



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L' AUTOMOBILE

2017 FIA Formula One World Championship

British Grand Prix

Thursday Press Conference Transcript

PART ONE: DRIVERS – Valtteri BOTTAS (Mercedes), Romain GROSJEAN (Haas), Lance STROLL (Williams), Jolyon PALMER (Renault)

PRESS CONFERENCE

Q: Valtteri, we'll begin with you. Second win and, more importantly, in the last four races Hamilton 53 points, Vettel 67, Ricciardo 70, Bottas 73. You must feel you've got some real momentum now in your campaign to be World Champion.

Valtteri BOTTAS: Definitely got some good momentum now. We've been having strong races – as a team – and the car seems to be getting better and better and I feel the same, the same for me really. It's still my first year with the team and always getting to know the team better. It always helps with everything and, of course, every single lap you get more comfortable with the new cars etcetera. So just try to continue the good run with a good weekend here.

Q: Jolyon, F1 Live London yesterday, you were there in your Renault retro getup celebrating the 40th anniversary of the company's F1 debut. What did you think of the event and what it says about Formula One and its place in this country?

Jolyon PALMER: It was awesome. So many people there, in my home city as well so it was really cool. I think it was the first time anything like that has been done. It was great to see almost all the drivers there. So many people, different cars through the eras as well, it was great fun for me to drive up there. So, it was great. I'm sure it was such a success that, from my point of view, there'll be a lot more of it in the future.

And the retro look?

JP: I liked it. It was 1977 car and wearing the retro overalls. It was nice to try something different as well, try different cars.

Q: Lance, three straight points finishes including, of course, the podium in Baku. How much did the afterglow from that podium help you to feel really settled here in Formula One?

Lance STROLL: It was a great result, yeah the last few races have been good. Just getting more experience in the car, feeling more comfortable every time I get in the car. I think it's really just been a good three races. The podium was the highlight of the season, that's for sure. Crazy race, we just stayed in it all the way until to the end and took home a great podium. It's given me a lot of confidence for sure, knowing that I can be there and fight. It was a great day – but got to keep going.

Q: Romain, another great result in Austria, built on strong qualifying and a fantastic start. So the car – and you – are capable of the results but what will it take to find consistency.

Romain GROSJEAN: Afternoon. I don't really know. I think a lot of people don't know, when things happen in a bit of a strange way – like Williams in qualifying in Austria, where they were in Q1 when they are normally always in Q3. We went well. We got everything to work. Tyres, we know we've got a good platform. I guess experience is the key and we're only 28 grands prix in our life for Haas F1 Team. There are things we need to improve and understand but when everything is working well we've got a very strong package.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (David Croft – Sky Sports F1) A question for Lance, Romain and Jolyon after Valtteri's brilliant start in Austria seven days ago – how many of you think he anticipated the lights and got away with it and how many think it was an absolutely brilliant reaction from him and could you do any better?

Romain?

RG: He didn't jump the start. Did he anticipate the start? For sure. 100 per cent.

Jolyon?

JP: It sure looks like a jump but I'm sure he anticipated it perfectly.

And Lance?

LS: For sure it was on the limit – but he got away with it. So, it's all good.

Valtteri, your right to respond.

VB: Waiting for the lights to go out. I don't know. With starts, doing starts and starts you just kind of know always, more or less, when they're going to go off and, you know, sometimes you can try and be a bit more risky and this was definitely a risky one but it paid off because it's an absolutely perfect start. Nothing more to say.

Q: (Phil Duncan – PA) Valtteri, how did it feel to be the only Mercedes driver yesterday at the London event. Were you disappointed that Lewis wasn't there with you?

VB: I think everyone has the right to decide which kind of events you attend to and, you know, I'm not really the one to answer that – I don't really know his schedule. So, for me, it's absolutely fine. And although I was the only team member there it was still all good. I did enjoy the event myself, it was a great event in general, especially for the fans to get so close to F1 and see, in a different way, Formula One. And also a great experience for me, y'know? Never drove a Formula One car before in Central London so that was really cool. So yeah, even though I was alone it was really good for me.

