



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

## Press Information

### 2014 Austrian Grand Prix Thursday Press Conference Transcript 19.06.2014

**DRIVERS – Marcus ERICSSON (Caterham), Esteban GUTIERREZ (Sauber), Max CHILTON (Marussia), Sergio PEREZ (Force India), Daniel RICCIARDO (Red Bull Racing), Fernando ALONSO (Ferrari)**

#### PRESS CONFERENCE

**Daniel, can we start with you? Obviously a winner last time out in Montreal. Has it sunk in yet? How did you celebrate and what kind of messages did you receive?**

**Daniel RICCIARDO:** Yeah it has, it's sunk in now. It took a few days but yeah it was awesome. We had obviously a great day and a good night with the team; we celebrated and enjoyed the moment. It was nice. I got lots of messages from lots of people, fellow drivers and other sportsmen and people around the world, which is pretty cool. I didn't see all of them but the amount I saw were really nice.

**Obviously this is a big weekend for your team on essentially its home track. What are your thoughts on that and how everyone is prepared?**

**DR:** It's obviously exciting for us now. We've got a bit of steam as well from the last race. I think we're all really excited – the home one for Red Bull. We'll see what happens on track. Hopefully we can be strong again but I think as the weekend goes it's going to be a lot of fun. Not only for us drivers but for the spectators as well. I think they're going to put on a good show. There's a few planes flying around today and I think that will continue throughout the weekend with a good show.

**Marcus, coming to you. Obviously we're just over a third of the way through your debut season in Formula One. How do you evaluate your progress?**

**Marcus ERICSSON:** I think it's going better and better. I think my improvement is good but obviously as a team we want to be performing a bit better. I think I had a really good race in Monaco equalling Caterham's best ever result, which was really great for me. I think compared to Kamui I'm improving all the time and can compete with him. It's getting there but of course we need to keep pushing and keep improving all the time.

**And how is the morale in the Caterham team at the moment?**

**ME:** I think it's good. We know that we need to improve of course but everyone in the team is working really hard. Straight away after Montreal I went to the factory in Leafield and everyone there is pushing 100 per cent. We're going to keep pushing and hopefully turn things around here in Spielberg.

**Max, coming to you. Your unbroken run of finishes was ended in Canada with that first-lap accident. How do you feel about that now?**

**Max CHILTON:** Obviously I was hugely disappointed when it happened. It was a typical first-lap accident; two drivers in pretty close proximity. I was pretty upset after the race, losing that, and for the team because there was a lot of damage. But we've got to draw a line in the sand and move on from that and I think we're on a good roll at the moment as a team, we're definitely pulling away from certain teams and catching others up, so we've just got to keep focusing on that now and focus on the future.

**As you say the team is in pretty good shape – ninth in the championship with the two points that were scored in Monaco. So where do you go from here?**

**MC:** We've just got to keep moving forward. We're not a top team that can bring huge updates to every race. We just need little and often. We've been doing that I think fairly well this year, better than previous years. Just getting a few more points of downforce at each event just makes the car more driveable for me and Jules and that means we can then extract more from the car. It's amazing what that little difference to the cars around you. I think we've been racing cars that we've never raced before.

**OK, thank you for that? Esteban coming to you. Obviously still no top 10 in qualifying or the race yet this year for your team. However, last year developed pretty well in the second half of the season and picked up results. Do you feel it's possible to repeat that this year?**

**Esteban GUTIERREZ:** It's going to be a little bit more challenging. At the moment there is not any quick fix to our situation. It's not easy to accept and to realise the position we are in but all the team, every mechanic, every engineer, is doing his best to recover. At the moment we are in a position where we are fighting for ourselves. I mean I'm fighting basically with my team-mate and that's the only reference I can have and that's the only thing I can show from the driver's point of view.

**I think I'm right in saying that you've never raced any kind of car around this circuit. What are your thoughts on the track and how you've prepared for this weekend?**

**EG:** I heard very good comments from various drivers that it's a fun track even though it's quite simple, so I'm really looking forward to it. At the team we don't have a simulator, so there's no real preparation for it, but I've seen a lot of footage, some data as well, which I'm able to look at and that's basically it; not much to do. I'll do the track walk later on, pretty slow, to really see every detail on track and enjoy the weekend.

