



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

## **Press Information**

### **2014 Australian Grand Prix Post Qualifying Press Conference Transcript**

**15.03.2014**

#### **DRIVERS**

**1 – Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes)**

**2 – Daniel RICCIARDO (Red Bull Racing)**

**3 – Nico ROSBERG (Mercedes)**

#### **TV UNILATERAL**

**Lewis, a little bit of history on a number of levels today, not least the first pole position with this new formula and equalling Nigel Mansell's 32 career poles.**

**Lewis HAMILTON:** Yeah. It's been an interesting weekend. Today, it made it so much harder for everyone with the conditions. I'm really happy for the job the team did. You know these new cars are so much harder to drive in the wet and it was the first time for me driving in the wet, as I'm sure it was for a lot of people. A serious task and challenge today, but for both me and Nico to be up here is a great showing for the team and it's obviously great to see Ricciardo up here for his first grand prix with Red Bull.

**Tell us about the conditions, as obviously it rained pretty hard towards the end. There was a split of decision on which way to go on tyres – you went for the wets. Was that the right decision?**

**LH:** Yeah, it was kind of on the limit. It was very difficult to know what the turnover point was. Do you take a risk or not? I decided not to. Ricciardo, Daniel did a really good job on the inters, so obviously it was a very close call between the two. But the conditions made it extremely difficult. There's so much more power, so you're short-shifting all the way down into fifth, sixth, seventh before you can get the full throttle. But great fun otherwise and I hope the weather is better tomorrow, mostly for the fans, but also for us.

**Daniel, I think the cheer from the crowd said it all really, an incredible first Red Bull qualifying session for you and a lot of Australian pride?**

**Daniel RICCIARDO:** Yeah, it was exciting. Definitely the weather added to the mix and the whole session went well. Not everyone was out with options at the beginning but Q1 looked like it was going OK for us. And then when the rain fell, as Lewis said, it's the first time we've all driven these cars on the limit in wet conditions. It was tricky but at the same time, of course, a lot of fun. It was nice to be always up there. The engineer was on the radio saying 'pace is good, P1, P2, P3' it was always in that battle for the pole position. So definitely a really nice qualifying session with the team.

**Well your team-mate is down in 13<sup>th</sup>, so what was the difference today?**

**DR:** I don't know yet what his issues were. I think it was... I saw it was about two seconds or so off my pace at the time. We'll have to see what went wrong with Seb and his side of the garage. But for now, happy for me to at least be up here and just for the team to have a front-row start, I think it wasn't looking like this a few weeks ago, so pretty pleased right now.

**Very well done, and Nico, was it all about timing in that last part of qualifying? Was that what it was about?**

**Nico ROSBERG:** I'm not really sure what the others were doing. For sure we didn't get it quite right but you just don't know what's going to happen. So, I don't think we did much wrong. Of course, in hindsight you can always say 'oh we could have done that better or this better' but all in all I think it was a good qualifying session. Third is... I'm pleased with that. Could have been better but third is OK. I know we have a quick race car and from there a good race is possible.

**It's been very close between you and Lewis throughout this weekend, so what happens tomorrow?**

**NR:** Of course it's going to be a completely different story than today. Also again depending on weather and things like that, we don't really know what's going to happen, there is a small chance of rain also tomorrow, but I think more likely it's going to be dry. It will be totally different because this year... especially in Melbourne, it's the most difficult track for fuel consumption, so it's going to be difficult to save enough fuel in the race – a big challenge.

**You had a reliability scare here Lewis on the first day here, but the pair of you have been very, very quick the rest of the time, so what are you expecting from tomorrow?**

**LH:** Ultimately it's just down to the incredible job the team has done over the winter and through testing and come here... of course we had a small hiccup on Friday morning – it wasn't really a scare, just unfortunate that we missed the session. But it was a quick fix, so no need to take the car apart, and just building on a good foundation and hopefully we can continue to do so.