Q: (Peter Windsor – F1 Racing) Valtteri, I'm amazed to hear you say there's a risk element to the start. Are you saying that there's a little bit of a gamble, that you might actually jump it, you do try to anticipate it? Or do you actually... are you talking about a risk of how quickly you can react to the lights going out? What do you actually mean by that?

VB: Well, having a start like that definitely you need to gamble a little bit. If you're moving exactly at the same point the lights go off you definitely need to be a bit on the risky side rather than safe side. Everyone is obviously free to try and kind of guess when the lights go off.

Q: (Graham Harris – Motorsport Monday) Question for Romain. You're into your second year with Haas, last year we talked about the possibility of you perhaps trying a NASCAR. Now that you're cemented in the team and you've got a month's break coming up and there's Watkins Glen road course coming, any chances of you going on holiday in the States...

RG: No. The schedule's getting tight. I wish we'd had a NASCAR yesterday in London. We didn't have a car so it would have been fun to drive a NASCAR around London – but to be fair, if we do it, we need to do it properly and I need to get a test before, get used to the brake, for example, and see how it goes.

Q: (Rob Harris – AP) Question to Valtteri. You said on the London event that everyone has their own right to decide whether to attend or not. First of all, why did you decide to attend when obviously Lewis Hamilton didn't. And do you think that drivers have an obligation to go to these events, particularly at a time when the sport says it's trying to reach out to new fans, and one of the biggest names in the sport in this country thought he'd go on holiday instead?

VB: Well, basically, when I first heard about this event and that it was most-likely going to happen, they asked all the drivers to attend and I immediately said yeah, I could attend – and also my team was asking me to attend, so I knew it was just before Silverstone, in the same country, so for me it was all OK.

Q: (Rachel Brookes – Sky Sports F1) To all four of you really. I know you get a lot of call on your time anyway as it is – but an event like that, the day before Silverstone, has that given you guys a lift? Are you glad you went to it? The looks on your faces look like you really enjoyed it – so has it given you a boost coming into the weekend?

Lance?

LS: I think it was a great event for everyone. For the fans, for us drivers something different. I don't think it gives us a boost but I think it was a good day and I'm fully on board with more of those days to hopefully come in the future.

JP: I think it's nice. It's my home crowd as well so it's probably especially nice for me. It's a bit like Goodwood really. You see fans up close to the cars, they're all very happy and it kind of makes you happy as well. It was fun.

VB: Like I said before I thought it was great. Great event and I was happy. Happy that I could make it. It was good fun.

Romain?

RG: Same thing. I was very happy that I was there. We didn't have a car but I enjoyed the show, seeing others cars, seeing the McLaren, the Renault, the old V12, the old V6 and then some of the Red Bulls, and donuts in London! Then I was pretty amazed when we went on stage, to see so many people. It was just a great show. Good to see that most of us went.

Q: (Ben Hunt – The Sun) Question to anyone who wants to answer really. Back-to-back races, it's quite important, I thought, to get momentum. Any of you taken a holiday in between back-to-back races – and do you think it's a good idea.

Jolyon?

JP: No and no.

RG: My kids are on holiday – so it's no holiday for me at all.

Lance, obviously it's a fairly new experience for you. How does it feel to have consecutive weekends?

LS: Yeah, sure, it's a busy week. The London Live on Wednesday – but I took a few days to myself, Monday, Tuesday.

Q: (Ysef Harding – Xiro Xone News) To all of you, to the previous question about Wednesday. What other places would you like to see the F1 Live events held?

Lance? I guess you're going to say Montreal...

LS: Yeah, that would be great. I think the big cities. Wherever we go where there's a good crowd and people can turn up. I think it's good for everyone.

Paris?

RG: Paris would be good – especially with the French Grand Prix coming back next year – but I guess New York, L.A. Could be some pretty amazing cities to have an event.

Valtteri? Helsinki?

VB: Nastola, Finland! My home town. If I could choose.

JP: Drive down to Clapham! Just shift it down.

Q: (Peter Windsor – F1 Racing) To the other three drivers, whether or not you think in terms of taking a gamble, trying to anticipate the start, or whether you rely on your reflexes for the lights to go out – bearing in mind the penalty of jumping a start?

