



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

2014 Spanish Grand Prix Sunday Press Conference Transcript

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PODIUM INTERVIEWS

(Conducted by Eddie Jordan)

What a great race, what a great finish – Lewis Hamilton, ladies and gentlemen, four race wins in a row; let's hear it from him.

Lewis HAMILTON: A big thank you to my team, they've just done an incredible job this year. I'm really happy with the support I've had here in Spain, it's the best I've ever had, so thank you to everyone in the grandstands, it means the world to me. My first win here in Spain, it means everything to me.

We heard you grumbling, or not quite happy with your team about the graining and also about the time loss in the pits. Tell me, were you upset?

LH: No, not for the pits. I wasn't fast enough really today; Nico was quicker. I struggled a lot with the balance and really had to rely on my engineers a lot more to give me the gaps and to try to find where I could find time. And also with all my settings, I was moving them up and down, up and down really trying to find extra time. But Nico was just generally quicker this weekend but fortunately I was able to keep him behind.

Well, I needn't tell everybody out there but you've now taken over the lead in the championship. Nico, what a fantastic fight, just like Bahrain, right up there at the end. How many more laps do you think you needed to pass him?

Nico ROSBERG: I think one more to be honest, one more I could have given it a good go. I wasn't close enough to give it a go there but next lap I would have. But unfortunately that was it. So, a bit gutted but still, second place, still close to the championship and many more races to go anyway.

I needn't remind you or anybody else, but you've been on this podium every race of this season so far. Going now to your home race, Monaco, where you won last year, surely you can make a massive effort for there?

Nico ROSBERG: Definitely. I'll be going there to do it one better and try to come first there and repeat the win from last year. That's the aim and we'll see if it works out. And for those of you who don't know Eddie is my number one favourite neighbor in Monaco.

I don't they needed to know that! They want to know all about you. Ladies and gentlemen we'll leave my neighbourly friend here and move to young Australian superstar, the man who has lit up the season so far from a rookie point of view, Daniel Ricciardo. I don't want to be doom and gloom here, but you were 50 seconds behind, what are you going to do to catch these guys up?

Daniel RICCIARDO: Thanks

I just thought I'd bring you back down to reality a bit.

DR: No, you're right. They were a long way ahead. I think coming into the race today we knew a boring race would be a pretty good one for us. We knew we didn't really have the paced for Mercedes. We looked like a third-place car and in the end that's what it was, we had a pretty comfortable third- place and we just had to focus on getting the tyres to last two stops and that was it. Really nice to be on the podium and I'm sure I'll be able to keep it this time.

Lewis, are you surprised with the dominance, because a lot of people called into question your idea of coming to Mercedes maybe 18 months ago. Had you got this in the back of your mind that this was all the potential that was being told to you?

LH: Yeah, sitting down with Ross at my mum's house at the kitchen table, yeah this is the idea that I was given. I really, truly believed it was going to happen, but I could never have imagined us to have a 50-second gap to Red Bull in a race. So it's just an exceptional job from the team and I feel truly blessed to firstly be a part of this team, to be contributing, getting the results. This is our fourth 1-2 together, it's just unreal.

PRESS CONFERENCE

So, Lewis, where do we start? Four wins in a row, fourth Mercedes 1-2 in a row, which is fairly hard to achieve. First win for you in Spain and you're leading the Driver's World Championship for the first time since, I think, 2012. Which of those things means the most to you?

LH: Of course getting my first grand prix win here after trying for eight years. It's very difficult to really put into words the feeling when you come to a race and have a result like this. Never have I had a car like this and obviously we've never had a gap like this to anyone before. Nico did a fantastic job today, it was a struggle to keep him behind, but I'm grateful that I was able to. I just feel that it is such a huge blessing, for not only me but for all the guys in the team, because of all the hard work they've done for many years now, but finally they are starting to see the fruits of their labour. So, for me, yeah, just enjoying every moment, every step of the way. And it's really great today we have our board members, our bosses from Mercedes, so it was really good to... every time Dr Zetsche came last year, we generally had a bad race, so it was really important to get a good result for him to get rid of that negative bug, or bad luck that I guess he thought he was bringing, so I'm really grateful for the team being able to do that today.

Q: Nico, the start didn't give you the platform or opportunity that maybe you'd hoped for. From there, like Bahrain, you tried something different on the strategy. Like Bahrain, Lewis said you were quicker today – but unlike Bahrain you didn't really have a chance to attack, particularly at the end. Why was that? Why did it work out the way it did?

