



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

2014 Malaysian Grand Prix Thursday Press Conference Transcript 27.03.2013

DRIVERS – Kamui KOBAYASHI (Caterham), Pastor MALDONADO (Lotus), Daniil KVYAT (Toro Rosso), Valtteri BOTTAS (Williams), Kimi RÄIKKÖNEN (Ferrari), Nico ROSBERG (Mercedes)

PRESS CONFERENCE

Valtteri, we'll start with you. Quite a race in Australia, 15th to sixth, hit the wall, back down to 15th, back up to sixth again, very eventful. But what do you think was possible that day?

Valtteri BOTTAS: Yeah, really eventful. If we look at it as a whole race we need to be happy. With the result we have more points, double the points than last year. So it's a good beginning for us but it could have been better. We could have definitely, without my mistake, been fighting for the podium.

Tell us a little bit about what these cars are like to drive. Obviously less rear end stability, more of a handful into and out of the corners. How are you finding it so far?

VB: Yeah, the cars have quite a bit less downforce than last year so you're sliding a bit more, with more engine power also it makes it a bit more tricky, but I like it. I really think the cars are good fun to drive. I hope it looked good from outside I think we made an exciting race with the new cars, new engines, so I think it's good.

Coming to you Daniil. Obviously the youngest ever points scorer with that result in Australia at the age of 19. How do you feel about that and the start you've made?

Daniil KVYAT: It was a good race, also eventful for us. It was everything new for me, so obviously many things to learn during the qualifying, the race, so it was good. P10 is an OK result but we always want some more. In the end, we would always like to get some more points in the future and the more we get the better it is.

I wonder if you could talk about the step up [to Formula One]. Prior to this the longest race you've ever done is 35 or 40 minutes, before you raced in Australia and then of course, the challenge of this weekend in particular so soon [into your F1 career]?

DK: Yeah, you're right, it was a very long race but I found a good rhythm and it wasn't looking so long anymore. Here it's going to be a bit different because it's much, much warmer. Let's see how this challenge will be done. It's hard for me to say now but for the moment it's looking pretty hot but it shouldn't be a big problem in the end.

Coming to Kamui. Welcome back to Formula One. How does it feel to be back?

Kamui KOBAYASHI: Hi, first of all I think I have to say it's great to be back in Formula One. I think after one break doing like GT... I think definitely I enjoyed GT but Formula One is one of the top categories and I also think I was missing the development and of

course racing with the top drivers, which I think is one of the most exciting times, so I'm very happy to be back.

Obviously, quite a tough opening weekend for you in Australia. What has the team learned, first of all about what happened at the start and also about the general problems you suffered at the weekend, and how much have you been able to put right?

KK: Well, first of all, unfortunately I think that in 2014 the first crash is myself is not really good! But it's not really fault, it's coming from the system. I do anything without the rear brake and that was the first proper braking. I mean, at this point I felt straight away, I felt panic, I was a little bit crazy because my car doesn't stop and I can't avoid... I feel very sorry for Felipe, just... I don't want to crash of course like that and I don't want to end up like that. That's what happened, a racing accident, so I think we have to find what is really the problem, but we have to find out that it never happens the next time. I think through the week, I'd say it was a very difficult week for us because we missed the complete Friday and we went to FP3. Unfortunately we had not much time to change any settings between practice and qualifying. So, I think we went to Q2, which is very happy but I think we have to look at more potential from what we have. Still we didn't bring any potential from the car. S I'm quite excited, looking forwards to this weekend. This week is our home race, so it's very important to having a great result and of course I think a lot of Malaysian fans are excited about Formula One, so hopefully we can achieve something.

Q: Pastor, obviously, like Kamui, it was a tough weekend for you in Australia. Not too many laps on the board. How much has the team been able to do in the time since then?