Romain, you took off like a rocket on Sunday. What's your answer?

RG: No, I normally don't gamble. I think about it but I just normally react to the lights.

JP: I think if you gamble nine times out of ten you will get it wrong, to be honest. I think everyone's normally waiting for the lights to go out.

LS: I'm no different. I just go when the lights go off.

Out of interest, do you practice this? Do you have lights that go out? A digital thing that you can practice it on?

JP: My engineer's been practising on a little clicky computer now, I think ever since Valtteri last weekend.

And what's the fastest you can do it?

JP: 0.03, wasn't it?

LS: I'm not sure, I don't really look at my numbers.

And you Romain?

RG: I'm normally within two and three tenths but I wouldn't play much.

Q: (Rifa Uddin – Renaissance Foundation) My question is to all of you. What advice would you give to a younger generation that are interested in Formula One?

Lance?

LS: Make sure that you think about it because it's an interesting world. It's a very unique business. I think y'know, obviously, you need to work hard at whatever you're doing in Formula One. You need to follow your dreams and always believe you can get there. At the end of the day that's what's important.

Jolyon?

JP: To be a Formula One driver's extremely tough. If someone's very interested the only way is to have a go. But also, I think it's worth bearing in mind most people in Formula One are not drivers. They are also mechanics, and engineers, and catering and marketing. If you're interested in Formula One, then there's a lot of avenues to go for.

Valtteri?

VB: I always think that definitely having goals in your career, whether it is to be a driver or in general, or a mechanic in Formula One, always to have a goal. It really makes you work harder every day for it. Anything's always possible in life so always good to set a goal.

Romain?

RG: It's a good summary by the guys. Don't give up on the dream. I lost Formula One once and I dreamt of coming back and I managed to come back, so that's the key.

Q: (Stephen Camp – Paddock Magazine) You all looked to enjoy yourselves yesterday at the show but has Liberty Media come to all four of you and the rest of the paddock about any other events that you would like to put on or any ideas that you have for the sport in general.

Valtteri?

VB: Not yet, haven't heard anything more.

Q: (Iolande Skinner – Motorsport Monday) Question for Romain, after such a great result in Austria, how's this affected your confidence in yourself and also in the car?

RG: I think, y'know, confidence, the key's not to lose it at any time. We've all had good races, bad races but I believe in your career you need to believe in yourself. If not, there's almost no point turning in. The car... well the car, it's a girl and she's a bit up and down, y'know? Decides which mood she wants to come in. Hopefully she's still in a good mood and we'll have a good weekend here.

Q: (Tony Dodgins – Channel 4) What with the London Live event and talk about a possible, potential street race in the future in London, obviously Silverstone has talked about exercising a break clause after 2019. How sad would you all be to see Silverstone not part of the F1 schedule? How important is it to you guys?

Jolyon?

JP: Well, for me it's very important. This is where I probably grew my passion for Formula One, so it's been my local track, my home track for my home life. I first came here in the '90s and got a real passion for it and now the history and tradition here are pretty big. A London race would also be very cool – but I think Silverstone is also quite important for Formula One.

Q: Valtteri?

VB: I agree really. I would be also really sad not to race here. It is a track everyone loves and I personally think it's one of the best venues for the fans. The atmosphere here is really special. Formula One definitely needs the British Grand Prix, because of all the

history and most of the teams are based here. But if not here then hopefully for example central London but, yeah...

Q: Lance?

LS: I think it would be a shame not to be racing at Silverstone anymore. I think there is so much history here. It's great for the fans, it's one of the best races, although I've never participated in it before, but the crowd really gets into it and it's probably one of the best races of the year so it would definitely be a shame to lose it.

Q: And Romain?

RG: Yeah, pretty similar. It's a great place to race. Most of the teams are around the track as well, so it's very important as every team around looks forward to racing here. Driving wise it's one of the most enjoyable track on the calendar, so hopefully we get more years here.

Q: (Peter Windsor – F1 Racing) Valtteri, I'm interested to know when you win a race do you get any feedback from Nico Rosberg – email, text, anything at all – winning in his car, as you are?

