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Italian Grand Prix

Post-Race Press Conference Transcript

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DRIVERS

1 – Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes)

2 – Kimi RÄIKKÖNEN (Ferrari)

3 – Valtteri BOTTAS (Mercedes)

TRACK INTERVIEWS

(Conducted by Paul Di Resta)

Q: Congratulations Lewis, we can see what that means to the team, we can hear it in your voice, that has to be one of your craziest races ever, to beat two Ferraris, outrace them on home soil here at Monza.

Lewis HAMILTON: Well, firstly I want to give it up to Ferrari who put up a great challenge this weekend. They really did an amazing job and they've really give us such a great fight. Secondly, I just want to say a huge thank you to these guys and everyone back home, because without their support, without their continued efforts this wouldn't be possible today, their continued belief. Also, here there was a lot of negativity, as there is when you're against an opposing team, and I could see so many British flags out there, they know who they are. I was pointing them out and they inspired me so much for this race and that's what I was driving for. In future, the negativity is really a positive thing for me because I harness it and turn it from negative to positive. But, as I said, a big thank you to Valtteri for helping us as well.

Q: Yeah, we could hear it in your voice even when you were doing the parade lap. You were happy with your starts, you got the job done in the beginning. You're not going to go down without a fight. They've got a strong package but you're going to fight it all the way.

LH: Absolutely. We never give up.

Q: Well done, mate. Kimi, you had the weight of the Italians on your side, the weight of Ferrari after Sebastian went out but the package just wasn't quite quick enough to beat Lewis was it?

Kimi RÄIKKÖNEN: I think it was quick enough but unfortunately our rear tyres went and it was a losing battle since that point. I tried but it was impossible in the end unfortunately. It's far from ideal but this is what we got today and we did our maximum.

Q: You can take the positives from the weekend can't you? First pole position in a long time and it shows that the fight is going to go all the way to try to beat this guy and try and help Sebastian?

KR: Yeah, I mean, for sure we tried, but if you look at the rear tyres, they gave up before the race ended but at least we take the second place and we keep fighting.

Q: Great, all the best. Valtteri, a very strong fight with Max Verstappen down there, how did you see it?

Valtteri BOTTAS: I was really trying to do everything I could to get to the podium. First, my mission was to try to hold up Kimi for a while, but then I was trying to end up on the podium. It was hard racing, sometimes not quite as fair as I was hoping for, so he got a penalty so then I'm on the podium.

Q: Well, I'm sure you can say the atmosphere in this team is going to be electric tonight and you have to celebrate it, because it was a team effort and you played a big part in that, you held Räikkönen up for a little while and got Lewis on top of him?

VB: Yeah, I think as a team we take this result. We got more points than Ferrari in their home. Obviously they were quicker yesterday in the qualifying, so we take it but hopefully we can be better next time.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Frédéric Ferret – l'Equipe) A question to Kimi. Would you have pitted later would you have been blistering? And a question for Lewis: was it planned to pit later than the 21st lap? A question to both of you about pitting.

KR: Afterwards you can always fine-tune things, but it's too late afterwards. I don't think we did anything wrong. We just ran out of tyres in the end, simple as that. I don't know. I mean, there's no point to start thinking right now. This is what we got. Leave it and go forward.

Lewis?

LH: The question was about was it the right time to pit?

We saw your mechanics out in the pit lane a few laps before you came in. Was the plan always to pit when you did.

LH: No, the strategy was the pit a lot earlier than that, but as you go through the race... As I said, the communication was really great. I was pointing out that the tyres, I still had them in good nick. I could see that Kimi was struggling a little bit and I was able to advance and keep the gap around a second. I think it was eight tenths of 0.9s or something like that I was maintaining, and we just kept extending and extending. I was a little bit surprised that we didn't stop before Kimi. I thought we would have done the undercut. Then Kimi came in and I was able to pick up pace. My next few laps were really quite strong and I was hoping to overcut. I was trying to make sure that I pushed and extended and made sure that I was then able to pit. But straight away he came back into my window quite quickly because of the big tyre difference, so then I had to extend. So we just tried to keep it going as long as possible and even when they pulled me in I was still a little bit surprised because the tyres were still good but he was catching Valtteri. I think it was an important and a very good decision made to pit at the time I did, so I could close the gap with them and have at least a few moments behind these guys. And then after that it's all history.

Q: (Scott Mitchell – Autosport) Valtteri, obviously staying out long was one factor of your race, but another was the contact with Max in Turn 1. What did you think of him moving in the braking zone like that. And also his attitude after that, because he made it quite clear over the radio that he was willing to fight and defend aggressively from you on track even if it cost him a place to Vettel because of the time penalty?

