



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

**Press Information**

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

**21.07.2016**

**DRIVERS – Marcus ERICSSON (Sauber), Felipe MASSA (Williams), Sergio PÉREZ (Force India), Carlos SAINZ (Toro Rosso), Max VERSTAPPEN (Red Bull Racing), Nico Rosberg (Mercedes)**

**PRESS CONFERENCE**

**Q: Marcus, first of all, how are you? Any lasting effects from your crash at Silverstone?**

**Marcus ERICSSON:** I'm good thanks! It was a big hit, I was a bit sore the next couple of days but I went down to Italy, to Formula Medicine got some treatment there. After that I felt really good and this week has been perfect. I'm ready for a good race.

**Q: Can you give us any insight into the treatment you received down there?**

**ME:** Everything was fine with my body but obviously after a crash like that you are a bit sore in the neck and back and things like that. Got a bit of treatment on that but now it feels really good.

**Q: It's been announced that Sauber is now under new ownership following a takeover by Longbow Finance. Can you tell us about the mood in the team since that announcement was made and how it will impact on your future?**

**ME:** I think it's great news for the team. It's no secret it's been a difficult year for us in Sauber, financially mainly. We haven't been able to update the car the way we wanted and been fighting in the back. I think for the team it's been very, very important that this happened and it's great news. What it means for the future, I don't know, we have to wait and see. But for sure it's very, very good news for everyone in Sauber.

**Q: Felipe, if we could come onto you, Silverstone was a disappointing race for Williams. Were the problems there track-specific – and were you expecting more?**

**Felipe MASSA:** For sure it was a very disappointing race, Silverstone and also Austria, so we are definitely trying to understand everything that didn't work in a proper way in the car. We really hope we're not suffering these problems any more. I really hope we get back to the points and be as competitive as believe so. This is not really the perfect track where we believe we can be very competitive, but anyway – we're working so hard to make the car in the way we believe it needs to be – and we really hope it can be better from now on.

**Q: What conclusions have you reached – because Williams have been very strong at Silverstone and in Austria the last few years?**

**FM:** Yes, for sure we're trying to develop the car. This year we've had many new parts in the last races and we just need to try and understand what is the right configuration to use. We will test a

lot of different things tomorrow as well and hopefully we understand already the conclusion, how to use the right parts and make the car as competitive as we believe we can be.

**Q: The drivers' silly season is now in full swing. How confident are you about your plans for 2017?**

**FM:** Well, I am confident, definitely. I think everyone knows what I am able to do, what I am able to achieve. Drive, experience inside the team, or other teams. So I'm really looking for things to go in the right direction – but not in a big worry. Just trying to do my job race by race and we'll see what's going to happen.

**Q: What is Plan A? Is it to stay at Williams?**

**FM:** Well the Plan A is to stay in a top team, in a good team, like Williams or maybe like another team. So we just need to... I think the time will give the right answer. As I said, I'm not really worried, trying to do my job in the best way every race and that's the only thing I'm looking for.

**Q: And just a quick nod to the Rio Olympics. Do you have plans to attend that during the summer break – and if you are, what are you going to watch?**

**FM:** Well, I like so many different things: football, basketball, so many incredible things to watch. I didn't plan anything for the moment but I will be there, I will be in Brazil and I really hope that I can have opportunities to watch something, which will be really nice.

**Q: Sergio, Felipe was just giving his thoughts on 2017, can we talk about your contract. Vijay Mallya says you're signed to Force India for next year yet you've said in the press you're going to decide what you're going to do during the summer break. What's the story?**

**Sergio PÉREZ:** Well, obviously as you know, I'm a very lucky driver to have many sponsors behind me. So I'm not alone. I don't decide my future on my own. I need to obviously speak to my group of sponsors to see what's the best for our future and then we will decide. I think we have some time during the summer break – that's why I say that – and then we decide what's the best for my career.

**Q: So, just to clarify, you're not yet under contract with Force India for next year?**

**SP:** Well, what Vijay says is correct you know? But as I say, I depend a lot on my sponsors as well to decide together what to do.

**Q: It was a double points finish for the team at Silverstone last time out. Do you feel this car is good enough to challenge Williams going forward?**

**SP:** I think obviously Silverstone was a very different race to normal races. It will be very interesting to see how the next races go. This one is a very good test for us, to see how close we are to them. I generally think we're getting closer and closer, certainly if you look at the points difference from five races ago, then we have closed the gap massively. I think it is going to be a very tough challenge but I'm sure we can give them a strong challenge to try and beat them. That will be a fantastic result for our team, to finish fourth in the Constructors'.