VB: No. I saw him last time I think Monaco Grand Prix. We had a bit of a chat and he told me that he thinks I'm doing a good job and obviously that was nice to hear from him. Otherwise, no messages or anything. I'm getting quite a lot of feedback from the team about everything, so it's all good.

Q: (Alex Cheale – Renaissance Foundation) I just wanted to know who are your inspirations for driving?

RG: Good question. I started watching rallies to be fair. So it was Carlos Sainz and Didier Auriol and then in racing, Formula One, I started watching in '93, '94, same time as rallies, Prost and Senna and that was a great fight.

VB: For me, definitely when I was a kid it was Häkkinen, when he won his first race, his first title, second title I was watching him closely so he was massive motivation for me.

JP: No one particularly for me but I think when I was young Damon Hill was the British champion and fighting so him.

LS: For me when I was growing up it was Schumacher. He was the guy I looked up to.

Q: (Graham Harris – Motorsport Monday) A question for Jolyon. You've had a string of 11th places and a lot of bad luck this year and you're still chasing the magical point on the board. How much pressure do you feel at the moment to put points on the board? Do you feel that your drive under threat? Has the team been vocal about it? Have they put you under any kind of targets to meet?

JP: No. I'm trying my best all the time. The pressure? I put a lot on myself. Of course I wanted to score points by now but it's not been possible. But I have also had a lot of bad luck. I think most of the reliability problems have been on my side of the garage. We missed some races where I think there were some good chances to score, like Baku, where I had a lot of problems. And then of course all these 11th places. It's frustrating. Every time I have been 11th there has been a car, last time it was Lance, that is right in front of me but it's not possible to overtake, actually it was Romain before as well. It's frustrating like that, but it's pretty close and we're not even half way through the year. Things are starting to click a bit better now, so hopefully I can carry the momentum into this weekend and then the rest of the year, I'm sure it will get much stronger.

Q: (Giles Richards – The Guardian) You were talking about the younger generation earlier. In terms of encouraging a new generation to get into Formula One, do you think attending events such as the demo is absolutely key to bringing a new generation of fans to the sport?

RG: It definitely helps. It's not easy to afford to come to a grand prix, when you're a dad with two kids for example. So yeah, events like this, where you get to see the cars... I fell in love with motorsport when I was going to see my dad racing in Formula 3. When I saw those cars going around I said: "I want to do that when I'm big". That's a key element. I think there are more, clearly getting the passion when you are a kid, you dream about things and it's just make the kids dream that they can do it and they get the feel of what is Formula One and they will join as big fans.

VB: I think definitely events like this will motivate a lot of young kids. I think it is important for many kids to have opportunities to see F1 live at least once in their childhood. I don't think it is the only way to get people excited. Personally for me it was enough that I was just doing go-karts. I was watching all the races on TV and I was playing Formula One games. Actually the first time I saw a Formula One car live was 2010 I think. But I was obviously quite keen much, much before that.

JP: I don't think it is the only way but I think it is a big contributor. It's great for people to be up close and see the cars in action. I think for a lot of people in London they hadn't had that experience before especially to be three metres from the track and then of course to see the stars as well. It's all about the cars going quick and making some noise and then the stars driving them as well. When I was young, seeing the cars in action – OK it was at Silverstone and not in London – but I was like "wow, this is pretty cool", so for most people it's a great incentive.

LS: Yeah, I think every opportunity to get close to some Formula One cars is great – races, hopefully more F1 Lives to come, it's always great to see some cars.

Q: How old were you when you first saw a Formula One car?

LS: I was young. I was probably four or five when I went to the Montreal grand prix for the first time.

Q: (Steven Camp – Paddock Magazine) With Silverstone being one of the fastest tracks on the calendar and the upped pace in performance from the 2017 cars, do any of you think you can take Copse flat out?

VB: Well, it's always from simulations and driving the simulator and stuff it's difficult to say for sure, but it could well be, at least with the low fuel. We will see on Saturday at the latest. But it is going to be a lot of fun with these new cars. It's been anyway in the past years a great circuit, being in the car, driving a Formula One car around here. But I'm really looking forward to this one, it's going to be really cool.

