



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

## Press Information

### 2015 Brazilian Grand Prix Thursday Press Conference Transcript

12.11.2015

**DRIVERS – Felipe MASSA (Williams), Felipe NASR (Sauber), Max VERSTAPPEN (Toro Rosso), Nico HULKENBERG (Force India), Jenson BUTTON (McLaren), Sebastian VETTEL (Ferrari)**

#### PRESS CONFERENCE

**Jenson, if we could start with you, a former winner of this race of course, back in 2013 and you clinched your 2009 world championship here as well. But clearly this year the reliability challenges continued in Mexico, so what sort of shape will McLaren be in this weekend?**

**Jenson BUTTON :** Well, first of all, I wish it was 2013, it was actually 2012, but it was a few years. But I think we all love coming here. There's always a fantastic atmosphere. A lot of world championships have been decided here, so a lot of great memories for many drivers and for the fans as well. For me, coming here this year, it's obviously not going to be an easy weekend but it will be better than the last one definitely. So looking forward to it and we'll get the maximum out of what we have, which is always what we do.

**You've had championship years, race-winning years, but you've also had some tough years as well, so you've been in this position before. When you have a tough season, presumably you always want to take something out of it that you can use as a platform for the year that follows. What will you be taking out of 2015?**

**JB:** Lots of learning. It's obviously still... I know we keep saying it, but it is still a very young partnership. We've learned so much this year with the power unit, with the idea of the aerodynamics of the car, because it's very different to a normal McLaren, so there is a lot of learning to take from this season. We obviously need to make a big step next year – we know that – so it's going to be a long, hard winter, but an exciting one as well.

**Thank you for that? Nico, coming to you, it's been a strange season for you in many ways. Obviously you had great success, winning Le Mans during the summer, but in Formula One less than half the points you scored in 2014, some bad luck clearly in there as well. However, on the upside Force India are virtually assured of fifth in the Constructors', which was the target, so can you consider this season a success.**

**Nico HULKENBERG:** Yes, definitely a season with two faces, but most importantly for the team that we come away with that fifth after Abu Dhabi. I think we need three points over Lotus this weekend to secure it. That's the main target. Like you say, for me personally there have been some really good races and some struggles but I think that's how it works in a long season.

**The team has scored 81 points in the last nine races, since you brought the car on stream, is that the limit of what this team can achieve or do you think you can use this a platform for more next season?**

**NH:** That's the idea, that we can continue growing and use this solid base that we have now with this car to develop more and get closer to the top for sure. The key will be the winter, that we really develop in the right direction and keep moving forward, but I have good faith in and trust in the team that we can achieve that.

**Thank you for that. Coming to you Felipe, a two-time Brazilian Grand Prix winner of course. It's pretty much certain now that Williams will end the season in third place again, so is that a success given the level of the teams you are racing against, or is there an element of disappointment that you couldn't move up from where you were last year.**

**Felipe MASSA:** Well, first of all it's always a big pleasure to be here, racing at home, where I was actually born, where I actually started learning anything about racing – on the other side of the wall on the go-kart track and then to have a chance to race here, in a place where I remember going to the grandstand and standing up every lap that a Brazilian guy was passing, so it's really a dream for us to race here. A big welcome for Felipe [Nasr] for his first time here and I'm really looking forward to do an amazing race. Fortunately, I managed to win two times here and I'm really looking forward to having another opportunity to achieve another victory here, which is like a dream for us. So we'll try everything we can. I would say we are third in the championship with a good margin to the fourth, but also unfortunately a good margin to these guys here [Ferrari] in second. So I think it's a good championship. You cannot say... you always want more. For us inside the team we are not 100 per cent happy because we want more. Unfortunately, we did not have everything in a perfect way to finish even second. But I would say it's a positive season for us. We did a good job. We worked well at many, many races. We fight with the big teams, which I think we cannot forget that. Definitely we want more for next year and we want to finish where we are, in third, which I think it would be OK to do that, especially in the two tracks [remaining], that I believe we can be competitive [at] and we can fight for podiums and have a really strong performance. So, yeah, I think it's positive. Last year we started not in a really good shape; we finished in a really, really good shape. So we managed to get third at the end, which everybody was really, really happy [with] and this year we were third during the whole championship. It's better than last year but we definitely want more.