## **PRESS CONFERENCE**

**Q: Lewis, I wonder if you could say a few words, particularly about the achievement of equalling Nigel Mansell? I'm sure he's somebody as a kid you grew up watching racing. Obviously a very flamboyant character in Formula One and you've equalled him today.**

**LH:** Yeah, absolutely. Another Brit, one of the greatest British drivers we had and to have achieved so much. I've been racing since my eighth year so, to be in Formula One has always been my dream but to get to as many poles as him is...yeah, incredible achievement and I owe that to all the great people I've worked with through my career at McLaren-Mercedes and now Mercedes and the team, and my family and the good people I have around me. I won't be able to put in those laps without those people helping me. It was a team effort.

**Q: Question for you Daniel. Obviously you have to go up against Sebastian as a team-mate. It's a tall order but how much confidence are you going to draw just from today's result?**

**DR:** Definitely it's a... not looking at him, I'm sure he had problems of some sort today but just for me to start the season with a front row, yeah, it does a lot of good things for the

confidence. But yeah, obviously it's just the start. I obviously have to race tomorrow and obviously finish up the front of the order and then see how the season progresses. The last couple of days have been really positive for us.

**Q: Nico, couldn't help but notice at the beginning of the qualifying you and Lewis side by side, wanting to be the first one out on track. I guess you guys just couldn't help yourself, you had to race even there.**

**NR:** No, it wasn't that at all, and there were clear instructions also from the team that Lewis is first. It was agreed like that so that's fine. It's just that I wanted to do a practice start and the practice start position is on the right. That's where we're used to doing it, so I just put myself there for that. To have consistency.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Mark Fogarty – Auto Action and Fairfax Media) Daniel, can you talk a bit about how excited you must be to put in such a strong performance in your debut with the team in your home race?**

**DR:** Yeah, of course, yeah, really excited but at the same time, still staying calm and collected because tomorrow is what counts, definitely, so there's no point in having a party tonight and not focusing on tomorrow. I guess speaking solely of today, it's a really good day for us. The car was pretty good to drive in the wet. I think at the start of the year we were all fearing how difficult these new animals would be in wet conditions but it was... it's always a bit of a handful but at the same time it was quite nice behind the wheel. Controlling the turbo and all that on throttle was good fun. Pretty excited. I heard all the crowd on the cool-down lap so all I can say is hopefully I will hear that tomorrow.

**Q: (Frederic Ferret – L'Equipe) To all three of you: how do you drive without the noise of the V8, does it change anything, the way you drive and the way you behave in the car?**

**LH:** How do you drive differently or...? Without the noise. It's the same, it's the same, it's just you don't hear it as much. You kind of hear mostly wind until you get down to fourth/fifth gear... fifth, fourth and third. It might be different for other people but otherwise the rest of the drivers are saying you obviously have to be a lot more gradual with the throttle, stability with your reflexes and all that stuff is quite important.

**NR:** It's just that we have less grip and more torque, that's the main thing, and that just makes it more difficult on the exit of the corners, especially now in the wet and the sound, the difference is that I can hear my brake locking which I never used to hear, like in a road car, when it's squeaking (squealing?) in the corner? Now you can hear that because there's not so much engine noise any more and that's really really strange, but also interesting because now I can also hear my rear locking, even though I don't feel it that much, it gives me some extra indication.

**DR:** I think I agree with what Lewis said, you hear the wind a lot more, especially at high speed. I guess you know when the gusts are blowing.

**Q: (Andrea Cremonesi – La Gazzetta dello Sport) For all of you: we saw during this qualifying a lot of quick laps one after the other. We understood that in the dry conditions you would do a lap and then a slower lap to recharge the batteries. Does that change in wet conditions?**

**LH:** Well, naturally in the wet your braking distances are a lot longer so compared to a wet (dry?) lap where you get rid of all the energy on that lap, on a wet lap you're braking for almost twice the distance or a little bit longer, maybe a third longer in the braking zone, so you have more time to regain the battery and charge the battery. But naturally it is easier if you do do a fast lap and a slow lap, fast lap but it is possible for some of us.