Q: If it was, what speed and what gear would it be?

VB: It could be eighth or seventh gear. I don't know about the speed.

RG: That could be the limitation, because if we go in in eighth, the exit might be a bit tricky.

PART TWO: Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes), Daniel RICCIARDO (Red Bull Racing), Daniil KVIAT (Toro Rosso), Pascal WEHRLEIN (Sauber)

Q: Lewis, four-time British Grand Prix winner, looking to equal the record of five. How have you spent the last few days in the build-up to the race and are we set to get a strong statement from you on track here, as so often in the past?

Lewis HAMILTON: It's good to be here. I tried to prepare in the best way I can, quite relaxed the past few days and I've come here excited for the weekend, as always. You've got the championship, which is obviously the most important thing, but a very close second, if not tied, is the British Grand Prix, being a home grand prix, the home of motorsport, such an incredible, intense weekend. Every year it is a must-win for a British driver, so yeah I tried to prepare the best way I could.

Q: Daniel, you looked like you were having fun in London yesterday evening, but you've also been having fun on track with 70 points from the last four races I think it is, second best tally in the field. What does that say about your competitiveness now?

Daniel RICCIARDO: It's certainly getting better. The season started slow but we've found some good momentum the last few races. I think Austria was a bit of a breakthrough in a way. It was a third, obviously not as good on paper as Baku, but in terms of actual performance we finished six or seven seconds off the win and there were no safety cars and it felt like really for once this year had genuine pace and we could run pretty much with the pace of the leaders. So that was super encouraging. Last few laps it was looking like it was going to get tight. I'd held that podium spot the whole race and I could see Lewis closing in, so I was relieved to have stayed on the podium when it looked like he was going to come past pretty easily at some point. It felt like from one lap to the next he was in my mirrors. I didn't really have to look in the mirrors most for the race but then I saw a car and I was hoping it was a car that had come out of the pits, out of sequence, and it stayed in my mirrors for a few corners. Then I had a proper look and it was a silver car and I knew it wasn't Valtteri, so I knew we would have a bit on the last few laps but it's been a good run, so we're building.

And last night?

DR: Oh last night, yeah, it was a good event. Look, I'm sure that would have been pretty difficult to organise and get that all going but I felt like it was a success and you know, we had a bit of time on track to try to give the fans what they wanted to see. I doubt they left disappointed.

Q: Daniil, we had a big discussion in part one about the idea of using street promotions and the kind of thing we saw yesterday. What do you think of the idea of putting events on like that and reaching out to fans, in a place like Moscow for example?

Daniil KVIAT: I think it would work – not in January! But in summer yes, I think why not. I mean if every year, once a year, they could rotate this kind of event between one of the biggest cities of the world to promote the sport, then I think why not. Like Daniel said it was a good success yesterday I think. A lot of people there in the city centre of London. It was a cool and enjoyable atmosphere and I think it was nice for sure.

Q: Pascal, coming to you, how are you finding life at Sauber without Monisha Kaltenborn, but with the prospect of Fred Vasseur arriving as the new team principal.

Pascal WEHRLEIN: I'm looking forward that Fred is coming. I respect him a lot for what he has done in motorsport so far, like in junior categories and last year in Formula One. So, looking forward to working with him and let's see where he can bring Sauber.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Peter Windsor – F1 Racing) Just repeating a question from a colleague from the previous session. Lewis, Copse corner this year? Do we think it will be flat in eighth and if so what is that going to be like and if so how will it compare with Becketts in terms of fun factor?

LH: I think Copse is going to be flat this year. I would imagine quite easy, yeah. I would imagine probably eighth, you should get to eighth by then. It's going to be rapid. I don't think any of us are prepared for how quick Silverstone is going to be compared to previous years. It was awesome in the last race. Maggots and Becketts, again, are going to be the same. It's going to be a physical race for us, being that it is mostly medium and high-speed corners. The G that we are going to be pulling is definitely going to be one up, maybe two, who knows, but it's going to be a lot of fun.

Daniel, you're nodding and smiling, as if you're looking forward to this?

LH: It's because he's got an upgrade package!