VB: I think there was a couple of proper overtaking opportunities for me and the first one, I went inside and he just cut the chicane to stay ahead of me. The second time – I think there is a very clear rule that once you defend you choose your line and if another car is there you need to leave a car's width and obviously he didn't, I was there, so we touched and he got a penalty for that. I think it's a very simple and clear rule, so he got a penalty for that.

Q: (Dániel Horváth– Racingline.hu) Lewis, an epic fight with Kimi. Would you miss him from the grid if he won't be with us next year? Would I miss Kimi? I think it's always a difficult question to say if you miss someone. I think the sport would naturally miss him, yeah. I made it no secret that before I even got to Formula One I was always playing... when I was playing the Playstation I was always Kimi in the McLaren, imagining that was me. And then I remember the first car at McLaren which was Kimi's set-up and the suspension that he would use, which was... I remember it like it was yesterday. It was an amazing experience and it was cool because I think our driving style was kinda similar, which meant that I ended up being quite comfortable with the set-up that he used back then. So, y'know, he's had an incredible career and it's been a real honour to race against a great Finn such as him – but he looks like he's just ice-cold. He's just got plenty of years left in him. He's not seeming to age. I don't know what it is about Finnish people. I think it's the sauna and the ice thing. Yeah.

Q: (Zsolt Godina – F1vilag.hu) Kimi, you said on the podium that 'maybe next time.' do you perhaps have any new information regarding the future? Do you have more options in F1 for next year other than Ferrari?

KR: There's always going to be options. In life generally. It depends on what you want to do. It depends on a lot of things. So, we'll see in the future what will happen and that's about it.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Lewis, how would you rate the overtaking manoeuvre on Kimi? Was it an easy one or did you need a lot of Finnish *sisu*?

LH: Sisu? Is that fighting spirit? Did I need a lot of it. Well, naturally I find myself between the Finnish drivers quite a lot but, no, I mean the battle was awesome. The restart was obviously really good and then, straight after that, Kimi getting back past me, was... whilst it's never good losing a position, it was a great move from him. I left him room, etc., and I was just hopeful that later on I would have the opportunity to continue the fight. And, as I said, I was still between 1.1-1.3s behind most of the time. So, I was definitely hopeful of another opportunity at some stage – but it isn't easy to get close, at all – but these cars are definitely getting better. I do hope that next year's cars are better than this in terms of being able to follow. The last manoeuvre he defended on the outside. He moved to the right and then I thought a little bit too the left but it didn't cause me any problems and then it was just about late braking into Turn One and trying to... it was very, very close. Kimi was very, very fair. Gave me space. It was tooth and nail, whatever you call it, as racing should be.

Q: (Phil Duncan – PA) Congratulations Lewis. Does this feel like one of the greatest performances of your career, given that it's in Ferrari's homeland and the passing moves that you've already mentioned?

LH: I think it's always very difficult to compare past performances. I always tell you that I don't really have the greatest of memories – but under the sheer pressure that we are under I definitely will consider it to be quite far up there. And obviously to do it on Ferrari's home turf as well, with such a difficult crowd and so much pressure on the team with the performance that they have, to really be able to pull a little bit more out of the bag, and really make it stick... but I generally think that this year I've been quite consistent in my delivery. I really been happy with what I've been able to extract from the car and again, just incredibly grateful and proud of the team for continuing to keep their faith in me, and keep pushing as they are. Days like this, it's going to be amazing when I go back and see my guys in the garage. We'll have a team photo to celebrate it probably. And that is a very, very proud moment, to be a part of that. So many people in these teams now, it's incredible – and there's not one single person – component – that's more important than another. It's been great teamwork and effort.

Q: (Luigi Perna – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Question for Lewis. Lewis, Sebastian in his team radio said that your move in the second chicane was silly. What is your answer?

LH: That it worked! I think it was a racing move. It's pretty much the same move that Kimi did to me. I don't really know what to say about that. It was a racing manoeuvre, it's what we're supposed to do out there. We're supposed to be racing. I left him space. I was still on track, so... but I'm sure it's a comment that was done in the heat of the moment. And it's never a great feeling when you spin and you're facing the other cars coming the other way. And then you get back up and you start from the back and you have to come through. So, I don't take anything from it. I know how it is to be in that emotion. I'm sure he really didn't mean too much by it.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – Globoesporte.com) To Kimi and then Lewis. Kimi, Lewis' victory today was a real team victory. Did you receive, you and Sebastian, any orientation before the start? You, for example, you locked the wheels at the wheels at the first chicane after the start, which could make a completely different story of the grand prix. And Lewis, you had incredible speed in the straight in this race. The reason is the new spec of the power unit you use in Spa or maybe the aero set-up you choose for Monza.