Pastor MALDONADO: The pre-season, it was quite tough for us. We've been working very hard and trying to push to solve all of the problems. These kind of problems, when you get at the bottom of the problem, you see that they are not huge problems: easy to fix but it took so much time from the test. In the first race again. So I think we miss free practice, even on Saturday, quali, so we've not been able to do proper long runs and to see our real potential of the car because of this kind of issues we've had. And now I hope to have a better weekend. We've been working hard again to try to improve. We improve quite a lot for the race. We had never been able to run for more than 10 laps together and during the race we did more than 30 laps with both cars – which is a step forward. Now we are fully focussed on finishing the race and I think if we finish the race we will be in a good position to fight for good places.

Q: From the running that you have done, what's the car telling you? What does it feel like? Are you optimistic about the potential of this car?

PM: It is very difficult to say, just because everything is new for us. We will need some more time in the car, especially to explore the potential of the car. It's very difficult to say. The feeling is not bad but against the other teams we need some more time in the track and try to do our best to catch them. I think it's going to be a very tough beginning of the season but again things are changing quickly in Formula One. We've been working very hard, the team is quite good on reacting and hopefully this race will be much better for us.

Q: Kimi, seventh in Australia and a bulletin from the Ferrari team since then with some quotes from you saying that one of the problems was the brake-by-wire system in particular. Would you give us a bit more detail on that?

Kimi RÄIKKÖNEN: ah, I don't know where that came from. It's not the issue. There is nothing wrong with the system. Somebody asked me after the race and I said 'it's not that' – because they kind of said 'is there some issue?' It's not true. But just mainly setup to get the car as I like it, as I wanted to have it and I'm sure once... we're making some stuff for me, so hopefully once we get those it will get a bit more easy to get a bit more feeling in

the front end. But it will take a little while. Obviously not the ideal start for the year, for the team, not what we obviously want to achieve. We want to do much better results but after all the difficulties over the weekend and how difficult it was, how many areas, just the small things. At least we got something out and it's going to be a long year, so hopefully we can now build on it. We have plenty of good people and they're working flat out as a group to improve things. So, we still have things to do but I'm sure we can keep progressing.

Q: With the nature of this particular circuit, do you think that you and we will be able to see more of what this Ferrari car is capable of this weekend, perhaps than we did in Australia?

KR: I don't know. Every circuit is different. Obviously it is very hot, humid here, slightly different tyres here I think, so I have no idea. Even from the past years it was very difficult to say from race to race and especially with this new year with new rules. It will be hard but hopefully we get a bit better feeling and overall have a bit more experience and all the things run the weekend through a little bit more cleanly and hopefully get the better results.

Q: Nico, obviously the winner in Australia, your fourth career win. What's the reaction been like? What's the feedback been like? How have you spent the last ten days or so? Has it been more special than the other wins?

Nico ROSBERG: Well it's been a fantastic start to the season, definitely, yes. I think the whole team has done a great job with these new regulations, with the car and engine and powertrain that they've built and yes, it's been great to win the first race, for sure, fantastic. But now... went on holiday after that, so obviously the holiday was a little bit better, thanks to the win but now back to just fully focussed on getting the most out of this race.

Q: Obviously it's well-chronically that it was an eventful race for you here last year, particularly towards the end. Do you expect it to be another tight, close in-house battle this weekend?

NR: That would be a great thing. The chances are... yes, that we will be right at the front because it seems that we have a bit of an advantage over the other people. Of course Melbourne is not a benchmark, as a race, so we need to be a bit cautious with that but I think we're looking good, so for sure it will be possible to do a great result again here.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Kate Walker – crash.net) For all of you: we've heard quite a lot of negative headlines, negative news reports about the new formula. I'd like to get some positive feedback from you on what these new cars are like to drive and how much fun they are to race.

DK: Well, it's quite popular to criticise Formula One nowadays, I think, and there is always some new technology coming and it has happened for me to debut in a new Formula One, let's say. It's quite interesting, I would say. The standard, with the new technology, has to change at some point and I think it's quite interesting. It's still fast, it's going to be faster all the time and we will see at the end of the year how much better it is or not, so it's early days.

