



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L' AUTOMOBILE

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DRIVERS

- 1 – Sebastian VETTEL (Ferrari)**
- 2 – Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes)**
- 3 – Kimi RÄIKKÖNEN (Ferrari)**

PODIUM INTERVIEWS

(Conducted by Mark Webber)

Sebastian, 48th victory, 100th podium, a couple behind Alain Prost, so run us through it – what a race.

Sebastian VETTEL: Yeah, obviously pretty good. We got a bit lucky with the safety car but yeah, really enjoyed it. A great turnout today, you saw in the grandstands, I really enjoyed the lap back in. And for the race, I mean my start, I was hoping for it to be a little bit better, but it didn't really work, so I had to settle for third. And then, towards the end of that first stint I lost a little bit the connection to Lewis and Kimi ahead. I was struggling a little bit with the tyres. I felt happier with the soft tyres, with the yellow tyres at the end, for the second stint. Obviously I was praying for a safety and there was a car that stopped in Turn 4 and I was like 'no, it's not coming out' and then somebody stopped, I think it was a Haas, in Turn 2, and then when I saw it I was full of adrenalin, even though the race is frozen, but still to come into the pits, everything on the limit, trying to get back out, because they told me it was really close with Lewis. And when we got out ahead I knew it was difficult to pass but he kept some pressure on, especially at the beginning of the last stint and then at the end, during the last five laps at least I could enjoy it a little bit more.

Well done. Lewis, God, what a weekend you've had! Give him a round of applause. He's been incredible this weekend, absolutely on fire yesterday in qualifying. You've been on this podium eight times, more than any other driver in history in Australia. I thought you drove phenomenally this weekend, mate, it got away through tactics in the [pit] lane. Talk us through the race, how was it for you?

Lewis HAMILTON: It's been an incredible weekend, honestly. To arrive and have the performance we had today. A big congratulations to Sebastian and Ferrari. Today, obviously, they did the better job and we have to go back to the drawing board and work on it. We still have great pace, our qualifying was

great, I think through the race I was able to apply some pressure towards the end. This is one awesome circuit but it's so hard to overtake, even with the extra DRS, obviously with the cars being as close as they were. At the end it was really trying to live to fight another day, save the engine and we'll try to regain the point later on. But a big thank you to everyone that has come out this weekend. We've got so many British flags and for the Australians for having us this week.

Kimi, my man. How was it? Sixteen times this man has raced in front of you guys. He's an absolute legend. Up here on the podium for the first time since he won in 2013. Kimi, how was your race?

Kimi RÄIKKÖNEN: I think it was OK. We didn't have the most luck but what can you do. Luckily it was Seb that got the luck and it was our team at least. I think I had decent speed all day long and just difficult to pass. I got a good go in the second corner and then just tried to follow and see if we could do something in a pit stop. Obviously with the safety car it's pure luck. We could hold onto third place. Got some pressure in the end, from the Red Bull with little bit more fresh tyres, but I'll take it the third place. I think I've been happy with the car and it's nice to go onto the next races.

Sebastian, we meet up again on this podium with (you) victorious. It's a nice meeting point in terms of Ferrari winning, the season starting off on the front foot, last year it was a titanic battle with Lewis, off to Bahrain in a few weeks. How do you see it playing out?

SV: Obviously we were a little bit lucky today. Lewis had a great lap yesterday. He deserved pole position. He drove a very good race; controlled it in the beginning. As I say, we got a bit lucky, but we'll take it. We put a flag up in Maranello for every win and I asked them to do that this morning back in Europe. We're not yet there where we want to be. I'm not yet exactly there with the car, you know. If I don't feel what I need to feel then it's a bit tricky. I think we all know. But I think it gives us a good start, a good wind and fresh motivation for the coming weeks.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Q: (Yianni Mavromoustakos - Talkingtorque.com.au) Firstly congratulations to Seb, now for all three drivers, how did you find the Halo in race conditions.

KR: No different than in testing or at any other point. I think it definitely doesn't disturb at all. I think it was helpful here because the sun, when it's coming in the right height, it's blocking the sun in the eyes. So, I think it was only beneficial here, and it's safer. Maybe people don't like how it looks but y'know it might make a difference for us one day and it's a good thing to have.

Seb?

SV: During the race, it was no issue. As Kimi said, it even helped. I don't know what you call the thing in the car... it worked like a sun visor, that helped. In the parade lap, that's when it was bothering because you couldn't see so well the people in the grandstands. Was trying to find, is it better to look below, or... wasn't tall enough to get above. Other than that, no difference.

Lewis, anything to add?

LH: I don't think so.

Q: (Luigi Perna – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Question for Seb, what do you still miss in the feeling of the car. It's up to the balance of the car, the power of the engine or what else?

SV: No, I think the car has huge potential but yeah, I'm still struggling a little bit. I think if we also compare to where we're still a bit weak, it's where I also feel that the car is not yet there, so, what am I missing, when you talk about something that you miss as a driver, the car doesn't respond the way you like and it's still sliding in places you don't want it to slide. I'm quite... I want the car to be spot on when I hit brakes and turn in, and in that window, I'm not yet happy, so it's always sort-of a compromise. Of course, it's our job to drive around problems that we have but if I could chose, I would like it a bit different and yeah, it's not a big drama. I think we can live with it but I feel also if we get on top of that then you feel more confident. A track like here, when you have confidence it makes a big difference. I

think today was quite windy, very gusty. You always try to push but equally to try to be a bit safe – because you don't want to throw it away. That's exactly where it makes a difference: if then then have the confidence and you trust the car, you don't think for a second, you just go out and do it. At the moment, it just feels a bit too conscious. So, let's hope I get to think less, and we need to think less in the next races.