DR: Ha! We've got more coming later. It's going to be fun. I love high-speed corners. From Turn 9 to 15, Copse to Stowe, it's some of the coolest sequences... probably [the best] mile of race track we go on all year. We got a taste of it, as Lewis said, in Austria. The second, third sector we were carrying some serious speed, so it's a sign of what this weekend is going to be like I think.

Q: (Jon McEvoy – Daily Mail) If they organised an event such as last night's again in London, would you all go?

DK: You mean every day or what? Probably no. But next year again? Why not. Wednesday? Yeah I think why not, of course.

LH: I guess I'll decide when the time comes.

DR: Yeah.

PW: Yeah I would and I would do more donuts, as Daniel did.

DR: That was controlled sliding.

Q: Is that what you told the council?

DR: It's alright... arrest me.

Q: (Ben Hunt – The Sun) Lewis, just in your words, why were you the only driver not there when your colleagues were there and you were missing?

LH: I don't why I was the only one. Everyone had the right to make their decision for themselves. For me, I felt that it's been a pretty intense season so far and I felt for me, I needed to prepare the best way that I could for this weekend. The season's the most important thing for me. That's really it.

Q: (Rachel Brookes – Sky TV) Lewis, just following on, from what you saw of yesterday's event and the crowd that turned out that was there, you're someone who talks a lot about what you get from the fans and how much it helps you. Looking at those pictures and what happened, do you feel that actually being there yesterday might have helped you coming into this weekend and given you a boost a day early even, coming into the British Grand Prix?

LH: I generally haven't been on my phone the last couple of days, I tried to switch off, I switch on a couple of times just to receive a message but otherwise I've tried to stay away from it. Personally, I feel I prepared the best way for this weekend and that's really all I can

do. Of course, there are people who have other opinions about it but I'm trying to do the best... it's a very intense season, I'm trying to prepare the best way I can. Other people will have different ways of doing so. I love this Grand Prix, I love this race so I feel yesterday, personally, plays any role in how great this weekend is for me. Every season, for the last years has been incredible, it's been growing every year. You get people who have saved up so much through the year to come up to this Grand Prix and I think you will have seen over the previous years how much I appreciate and respect that and tried to give and enjoy the weekend with the fans and that doesn't change.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Lewis, on the same topic, there's suggestions that there has been some sort of disagreement over the use of your image for this particular event, that you wanted to be paid or something like that. Can you refute that categorically?

LH: Yeah, that's... No, I mean I told the organisers last week that I wouldn't be going. I spoke to Toto, informed the team which was very understanding and understood and respectful of the decision. Yeah, I think they used my image so that wasn't a problem.

Q: (Rob Harris – AP) Lewis, first of all, how is flying for what, seven or eight hours round trip to Greece better preparation than staying in the UK? And you were booed by the fans in London, they obviously are unhappy with you, this was a big event, used by the F1 owners to try and engage with fans. You are the biggest British driver. What were your thoughts when you heard they actually booed you?

LH: To be honest, I didn't really know about it. In terms of flying, I don't live here so I wouldn't have been here anyway as I was back in Monaco first, but I fly a lot longer than that for trips and I usually arrive pretty good. But you know, right now my focus is on this weekend, making sure I put every bit of energy into this great weekend that we have and I received incredible love from the fans every single year that I've come here. Yeah, looking forward to seeing them.

Q: (Phil Duncan - PA) Lewis, sorry to keep harping on about yesterday, but do you still stand by your decision and do you think it was the right decision, given you were the only driver missing? You're the home star, you're the home favourite. Do you think you got it wrong?

LH: Well, I mean, like I said, I think I've felt like I've answered as much as I really want to. I'm solely focused on this weekend now, I feel great, being here, I feel the best prepared I could be.

Q: (Stephen Camp – Paddock Magazine) I was just wondering, I asked the last four drivers if there was anything that Liberty had come to you about, what you would like to give back to the fans. Are there any ideas that you would like to give back to the fans, anything that you would like to do to widen the audience of the sport?

DR: Not anything right now, off the top of my head. Yeah. You've kind of got me. I don't know. I wasn't expecting to be asked the question. We'll come back...

