHILTON (Marussia), Giedo VAN DER GARDE (Caterham), Jean-Eric VERGNE (Toro Rosso), Felipe MASSA (Ferrari), Mark WEBBER (Red Bull Racing)

PRESS CONFERENCE

I'll start with you Mark: 215th and final grand prix start this weekend. I know you've had time to come to terms with your retirement from Formula One but when you climb into that Red Bull for one last time, it's going to be emotional isn't it?

Mark WEBBER: I think on Sunday it will be a little bit different but it still feels like a normal race at the moment, so looking forward to Sunday in many ways, in terms of obviously pushing for a good result, but also I'm ready to stop and looking forward to the extended winter that I'll have and the new challenges around the corner. Getting out of the car Sunday there will be a few things that will be for the last obviously in terms of Formula One, but I'm pretty relaxed at the moment and looking forward to the race.

What do you think you might miss most of all?

MW: There are certain situations in Formula One that are super rewarding. Obviously driving the car on the limit at certain venues is still very satisfying, no question about it. You've got Suzuka, Spa, Monte Carlo, come qualifying day and even racing, at certain circuits it's very challenging and rewarding. So I'll miss some of that. But I'm on a little bit of a slippery slope now, in terms of... you've got to be careful not to test it too much in terms of performance and what you used to be able to do. I still think I'm driving well but I don't want to be around not driving well. So it's inevitable that you're going to miss certain parts, for sure the adrenaline and working with people like Adrian Newey. Stuff like that you don't get to do that often obviously. That'll be something I'll miss a bit. But there comes a time when you've got to let go and I'll still have good adrenaline next year obviously with Porsche and that'll be a good balance.

So many highs and lows from your association with Formula One. Which period have you enjoyed driving the least and which period have you enjoyed driving the most.

MW: I think the hardest and most difficult cars to drive were in the mid-2000s, when we had all the refueling and the tyre war. Those cars were tricky and you had to push every time you went out. There was no such thing as pacing at any point really, in qualifying, practice or Sunday afternoon. So it really was a tight envelope for a grand prix driver in those eras to operate but that's what we trained [for] and we aspire to do. They were good times. Obviously a lot of power too, the V10s had plenty of horsepower. So the lap times floating around then were pretty impressive, and in the early 2000s as well to a degree. We've had a lot of changes in the last three or four years. The racing has gone through some boring phases, so we've introduced some DRS, things like that, things that have

been of benefit to the sport. It's taken a little bit of the tradition out of it I suppose, some of the passing moves and things like that, which probably which are not as difficult to achieve as in years gone by. They are achievable now. That's a little bit fabricated but good for the neutral at home. Tyres – we've had some challenging times on those as drivers, and as teams, trying to understand particularly the new brand of heavily modified pace during races is probably not as rewarding as it was. But you can't always have it. I've driven in so many different regulations... one championship but with so many different scenarios but generally you just have to enjoy it, it's your job.

I'm sure you'll be greatly missed by everyone here in the paddock. Good luck for the future. For you, Felipe, it's the end of an era too. Your association with Ferrari, which begun in 2006, comes to an end and what a place for it to come to an end – your home race, at Interlagos.

Felipe MASSA: Yeah, definitely. It's a fantastic place to race and to finish an incredible time with Ferrari. It's a very long time. It's our eighth championship but I've been inside Ferrari even before Formula One, so it's a long time and I need to say thank you to all of them – everyone who worked together in Ferrari. Stefano as well. You know that he is a big friend and he did a lot for me as well, Domenicali. Everybody, everybody I worked with together. I hope we can enjoy the last race here in Ferrari and having a lot of fun and having a good result as well to have even more emotion at the end.

Do you pinch yourself when you think back that you spent eight years with Ferrari, the team that every boy racer dreams of racing for?

FM: Yeah, I mean I think Ferrari is a dream for all the drivers. I remember, one of the first go-karts I had was red. My first overall was red, so I was always supporting Ferrari as a kid. So racing eight years for Ferrari is definitely a dream come true. So, getting old as well! But also it's another re-start for my career. I'm really happy and looking forward to my future in Williams, a different team. So really, a lot to do still in Formula One.