NR: The start unfortunately was poor. It's a bit of a weakness that we have at the moment, just inconsistent and now I've had a couple of bad starts in a row – actually three bad starts in the races. And that's costly, you know? Because, always losing out at the start, that's not good, need to work on that. Other than that, the race, yeah, I felt comfortable, race pace was good. Best thing to do was to switch strategies. That was planned before the race. Worked out well, worked out perfectly – but this is a really, really difficult track to get close to the guy in front. I still got close, y'know Turn 10, the last lap. Could have got gone for a kamikaze move but it wouldn't have worked. Lewis did a great job the whole weekend and just that little bit ahead. But there's a lot of positives for me to take out of it. I'm fully motivated to just try to get that little bit extra and to edge him out next time – and it's doable.

Q: Daniel, hopefully the first trophy you'll be able to keep. Obviously the story of your race, a difficult start, losing the ground to Bottas but then getting him with the undercut first round of stops, then you were Billy-No-Mates, on your own driving around on your own – tell us how it worked out for you.

DR: Yeah. Not exactly the start I wanted. I think initially the launch felt OK but we lost a bit of traction after that. Bottas got past me. The first stint I tried to hang in there, had, let's say, a pseudo-attempt into Turn One. I got underneath him but it wasn't deep enough to pull the move off and then, yeah, it was just about doing an undercut and just trying to still make a two-stop work. So from then on a pretty lonely race. Unfortunately we're not going to catch Mercedes. At least this weekend we weren't going to, so a lonely third was not a bad result in the end.

Q: Final question to both Lewis and Nico, just looking ahead to the next couple of races that are coming up, Monaco is a track that's been strong in the past for both of you and strong in the past for Mercedes, and then we go on to Montreal which has always been one of Lewis's favourites. How do you go there, Nico? And your thoughts, both of you, on those two upcoming races.

NR: Monaco: fantastic. It's my favourite race of the year. Great memories there from last year. Looking forward to it, with the car that we have also this year, it's going to be great. For sure the opposition is going to be closer. Especially I expect Red Bull to be a lot closer, so it's going to be tougher for us but still, we have a strong package, engine and car. So, should go fine around Monaco and going to try and make the most of it, repeat the win from last year.

Your thoughts Lewis...

LH: I think I have a bit of work to do in the next couple of weeks but of course I love those two races. Struggled last year in Monaco and struggled with this race, so need to figure out where I'm losing the time and apply it to the next race.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Frederic Ferret – L'Equipe) Question for Nico and Lewis. What was the main difficulty during the race: managing the hard tyre or doing quick laps at the end to fight to get Lewis with the medium?

NR: No, the big challenge was tyre degradation. Very, very big tyre degradation. That was really difficult to manage that. But I found my way and was quite comfortable with it, and then graining on the hard tyre which is the opposite of what we expected. We expected to have graining on the soft tyre. So it was very strange. Graining on the hard tyre and no graining on the soft tyre, it was really weird and unexpected.

Q: (Adrian Rodriguez – Agencia EFE) Question for Lewis, congratulations for your first win here in Spain. Makes it 26, one more than Jim Clark and one more than Niki Lauda, one of the big guys on your team – are you planning any jokes on him tonight and how many victories can you make it this year?

LH: At the rate the team's going, we're looking strong for at least a few more races. It's by no means easy for me because I've still got a massive challenge with Nico. But, I mean, I could never have imagined winning these four races but it's still so close, long, long way to go and, just as I was saying earlier, I've got a bit more time to find in this car, so going to work on it.

Q: Michael Schmidt (Auto Motor und Sport) Lewis, in the race, did you experience similar problems to those you had yesterday and how did you try to dial them out? There was a lot of conversation between you and the engineers.

LH: I did have the same problems as I had yesterday, yes. It was very strange because Friday P2 was excellent. The car was really good, degradation... I mean I was very very fast and I stopped my run with 18 laps or something like that, but if I just brought my pace down a little bit I probably could have eked it out even longer. Those changes just transformed the car and today, just not able to attack the corners due to snap oversteer, and that's generally where Nico was catching me, through those entries of corners.

Q: (Leonid Novozhilov – F1 Life) To the Mercedes drivers: you have won every race this year. What secret did you find and where?

LH: I haven't found any secrets but I think Mercedes – there is no secret really, it's just been hard work and really constructive work. Often when you're working towards something, sometimes you stumble and fall and then you have to build it again and the team has just been building and building, building and not really having many times when they're falling. It's quite remarkable, the actual car itself, the downforce is very good, I'm sure very very close with the Red Bulls and then with the engine, it's the best engine Mercedes have made.