**Q: Carlos, moving on to you , first time you've been in this press conference since your contract was renewed at Toro Rosso, so congratulations for that. How do you feel you're going to benefit from a third season at Toro Rosso?**

**Carlos SAINZ:** Well I think it's a very good achievement for myself and for my group of people. I think to be renewed so early in the season by a team like Toro Rosso that we know is a difficult team with young people, I think it's a good achievement so I must say I'm very pleased for that. I think we have now a second half of the season where we can fully focus on what we're here for, that is pure racing, and go forward as a team. That, I think, we've been doing quite well lately. So,

yeah, full focus on that now, and also I can be quite calm that 2017, I'm also in F1, I'm also in a team like Toro Rosso that is always improving, always creating a very good chassis and as soon as we sort out a bit the power unit side with maybe a bit more relationship with Red Bull, I think we can be in a good position next year. I'm looking forward – but first this second half of the season.

**Q: As you say, you're going to be in Formula One in 2017 – but do you feel you're now ready for a front-running seat.**

**CS:** Yes. Obviously like every racing driver I feel ready, fully ready for a top seat, especially this year where I have a good run without reliability issues where I could find a bit more myself. With not so many issues I think I have proved myself a lot more compared to last year. And now I'm fully really for a top seat – unfortunately there's not many available.

**Q: Max Verstappen finished fourth for Toro Rosso at this race track last year. What do you think you can achieve this weekend?**

**CS:** I think last year was a very strange race in a way, there were many accidents going on, lots of stuff going on, so P4 is probably not a realistic position for our Toro Rosso. Obviously if some rain comes, if there are some battles at the front, something going on with a Mercedes, a Ferrari, with a Red Bull, then we can steal the spot – but it's a tricky thing to achieve.

**Q: Max, coming on to you. Great drive at Silverstone. Tell us about that battle you had with Nico Rosberg.**

**Max VERSTAPPEN:** Yeah, well I enjoyed it, both the battles on the Intermediates and the medium tyre. I think the car was performing really well in both conditions but yeah, we know the car is always very strong in the wet and I'm enjoying myself in the wet as well. Once I got past, of course, you could see the real pace of the car. It was really strong. Even when we were out on the medium tyres we could hold on pretty well. So I was very pleased with that. I think in the end, to finish third in the end, get second was a great result for the team.

**Q: Nico, could I just ask for your thoughts on that battle with Max? How did you enjoy it? And what sort of an adversary is he? I think it was your first wheel-to-wheel battle with him on track?**

**Nico ROSBERG:** No, second one actually! Max does a great job out there, for sure. So, it was exciting; good thrill, especially to get second place back there in the end. That was a good feeling, and to try and go for hunting down Lewis.

**Q: Max, coming back to you. You complimented your car after the race at Silverstone, saying how good it was. What can you achieve this weekend? Do you think it's going to be Red Bull's best chance of taking the fight to Mercedes this year?**

**MV:** Well I think the best chance was in Monaco for sure – but I think here as well the car can be very strong and I'm definitely looking forward to the weekend, because so far the car has been very strong, even on tracks where we didn't expect it to be that strong. We just have to wait and see. It's all about the setup now, how we can improve during the sessions. Hopefully we can be pretty close.

**Q: Nico, coming to you, you got that ten seconds penalty after the race at Silverstone. Can you just give us your view on the events that happened after the race?**

**NR:** Well, just the radio communication was reviewed and it was deemed to be beyond what's allowed, and that's it, so you get a 10 second penalty. I have to accept that. Now things have been clarified once more, that we really need to stick literally to what Charlie... the wording that he gives, that he's allowed us. And that's it. So it's clear. It's a thing of the past now and moving forwards we need to make sure we stick to that.

**Q: What is your view on the radio rules in Formula One at the minute?**

**NR:** It's not something I think about, it's not something I have an opinion on – because I just want to make the best of what we have and let the people decide what's best. It's come about because fans have said we're like puppets out there, y'know, just doing what the engineers are saying. So now we're trying this, and I think it's OK. It makes it more challenging for us out on track, which is good. So it's fine.

**Q: Did you feel you were a puppet when you were on track before the radio ban?**

**NR:** No! But I can understand a little bit the frustration of the fans because there was a lot going on and the engineers were giving us a lot of advice, so I can understand that, yeah.