DK: Well, I just drive the car, you know. I think that's what I should be focused on. I think there are other people who know how to do their job a bit better for that.

LH: I don't really have all the ideas. I think there are people who make those decisions.

DR: Probably more locations, where we go. I think we can keep expanding in different parts of the world perhaps. I guess put F1 on the map in places that it's not currently. That can always help to raise awareness of our sport and give people an interest. Yeah, that's something that comes to mind.

PW: I think that after yesterday some louder engines again. It was really nice to hear the old V8 engines, that was great. Hopefully we can have the same in the future again.

Q: (Andrew Benson – BBC Sport) Lewis, I'm not going to ask about London! This weekend – it's obviously been very close between Mercedes and Ferrari all season – but with the different characteristics between the two cars, do you feel that this might be one of the tracks that's more suited to Mercedes and it could be a particularly strong weekend for the team?

LH: I hope so but I think that being that we're (indistinct) on the car you would have hoped that it would have worked better in the medium and high speed corners but if you look at previous races, the last one, the Ferraris were very strong, the Red Bulls were very strong in all sections but there is also that balance of the high speed as well and drag. I think it will be very very close but I've heard that these guys have brought a big upgrade. He's always smiling anyway so he smiling a little bit more...

DR: I'm good at bluffing, I always smile because you never know. We've got more.

LH: You've got more. They did a great job in the last race so to see Red Bull up there I think is great, to see a three way team challenge competition and I think this weekend's going to be... you know, they were very very strong here last year, particularly on intermediates, in the race, so I think it's going to be a spectacular British Grand Prix in that respect.

Q: (Graham Harris – Motorsport Monday) Daniel Ricciardo, you seem to be really getting into the shoe business on the podium and the podiums are becoming more and more regular. You are persuading the interviewers to drink but you're not having very much luck with your fellow drivers. Can you think of any way to encourage them to join you, and to the other three: should you be up there with Daniel, would you be partaking of the amber nectar?

DR: Well, most of the last ones have actually come from the others wanting – not the drivers – but the interviewees if you call them (he means interviewers) - they've been wanting to do it. I honestly didn't plan on doing it in even Baku – I was 'ah, I won't do it.' But DC took my shoes off and then Austria, Martin was like frothing for it. So I feel that there are some really sick bastards around here. I never thought it would continue like this. Even yesterday, people were shouting it. I'm just walking along, minding my business and they're like shouting 'do a shoe.' I don't actually just take my shoe off while I'm walking in the street and drink out of it. I feel like I've dug a hole for myself with this one. On that note, I feel like it's been fun. I want to say it's run its course. We'll see what happens but I heard that the Finns drink, I really heard that. But Valtteri did not carry his flag well last Sunday. I mean shame on him! He needed vodka in it, so Valtteri Bottas – disappointed. And that's it. No more shoeys.

Lewis, you've avoided it so far...

LH: Absolutely. I still stand firm on... I told you... the juice from the foot is not something that I wish to drink, especially someone else's!

DR: It's risky with back-to-backs. It is! We put - all the podium guys could end up in hospital for a week. Yeah.

Q: (Ralf Bach – Sport Bild) For all of you: we heard that Red Bull has a great update on the car. What are the updates of Toro Rosso, Sauber, Mercedes, Red Bull here and in the future; what is planned?

DK: Well, it's probably not as much as these guys but we also try, we try hard and hopefully there will be some, maybe Budapest. I think we're working on it and I think that it will be efficient so let's see.

PW: We expect a big one in Budapest. I was in the factory two weeks ago and I was told in Budapest there's a big one coming, hopefully.

Q: Any particular reason why there?

PW: I don't know. As soon as possible, hopefully.

So you've obviously got a massive upgrade this weekend, Daniel, another one coming...

DR: No, I do believe we've got something significant for Budapest and this weekend it's usual bits and pieces which we kind of bring now nearly every race but Budapest is probably more of an advertised update as opposed to this weekend.

Q: And the reason why it's there?

DR: I think mostly it seems it just takes time, but yeah, it's a high downforce package.