Q: How important for your morale was it that Williams had the faith in you to extend your Formula One career, to take you on and try and restart a period of success that they'll be hoping for from next season? And also, how important is it for the sport that a Brazilian driver still stays in Formula One.

FM: First of all, I really believe I can do a lot with Williams. Everything is changing, brand new rules for the championship so I think it's also a good time that we start something new, different. You never know, you're doing a good job in a team that has also all the infrastructure to do – like Williams has – everything inside the company to do a good car. So everything is possible. They believe in me so I'm really happy and motivated to drive for them, to work and to do everything I can to help the team to be competitive again, which I'm sure everything is possible.

And how important for a Brazilian to stay in Formula One?

FM: It's very important. We know how important is Brazil in Formula One: the history for so many drivers, so many championships, so many victories. For Brazil, Formula One is very important. We have motor racing in the blood. So, it's very, very important to keep Brazilian drivers in Formula One, and also, we're not having a great time in Brazil for the small categories, so I think it's important to give a push and help for our future – because for the moment it doesn't look very nice. I'm trying to help and give some good ideas for the Federation to help and pushing for our future.

Jean-Eric, your second full season in Formula One. How difficult has this year been for you? Off the track when Mark announced he was retiring there was the hope of a Red Bull seat, tantalisingly close but it never ultimately came your way.

Jean-Eric VERGNE: It was a difficult season. I have to say that I've been quite unlucky in many races, not finishing when I should have been in the points. We had a really good car to start off the season with but then I guess with the introduction of the new tyres, everything went a little bit more difficult for us and, yeah, we were out of the points for a long time. It has been really tough. Obviously there was the Red Bull seat opportunity. They went for Daniel. It was, of course, a big disappointment for me as a racing driver. You want to win races, be one day a world champion and obviously it's the team to be in to do this, to succeed. But, you know, I try to look at the positive. I guess if Red Bull choose Daniel that means there are things I haven't done good. I have to look at myself in the mirror, try to understand the reasons and try to get better. The challenge with Toro Rosso next year will be massive. I'm really happy to stay in that team and everything is possible. Even staying in this team, it's not a back-up plan or whatever. I really believe in this team and I want to grow as a racing driver with this team that is growing a lot too.

Q: When you miss out on a big seat is it difficult to keep your head high, is it difficult to keep your morale and your focus.

J-EV: For a few races it has been difficult because I think I was doing really good races and I was on a good run from Monaco, Canada and Silverstone was going to be really good as well but obviously I had the big tyre explosion and then there was the call of Red Bull to put Daniel in the Red Bull for the young driver test and straight away I understood that this seat was not going to be for me even though I tried to do my best. And then there were a couple of really difficult races in terms of pace, everything, so it was quite difficult to manage it, I guess.

Q: Giedo and Max. Question for you both. We know where Mark's going to be next year, we know where Felipe and Jean-Eric are going to be – but you two, we're not sure at the moment. Max first, what can you tell us about the future?

Max CHILTON: I'm not going to speculate any more than people already have. We've had some good discussions over the last couple of weeks and I'm happy with those conversations, they've gone quite well so I'm just looking forward to hopefully being back next year and having a bit of a better chance.

Q: No doubt in your mind that ideally you would like to stay with Marussia.

MC: Yeah. Marussia have been great to me. They gave me the chance to get into Formula One and it's not easy for us where we are but this year I think we've done a pretty stunning job with what we've got. It's not over yet – we learnt that last year here with five laps to go – so we're kind of... we're fingers-crossed hoping that it can finish well but the car's looking strong for next year. When big rule changes tend to come into Formula One it gives the smaller teams a bit of a chance. So looking forward to Australia hopefully next year.

Q: Giedo, what does the future hold for you?

Giedo VAN DER GARDE: Well, I can tell you nothing yet. The management is very busy at the moment. Hopefully they can do a good job. I think I've proven myself during the last part of the season and I think I've been doing a very good job so hopefully I will be there next year.

Q: Is it easier to have those negotiations after a season of Formula One do you think – or is it easier to make more of an impression with your results from the junior categories, trying to get in for the first time?

GVDG: I think after a season it's better to negotiate – because then you've shown already what you can do. I think we've shown already this year what I did. Let's see.

