



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L' AUTOMOBILE

2018 FIA Formula One World Championship

Bahrain Grand Prix

Saturday Post-Qualifying Press Conference Transcript

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DRIVERS

1 – Sebastian VETTEL (Ferrari)

2 – Kimi RÄIKKÖNEN (Ferrari)

3 – Valtteri BOTTAS (Mercedes)

TRACK INTERVIEWS

(conducted by Johnny Herbert)

Q: Let's talk to this man, who is on pole position. Nice smiley face. You must be a happy boy?

Sebastian VETTEL: Yeah, let me breathe! It was quite intense. First run in Q3 I was very happy and then tossed it away in the last corner. No, really happy that I got the second run and I got it clean and I knew in the last corner I just knew I had to stay away from that kerb. Then obviously you're looking around trying to see where the others are. Very happy. The car was excellent all weekend so far, so looking forward to tomorrow.

Q: We've got to talk about the car, because these guys, your mechanics, have done a brilliant job for you. But when we look at her, she just seemed to do everything you needed to do day and that seemed to be the comfort factor that you had?

SV: Yeah, you know best. If the car is responding to what you want it to do it's a pleasure. Otherwise it's a fight. Australia was more of a fight. I think we worked on the balance. I think we looked into it a lot and I think we improved it as well yesterday and today – even though it's not easy because we do the practice session when the sun is up and qualifying and the race when the sun is down. But yeah, the car is responding, so very pleased.

Q: Good to see that smile on your face. And Kimi... that was a battle and a half. How are you feeling now? A little bit of disappointment I guess? But that was a good performance for you this weekend?

Kimi RÄIKKÖNEN: For sure, not ideal. Far from ideal in the last run, with the traffic, but what can you do?

Q: Yeah, what can you do? But again, everything seems to have started strong for you this season. It was unfortunate for you in Australia but coming here you look more at home than I think we have seen you for a long time. There are millions of people around the world who support you big time and this is maybe the start of something coming good for you.

KR: Well, we'll see. It's one Saturday. Tomorrow is the main thing and tomorrow is the time when we get the points or we don't get the points, so obviously see what we can do then.

Q: Valtteri, happy with that performance today? You beat your team-mate, which is great. I know you had pole position last year, but these two guys in red, they were strong today.

Valtteri BOTTAS: Yeah, it felt OK, the laps were OK and getting better towards the end. In Q3, when you need to put everything together, we got it more or less. I think these guys with the red car they are just a bit too quick. We can't be happy with this, so we are looking forward to tomorrow.

Q: But tomorrow is something you can focus on, a totally different scenario, because race pace looks a bit better than qualifying?

VB: Yeah, I think it's going to be a close race, even with Red Bull and with Lewis and Max coming from behind we'll see. It should be interesting.

Q: Well done. Seb, you're going to be starting right at the front, no one in front of you. You're going to be feeling pretty good once those lights go out.

SV: Feeling good now, tomorrow's a different story. It's a long, long race and we've seen that it's not easy to make the tyres last so... The car is quick – that usually helps! Let's see when the lights out, but for now I'm very chuffed and for the team as well. We had some issues this morning but we overcame those, so, yeah, looking forward to tomorrow.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Q: Seb, your 51st career pole position in Formula One. It didn't look that likely after FP3. Was it as surprising to you, the way the weekend has panned out?

SV: I think it's surprising for us to be, after Australia, that competitive. So, obviously, we, I think, have a good base. The car is working; in Australia, I think we struggled with the feel for the car. Here it's been better, so we improved a little bit, working the car, y'know, the beginning of the season, it's always difficult because you don't know yet the car that well. It's getting better, so obviously today was quite nice and the car came alive. I didn't have much session this afternoon, so it was a bit tricky to know what to expect but I felt quite good right from the start and knew that I could make progress throughout the session. Q3, that's when I wanted it to peak, and I think I peaked in the first run, just before the last corner. I wanted a bit too much. So, I knew I had a bit in me and yeah, basically, it was a bit copy/paste the final lap I had, but the last corner I managed to stay away from the kerbs, so yeah, very happy with both laps in the end and happy obviously with the result, with the car, the way the car was handling and responding, so, yeah. Chuffed.

Q: Kimi, coming to you, you've looked quick all weekend here, and it looked like you were one of the favourites for pole position today. Where do you think that pole just got away from you today, compared to Seb?

KR: Somewhere around the lap. Far from ideal but with the traffic on the last run. I thought there is a lot we can improve but obviously, it was such a messy thing in the end, I was passing people and doing this and that, so it's disappointing because it's been good most of the weekend. Everything. You always want one more but we'll see tomorrow.