Q: (Paul Gover – Herald Sun) Party time for you guys tonight. Will you be inviting the guys from the Haas team perhaps as well?

SV: I don't know what the problem for them was. Obviously, as I said before, the Virtual Safety Car did help me today, no doubt, but as I said as well, there were other races where it didn't, so that's the way it goes. I've been on the other side as well. I said as well that, y'know, Lewis was probably the quickest out of all three of us but that's how it goes and for sure, wearing red is a good day today.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Kimi, it's your best start to the season for five years. P3, it is more satisfaction or a disappointment?

KR: Obviously, you want more, always, and you want to win. I think we had decent speed all weekend and we were pretty OK in the early part of the race and then obviously, it's just pure luck sometimes that goes your way or against you. What happened today, at least it was our team. Not ideal for me but it's a decent start and it's a long year so the feeling has been OK this weekend. We go for the next race and I'd rather take a third place than no points, so yeah, we always want more but I'll take it and we go.

Q: (Ben Hunt – The Sun) Tabloid time again. Sebastian, are you concerned about 'Party Mode', do you think it's legal what Mercedes have got?

SV: I think so. I think also Lewis was right yesterday. I think that... y'know we do get a bit of data, GPS data and stuff like that... I think they did turn it up for Q3 but not by seven-tenths. I think probably if you look at qualifying carefully, I try to do so last night. It's fair to say they were quick in Q1, quicker than us, Lewis was quick in Q2 and then his second run, I don't know, something happened. So, his last run in Q3 was the only proper run at the end and he had a clean run and I don't think the gain that he had in time was down to engine. Probably a tenth, a little bit more, but not seven tenths. So, the credit is for his lap that he did and not for the engine power. It's completely fine what they're doing because they didn't do anything special. Not more than they did last year, probably even a bit less by the looks of it. So, it was clear that he just had a very good lap and he drove well.

Q: (Phil Duncan – Press Association) Seb, do you take any extra satisfaction in the win today, given the comments that Lewis made yesterday about wiping the smile off your face after qualifying?

SV: Not really. He said he was joking and I believe him. I think we are old enough, I don't think we need to go on that sort of level. It's fine as long as we joke with each other and I don't think... apart from a point last year, we don't have a problem with each other. I think even if we are very different persons, I think we share – all of us – a common passion and that makes us quite equal again. We love racing and we try to do our best, once we're in the car and beat all the others. I think in that regard, I don't see why we shouldn't get on with each other.

Q: Do you see it the same way, Lewis?

LH: Sorry, I wasn't listening.

Q: No reason you shouldn't get on with each other?

LH: Don't think so, no.

Q: (Daniele Sparisci – Corriera della Sera) Seb, in your feeling, what is the difference between this victory from the one from last year in Melbourne? Which one is more unexpected?

SV: The one today. I think last year we had more pace in relative terms. Last year we were putting them under pressure. Even though Lewis was in the lead, I think we managed to put him under pressure so yeah, I was forced to pit and we benefited from that. Because we had the speed today... I think we didn't have the true race pace to match them but we weren't that far off. In the last stint, even though we were probably lucky with the safety car or virtual safety car, we still had enough pace to stay ahead and make it very difficult for him to be close and try and do something. I think also compared to the others, it didn't look like there was a whole train behind us so I think we had some decent pace.

Q: (Luis Vasconcelos – Formula Press) Two questions for Kimi: first of all, you were quicker than Sebastian in qualifying and in the first part of the race with the ultrasoft tyres so is that satisfactory and encouraging for future races? And second, with the harder tyre, you didn't seem to be able to hold on to them. Was the balance the difference?

KR: I think I had a chance to fight for the first place in the beginning but I was very happy with the car all weekend. Obviously there are things that we have to improve, we know that, but it wasn't too bad and in the end of all the guys I had the older tyres so obviously with Ricciardo my aim was just to keep him behind because I followed throughout the first part of the race but it's very difficult to overtake so it wasn't really there. The biggest thing was to try to get in front of Lewis. I was happy to take the third place, not ideal but I was pretty happy with everything, not much to complain about but obviously the position could be a bit better.

Q: (Frederic Ferret – L'Equipe) Lewis, if the team had warned you about Seb's pitting, would have you been able to do something else to change the scenario?

LH: I'd have to go and look at it but it was quite close between us, maybe a second or so. If I had known that Sebastian was in my window I may have been able to make a difference, yes. Whether it would be enough, I'm not quite sure. I'd have to look.

Q: (Mikko Hyytia - Iltalehti) Kimi, how surprised were you by Sebastian's tactics because on the radio it sounded like you were pretty surprised?

KR: Not really. The only thing I was surprised because we were talking on the radio that they didn't let me know what he was doing. Obviously we talked before the race and there were hundreds of options what we can do and that was his best option and no threat from behind. He would obviously take a chance because he had nothing else to lose at that point, safe in third place so it would work out well. I wasn't really surprised what they did. I was surprised that we didn't – at one point – know exactly.

Q: (Phil Branagan – Auto Action) Question to Seb to follow on from that earlier one: because the result was so similar to last year, and the race played out similarly, would you say, compared with Lewis's car you were better off this year than you were a year ago, worse off or about the same?

SV: Well, at the moment we're a bit worse off. Last year we had more pace at this point. If you look at the gaps the whole weekend and we're not yet a true match. Obviously we had very good pace today, Kimi was very strong in the first stint. I think I was probably a tiny bit stronger in the second stint but it was a different race for us. But I think if you look and you are fair, then Lewis was fastest whereas last year I think we were fastest and it was very very close and therefore at this point we know that we are not yet where we want to be because we want to be fastest.

Ends