**Sergio, first of all, how are you feeling after your accident at the end of the Canadian Grand Prix? Any after-effects and have you had any conversations with Felipe Massa since then?**

**Sergio PEREZ:** Yeah, luckily nothing happened. We went straight to hospital; it was a pretty big shunt. I had a little bit of back pain, which went away during the days. I couldn't do normal training for a couple of days and no, I haven't had the chance to speak with Felipe.

**You were running competitive at the time [of your accident], so what about this track? Is it going to be another weekend that will suit Force India do you think? I understand you've got some upgrades coming this weekend as well?**

**SP:** Yeah we have a couple of upgrades, so we are really enthusiastic. I think this can be a good track as well for us. Yeah, we were doing so well in the last race; the strategy was going really well, we managed to do one stop and keep a very competitive pace, so I think we are really enthusiastic. It's the first really big upgrade we bring to the car since the beginning of the year, so hopefully that will put us in better shape and a better position.

**Fernando, you are the only driver on this panel who has raced a Formula One around this circuit before. What do you think about the circuit, what are your memories of your races here from the early 2000s?**

**Fernando ALONSO:** I think the circuit, as Esteban said before, is a very short circuit, so there are only five or six corners around here where you can make the time, so I expect all the cars to be very close. One or two tenths you can make a lot of places, so you just need to make a perfect lap on Saturday. If not it's a big penalty in terms of positions on the grid here. And to be honest I don't remember anything. We raced in 2001 and 2003 and I have no memories. Too long!

**We spoke in Montreal, obviously Ferrari brought quite a lot of upgrades to the car, which worked quite well in practice, but you weren't able to use all of them for the whole weekend. What's the plan for this weekend and what sort of shape do you think you're going to be in?**

**FA:** We have some new parts also coming here, as every race, and we will try to evaluate them tomorrow in the practice, trying to understand which ones we can put on the car on Saturday and which ones will require more time to bring to the cars. So tomorrow will be as usual a test Friday and hopefully we'll pick out the good ones for the rest of the weekend.

## QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

**Q: (Ian Parkes – Press Association): Question for Sergio. Sergio, we've just covered Felipe Massa's Thursday presser. To précis what he said: he described what you did in Canada as dangerous; that he would never trust you on track again; that he would think three times before considering an overtaken manoeuvre against you. However, he would be willing to sit down and talk things through with you. If I could just get your thoughts on all of that and whether indeed you might actually want to sit down with him?**

**SP:** Yeah, of course. Felipe, we all know he is a good guy. He has his opinion, I have my opinion, and we just have to sit down. Also we get the opportunity tomorrow, with the FIA, to review the accident once again, as we believe we have enough evidence to prove I did nothing wrong.

**Q: (Frederic Feret – l'Equipe) – A question for Daniel. Is there any kind of advantage to drive on a Red Bull circuit this weekend? Did you drive it years before on a simulator, things like that?**

**DR:** Yeah, I did some simulator work last week – like a lot of us probably though. And last year I did a filming day with Toro Rosso, so I've been around the track but just a few times. It's a short lap and we won't take too long to adapt and get used to it. And as Fernando said I think qualifying is going to be really, really tight, especially by the time that comes we're all going to have our eye in and yeah I think mistakes are going to be costly here so it's just about putting it all together. But it should be fun. I don't think I've got an advantage here, I think by Saturday we'll all be up to speed.

**Q: (Peter Vamosi – Vas Nepe Kiadoi KFT) Question to all drivers. Did you make any bets on the football championships?**

**FA:** I didn't. I didn't. I don't know who's going to win, it's open and...yeah... I will not bet, it's too difficult.

**How about you Esteban? Mexico are going really well...**

**EG:** Yeah, really well and I feel proud of it. It's great to see. They barely made it into the World Cup and now they're playing really well and in a good position. So hopefully they keep on going like this and we can fight for the win at the end.

