



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

**2016 Austrian Grand Prix
Thursday Press Conference Transcript**

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DRIVERS – Esteban GUTIÉRREZ (Haas), Felipe NASR (Sauber), Kevin MAGNUSSEN (Renault), Daniil KVYAT (Toro Rosso), Daniel RICCIARDO (Red Bull Racing), Kimi RÄIKKÖNEN (Ferrari)

PRESS CONFERENCE

Daniil, can we start with you. Good qualifying last time out in Baku but results are proving hard to come by at the moment. Are you now fully settled back in with the team and what are your goals for the rest of the season?

Daniil KVYAT: Yeah, I think step by step it was coming better and better. We had a few competitive, in terms of pace, weekends and Baku was certainly one of them, starting from the third row. That was already a good achievement, even though of course the points are given on Sunday, that's why we didn't manage to finish let's say. But I think there are plenty of races left, things are coming better and better and I'm feeling more settled in the team. They are giving me lots of support because obviously coming in like this wasn't very simple but now things are more clear and I'm just enjoying racing. I'm enjoying myself and to be honest I'm having a really good time.

This is another power circuit obviously. Are we starting to see the effects of your one-year old power unit versus all the current units?

DK: Yeah, we do. To be honest, already Baku was one of those tracks where it wasn't meant to be easy for us but nevertheless we found good compromises and managed to make a good Saturday. I think here is going to be another very difficult weekend for us. Obviously it is a power-limited track and most of the time on the straight it's not the biggest friend of us. Still, you know, we have to keep fighting and play the best game with the cars we have in hand, so we will just do our best and then we will see where we are.

Thank you for that. Felipe, coming to you, you won the GP2 feature race here back in 2014 and you made the most of the package in Baku, getting into Q2 and then racing up to P12. How satisfied were you with that result, which I think was your best of the season so far?

Felipe NASR: Oh, it was pretty good, you know. I think it was one of the very first trouble-free weekends I had and I was able to extract the maximum from the car, from the strategy. We actually had pretty good pace in the race, able to fight the McLarens and I was pretty close to the top 10. I mean, not enough but it was a decent weekend, you know. If we can have something similar here and if we can have a bit of fortune on our side then maybe we can score our points of the season.

It's your second year in Formula One. Looking at the rest of the field and prospects for your team, where do you go from here, do you think, looking forward?

FN: Where do I go from here? [Laughs]. Well, we still have 13 races to go, there's so much to go on yet, so many things to roll and happen. I'm still fully committed to the team I'm pretty sure. The situation seems to have got better from what I hear – getting all the employees and the salaries paid it just gives a boost to everyone back at the factory, at the track. I'm sure we can soon start updating the car. All we want is the results on the track, which I think we can have pretty soon. So we just got to keep on doing what we can for now.

Thanks for that. Esteban, Haas has fallen from fifth in the Constructors' recently to eighth, but you personally have been on a bit of an upward curve, you out-qualified your team-mate in Monaco and Canada. What's been making the difference for you?

Esteban GUTIÉRREZ: Well, I've been pretty unfortunate in the first part of the season. It hasn't been easy to have a lot of technical issues. It wasn't very straightforward. Therefore, I believe it wouldn't be fair to rate my season based on the points, because I've been in a lot of positions to score the points in many races and not been able to finish the race because of different reasons that were not in my control, so now it's been improving a bit. It hasn't been easy in the last three grands prix because of my health, but now I feel much better so now I'm looking forward to the next four grands prix, which are pretty close together.

The F1 paddock is now starting to think and talk about next year, new contracts and such. Have you started that process yet with Haas?

EG: Yeah. I know pretty much where I'm going, so...

OK, sounds good. Kevin, coming to you, there have been some notes of optimism coming through from the team's pre-race preview materials. What is it about your car that's really not worked recently and that gives them some optimism about this race track?