**Q: And Nico, if we can just look at the championship now, how do you reflect on the last five races, since Monaco really?**

**NR:** I don't. I have reflected on each individual one once it's done and then I've moved on. Feeling good, feeling excited to be here. It's been a good season so far and I'm going to try and win this weekend, of course.

**Q: Do you share the view that the World Championship is now a two-horse race between yourself and Lewis?**

**NR:** It's too early to say that. Red Bull and Ferrari have been a bit up-and-down, y'know? But there's still such a long way to go so it wouldn't be right to say that. But of course I can understand why people might think that at the moment.

#### **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Ahbishek Takle – Mid-day) A question to Marcus. There has been some speculation that Longbow is linked to you backers. I was wondering if I could get your comment on that and does this now give you clarity about your future with the team going forward for next year?**

**ME:** Yes. I've seen that as well. It's not something I know about. I'm not involved in these kind of things anyway, so yeah I really don't know to be honest. And my future, like anyone else without a contract for next year so looking at Sauber because I really like the way it's working in Sauber. Hopefully now with a new owner we can improve as a team but also looking at other alternatives, so let's see.

**Q: (Daniel Johnson – Daily Telegraph) A question for Nico. It's fair to say that generally you're not always someone who gives a great deal away about your innermost feelings as it were. But over the past five races the lead has gone from 43 points to one and this is a track where Lewis has won four times and I don't think you've been on the podium here. Would it be fair to say that this is a weekend where you're sort of feeling the pressure a bit?**

**NR:** No it's not. Because for me, I mean we can all agree on the fact that so far up to now I've had the best season of all drivers. That's the fact for me, which I'm focusing on. As I've said though, in general I don't look at the big picture, because the best approach for me to win races is just to focus on the weekend at hand, which is now look at Hungary and try and get the best out of the weekend, go for the win and that's it. It doesn't feel any different to any other weekend.

**Q: (Peter Vamosi – Vas Népe) The question is to Max. Are you still in the phase of learning how to drive the Red Bull or are you ready now?**

**MV:** I think you always learn. For sure I'm feeling very confident with the car but every weekend I jump in the car and straight away you are learning again and you find new bits to improve the set-up, so still learning.

**Q: (Vladimir Rogovets – Belarus Segoduya) We see here today drivers with contract for next year and drivers without contract. My question, for all drivers: what influence does the existence of contracts [have] on a driver's motivation to race. But my question... I want to know opinion personal and not opinion of team?**

**NR:** Of course you need to be careful, because it can influence and take some energy away but I think from my side with the experience that I have now I know how to handle it and in my part I have Gerhard Berger who is handling it for me, specifically to make sure that I don't lose any focus on the racing and to get the best out of it.

**Carlos you have a contract now, so how does that impact on your race weekend?**

**CS:** I'm not the kind of guy who goes to sleep on a race weekend thinking about your contract situation. During a race weekend it doesn't really affect you but maybe in the summer when you are on vacation, yeah you think about your future and where you are going to be but now that I am under contract I didn't think about it any more, because there's nothing to think about. You have easier holidays, let's put it like that – even this year.

**Felipe, your thoughts?**

**FM:** Definitely when you are in the race weekend you're trying to get the best you can, in terms of how to drive, what you think. I don't think really having a contract or not for next year would change exactly your thinking of driving., Definitely if you are trying to do a big risk overtake maybe you think twice, because it's better to finish the race, better to try to do the best you can, but to be honest I don't think it really changes massively by having the contract for next year.

**Marcus, Sergio, Max have you anything to add?**

**MV:** Well, I've never been without a contract in F1 so far. To be honest, I never real the pressure anyway, it's all about what you do one really, so pedal to the metal.

**Q (Barna Zsoldos – Nemzeti Sport) To all drivers. After 2013 the podium-placed drivers will again have these classical, traditional Hungarian porcelain trophy. What do you think of this and in general is it important for a driver for a driver to get aesthetically beautiful and OK trophies in Formula One?**

**Nico, how much would you like to get your hands on one of those trophies this weekend?**

**NR:** I would love to get my hands on the biggest one and I think it's great that there are such traditions and that the trophies are done in the country's traditional manner. That's great and they're very nice here.

**Sergio, your thoughts?**

**SP:** Yeah, I would love to have a trophy to be honest.

**FM:** I think the trophy is a very important image of the country, so it's needs to look nice, it needs to look beautiful. Also for the image of the country, that you're getting something. I had races where the trophy was pretty... not nice. You do an amazing job on the track and you get a little trophy like that. To be honest, we are in Formula One not... I think it needs to be nice.