Q: Valtteri, coming to you. The gap between Mercedes and Ferrari at times looked even bigger this weekend than it is in the final result. Does that give you encouragement for tomorrow's race?

VB: Well yeah, of course. First of all, it's disappointing not to be in the first row. Ferrari was quicker today – but yeah, for sure we made some good progress during the weekend, we tried some things which didn't work, that's why the gap was sometimes bigger. So, I think we have the right setup in the car for the race. So, it's difficult to estimate really, with the race pace. I think it's still a long race tomorrow so anything can happen. We'll definitely go for it and hopefully Lewis can also come back to get some good points, and hopefully we can put pressure on these guys.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Christian Menath – Motorsport-Magazin.com) Seb, do have an idea why you feel the car more here: is it the track characteristics, the updates you've got on the car, was it set-up that you made changes?

SV: Well, we mostly tried to work on the set-up, understanding the car so we tried different things obviously. Across the weekend, you don't have that much time so in Australia, the first race in Australia, it's a tricky track, it's improving a lot throughout the weekend, it's very bumpy so it's difficult to change too much in drawing conclusions. I think after the weekend, after the race distance, especially when you have so many laps, I think we had a very good understanding and feel and obviously we've been talking about it and looking into it and I think overall I've been happier this weekend with how the car has been responding, how the front end was responding so yeah,

overall, I think you also see it in the results but I think the good news is that we are a lot closer in all the conditions, if you look at all the sessions across with everyone so I think that's the only difference. For the rest it's the same car as in Australia.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Kimi, P2 in qualifying in Australia and now again. How difficult is it to start against your teammate compared to Lewis in Australia?

KR: I don't think it's any different, it's another car. We're never next to each other at the start because it's staggered but it's no different, we're basically in the same position, just a different way round with the start. Makes no difference.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – GloboEsporte.com) Valtteri, in Australia Mercedes was very fast and here on a more normal circuit we expected you to be even more fast but we saw exactly the opposite. What is going on with your car? Is it tyre management again like last year?

VB: I don't know what's going on. I agree that we were not having the pace this weekend that we've been expecting coming here but we also didn't have anything new since Melbourne. It's a very different circuit, very different kind of tarmac, different temperatures, everything so for sure we still need to understand completely why. For sure we are struggling a little bit with some overheating issues with the tyres. Obviously less so in the evening sessions but still, we have work to do. It's like we've been saying all through the beginning of the season that we are not miles away. Today, Ferrari, this weekend so far has been the quicker car so that's where we are. We were better in Australia, we need to understand why we were not quickest today but for sure we still have tomorrow to see how the pace is.

Q: (Luigi Perna – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Sebastian, this pole position, is it only up to the better balance of the car or do you have a party mode working as well as the Mercedes one this time?

SV: No, I think we answered that already in Australia. As I said, I was happier with the balance of the car so obviously there's a lot of factors. It's how comfortable you are in the car, whether the car's responding or not to what you like it to do. The track, Valtteri has mentioned, the surface, the temperatures, so there are a lot of things but I think we are very very happy that we build another very strong car and we are able to put it on the front row on our own, beating everybody today, so I think that's a great result and deserves some credit for the team, the effort that everyone is putting in so I think that's the best thing about today but the race is tomorrow so even if it's a good day, the main day is coming tomorrow.

Q: (Scott Mitchell – Autosport) Kimi, you seem a lot more comfortable in the car at the start of this season compared to last year. Do you feel happier in the car and what's different for you to access that higher level?

KR: Every car is different, it's a new car obviously and it's been OK. Obviously there are things we need to improve and we can improve but it's reasonably fine. Like I said, it's a new car, there are certain designs that have been done but it's either good or not and there's not one specific thing that is suddenly better for me than other years.

Q: (Arrackal Alexander – Gulf Auto Zone) Looking at the new halo system, how is it functioning with the three of you and what would hold the key for success tomorrow?

VB: It doesn't feel so new any more, the halo. I think we're used to it and I think it's all good. I actually missed the second question, what was it?

Q: What will be the key tomorrow?

VB: Be quick. I think here tyre management is going to be really important but consistent things, whoever's having the less drop-off with the tyres is going to be high in the end.

SV: Just the first time in the weekend you get in the car it's still a bit weird but as Valtteri said, you get used to it. I think it would be funny now if we take it off, it would feel a bit naked but yeah, it's fine. I think the most difficult thing is to get in and out. And for the rest, yeah, nothing to add from Valtteri.

Q: Key to success for you tomorrow? Is it the start against your teammate?

KR: It's the whole package, obviously, but I think we should have a good car. Make a good start and go from there.

Ends