Kevin MAGNUSSEN: I think we have tried some very different things to learn about the car, to get a better understanding of the car we have and basically we are going back now to something we know and that gives a little bit of optimism. I don't think it's going to a lot better than previous races but hopefully we will be able to know what we have and to get a better weekend.

Looking at it from the outside it would make sense to stop developing this car and focus 100% on 2017, but what are you, as a driver, asking for and what's on the horizon?

KM: As a driver what you care about at the end of the day is winning and we are so far off that that in my mind I would be fine to switch focus completely, because we are clearly not going to win with this car. The sooner we can start winning the happier I am and that's what I want to focus on, so shifting focus as quick as possible I think is the best thing. But I am not team principal and there is a reason for that. Maybe more qualified people take these decisions but I trust whatever the team is doing.

Thanks for that. Kimi, coming to you, 99th race start for Ferrari this weekend, puts you fourth on the all-time list for the Ferrari team. There has been quite a lot of discussion externally, ie within the media and among other teams as well, about Ferrari's strategy decision-making in the last few grands prix. I know you have been on the wrong side of it a couple of times. Have you reviewed it internally and will you be approaching it any differently as a team?

Kimi RÄIKKÖNEN: No I think we did the best that we could. Obviously people outside the team can talk as much as they want. We cannot control them and it's not our business. We work as a team, one group as Ferrari and obviously we always look at what we done over the weekends afterwards and we try to learn on everything, good and bad things. I think it hasn't been easy weekends for us lately but I think we managed to turn them around quite well as a team. There are some decisions that have to be made over the races and we had no issues with them. We tried to make the best out of it as a team. Obviously certain situations have changed a few things in the last race, but it's a normal thing.

We're now coming into that traditional part of the season where the Formula One paddock speculates about your seat at Ferrari for the following year. Do you have any clarity on whether you will carry on next year?

KR: I don't know. I know that I have a contract for this year and I don't know what will happen next year. A lot of talk. A lot of talk every year I would say since I've been in F1. It's nothing new. Same story really – people can say what they want and discuss but they have very, very little understanding of what's happening and then this I'm not signing the contract. Well, if I was making the decisions then it would be very easy to tell what will happen, but I don't. We'll see. We'll try to do our best and for sure the team knows my side of the story. That's enough from me. The rest I have no interest to talk about it in here or anywhere else, apart from with the team.

Thank you for that. Daniel, your 27th birthday tomorrow I believe, entering your prime I guess. Just a pair of seventh places in the last two grands prix though, whereas you had a chance to win the two before that. Is it all about the engine or have you personally lost a little bit of momentum?

Daniel RICCIARDO: I haven't lost anything. We had Canada, yeah, I think we could have done better than seventh. The second set of tyres flat-spotted and would have tried to maybe do a one-stop race if that wasn't the case and that could have been a different story. Baku – I think it is a power circuit but also we knew we had gone a bit wrong after three laps in the race. We struggled a lot with tyres. We probably just haven't executed the perfect weekend I'd say since... probably not for a while, but I think performance-wise there's still more in there. We're better than seventh, that's probably what I'm getting at. This circuit will test us this weekend. Historically, the last couple of years it hasn't been a strong one for us, but we'll see. We'll try to do what we can, hopefully better than seventh.

There's been quite a bit said recently about your contractual position over the next couple of seasons – discussions about Ferrari, but also discussions about options been taken up for the next couple of years. Can you confirm today that you are staying with Red Bull until at least the end of 2018?

DR: Yeah. Yeah.

A little more detail, a little more flesh on the bones.

DR: Every word I say... one word turns into 10, and then 30 and 50. So, I'll just leave it at that.

But obviously a big part of that is it is your own decision to do that rather than take any other options or look at other options?