**Max, big night for England tonight.**

**MC:** It is a big night. I didn't put a bet down because I've never seen a poor bookie but it was a good game [England vs Italy]. I did tell someone to put a bet down on it being 2-1 but I got it the wrong way around. Italy beat us 2-1. If we can get a win in today it will really boost us for the rest of the tournament.

**Daniel, the Australians tried hard yesterday...**

**DR:** Yeah, we're now playing for the wooden spoon. We'll see how we go, hopefully we can win one but, y'know, they fought well, I think both games. Obviously they lost but they scored goals, found the back of the net, they attacked and took risks, so we have to be proud of that at least: went down swinging.

**Have you been enjoying it Sergio?**

**SP:** Yeah, really enjoying it. We've done a fantastic job in the first two game. We played against Brazil the other day and are doing really well. Right now we have the best, the most important game with Croatia to go through to the next match. Hopefully we can go on and keep going. They're definitely doing a good job and I think it can be one of the best World Cups in the history of my country.

**Marcus, Sweden watching from the sidelines. Have you put a bet on?**

**ME:** I haven't, no. It's a shame we're not there but I'm sure Sweden will fight back and be strong in the next one.

**Q: (Kate Walker – crash.net) Looking ahead to the German Grand Prix, could you tell us what you're looking forward to about racing at Hockenheim please.**

**FA:** It's just another weekend I guess. Is there something special there? No? Normal.

**Max, how have you gone there?**

**MC:** Yeah, I've raced there a couple of times in GP2 and it's a challenging track, not particularly easy to get right but I'm looking forward to it. I like Nürburgring slightly more but I'll give it my best shot.

**Esteban, is it one of your favourites?**

**EG:** Yes, I really like it a lot. I have very good memories there. In my early days in my career, Formula BMW, Formula 3, GP3 as well, so it's going to be one I'm really looking forward to.

**Marcus?**

**ME:** I've been there quite a few times and won there in Formula 3. I usually go well there and hopefully can keep that up.

**Sergio?**

**SP:** I have good memory. It was my first-ever podium in Europe, when I was racing in BMW. And, always good memories to go into that place.

**Daniel?**

**DR:** Turn One is fun. It's fast. Also coming into the Stadium, the other fast right-hander – are my two preferred corners. Yeah.

**Q: (Flavio Vanetti – Corriere della Sera) Couple of questions to Fernando. In these days we had some quotes by Luca di Montezemolo about the necessity for big changes in Formula One. How do you judge them? Second question: yesterday it was decided to reduce the in-season tests. What's your opinion about this decision about Formula One?**

**FA:** I think the president is right, in a way. The show that probably we've put in this year is not good enough in some of the races. Also, when one team is dominating so much as Mercedes, probably the spectators prefer some more action, as probably they like Canada Grand Prix that everyone seems to enjoy. Yeah, we will try to put on a better show in the next races and if the teams or the fans or whatever, they have any ideas, they will be welcome to have a better show.

**[In-season testing]**

Obviously this is the way the sport has been going in the last couple of years, y'know? Now for many years, reducing the tests more and more. They have some good things and some bad things. Probably the cost is the good thing. The teams can save a lot of money and we have more teams that can survive year after year and we can keep having a good grid. On the other hand it's the only sport in the world that you cannot train. So, for us probably it's not a big thing but for a young driver coming from Formula 3 or GP2 or whatever, the first time they go to the circuit if FP1. There is no possibility to test at any time and that's probably a unique thing in our sport unfortunately. But at the same time, as I said, I understand the cost problem and if they decide this it's because it's the best decision.

**Q: (David Croft – Sky F1) There are two big issues that have been discussed: there's the cost cutting and then there's the improvement of the show. Gentlemen, as you're the guys that are out there racing, do you think the show needs improving, and if so, what can the sport do to put on a better show on a Saturday or a Sunday afternoon? What's the one thing you'd like to see to promote better racing, if we need it in Formula One?**

**ME:** I think the show is... obviously there is room for improvement... but I think overall it's good fun to drive, the cars are quite tricky to drive but we've seen this year in many races that there is good racing, good battles, it's just... yeah, there are always things to improve, I don't know exactly what, but I think still, the racing has been good this year – and we saw in Canada how good the racing can be.