KR: No, I think we have very clear rules. I don't see how my front locking changed the race. Unfortunately, we lock front tyres sometimes under braking and that's what happened. Obviously always difficult after the start when they're not exactly where they should be. These things happen. It wasn't a big deal and I got out of it – so I don't see how it changed the race somehow.

(Inaudible question)

KR: Like I said, we know what we can do, and what not.

Lewis – your thoughts on the straight line speed.

LH: Well, there's a big difference. There's a big tow-effect here. Naturally Kimi was out in front on his own. So he's got a disadvantage in the fact that he's driving into clean air and I'm in the dirty air and he's pulling me along. So, that was really it, basically. You saw in qualifying, everyone's using the tow. It's worth a lot of time. It's up to three-tenths, or something, on each straight. Something like that. And then, it was just about being able to follow through the corners and positioning your car so you can still get a good exit – because the car in front always gets max downforce. Once I got past Kimi, it's night-and-day different how it handles through the corners – because I've got clean air in front of me, as opposed to being behind, and you're fighting the dirty air and different patches of air hits you, air pockets you hit down the straight where the car speeds up and slows down, speeds up, and I guess that's the turbulence that you're facing. So, that was really it. But the engine was great today, for sure. They brought an engine upgrade, as did we, but they were quite similar steps, I would say, coming into Spa and then here.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Kimi, have you ever bigger support as you got today when leading for Ferrari?

KR: I have to say... obviously you cannot hear the crowd. In the end, when we get our trophies, you can see how many people (there are). You see at the end, when you look down the main straight, there's a lot of support from the tifosi. Unfortunately we didn't get the maximum, the best result today for all of us but this is how it goes and I'm sure they were cheering as much as we were trying. It was very nice to see.

Q: (Francesca Galbiati – Quattroruote) Lewis, five victories for you here in Monza, like Schumacher. What's your feeling about that?

LH: That's cool. As I said, I have such a bad memory I didn't even realise that I'd had that many here. It feels like the first, if I'm really honest, being the way the race went, it was one of the most exciting of victories that I've had, that I can remember. And as I was saying, it's such a great place to win but to know that I'm up there with Michael... it is always a real privilege and an honour to be

mentioned in the same sentence as a great like him, someone I watched and supported as a youngster growing up.

Q: (Stefan Burgstaller - Kronen Zeitung) Lewis, was this is a victory for Niki Lauda?

LH: Was the victory for Niki Lauda? The victory was for the whole team, really. And I know Niki... I've been in touch with Niki's wife quite often and she sends me updates all the time. He's still fighting with his fighting spirit and the messages that I get are really encouraging. He's here with us. Honestly, I hadn't thought of dedicating it to anyone in particular but there is someone that I have in mind but I'd rather not mention it. I'll get to tell the family afterwards.

Q: (Ben Hunt – The Sun) Booing on the podium, is that acceptable at Formula One races? We see it at football matches but is it OK for F1 fans to boo you on the podium?

VB: I think every fan has their own right to tell their opinion for different drivers, different teams. Everyone can say whatever they like, they can support whoever they like. For sure they can do it. Of course, when you get the boos, it's not as nice as someone shouting your name but as Lewis mentioned, for sports people who have the right mindset, we can turn some negative experiences into strengths, so in the end, if you handle it right, you can really use that as a source of energy.

LH: I think it's acceptable. It's done in every sport. If I'm really honest, I don't understand it because I've never... I've been to football games, I've been to NFL games, I've been to basketball games and rugby games. I've never booed an opposing team even if it was against my team. And none of my friends do either so I don't get the psyche of it. It happens in all sports. It definitely happens in football and probably here more than I've noticed in others but it is the way it is. For me, as Valtteri says, it is easy in the arena that we're in, it is very very easy to allow it to get to you, to allow it to have an impact on your life and have you think about it, all these different things. But it is also quite easy to harness it and use it and that gave me so much motivation today. I welcome it. If they want to continue to do it, that just empowers me.

Q: Does it offend you?

LH: It doesn't offend me, no. No. There's nothing to get offended by. I don't really think too much about it. I just keep smiling. I know I've got those individuals who are out there who travel the world to support me. I know they're there. Really really proud of them, because obviously when you're in a big crowd, when you're in a big sea of red and there's the booing and then there's you with the one flag which there is out there, you know you notice there's one guy standing there with a flag or there's a kid waving it and you can imagine being surrounded by that, feeling the heat on him, because all eyes are on him or her, maybe. I really just appreciate that and respect it so much, so I really really do try like on the podium and on the parade lap and when I was driving round, I really try to point out... it's hard to point to a big crowd and them know that you're pointing at them but I try to point out and know that I acknowledge them and appreciate them.

KR: I think everybody as the right to do what they feel like but I don't think it's very nice. I don't think it should happen but obviously it's not my decision. It happens and that's how life is but it's not very nice.

Ends