LH: We had a small upgrade in the last race and I think we've got some small bits here but nothing major. Similar to what Daniel was saying, and I think in the next race there will be some small parts as well. I think after the break there will be more substantial bits coming.

Q: (Jon McEvoy – Daily Mail) The day before the hearing, the FIA hearing into Sebastian Vettel and his accident with Lewis, the boss of Mercedes, Toto Wolff, went to a birthday party to celebrate the thirtieth of Sebastian Vettel. I was wondering, from all drivers, would you be surprised most relevantly for Lewis, but would you be surprised and see it as maybe an act of loyalty or otherwise for your boss to go to a birthday of a rival with whom you've just had an accident before the hearing?

DR: Free alcohol. Doesn't matter how much money you make, you don't turn that down.

Unless it's out of your shoe.

DR: Yeah, actually, good point.

LH: All I can do is laugh at that one. I don't really have an answer for that one to be honest. That's the dumbest question I've had so far.

PW: I think Seb is a really nice guy so I would also go to his birthday.

DR: Why weren't you invited?

PW: I don't know! Maybe he doesn't think that I'm nice.

Q: Daniil, were you washing your hair that evening or did you go as well?

DK: I was hoping you'd forgotten about me already. I don't have an answer for you. I cannot even imagine.

DR: There was an invite for the torpedo. I saw it. Not so cool.

DK: You have a good memory.

Q: (Giles Richards - The Guardian) Lewis, sorry to return to this but it's quite a big issue: you've always tried to connect... you've made a point of trying to connect with your fans. Do you think it was a missed opportunity not attending yesterday,

given that a lot of people who were there, who were attending, would be kids and people who can't afford to go Grands Prix, so this was a really good chance to connect with those people who just can't make it to Silverstone?

LH: Like I've said, I feel like I've said everything I want to say on the subject but I like to think that I do everything I can to connect with the fans. I do have the biggest following in Formula One and I communicate with them as much as I can. The fans mean everything to me and they always have. I've made no secret of that. I think hopefully my commitments to the sport over the last ten years and what I do actually outside the sport, things that perhaps you don't comment on such as when I go and visit the hospitals and spend time with young kids who can't come to a Grand Prix. That's not something you report on but that's actually very important to me and that's where I put my energy mostly. I think lots of us have decisions to make and you have to stand firm with the decisions you make and feel proud of the decisions you make and I personally do and this weekend, as I say, coming here and give everything to shine as much light and raise the flag in the best way I can, and try the best I can. The goal is to win the British Grand Prix for my home crowd. I've been very fortunate the last few years to do that and the yearning and the need to do that again is greater than ever.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) To the three non-Mercedes drivers: you've heard what Lewis said; do you guys feel that you've prepared any less intensively for this race by being in London and not being on a beach in Greece, for example? And just because you're not leading the championship or up there, do you feel that you haven't prepared as well for this weekend?

DR: Each to their own. We're all adults now. Obviously the spotlight's on Lewis because he was the only one that wasn't there, out of all of us, so I understand that but yeah, he's been doing it long enough to know what he needs to do. For me, personally, I thought it was a good event. I thought it was a good opportunity to reach out, obviously, to a few more fans but it also gives Liberty some more encouragement. They're trying to start something now so just to get behind that and see where we can take it.

PW: Nothing to add.

DK: I think Lewis justified it very clearly. I think everyone has different preparations. I think it's enough said on the topic.

Q: (Peter Windsor – F1 Racing) Daniil, this year Toro Rosso has shown some real pace on occasions but it seems to be quite difficult for the team to have a consistent weekend from Friday morning to Sunday night, Austria being a good example: very quick and then it fell away in qualifying. What is your feeling about that, why did it happen in Austria, for example?

DK: I think in Austria we know really what happened in qualifying, and we dropped a bit out of the working window in the important session. Coming to the year, I would say that for my personal case, Sundays, for one reason or another, on the good days the races were not finished and I think it's very important because that's when the points are given on that day and I think that's what I'm looking for really. I've had really good Fridays, really good Saturdays, good Sundays until the car stopped but now what we're looking for is to put all three days together and that should bring good things to my side of the garage.

Ends