**Sergio?**

**SP:** I think there is a big room for improvement, to improve the show. There is one team dominating, normally every year. I mean in Formula One there is always one team winning pretty much every race, so that's a bit boring for the fans and also for the drivers if you're not in that car. I think there's not much you can do. Reduce the cost to give an opportunity to the smaller teams to try and be competitive. I come from a big team to a smaller team and I see the reduced amount of budget and with this limited budget it is very difficult to compete against big teams. I think that would help a bit, to reduce a bit the cost to be able to have more equal chances of fighting big teams.

**Esteban, another thoughts on this?**

**EG:** I think everything is more related to the cost cutting, which is probably the most important topic at the moment. In terms of the show, it was been very mixed in the last years which more regulation on the tyres, more pitstops, everything has been probably more interesting but at the same time in some way a little bit more confusing. I think the more information is given to the fans about what's really happening in the race, this can improve the understanding and it can directly improve the entertainment as well.

**Daniel?**

**DR:** Not much more to add, I think it's all been said. I think they've improved it with things like DRS and all that. I think it's been quite a good addition in my opinion and at least... I mean the F1 cars this year, in high speed corners and that, you can still follow fairly well. We can keep, I think, a closer distance than probably what there was in the past. From what I see, there are things that are definitely going in the right direction. The rest, a lot of it is related to cost-cutting and all the rest but that's about it.

**Max, your thoughts.**

**MC:** Yeah, I think cost-cutting has a huge part to do with it. I think it has to be slightly more efficient or the winnings have to be spread more fairly so the smaller teams have more to play with so then the cars are closer in comparison so then the racing will increase. I think that's one that will definitely help the spectators. Instead of having two seconds between some cars if there's only half a second it's going to make the racing better to watch. And I think, Formula One is cutting edge technology and we all know everyone spends there lives on their phones and iPads now – I think we can try to put it out there slightly more. I've seen some pretty cool apps where you can select whatever camera you want, pause it when you want, rewind. I think getting it out to the younger population as well would really help.

**Fernando, any thoughts what you'd like to see**

**FA:** Well, probably, as we've all said , the cost is the biggest thing here. All the ideas you have are closely related to the cost as well. So that's not an easy thing. In my opinion the KERS should come back to our cars. We have now the electric helping us on the straight but we cannot decide, or we don't have the extra boost we had last year to help with overtaking because you can use it in different places compared to other cars. Now we all use more or less the same energy in the same places, so that's impossible to overtake. And then tyres are a big thing. Bringing in a tyre competition or whatever will mix the teams. We could help the small teams like they do in MotoGP, giving them a different spec of tyres or different fuel quantity or whatever to use in the race. So there are some ideas we could take from other sports – but as I said, all needs to take care of the cost as well and that's the main priority.

**Q: (Adam Hay-Nicholls – Metro) Fernando, another football question. How surprised and depressed are you about last night's result?**

**FA:** I'm surprised, I'm not depressed. I think that (sooner) or later we had to lose. We've been winning for some years now and we knew that sooner or later the day would come that we were back home, we were back home a little bit earlier than we expected, probably. They will enjoy a little bit more holiday break now but that's the way it is. We didn't play well enough to qualify, the others played better - sadly because the country has a lot of expectations when the World Cup comes around, so it's good to give some happiness to everybody but we just need to say thanks for all that this generation gave us in the last couple of years and hopefully come back stronger in four years' time.

**Q: (Christobal Rosaleny – Car and Driver) To all of you: Fernando introduced the topic of the tyres and it seems that Pirelli is going to keep the blankets next year. Did they ask you for your opinion to take that decision, and what's your opinion?**

**SP:** Yeah, we asked them. I think it's very unsafe to take the blankets away. I don't think that will really improve much the show. I think I agree with Fernando, we need to do something quite different to what we're doing at the moment, to give more opportunity to all the teams, smaller teams to be able to fight, maybe not for wins but if you do a weekend well, to be able to score points to give a bonus to the team. This thing is what we need a bit more mixed in Formula One; it's always the same teams winning and it's normal that people get bored of that.

**ME:** I think it's the right decision, especially with the tyres that we have this year; in general they're quite hard so to take away the blankets would be making life a bit too difficult, in my opinion.