**NR:** Which one in for Formula One?

**FM:** One in Barcelona, maybe three years ago.

**NR:** So the Spanish did a terrible trophy?

**FM:** For that race! Maybe I wasn't lucky for that race!

**Carlos, give us your thoughts?**

**CS:** I will talk to the circuit in Barcelona and let's see if they can do something for me next year!

**And Max?**

**MV:** I quite like the trophy of Barcelona, it looks great!

**Q (Peter Farkas – Auto Motor) Question to all of you: I know most of you have already walked the track. It's been resurfaced completely, new kerbs have been installed. I guess you had a careful look at them, any impressions, concerns, especially after what happened in Austria, there are some similar ones? Also, what's your opinion of the electronic track limits policing that will be used this weekend?**

**ME:** I did the track walk earlier today and it looks nice, definitely more smooth than before. The kerbs are quite different at some places. Hopefully this new system will work because I can see some places where there is potential lap time to gain by going off track and I think that discussion is not something we like, so hopefully this new system is going to be used and is reliable to be used also in qualifying and in the race. Apart from that I like the track and I think even though it's resurfaced and new kerbs I think it will still have the same character.

**Max?**

**MV:** It looks great. I've seen some racing before with F3 one or two months ago and it looked nice. I'm looking forward to driving it.

**Q: (Tom Richter – AMC Sport TV CZ) Question for Max. How different mentally is it to race in the mental with a not so competitive car, some blue flags and running at the front, for example in Spain? How mentally is it different as you are the guy with the most recent experience with that, so you can compare.**

**MV:** Actually it's not different because you approach your competitors as the number one... or the guy who is leading the race, because you know whether you can fight with him or not. So, for me, it doesn't really change – only the blue flags. Before you were a bit angry that you had to move out of the way and now you are the one overtaking them and you are getting a bit angry with them because they are not moving out of the way, so that's the only difference.

**Q: (Abhishek Takle – Mid-Day) Question to Felipe and Nico: Imola has emerged as an alternative to Monza as host to the Italian Grand Prix. As drivers who have raced there in the past, what are your views regarding a return to the venue? Is it viable, would it be safe given the cars are going to get a lot quicker? And also what do you feel about the Italian Grand Prix potentially moving away from Monza?**

**FM:** Well, first of all I think we need to wait and see what's going to happen and if they really announce something in the proper way. Before, it's just talks. It's really not the right time to answer about that. I think it would not be nice to lose the Italian Grand Prix. I really love to race in Monza. I used to enjoy racing a lot at Imola as well. It's important to have the Italian Grand Prix. Italy's such an important country for Formula One, for the history of Formula One. It would be really sad to lose a race in Italy. I used to enjoy Imola a lot but I love to race in Monza. If we keep Monza, for me it is maybe even better.

**NR:** Yeah, just very important to keep the Italian Grand Prix, because it's legendary and a huge following there, a huge crowd and the tifosi. So we need to make sure to race there.

**Q: Did you enjoy the challenge of Imola?**

**NR:** Yeah, yeah. Imola's great, Monza's great. Both tracks are good.

**Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Marcus, you said earlier on that you'd heard these suggestions that your backers and Longbow were interlinked. You said you didn't get involved in these things though. Are you saying that as an ambitious young driver you don't really care about the future of your team or what the ownership is and what the potential is?**

**ME:** Of course I care about it and I think it's important that the team has got a new owner, but who they are and what they are is not something that I'm involved with. I'm contracted as a racing driver and my job is to drive the car as fast as possible on the race track, to work with my engineers, to work with the guys on the aero, stuff like that. Who owns the teams and who is putting money in the team and all these kinds of stuff – I think that is not my job so it's as simple as that.

**Q: (Daniel Johnson – The Telegraph) Max, Nico and Felipe, correct me if I'm wrong but you all live in Monaco. Were any of you affected or were you at home at the time of the awful events in Nice last week? I just wondered if you went to the parade afterwards or anything like that.**

**NR:** Yes, of course all tragedies like that are touching and this one was in a particular manner to me because I went to school in Nice and I have family living in Nice. So it's very shocking. What can I say beyond that?