**We've just experience incredible levels of enthusiasm for Formula One at the Mexican Grand Prix. Formula One has been in Brazil for many years now, so what's the level of enthusiasm like here at the moment?**

**FM:** Actually, here in Brazil there has always been a big enthusiasm. I remember most of the years that people... or the drivers, or the people that work in Formula One, they were always saying it is an amazing place. People are really, really excited. You can see the people, the way Brazilians support the race, us as Brazilian drivers, our mentality is really, really. Definitely it was nice to see what happened in Mexico and I think that's what Formula One needs. I think everybody was really happy to be in Mexico, to race in that atmosphere, you know, people really enjoying whatever practice, whatever time we were on the track. That's what we need. I'm sure we will see a lot of support here in Brazil, in our way, but it was very nice to be in Mexico and to see the people were supporting Formula One.

**Q: Coming to you Felipe [Nasr], continuing the Brazilian theme, amazingly your first time, I think I'm right in saying, racing here at Interlagos since 2008? But you are Brazilian obviously, so presumably you feel a certain magic at the prospect of racing here.**

**Felipe NASR:** Yeah, for sure it's going to be the first experience. A whole new weekend for me, being at Sauber this year. I had a little taste last year with Williams in Free Practice One and all I can say is that I just cannot wait to see all this energy. The atmosphere is going to be amazing here with all the fans. I feel there are a lot of people following the season and especially, you know, for myself coming first time here in a circuit that has so much history, so much nice moments in the

past with all the Brazilian drivers and I'm just about to begin my own... so it's a pleasure to be here and hopefully coming out of... if we can score a few points here it would be nice to share with everyone.

**Q: You've got 27 points on the board this year, in your rookie season, more than double your team-mate's score. Are you pleased with the impact that you've made on Formula One in your first season?**

**FN:** Yes, I have to be pleased. It's been a tough season for us. We started pretty well, I think other teams were still struggling with the reliability of the car and we were able to get some nice opportunities at the beginning of the year to score nice points, especially in Australia, in the very first race. That fifth place was amazing. I couldn't ever ask for more in my first ever race in Formula One. For me it's been a season of a lot of learning as well. Getting a lot of experience. I've learned a few new circuits as well and of course we've struggled to carry on the development of the car but we knew we were going to face that at some point in the season. We see, for example, the McLarens are much closer to us now. Only nine points behind, so we're trying our best with what we've got. Hopefully maybe a few more points until the end of the season and especially here in Brazil would be a nice way to end up the season.

**Q: Sebastian, you were very self-critical in Mexico after the race. Now you've had a chance to debrief fully with the team, was it all your responsibility? Were there issues with the car that contributed to what happened in your race?**

**Sebastian VETTEL:** No, there was nothing wrong with the car, so as I said after the race, was my mistake. So, I don't think I was very self-critical, I was just honest.

**Q: There are many counting on you to take the fight to Mercedes next season. Are you yet at the point of believing that this is definitely possible?**

**SV:** Well, it's always difficult to predict what's going to happen but surely it is our target. Surely I can see what's happening in the background, the work that has gone into this year, the work that is going into next year back in the factory, back in Maranello with all the people, so it looks promising and I think we should be able to make a good step forward. Now, obviously the most important day is when you put the new car on the track and you see what it does – but that's still a bit far away. For now I think we have two races left and we want to do well and ideally get the best possible results here and in Abu Dhabi.

**Q: Max, approaching the end of your first year of Formula One experience, which specific areas do you feel you've developed most?**

**Max VERSTAPPEN:** I think in every area I improved. Especially after only one season in lower categories, when you make the jump to F1, I think the raw speed is there, it's just you need to develop in all the other areas – and I think I coped with that pretty well. So I'm pretty happy with how the whole season went in general. I improved in everything. Qualifying I think especially, that's all going well now but all the areas, especially with the help of the team, it's going much better and I expected it to be like that because I am still very young and I have a lot of things to learn.

**Q: What made the difference with qualifying?**

**MV:** Experience. Understanding the tyres a bit more, those things.

**Q: How much of a hurry are you in to get yourself into a top team?**

**MV:** I'm never in a hurry but, of course, if you have two fourth places you're very close to the podium, you want to be on it. But I still have a lot of things to learn and I'm pretty happy where I

am right now – but hopefully in a couple of years I can fight for victories. I think everybody wants that.

## QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

**Q: (Silvia Arias – Parabrisas) I would like to know from all of you the weak points and the strong points of your team during this year?**

**NH:** The strongest point and the weakest point? I think the strong point is that we're very efficient with what we've got, if you consider the size of our team and the budget we have. I think we make a pretty good job of it. And the weakness is, yeah, we need deeper pockets.

**JB:** We don't have any weaknesses, we're perfect. Where are the strengths? No, we have a lot of strengths and I think everyone knows McLaren and what they've achieved. It is still the same team. In terms of what we do on a race weekend, I think we're doing a very good job, we're getting the best out of what we have, I think maximising the potential of what we have at the moment. The issues for us are, as I've said before, as I've said, it's a lot younger our project, than others so it does take time and obviously during a season it's very difficult to make changes but this winter is a very important one for us, to make those big changes and come out a lot stronger next year because we don't want to be where we are, we want to be fighting near the front. Whether we can win races or not, that's another question but I think we can at last fight at the front next year. There's a lot of hard work going on and I think another positive with this team is the confidence. Even in difficult times like now there's still a lot of confidence in the team and they're still working flat out to improve the car and the power unit, so there's a good atmosphere which a lot of people are surprised about but there really is.

**FM:** Well, I think for the size of the team I think we're doing a great job, compared to the big teams. For what we have, I think we're doing a really really good job. We're fighting with the big teams and I think we cannot forget that that's a very difficult achievement and that's very important for us. We definitely have some points that... we need to be more efficient, perfect with many things which are a little bit easier to fix, like strategies, even pit stops but it's something that we're working so hard to improve but I think for our size we're doing a really really good job, so we just need a little bit more money to put in the car and I'm sure we're going to make the lives of these guys even more difficult.

**FN:** Well, I guess for us at Sauber has been in a difficult situation as well. If you look back at last year, they scored zero points, they didn't score any points in the season and we have surpassed any expectations for this season scoring quite a good amount of points when we could, when we had the opportunity. What I like to see is the motivation of the people there. Nobody is giving up, you know, on what we have, what we can do. We've got good people inside the team. It's just a matter of time, we have to be patient now and things are looking better for next year so all I want to do is also to fight for better results so when things come together, when it's time to do it, I'm quite confident next year we're going to do a step forward again.

**SV:** Well, I think the strong point that I have certainly been overwhelmed by is the passion for Ferrari, I think inside the team but also the fan base around the world so the Red Magic. The weak point – the food is a strong point, believe me – the weak point? Obviously we've had a great season so far and after the races that we won, we had some good celebrations as well and I think we can improve on how resilient we are to certain drinks but it comes with practice, I hope, so hopefully we can practise many times next year.

**MV:** I think the strong point is the atmosphere in the team and maybe it's something Italian. I enjoyed it a lot also in go-karting and I still have it here as well. It's like a big family and I think when a driver feels well in a team, also the performance goes better so definitely enjoying it. Also the team is still very young and they are very ambitious and I think already compared to last year the car is a big step forward, so I'm very happy with that, to be able to drive such a good car. So

yeah, the weak point, I don't really have a big weak point in the team. It's just that we're missing a little bit of top speed, maybe that's the only thing.

**Q: (José Roberto Lioi– Globo Radio) Sebastian, is this a crucial race for second place in the Drivers' championship?**

**SV:** Yes. Yeah, obviously there's two races to go, the last one didn't help but yeah, for sure, as long as it's possible to finish second you want to finish second rather than third so clearly our target is to at least try and split the Mercedes and split them the right way but the best way to do that or the best recipe is to just do our job and try to achieve the maximum and then we will see what happens on Sunday.

**Q: (Luigi Perna – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Seb, according to Niki Lauda, at this moment Ferrari matches Mercedes in terms of power with this engine but not in terms of chassis and aerodynamics. Do you agree?**

**SV:** Well, as a fact we are not yet a match otherwise this season would have been very different but I'm very happy, as I said, with the season so far, with the progress we've made and also with the things that I think we have in the pipeline for the future. Now Niki is usually not the best one to trust, let's put it this way, he's changing his opinion very quickly and sometimes what he says makes sense and other times it doesn't make any sense so yeah, the more he's talking about us the better it is for us because he can feel that maybe we're coming, so hopefully that's good news.

Ends