Q: So, tell us about the battle this weekend. 13th place will be good enough to Caterham in the Constructors' Championship if there's no Marussia car ahead of them. At the moment Marussia have that tenth place and with it the financial benefits of tenth. How are both camps feeling? Let's start with Max first. It's a massive weekend for both teams.

MC: Yeah, for sure. We know how important this weekend is, coming into it. The worst thing is to start panicking because you start not concentrating on the right things. The best thing to do is treat it like a normal race weekend and try to get the most out of the car. If we can do that, and we can race well, then there's nothing that we can be sad about because we gave it the best shot we can. We've done that every race this year and it's worked. But with the weather in Brazil it's never over until that chequered flag.

Q: Does that mean then, Giedo, that Caterham are praying for rain?

GVDG: Absolutely! Because by pure speed it's going to be tough in dry conditions and we need some luck. We need some other cars maybe to have a collision or maybe to have a mechanical failure – but rain will help a lot. And our car seems to work quite well in the rain. And also our car is quite competitive here also in the dry. We have to give it a big push, the last chance, and hopefully we can do the same as last year.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Flavio Vanetti – Corriere della Sera) Felipe, which was your happiest moment at Ferrari and which was the toughest one? Can we say the toughest one was after losing the championship here, or the period after the accident in Budapest?

FM: I would say the happiest moment was, I think, the first time I won in Brazil, 2006, with the green and yellow overalls. I think that was definitely the best moment for me. You know how important it is for a Brazilian to win at home. If you remember well, Senna was more happy to win in Brazil than to win a championship so you can see how important it is for a Brazilian to win here. It was a very special moment, not just that time but even 2008 was a special moment. I won the race here, it was Sao Paulo, quickest lap. It was other championships, not here in Brazil, you know, before. I think the toughest moment was... definitely the accident was not a great moment and maybe the race in Hockenheim, 2010.

Q: (Marc Surer – Sky Germany) Mark, you must be very pleased next year that there are no standing starts any more for you. I hardly remember a perfect start from you. Can you explain us what is so difficult about starting a modern Formula One car?

MW: Austin was very good. Austin was a great start. Austin was a good start.

Q: Sadly the Frenchman behind you got a better start.

MW: That's right. I think that my reaction... first of all, we are not completely in a position like Ferrari with their clutches. We know they have a very very good start system so they're stronger than us on the initial...

FM: If you want we can change the downforce...

MW: So yeah, our initial starts, the initial part has not always been consistent and then I think my reaction to this inconsistency is not as good as it could be. So when you go for the second lever, when you go for the KERS, when you go for the slip control, especially on the Pirellis... with the Bridgestones, you could slip the tyre a little bit more and you get no penalty. With the Pirellis, you slip the tyre a little bit and you lose time so I think that... We've never seen Sebastian go through the row in front either. We're either holding position or losing and Seb has got the starts just OK because I think he can manage some of the problems but for me, it has not, particularly in the last few years. The Bridgestone years we were fine, 2010 was actually pretty good but in the last few years it has not been our strength and it has not been a strength of mine. But I enjoy the starts. I'm relaxed on the grid, I could sing a song to the guys, it's not something which... when the lights are on, it's a great part of the Grand Prix but of course, it's a part of the weekend that, if you look

at Austin, it's a big part of the weekend that needs to... Maybe I should have done 'bike racing because in 'bike racing you can overtake but in Formula One now, it's less easy to recover because in traffic with the tyres, blah blah blah it's a big part.

Q: Before we continue with our questions from our journalists here, I'm pleased to report that Charles Pic has managed to join us this morning. Thanks for coming along. We asked Max and we asked Giedo about their futures in Formula One; it would be wrong not to ask you about next season and how negotiations are going?

Charles PIC: Yeah, sorry, first, for the delay. I was doing the trackwalk because we had a mistake with the scheduled programme. For next year, I think the logical thing for me would be to stay at Caterham but it's not sure. I think there are still many seats available for next year so nothing is sure for the moment so we will see.

Q: How difficult is it for a driver and a driver as young as yourself to be thinking, 'do you know what, if it doesn't go right with the negotiations, that might be my time in Formula One and it might have come and gone so, so quickly?'