**FM:** Well, I was in a plane, just arriving in Nice at that moment, so I think it happened at maybe 10.30pm and I just landed at midnight from London. I was working at Williams for two days and I just got a message when I landed that a very big event had happened in Nice so I tried to go as quick as... tried to leave the airport as quick as I could because it was a big thing going on and then when I landed also the people from the plane, everybody started to be a little bit shocked due to the things happening. It was such a shame to see that to be honest. People were enjoying their time and then just lose your life for maybe your friends, your family because of this. It's really shocking. I really hope the best for them. I really hope that we don't need to see that any more. Things are getting more and more all the time which is really not nice.

**MV:** I was in Monaco at the time having dinner so once I heard the message, of course also the people around me saw it and you could clearly see the atmosphere was changing. Yeah, it was of course very shocking what happened there.

**Q: (Roland Mather – JHED Media) Max, first of all how do you reflect on your race here last year and second of all, your goal for this year ahead of the season was to score one hundred points. You've almost achieved that, what are you going to do next?**

**MV:** 200 points? I don't know. Last year was very good. Of course we had some luck as well, to finish fourth even with a drive-through. It was a great weekend, I enjoyed that one a lot but hopefully this year we are aiming for more than fourth, so hopefully we can be on the podium.

**Q: (Dan Knutson – Speedsport and Auto Action magazines) There have been stories on the internet that Max is getting a new road car but I'd like to ask all of you: what is the primary road car that you have in the garage back home?**

**SP:** I have a Ferrari, a 458.

**CS:** I have a Golf.

**ME:** I have a Porsche Panamera.

**FM:** Yeah, I have a few Ferraris. One La Ferrari and one F40.

**NR:** A 280SL, Mercedes, Pagoda.

**Q: And?**

**Q: Max, any more details about your garage?**

**MV:** Yeah, everybody has seen it, I think.

**FM: And the pink, the colour?**

**MV:** Pink? Pink. Yeah, I wrapped it in a great colour! No. It's a great car. It's a Porsche GT3, great car.

**Q: (Silvia Arias – Parabrisas) Max, there are a lot of people in Argentina who stopped watching Formula One for years and now they are back because of you, I have to tell you. So I want to know, how does that affect you, to have so many fans already all over the world?**

**MV:** Yes, of course, very nice, I have to say. Also Argentinian steakhouses are also great. It's quite close, so I really enjoy it, it's very good. Yes, it's of course great that there are more and more fans coming and hopefully we get more and more.

**Q: (James Gheerbrant – The Times) Nico, I think it was two years ago at this circuit that you had a bit of a run-in with Lewis. He was ordered to let you through but he didn't and that probably cost you the chance to win the race. When you return to a circuit does that have any bearing, can you draw any extra motivation from that and get yourself fired up?**

**NR:** Umm, I didn't know that, I mean now I do, of course, but I wasn't thinking about it so no, it doesn't. We review last year's race for the weekend, just to go through what happened and just make sure that we refresh to make sure we remember everything but that's it, then I don't think about last year. Especially this year, it's even more so the case because the asphalt is new and that will make it very different out there so we all need to start from scratch and also the kerbs are new so it's going to change a lot of things.

**Q: (Peter Vamosi – Vas Népe) Felipe, Valtteri will go to Rio games, visiting Emilia, what do you think or prefer for them to join or be a little bit Brazilian?? What should they do, what not? Can you give some advice to them?**

**FM:** Yeah, we've already spoken to him about Rio, giving him some suggestions and I think he found the right place and I think he's found a place to stay. I'm sure he will enjoy it and I hope the best for his girlfriend as well, to be competitive. I think Rio is definitely a fantastic place for the Olympic Games so I'm sure the people will enjoy it a lot and I hope it will be very successful for the country. That is very important anyway.

**Q: (Louis Dekker – NOS.NL) Max, could you say P3 is a realistic target? Let's imagine that Hamilton or Rosberg will be the World Champion but you're not far behind number three now.**

**MV:** Yeah, we are pretty close but we will see where we end up at the end of the season. We'll be third or sixth – in between that. Hopefully.

**Q: (Louis Dekker – NOS.NL) So you think race-by-race.**

**MV:** Yeah. You try to do the best possible job every race and then we'll see after Abu Dhabi where we are.

**Q: (Louis Dekker – NOS.NL) Max, do you remember the first winner here in Hungary? It was before your time.**

**MV:** Yeah, I wasn't born.

**Q: (Louis Dekker – NOS.NL) Nelson Piquet. He made a very nice move. You can't pass on this circuit but the one question I have is that he'd like you to see you win here. Have you ever spoken to him?**

**MV:** OK. Not him, to his son, yes.

Ends