DR: Absolutely. It goes both sides for sure. It's a bit like what Kevin touched on. We want to win. This year is going to be tough for a world title but obviously where we are this year is where we are. You can't do anything about that now. But looking ahead to next year and spending time with the team and seeing what's ahead I think it's the best place to be to try to challenge Mercedes, so that's where it stems from.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q (Peter Farkas – Auto Motor) Question to all of you. Obviously at the last race a couple of drivers, including Kimi, had some problems with the radio restrictions. We are now into the ninth race of the season and the new radio rules. What are your stances on this one? Lewis Hamilton said it's impossible to memorise all the settings that you have on the steering wheel. Do you agree with that, or is it manageable? Is it fine like that?

KR: I think it's fine. Obviously always some certain situations you might have some issues that you want to talk but rules are rules and they're the same for everybody. It wasn't really any big issue. I kind of knew what it is but tried to get some confirmed things from it – but it didn't change anything. It wasn't anything that we had to know 100 per cent or we would have had some issues. I think it's fine, y'know? It is what it is.

Daniel, did you have any sympathy for Lewis?

DR: um... not really. Obviously not directed at Lewis, I think anyone in that position... on race day you care about yourself, so certainly you don't feel any sympathy for anyone else in those two hours on a Sunday. Yeah, I think Kimi touched on it: it is what it is; it's the rules and, sure we can't... I think everything we can do is in front of us, so some things, if there's a failure during the race, the team's allowed to tell us a certain procedure perhaps to fix the failure – for example an electronic thing or whatever it is – but in terms of engine modes and things like that, sure there's a lot to do but we do know – or we should know at least where it all is. So, I think yeah, we've just had to adapt to it but it's been OK.

How about you Daniil? Are you good at this stuff? Are you quite techie? Do you enjoy it?

DK: Yeah. It hasn't been an issue for me. You might say the new generation... I haven't played Playstation or anything like that, but it hasn't been an issue for me so far. You have to prepare yourself for many scenarios. I try to predict these things and see what might happen. Of course it's impossible to see everything – but it hasn't been an issue for me.

Felipe?

FN: I think similar to the other guys. You either try to know the most you can on what you have to do in the race. There's some things we can cover and some other things it depends on the team communication. Some of them, they're not allowed to say – but I haven't faced anything yet to be in such a situation. It is what it is.

Esteban?

EG: I have absolutely no problem. I like the idea because it will motivate engineers to get rid of a lot of buttons on the steering wheel. We just need two pedals and one steering wheel to drive.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – globoesporte.com) To all drivers. We saw here the organizers amplify the run-off areas, increase the safety. And we come from one circuit where, most of the bends, you approach at 300kph, you didn't have run-off areas. Which options you prefer? High risk or less risk?

KM: I think it's a difficult one because when you have to do something to improve safety you do it. It has to be done. You can't not do something for safety because it's more exciting or whatever. If there is something that you can do to improve safety, you have to do it. But there's no reason to deny that the more risky circuits are more fun. At least for myself I think so and I'm sure most of the drivers will say the same – but we can't make the tracks more dangerous on purpose to make it more fun. But yeah, I guess that is a factor: for most drivers, it's more fun when the track is more risky.

DK: We're coming from Baku and I got a lot of adrenaline, I was really on the edge all the time. I was always thinking 'this corner, if I make a mistake, it's going to punish you'. I'm a bit old-fashioned on this question – but of course you cannot just put a concrete wall everywhere to make it exciting. You have to find a good compromise between paying the price for your mistake and not hurting yourself, obviously, because Formula One has been investing so much in safety and it is incredible what has been achieved. Let's say here also, Turn Five, Turn Six, there are

gravel escape roads so you pay a higher price if you go off, let's say. I think this kind of track, they have a bit more value. In my view, personally.

Esteban?

EG: I have the same opinion as Kevin and Daniil.

Felipe?

FN: I would say so. I think Baku was something... you would pay the price for it if you did a mistake or something but we've been working so much on safety that we don't need to give up all of it to just say we should risk more on tracks that is, more... if you want to call it dangerous. Like the other guys said as well. It's also true to say that some tracks, you lock-up, you go off and you come back on the race... I feel for me it's sometimes so easy to give up time there and you are back on the race. If it was like before you wouldn't have been able... if you have a gravel trap or something, you would have lost a lot more time to come back. Drivers that do less mistakes, somehow they get benefited.