KK: I think I definitely enjoy driving them because of course it's definitely not easy at the beginning but I remember there were quite similar headlines before, but after a few years or a few months everybody forgot, so I don't think it's a big problem. But for us we're still enjoying driving. It's more challenging to drive in dry races, so I'm pretty happy.

NR: I think it's been all good for F1. It's changed around the pecking order which is definitely good for everybody because the same guy winning last year... we needed a bit of a change to that, so that's been good. The cars are great to drive, that's fine, so I think it's all good.

KR: I don't think it's awfully different as a driver, to compare last year's cars to this year's. Obviously there are some small detailed issues but it's the bigger issues that make a difference for me, just to be in a different team. Every team feels a bit different, different cars. It doesn't really change an awful lot as a driver.

PM: To be honest, I don't have much to say, because I've not spent a lot of time in the car at the moment. It's quite early, but it doesn't feel a lot different to what we had in the past. For sure, it's a more complicated car, especially for the technicians, for the engineers in the paddock. For us, it's a bit easier on the steering wheel. It's a bit more complicated but it's what we have at the moment. It's the same for everyone.

Q: (Elmar Dreher – DPA) Nico, with a win here, you can equalise the five wins by your father. What does that mean for you, and how confident are you to win here?

NR: I understand that it's interesting to make comparisons and that, and even I find it interesting. After Australia, I read that he also won the first time... at the first Australian GP, 29 years ago. It's fun to read those things but I really don't think about that. I don't compare. I'm proud of what my father achieved but I'm just focused on my job and getting the most out of it and definitely, yes, I'm optimistic for the weekend and there is a possibility to win.

Q: (Adrian Rodriguez Huber – Agencia EFE) Kimi, how has your relationship with Fernando Alonso developed if it has, in any direction, since you guys have become teammates?

KR: It's good, it always been good. Now, obviously, it's early days but there was a lot of talk in the media from you guys, different people saying different things, but it's been good. But the team has been trying to improve things and get the team to where we want to be.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Kimi, did you have any temptation to go to drive the simulator to get better settings for you?

KR: No.

Q: (Flavio Vanetti – Corriere della Sera) Kimi, can we say that Ferrari will be more able to attack Mercedes and the other teams here?

KR: Like I said before, we don't know how it's going to be here. I would say it's a different circuit, it will be very hard for the cars, the heat. We have to wait and see how we can do. Obviously we learned quite a bit on things from the last race but then it's the same for every team. Hopefully we can be a bit more happy and see where we end up.

Q: (Abhishek Takle - Middy) To all of you: now that the first race is out of the way, do you have a fair idea of who stands where in the pecking order? Or given that Albert Park is a unique circuit, is it still very much a step into the unknown?

VB: I think we have some kind of idea where every team is. Of course, like Nico said before, Melbourne is maybe not the best benchmark, a little bit different track than most of the others. We will see here, and of course, all the teams are going to improve so much race by race, especially when we get to Europe. Some kind of idea but it can change.

Q: So where do you think you are? Second? Third fastest car?

VB: Somewhere there, hopefully. It's been a good start for us, hopefully we can maintain it because everyone is going to improve a lot, so I would definitely see no reason why we couldn't find four top six positions.

KR: I think we are more or less where we finished.

NR: I think we look to be the quickest at the moment which is fantastic but we need to be careful with that and the opposition is not asleep, they're pushing like crazy.

Q: Daniil, Toro Rosso got two cars into the top ten in qualifying and the race in Australia which they didn't do the whole of last year, so where does that put you in the pecking order at the moment?

DK: Well, I hope in the points quite consistently. It would be good for us. If then we can use the conditions to our best, then hopefully we can go as high as possible, it's always what we are fighting for and the higher the better.

Q: Pastor, hard to say?

PM: Yeah. No.

KK: Same. Sorry.

Ends