CP: Yeah but you say that every year, no? So, at the end, I don't think it's changing a lot. We try to be focused on the races we are on, so it's Brazil this weekend and give our best this weekend, try to get good results for the team and then we will see what happens for next year.

Q: Thirteenth or better on the track might help those negotiations along for this weekend and helping Caterham maybe to tenth in the Constructors' championship. Giedo was saying that the team is praying for rain. Do you believe that the shock result is possible, even without the rain?

CP: I don't know if it will help the negotiations but for sure it would help the team and it's the target so we will go for it and see.

Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action and National Speedsport News) Mark, would you like to send a message to Australia and a thank-you to the legions of Australian fans that have supported you ever since that first race with Minardi?

MW: Yeah, well obviously Formula One down there is not the easiest sport to follow, or wasn't particularly when I was growing up. It's always on in the middle of the night, there was no internet, blah blah blah. These days it's a little bit more easy to follow. Obviously we've been very very lucky to have an Australian Grand Prix since '85 in Adelaide and then at Melbourne, so that's a real tonic for our country to follow the best single-seater category in the world - obviously the pinnacle is Formula One so they are always happy to have the best drivers and the best teams in the world to come down there to compete in Australia and that's evident with one of the best organised events of the year. So, when they have an Australian racing, that's a super bonus and when they have an Australian challenging for good results, for them it's been a good period in the last few years so it's been phenomenal the amount of support that I've had from there, not always easy for them to understand the sport at times but they do what they can and they are very passionate behind their sporting people. I believe that I've competed in a way which they would be proud of and I just want to thank them, obviously, for all their amazing messages that I've had over the last few weeks and specially this week, it's been incredible. I look forward to spending a little bit more time down in Oz in the future, I haven't seen a huge amount of my country since I left there as a young lad so I'm looking forward to spending a bit more time down there, have a look around and I always represented and was proud to race for Australia throughout my career, so the Australian national anthem and the flag for me was very important because I always knew it was not often... there's only been three race winners so it's not exactly easy for us to compete at this level and get over to Europe. It's very special to race for Australia.

Q: (Patricia Sanchez – Motorpasion F1) Mark, already we ask you what are going to miss now you're leaving, is there something you're happy to leave behind, maybe us journalists?

MW: Well, I wouldn't be leaving if there wasn't things that I'm not happy to leave behind. Obviously if there's more positives than negatives then obviously I would stay, so there's more negatives than positives so for me, it's something that I want a fresh change, a new chapter in my life. Basically I'm ready for that, personally and professionally. Obviously the journos have to do their job, obviously I have a good relationship with quite a few of them, also the photographers for me have been very good for me over the years. Some of the snappers in the room here have been with me for my first test, for example in Estoril in 2001. You strike up good friendships with a lot of people, not just the drivers but other people. Obviously there's some shit magazines that have to do shit journalism and that's normal but in the end, you've got to deal with those as well but in general it's a good professional tennis match and that's how we always like to play it. The journos, I don't feel negative about the journos at all, they're doing their job but sometimes they test you of course.

Q: (Luigi Perna – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Felipe, considering all, do you think that Ferrari will miss you in future?

FM: I hope so. For sure, it's not part of my thinking. I've tried to do the best in my career so I really hope Ferrari can have a good future as well, so I have nothing really to complain about, to say. We have had a very good time together and I hope I can have a fantastic future in a different team and I hope it's the same for Ferrari. I have had zero frustration in my life and I think that's the way it is.

Q: (Ben Edwards – BBC Sport) Max, your thoughts going into this race, a chance of finishing every single Grand Prix of your rookie season, is that something you're already thinking about?

MC: Yeah, for sure it's something I'm proud of, a good achievement so far to finish 18 races. I think it's broken Tiago's (Monteiro) record already of 16 but I'm trying not to look into... I'm a little bit superstitious. If you start looking around I feel that I will tempt fate. It's something I would quite like to keep up. Obviously if I'm put in a position where I have to really fight as hard as I can to keep that 13th and screw the keeping it on the track I will do whatever I can to keep that tenth. It would be nice if I could finish the race on Sunday but it's not the end of the world if not.

Ends