How about you Kimi? Precision's always been a big part of your game.

KR: Well, comparing last race and this, they're completely different because one is a street circuit so it will never have the run-off areas than in a normal circuit. In the end the FIA has the group that works on measurements of how much run-off area you need in each place and, y'know, it's safe everywhere. They would never make the circuit where there is not enough run-off area in how they calculate the chances. It may look different but the end result, it can't be an awful lot different. Obviously it will because it's a street circuit and there's no space like we have here at a normal circuit. I think it looks a lot of different but in the end it's a different place. Every circuit is different. Some are a bit older circuits, obviously then there are different run-off areas. New ones usually are tarmac but what it good, what is not... you always try to stay on the circuit because that's the fastest way around.

How about you Daniel, how do you feel about paying a high price for mistakes on those sorts of tracks and this sort of track?

DR: Yeah, I think we've all got a similar view. It's a hard one. You obviously want to balance the safety always but Baku, I can obviously speak because I had a... it wasn't a big accident but it was at least an accident and, yeah, I thought it, in a way, had a good balance because it destroyed my car, so if that was the race it was clear I was out – but the impact didn't feel like anything. So I thought all the... you paid a price but looking at the track you were going to pay it in a safe way. Sure the walls, sometimes don't tickle, but wherever there was the high speed there was generally a SAFER barrier or something. So, I think that's the main one. As Felipe touched on, if you do make a mistake, at least pay a bit of a price for it. Whether it puts you completely out of the race or not, at least lose time – because sometimes it is too easy to just run wide, come back on and lose a second as opposed to losing ten or whatever. Yeah, tough one. I've always liked street circuits. It does give you the biggest rush, and I think now they've got a good balance. All the street circuits we go to are pretty good. Sure, you crash but I think you can crash safely.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Kimi, there are 100 points to gain in July. How many of those hundred would you need to still be in the fight for the championship in the second part of the season?

KR: Obviously we try to get as many as we can. I don't think one month will decide the whole story. It's still a long way to go and the end of season a lot of things can happen. The point is always, when we come racing is to do the best and try to score as many points as we can. No need to make any plans. We go to every race like normal and hopefully get out the good result.

Q: (Dan Knutson – Speed Sport magazine) Daniel, your team-mate Max Verstappen has also been confirmed through 2018. How do you see that relationship evolving or is it too early to tell?

DR: It's hard to predict what's going to happen in the long run. I can obviously speak for the first few races and it's been good. Max came in and set a bit of a tone in Barcelona. That was obviously a pretty crazy weekend and I think since then it's been good. Obviously Monaco didn't work as well for him and he openly admitted it and took it on the chin. In a way we've thrived off the new challenge, the new rivalry, so hopefully it can keep pushing the team in the right direction. Hopefully there is some rivalry. A rivalry would probably mean we're fighting for victories more often. Sure you can still have a healthy one. I think if you're mature about it and if you can basically just admit if one guys better on the day and be open about it, then you'll have good respect for each other. It's probably when you start making excuses out of nothing, is when it doesn't work out so well. Keep going hard and, so far, so good.

Q: (Peter Vamosi – Vas Nepe) Bernie had the idea, fifteen or maybe 20 years ago, that there should be a race at the Olympic Games, every four years – a non-championship race? Basically, what do you think about this idea and of course, Felipe, will you be at the Olympic Games in Rio this year?

FN: You want me to go to Rio? You want me to race? We have our break so if I'm in town, I probably will be, so a flight to Rio is not far away, give a bit of support to my Brazilian athletes wouldn't be a bad idea. Yeah, but you said, to have a race every four years then I don't know. I don't know. I think we have got enough races going on already.

