



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

## Press Information

### 2015 British Grand Prix Thursday Press Conference Transcript

02.07.2015

**DRIVERS – Valtteri BOTTAS (Williams), Jenson BUTTON (McLaren), Kimi RAIKKONEN (Ferrari), Marcus ERICSSON (Sauber), Pastor MALDONADO (Lotus), Will STEVENS (Manor)**

#### PRESS CONFERENCE

**Valtteri, why don't we start with you? You finished second here last year from, I think, 14<sup>th</sup> on the grid – equal best result so far in Formula One, your finish. Is this one of your favourite tracks?**

**Valtteri BOTTAS:** Well, it's one of them, definitely. It's one of these old school tracks and really high speed, so it's always really fun to drive here. I think it should be good for our car as well, like we saw last year. We had some new bits for Austria and I think they should work maybe slightly better here, so looking forward to the weekend.

**Well, podiums for Williams at the last two races, but can you tell us a bit more about why you think your car particularly suits this circuit and the things that you're bringing here that are going to help that?**

**VB:** Long straights – that's where we have been strong the last one-and-a-half years and I think we've been this year pretty good in high-speed corners as well and probably the updates we had in Austria... they definitely created more downforce but maybe were a bit too draggy for that circuit. Maybe we can make better use of that and if we just get everything right it could be a strong weekend but let's see.

**Jenson, coming to you, this year I think it's fair to say it's been 'hard yards' as we say here in England, but does racing here on home soil raise the spirits a bit?**

**Jenson BUTTON:** It does. Every race that we race in is a special race, you can find reasons to be excited, but when it's your home grand prix it's always very special. The British fans and public whether it's raining, 32 degrees, there's a British guy at the front or a British guy at the back, they will always be here to support us, which is fantastic. It's always a very, very special atmosphere here and I'm really looking forward to the weekend.

**World champion drivers are obviously leaders within a team. What's the message to Honda and the McLaren management? What strategy do you want to adopt in terms of performance, reliability and what would be a win at the moment?**

**JB:** Well, first of all I don't think a press conference is the best place to do that, you know. We are one team and we work together and if we have issues we talk amongst ourselves and that's the only way to improve a situation. The confidence is high within the team. You might say why is that, as the last two races have been very difficult, which they have, but there is a massive belief within the team that we will improve. There is a lot in the pipeline. I don't want to look too far into the future, you know, I'm one of those people that wants to live in the moment and do the best I can right now. It's the British Grand Prix, in front of them home crowd and I'm really looking forward to it and I will maximise what we have this weekend.

**Thank you for that. Kimi, coming to you, the GPDA fans' survey revealed that you are the most popular Formula One driver it would seem, amongst those polled. What's your reaction to that?**

**Kimi RAIKKONEN:** I think it's a good thing. I would rather take the fans than not having them. Obviously, some people... maybe I was lucky that they were ones that answered the survey, but I'm happy to have fans and obviously that's a good thing.

**What do you think it is about your character that appeals to them?**

**KR:** You'd have to go and ask them who voted, so...

**There's a few too many to do that I think. The team is telling us that retaining your seat for next season is in your hands, do you feel you are on the right track to meet their targets.**

**KR:** I don't know. Obviously they'll make the decision. We try to do good races. Obviously the last race was a bit difficult but that's part of the game, sometimes you have that. Who knows: I don't know anything more than you guys, so I will know hopefully at some point what will happen. There are always speculations to start off the year and it's always the same stories. It doesn't really surprise me a lot so let's see what happens.

**Thanks. Marcus, coming to you, you edged it over your team-mate in Canada, he edged it over you in Austria, describe the duel between you this season at Sauber and what the atmosphere is like within the team.**

**Marcus ERICSSON:** The atmosphere is good. I think me and Felipe are working well together. Obviously he has had the upper hand so far but I'm looking to change that, working hard for that. Now, coming to Silverstone, it's one of my favourite tracks, I really enjoy driving here, some really great corner combinations, so hopefully I can fight back and have a good weekend.

**It looks like Sauber has been caught after that strong start, with the big points finished in the early races – only one points finish in the last five races for the team. Do you have some answers up your sleeve in development terms for the second half of the season and how much of a boost do you think Mark Smith, the new technical director, will be?**

**ME:** I think we knew that the summer would be a bit difficult for us; we have a big upgrade coming after the summer. We are hurting a bit at the moment with people bringing updates to the recent races and we lost a bit of touch to some of them. But I think still we showed in Austria last time out that if we maximise what we have we can still be competitive and fight in the midfield, so that's what we need to focus on doing. On Mark Smith, obviously I worked with him a bit last year at Caterham and I have a very positive feeling with him joining the team. Obviously he's not going to be able to much short-term, but I think in the longer term he is a very good person to have in the team, with his experience, so it's a good thing for Sauber.

**Q: Pastor, points scored in the last two races but you've never scored points at Silverstone, amazingly. Looking to put that right this weekend?**

**Pastor MALDONADO:** I hope so. Do my best.

**Q: How did you leave it with Max Verstappen after the battle in the last race, in Austria? Spectacular action on track. How have you left it on a personal level?**

**PM:** I mean it was a great battle. This kind of battle I always enjoy, y'know? This is real fight in Formula One, which is always fair. For sure a couple of times it was very close, because he was trying to put me over the track – but this is part of the race. I really like the stewards that allowed us to race and to have more opportunities to fight in the track. Yeah, it was great. For me it was OK. After that, the race started very badly, we had some problems in the start and then we recovered quite well, thanks to the strategy, thanks to the team as well, and I drove quite well.