**EG:** Very hard to say. I used to race in other categories without blankets. All the slicks are very different tyres but obviously that can be adapted. It's all related to safety as well. If it's raining a little bit and for the right tyres it's getting drier and you go out without the tyres at the right temperature then it can be very difficult and very dangerous in my opinion.

**DR:** I think it's more for safety, especially at the start of the race when there are a lot of cars in close proximity. I don't think it's quite necessary right now to do that. I think we can find other measures or other things, better solutions. I think tyre blankets are still a good thing.

**MC:** Yeah, as Esteban said, we all came from junior formulas where you don't have tyre blankets and we survived perfectly well, but I think for Formula One we'd drastically have to change the compounds for it to be safe so it's a good thing we've still got them.

**FA:** (You agree? OK).

**Q: (Marco Canseco Fuentes – Marca) Fernando, can you understand the difficulties that Sebastian Vettel has found to adapt to the new powertrain, new way of driving compared to the high level of Daniel Ricciardo?**

**FA:** I don't know. We have enough problems in our garage that we are not competitive at all at the moment, that you don't look so much in the garages around you. You just take the opportunity. I think Daniel is doing a fantastic job and Sebastian was also doing a good job in some races with some bad luck but I'm sure that at the end of the year is when you need to see how the championship went and I'm sure that Sebastian will come back very strong sooner or later so we will see.

**Q: (Sim Sim Wissgott - Agence France Presse) Daniel, what does Red Bull have to do to catch up with Mercedes? Can it do that and is your win in Montreal the start of a winning streak?**

**DR:** We just have to keep... like everyone, everyone is chasing them and just keeps working. Definitely the win gave us more motivation, not that we didn't have it but it's given us that extra little bit. It's encouraged everyone to want more of it. I saw the team on the pit wall when I crossed the line and it was as if it was their first win again in Formula One. It was refreshing, so the motivation is there. I think it's still going to take a bit of time, it's not going to happen overnight, the gap is big as we all know, but as I've said, hopefully we can stand on the top step again this year and try and close them down. We're chipping away at it.

**Q: (Vladimir Rogovets – SB Belarus Segodnya) To all the drivers: the Red Bull Ring is a new track to young drivers. In your opinion, which point in this track can be the most exciting?**

**MC:** I think it's probably a huge percentage of drivers on the grid who haven't actually driven it so it's going to be an exciting experience. I quite like the look of the last two (corners) to be honest. I don't think they're going to be great for overtaking but driving-wise, if you can get a quick entry into the second to last corner and roll the speed through into the last corner, I think when you get that right it will be pretty satisfying.

**FA:** I don't know really, probably the last corner, downhill and you're over the exit kerb many times so you get excited that it's the last corner, you want to finish the lap perfectly if you haven't made any mistakes so it's a tricky corner.

**DR:** Yeah, what looks good is the last two... Fast, flowing and the last corner looks like you can throw the car in, use the banking of the circuit there to help so I think the last sector will be fun.

**EG:** Yeah, the last corner looks exciting but at the moment I don't know, because I haven't driven it so I will have a look tomorrow.

**ME:** Yeah, I think the track is quite cool, to be honest and it will be quite fun to drive. It's not super-technical, it doesn't seem like there are any corners leading into one another but still there are some good parts like the double left-hander and the last couple of corners, so I think it will be good fun for us to drive.

**SP:** Very short circuit. I think definitely the last two corners look really enjoyable, difficult to overtake and to follow a car as well, so maybe I will tell you after the race which one gives you the best opportunity to overtake and to have more fun in the race.

**Q: (Mikhail Rudoi – Autodigest Belarus) Daniel, after your win, do you still have good relations with Sebastian or has something changed?**

**DR:** I think it's still OK. He showed a lot of respect and good sportsmanship after the race. Obviously he would have loved to have been on the top step but as I said, he showed that he was happy for me, that I got it. Yeah, it's good. I think it's just going to make him more motivated so I obviously can't rest now, I can't get too complacent, keep pushing and hopefully it works well for both of us, get both of us further up the grid.

Ends