EG: Yeah, it would not be a bad idea actually, why not?

KM: Yeah, I wouldn't mind another race.

DK: We would maybe build a same car, probably, for the Olympic sport and all 22 drivers, same car, same tyres everything the same. Maybe it could be interesting, like a world final, if you like.

DR: I was about to say, I like medals so yeah.

KR: What can I say? There's always ideas, let's see what happens in the future but it's hard to see that it's going to happen so...

DR: No points, but a lot of prize-money, I guess. Yeah?

Q: A quick question: apart from Felipe, is anybody here planning to go to any of the Olympic Games, just as a spectator or is anyone hanging out there? No? No.

Q: (Barna Zsoldis – Nemzeti Sport) Danny, as your 27th birthday is approaching, how do you look back at your career so far and are you where you expected to be, 10 or 15 years ago?

DR: Getting deep, getting deep. Let me bring out my notebook and see what notes I made when I was ten. I don't know. I didn't really look back on it, so far, to be honest. I think it all happened so quickly that you just sort of get into a bit of a... you sort of roll with it and just keep going but sure, as a kid, I dreamed to be racing Formula One, it's one of those things, you know. In 2011 I got my chance and it was like a dream come true but then you do a few races and then it's like, OK, now I want to be with a better team and I want points and then I want podiums, I want wins. Fortunately I've been able to get some wins now which is a big box ticked for me but now it's like, OK, I want the next best thing which is the World Championship. In a way, you're never satisfied but I think obviously that's good because I'm obviously still very young and hungry so I think that fuels my hunger but sure, I'm happy and I'm obviously very grateful to be in this position. I think of all us appreciate the... it's 22 of us that are here. It is awesome but you can't help but want more, you know? I think Seb at my age, already his 24... not 24, his four titles so I go look at Seb and I go aaahhh. Obviously I would love to achieve more at this age but fortunately I've got some time on my side, I think.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – GloboEsporte.com) To Esteban and to Felipe: Mr Ecclestone said that at the end of the new Concorde Agreement, he will fight to share the money in Formula One in a more equal way. You from Sauber, you from Haas, what's your point of view about it?

EG: Well, luckily I'm a racing driver, I don't have to think about... Yeah, exactly. Well, it's not happening now, not necessarily going to affect me. There are many propositions which are probably going around, many ideas but I'm sure they are going to choose the most convenient for Formula One. We have to think in all other sports and try to bring the sport higher and higher and if that is the right way then for sure everybody will be happy with that.

FN: Well, I think it would for sure balance out things better for teams that are dependent on other resources. For example, Sauber is a private team, it just gives you a better chance to start the year developing the car, developing things. Sometimes you're just so spread apart that we cannot even get close to other teams, just on how much we can do with Sauber, financially or resources. It wouldn't be a bad idea. For sure, it's something to consider but it has to balance out for everyone as well, not only thinking about us so let's see.

Q: (Peter Farkas – Auto Motor) Coming back to the danger topic; obviously many fans and even some drivers say that danger is part of the attraction but if we look at the race in Baku, it was actually quite dull and every one of you seemed to be quite cautious, maybe because of what happened in the GP2 race, and we always moan about these big run-off areas and the tracks being not dangerous enough, or some people do anyway. But can you argue that actually a risky track doesn't produce really good racing? If you look at Monaco or Baku, because you are obviously being more cautious and these tracks that are more safe and have these big run-offs actually are able to produce better racing, because you take more risks?

DK: Well, it's a good point because we saw in GP2 that it was quite a big mess, there was a lot going on so obviously everyone knew that on this track a lot might happen but actually didn't happen, but these kind of races just happen and it was just a one-off. I think the track, when you look at it, could provide a lot of entertainment and I think in the future that will happen, a lot of races on the track which I think will enter history because I think this kind of track, in my opinion, will provide some great racing. I think everyone was good because in the end we are professional drivers, no one hit the wall during the race. There was no safety car to reshuffle the strategies so everyone more or less knew what they were doing. The faster cars just went ahead, the slower cars just settled there in the middle so there was no big action going on, I think. I still think that this kind of track should be... of course not every track should be a street circuit. It didn't affect me at least.