**Q: Will, celebrated your 24<sup>th</sup> birthday last weekend – what are your feelings on making your home Formula One debut in front of a capacity crowd on Sunday at the British Grand Prix?**

**Will STEVENS:** I'm really looking forward to this race. I have been for a long time. Clearly for us, growing up we watch this race and have come to it for many years. So, to be here for my first home grand prix is really exciting. Can't wait to get out there on Friday and see everybody around the circuit.

**Q: The last couple of races haven't been so good for you or the team. The margin – particularly in Austria – seemed to be bigger than it's been elsewhere. Are there technical reasons for that due to the package that you've got – and how do you think you'll be fixed this weekend?**

**WS:** I think the last few races have been a little more up-and-down. I think the actual times from the free practice sessions in Austria were pretty strong. Quali for us didn't really work out because of the conditions – but looking ahead to this weekend, we should be making some steps forwards with the car for sure. We have quite a few upgrades here, which is nice. So, looking forwards to Friday to see how much that can help us out.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Kimi, accident here last year, accident in last race in Austria, how difficult is it for you to come to this weekend?**

**KR:** It's a new race, different weekend. It doesn't matter if you have an accident. It was obviously bad for our race but that's part of the game. It doesn't change this weekend at all. I've had accidents before and probably will in the future, you pay the price when things do wrong.

**Q: (Mike Doodson – Grand Prix Plus) A question for Jenson and Kimi. Last weekend we had Formula E racing in London, there were a few good, old F1 names among the drivers. Did either of you see the race and would you seriously consider switching to electric racing after Formula One?**

**JB:** To answer the second question: no. And did I watch the race? No. I have watched a race this year and the reason is, it's not because of the cars themselves, it's because of the drivers. There's a lot of drivers that I've raced against over the years, I think there's 13 ex-F1 drivers, and that's what makes the category exciting: they've got some real talent there; they've done a good job of getting talented drivers in the cars. I think there's a great place for electric racing – if that's what you want to call it – but I think it's great and there's a good fight amongst the talented drivers that are there. But it's not something that interests me. Motorsport is motorsport for me. Something that I love is the smell, the sound and the speed – and that's what Formula One is all about.

**Kimi?**

**KR:** yeah, actually I saw it. I saw the race and I'm not so interested in the future in some point to race them. It's... I mean they've done well to go in the places that they race – I think it's nice for people but, I mean, for me, unfortunately... we always talk here: it doesn't go fast; it doesn't look spectacular. They are... in my view they are pretty slow. The concept is probably nice in the future. Right now, yes, they get the good racing out of it but it doesn't really... it's something that doesn't really excite me really – but obviously I'm happy for them to make such a good race series out of it.

**Q: (Daan de Geus – NU.NL) Kimi, you let it be known earlier in the season that you were quite happy about the 2015 Ferrari and the way it handles and it fits your driving style. Ferrari have obviously been updating the car and made some changes to it. Do you still like the way it handles and the way it suits your way of driving?**

**KR:** I don't see why I wouldn't suddenly like it; because I've had an accident doesn't change anything. I've had accidents sometimes, like I said, it's part of the game. We improved the car and it's still a great car, obviously probably not fast enough to challenge Mercedes all the time but it's a very good car and it's a massive improvement from last year. Things go wrong sometimes but it doesn't mean that you suddenly hate the car or you don't like things. It's just a part of the game. Like I said, it's a good package and obviously we want to improve it and make it faster. Things could always be better. Even if you're in a winning car you're always wanting more out of it. Like I said, we've come such a long way from last year which people always forget. We're still a work in progress to improve things.

**Q: (Daniel Ortelli – Agence France Presse) Jenson, you were very vocal and supportive when the survey came out in Monaco and you're one of the most experienced drivers; what's your general comment or specific comment about the results of that survey? Were there some things that surprised you, is it in keeping with what you think of F1? Is there anything you can tell us about the reaction to the results?**

**JB:** I don't think there are any massive surprises in there. Obviously Kimi being the favourite driver of the fans – we knew that anyway, didn't we? No, I don't think there were any massive surprises. I think it's really nice to get the view of the people that are out there that are watching us race, whether it's at the circuit or on TV or read about Formula One. It's nice to see their opinions. I think a lot of us agree – probably not with everything – but we all have our own opinions of the ways that Formula One can be improved. It's great to see that there are lots of ideas that are floating around for the future in terms of making the cars wider, tyres wider, lighter, hopefully more sound. These are all things that are interesting and I think that's great to see so hopefully they will happen in the near future.

**Q: Do any of the other drivers have anything they would like to add on the findings of the survey?**

**Q: (Joe Bernstein – Daily Mail) Question to Will: you said that you used to watch the British Grand Prix as a kid when growing up. Can you tell us your first memory and also maybe your favourite race memory, watching it?**

**WS:** Being British, obviously it's a race I come to a lot so... Probably the first race I've been to was probably ten, twelve years ago. I remember it was wet but that's not really too unusual for England. There's been lots of good races here, more so on the old circuit and now obviously with the new layout – personally, I really like it. The racing here is always exciting, there's always a good atmosphere here and that's where the British fans do a good job. I'm sure this year's going to be the same and I'm looking forward to seeing what it brings.

**Q: (Joe Bernstein – Daily Mail) Is there one stand-out memory that you have?**

**WS:** Not particularly for here, no.

**Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Valtteri, you seem to be very happy with the car after the Austrian test. Is this the best Williams car you've ever driven and is it good enough to repeat last year's result here?**

**VB:** I think we've been improving all the time so I think every race it's the best car we've had, I think. It's good that we're making the right things because it seems like since last year nearly every single bit we've put on the car has made the car better so it's a good direction and like I said, I'm just looking forward for this weekend to see how strong we can be, possibly even stronger than Austria but let's see.

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