**DR:** Yeah. What Lewis said.

**Q: (Jacob Polychronis – F1Plus.com) Daniel, what particular aspect of the racing requires the most attention going into tomorrow? Nico has spoken a lot about fuel consumption and tyre degradation yesterday being the key areas. How about for Red Bull?**

**DR:** Yeah, it's probably I guess the same for everyone. Fuel is probably the question mark for a lot of teams. We still haven't done a race distance yet so I think it's probably going to be one of those things that we're going to understand... each lap we do in the race, we're going to understand more and more and how we're looking. I think behind the wheel not too much will change, I'll just keep getting information from the pit wall. You know there's different modes and everything to control consumption on the steering wheel and I will just act accordingly. I think tyre degradation probably won't be too bad, I think, normally with the rain now, so the washing off and making the track a bit green – as we call it – will probably be quite kind to the rears. I don't think tyre deg will be a massive issue tomorrow.

**Q: (Will Hagon – ABC Radio) Daniel, with all the pressure that's been on you this week, your home Grand Prix and championship team and all the rest of it, how have you been sleeping and how do you think you'll sleep tonight?**

**DR:** I've been sleeping well. I think I've been pretty worn out by the end of the day with all the extra curricula activities I've been doing. I've been sleeping well. I got to Oz over a week ago. I was in Sydney for that Top Gear festival so had time to get over jet lag and I'm sure I will sleep well tonight. It's a pretty late start tomorrow so I don't have to set any alarms. Should be right.

**Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action) Daniel, the car is much better than in testing. Is it a case of just getting more laps on the core performance of the car or are the new bits that came in helping a lot?**

**DR:** I think it's probably just us circulating more. In testing, unfortunately, a lot of the time we were circulating to learn about reliability and to stop things from overheating so we weren't really focused on what set-up we were running or any of that. I think after yesterday, it was the first time we probably worked on set-up and understanding the car. I think all the aero guys are gathering more and more information and making the car a bit quicker each time we run. It's definitely positive for us now and hopefully the upward trend continues and we can start to hassle these guys in dry conditions soon.

**Q: (Mat Coch – pitpass.com) Daniel, a question close to every Australian's heart: what are you like at starts?**

**DR:** Let's see how we go tomorrow! Bit up and down last year. I guess everyone watched the races. I think they were on the up so let's see how we go tomorrow. I think it's going to be interesting for everyone now, with the V6 turbos. I think it's also a bit of a different animal off the line. Hopefully we get off well.

**Q: (Phil Branagan – Chevron Publishing) Dan, you must have had a realistic expectation after practice of where you'd qualify. Have you exceeded that? By how far? And what's your expectation for tomorrow?**

**DR:** I think exceeded it just because if it was a dry qualifying we were expecting Lewis and Nico to take the front row. I think their pace in the dry was pretty impressive so far this week so exceeded that a bit but obviously the wet throws a bit of a curved ball and you've just got to take the session how it comes and see how you go from there. There wasn't too much calculating going on in my head. It was just drive and adapt to the conditions. As I said, it was refreshing to hear my engineer on the radio saying we're fighting all these for the top three. That was good to hear and obviously gives you a bit of motivation as well.

**Q: (Mark Fogarty – Auto Action and Fairfax Media) Lewis and Nico, are you at all surprised to see Daniel sitting up there next to you?**

**LH:** Not at all. He's showed some great performances in previous years and he's got a good head on his shoulders, very talented so it's expected, to be honest, plus Red Bull have been up at the top for some time so you have to assume that this year they will be very close to us. But without a doubt they've done an exceptional job.

**NR:** No, me too, great job, definitely. I hope I manage to pass him tomorrow. For sure. Well done.

**Q: (Tony Schibeci – SEN) Daniel, for the last couple of years you've been fighting with the big boys. Now you're one of the big boys. How cool is that?**

**DR:** Yeah, it's cool. I can't get ahead of myself. I've still got a bit to prove. I've still to establish myself at the front. It would obviously be great to be up here for the next few weekends and to cement myself at the front of the grid, so this is definitely a step towards that but yeah, as I said, there still a bit to go but obviously excited for what lies ahead and give it a good crack.

Ends