Q: How about you, Kevin. As you came through the field, were you holding anything in reserve or were you giving it everything?

KM: No, I think we were giving it everything but for sure, after watching the GP2 race I thought this is going to be a good one to finish because I thought there would be quite a few crashes and safety cars and stuff. For sure, I took a little bit more care not to crash but not a huge amount. I think it was just coincidence that no one did.

KR: That's probably why it's GP2 and F1 is a different story. We've seen many other weekends when we watch their race...

EG: I thought Baku was pretty exciting.

DR: I was going to go more towards the open circuits, like the modern ones and that. I think some have done it well and some not as well. Yeah, that's the thing. If you have a modern circuit then sure there's some risk which is taken away because of the safer run-offs but if they shape the circuit well, then it can produce good racing. For me, Austin is a great example. Austin's a pretty safe track, there is a lot of run-off but I think the way they've tried to design it... like turn one, it's such a wide apex. You can take so many different lines into that corner, that creates great passing and you've got other corners on that track which are a bit unique. I think a lot of the time with our sport, a lot of it is one line. There's an ideal racing line. I follow... also this guy next to me... we

follow motocross a lot and there's so many different lines in motocross and I think there's some room in F1 to create something like that. Obviously not extreme but you've got some... you know the ideal line is perhaps... like in motocross you go the long way round because the corner's like a bowl, it's banked, you carry momentum but then if you're close you sort of do a block pass. I don't know, so maybe there's some room for these modern circuits to be more exciting. So they'd be safe, sure, but the racing could be more exciting. I think there's still some things which circuit designers can implement and maybe we can learn from other motorsports.

KR: Obviously you always want to see more overtaking but it's not easy, there has been a lot of different rules and stuff been done in F1 to create overtaking but has it really changed a lot? Over the years, not really in my view but you know you're going to blame the circuits that they built, they will not spend I don't know how many millions of dollars or euros, money, to make a new circuit like in US and expect them to make it without run-off areas. In MotoGP, they have to have run-off areas for when they fall down. They're being used for a lot more than just F1, they are not building circuits just for us so they have to make everybody happy.

Q: (Silvia Arias – Parabras) Kimi, I would like to know how difficult it is for Ferrari to get the right temperature in the tyres and what do you expect in this race?

KR: For sure, it's not been easiest job in the last few years but it varies a lot depending on how the circuit is, conditions, weather, all those things, what tyres we will have over the weekend and I think in the last few races it's been quite difficult but we managed to find something and turn it around for qualifying, for the race. It depends how the weather will be here, obviously. It's a bit unknown. There's a new surface on the circuit so how will that affect things we will have to see but I think it should be OK.

Q: (Peter Vamosi – Vas Nepe) There are some rumours that the old Osterreichring will be restored, the big layout for endurance racing. As Formula One drivers, what do you think? Would it be better to use that one or is it OK right now?

Q: Double thumbs up from Dan Ricciardo, you're obviously aware of the history, Dan.

DR: A little bit.

Q: Seen the old vids on YouTube?

DR: Ah, no, but I'm aware of it. For a few reasons. I think it would be cool to have a bit more distance on the track. I think next year, as well, if the cars are going to be as quick as they say they are then the lap times are going to be close to a minute which is a very short lap and I think it would create a bit more to the circuit. I think that there is the space so yeah, I've heard a few people talk about it and I think it could be pretty interesting for us.

DK: I tried to open a video last night but wifi was slow so I had to give up. But I agree with Daniel...

DR: He was too busy looking at other things!

DK: No, sorry Dan!

DR: Don't be sorry!

DK: So I agree with Dan, yeah, on track.

Ends