NR: It's been five years, it's been since 2010 this process started and so much has changed, it's been such a long long way, the personnel restructuring, everything. Big big changes and now we've come to a point where, thanks to all the work from the past, we're really just able... we're becoming the best team in F1. That's the way it is. I would still say Red Bull is the benchmark at the moment but we're definitely shaking their chair at the moment and I think there's the possibility that soon we will be the absolute best team, in terms of team organisation, capabilities, we're getting there and hopefully it will be a long domination.

Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action and National Speedsport News) Daniel, Sebastian Vettel went from 15th to fourth, is that encouraging that the car – while not as good as a Mercedes - can slice through the opposition, or a bit worrying because it looks like he might be back up to speed and coming to challenge you?

DR: Obviously it's the first thing you said. Yeah, really good. I just sort of heard on the radio that he was making progress through the field and when he was in fourth – I think he made a move in the last few laps so really good. I definitely see it as a positive for the team, third and fourth, particularly after his starting position. Obviously Mercedes are the top dogs at the moment but we seem to be settling ourselves nicely in that next spot and I think we've just got to now try and somehow creep our way closer. All the talk about Seb, I'm sure that was going to pass very soon and he'll get to his World Champion form.

Q: (Tony Dodgins – Motorsport News) Nico, just before the first stops, on the radio we heard the team say 'primes planned for the next stint' and you said 'the options are fine.' Did that mean you wanted another set of options for the second stint or were you happy with the way it went?

NR: There was a misunderstanding from my side because we were going to go prime second stint – there were two variables. There was one where we go prime second stint if we have graining in the first stint or I go prime second stint to try and beat Lewis, if I feel that pace-wise I can be quicker and have a shot at it. I thought they were going prime because they thought I had graining but I didn't have graining so that's why I was confused but then I understood: it was to offset my strategy so that I would have a chance to fight Lewis at the end so it was fine – and just what I wanted.

Q: (Borna Zsoldos – Nemzeti Sports) Lewis, at the end of the 2012 season when you announced that you would switch to Mercedes, there were some really harsh criticisms against you, stating that you are destroying your career without the guidance of your Dad. Now that you're winning and leading the championship and have the very best car of the whole pack, is it important for you that you could really prove that you can make good decisions on your own?

LH: Yeah, for sure, it was obviously a great call and there was never a moment that I ever doubted it but of course never could have imagined that we would be having this kind of success. I'm not one to rub it in people's faces. I knew that I was in a good place, I knew that I was making the right decision for me and now it should be becoming more evident to people... I'm sure the people that wrote those things had an opinion at the beginning and I'm sure it's changed now.

Q: (Adrian Rodriguez – Agencia EFE) To Nico and Lewis: you guys seem to get along pretty well right now but the problem is that just one of you can win if it keeps going this way. Do you guys believe that your relationship is going to be the same by the end of the year?

LH: We've been racing together for a long time so I don't see why not.

Q: Does that help, Nico, that you've been racing together for a long time?

NR: Definitely yes, because we've been through this before. It's not a first time and even back then we had discussions, debate but always... life goes on, discuss it and life goes on so that helps, yeah.

Q: (Anthony Rowlinson – F1 Racing) Lewis, you've said quite a few times this year about how perfect this car is, how well suited it feels. Could you explain just a little bit about how you've guided the development of it so that it suits your style?

LH: It's a lengthy process. Obviously last year... when you request something to be changed, it takes some time because obviously you don't want to take away their focus from the most important things which is getting downforce. I think it's just taken some time. I think Michael required a little bit of a... he had a different driving style to me. He required

different things, different seating position, different set-up and as I've come along, I've really tried to... and I guess Nico probably and Michael both kind of gelled and went in one direction with the balance and then as I've come along, mine is slightly different and I guess we've then created a hybrid: Nico's come halfway, I've come halfway so we now require the same things from the car, but last year it was maybe a little bit different and so over the time just really, for the engineers to get to know what I require from a car and I think really working on being comfortable with the engineers as well, new engineers, it takes a while to build those relationships and that's probably been a key strength to this year.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – Universo On Line) Nico, you are second in the championship now. Will you change your approach for the weekend, make strategies with more risks; even during the race, do you think you will change what you have been doing until now?

NR: There's not much to change. The race was really lost in qualifying and at the start. Those were the two opportunities I had. Qualifying was very very close, I even had a bit of a problem which we found in hindsight, where I was a little bit down on power on the straight, but the difference was not enough to get pole, but still it was actually even closer than it looked. And then just had a poor start, so those were the two shots that I had at it and it didn't work out. And then in the race, I nearly got another opportunity at the very end but again, just not enough. One more lap and I could have given it a go, I think, but I would have done everything the same again at the start of the weekend. Of course, I also missed FP1 which doesn't help either. Many small thing which add up and there are only very small gaps so next time.

Ends