



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L' AUTOMOBILE

2018 FIA Formula One World Championship

Singapore Grand Prix

Thursday Press Conference Transcript

13.09.2018

DRIVERS – Kimi Räikkönen (Ferrari), Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes), Kevin MAGNUSSEN (Haas), Brendon HARTLEY (Toro Rosso)

PRESS CONFERENCE

Q: Kimi, if we could start with you please. You've been generating a few column inches this past week. Can you just talk us through what happened and why you're on the move next year?

Kimi RÄIKKÖNEN: I guess you know what happened. I don't know what else you want to know. This is what happened. As we've said many times before, it's not up to me, it's not my decision in the end. Anything after that is obviously my decision but this is the outcome. At least we have an outcome.

Q: You say it wasn't your decision to leave Ferrari, but it was your decision to go back to Sauber, so just talk us through why you're doing that?

KR: Why not.

Q: What is it about the team? On current form there is quite a performance differential between Ferrari and Sauber, so what have you been told...

KR: Yeah, but then there's a lot of differences between all the cars, you know. If you take other teams, there are not many cars, if you take this year, that are on the same level. That's how it has always been. I mean, see what happens in the future so...

Q: But, Kimi, what have you been told about the performance? Tell us why you want to go back to Sauber?

KR: Because I want to. Why do you try to make it so complicated? I don't know anything more than you guys, purely where they have been finishing. Obviously I don't know what will happen next year, nobody knows what will happen next year when it comes to the speeds of the cars and the teams and obviously we can always guess but we will see what we can do. Obviously I have my reasons and that's enough for me. I don't really care what others think and as long as I'm happy with my own reasons, it's enough for me.

Q: And you're still passionate about racing? The fire...

KR: No, I'm not actually. Just by pure head games for you guys I happened to sign and I'm going to spend two years there just not being happy.

Well, Kimi, thanks for the insight.

KR: No worries.

Q: Let's move on. Kevin coming to you now: this weekend is your 75th grand prix, a bit of a milestone for you. Do you feel you're part of the F1 establishment now?

Kevin MAGNUSSEN: I don't know really. I haven't thought of it like that. I didn't even know it was my 75th race, so I'm just enjoying... it's the best time I've had in Formula 1, at the moment. It's great fun and I'll see how it goes this weekend and will hopefully have a good race.

Q: Have you had any further thoughts about what happened between you and Fernando Alonso at Monza and will it affect your approach to qualifying here in Singapore?

KM: I'll try to stay away from Fernando as much as I can! I think it was a pretty extraordinary thing that happened and it's not something that will happen too often I think.

Q: Thank you. Brendon, coming to you, it's your first time here in Formula 1, so can you just talk us through the preparations you've done for this grand prix. It's hot, it's a long race, just talk us through what you've done?

Brendon HARTLEY: Yeah, so everyone has told me that it's the most physical race of the year, not only because of the heat but also the focus and stamina it requires being a long race and not many breaks on the tracks. In terms of training, not much changes. I think all of us drivers are very race fit. We've had a long season already and many races to warm up to a tough one like this. I'd say most of us drivers did a bit of heat training over the last week or so and for me it was just adding a couple of extra layers on when I was training on my bike. I came out a couple of days early as well, just to get used to being here. Actually, it doesn't feel as hot as I expected. I think in previous years it's been hotter, but nevertheless it's going to be a tough old race. On top of that I spent some time in the simulator, learning the track as best I can before hitting FP1 tomorrow.

Q: Expecting a few Kiwis in the crowd I guess?

BH: Yeah I actually see a few already on the streets of Singapore. It's reasonably close for us, it's half way, so I'm kind of half way home. There should be a few expats around and the Aussies always seem to give me a few cheers, so I think they try to adopt me as their own as well.

Q: We've heard from Kimi about his move to Sauber next year. What can you tell us about your plans for 2019? Have your talks progressed with the team?

BH: Not really chatting at the moment. I have a contract going forward. Obviously there are always options and whatnot. I've been saying it for a while that the best thing I can do is focus on one race at a time and doing the best job I can. I know, and I'm confident about the job I've been doing behind the scenes with the team. I know I've got stronger every race during the season. The results don't exactly show that, but I know that I am strong and I have been strong in the last five races and there have been a few circumstances which meant I wasn't able to score points. I seem to have been in the wrong place at the wrong time a lot of the time but I'm also looking at myself, and what I can do better there. Honestly, I'm just focusing on doing the best I can one race at a time, and I hope that I'm on the grid next year, which is my goal.

Thank you Brendon, good luck this weekend. Lewis, on paper this is meant to be a bit of a bogey track for the team, but you keep winning. You've had two victories here with the team. What are your expectations ahead of this weekend?

Lewis HAMILTON: Honestly, I never even have expectations every time I come to a race, I must just tell you that. I guess ultimately our expectation is for us to give it our all and try to perform as well, if not better, than in the past races. Collectively, as a team, we have done a tremendous job in the past races and we want to try and keep that quality of performance.

Q: Your championship lead is now 10 times greater than it was at this stage last year – 30 points as opposed to three points in 2017. Talk us through that buffer. Is that a factor in your head and how you approach the race weekend?

LH: Honestly not. It might be subconscious but I've not really thought about it. I don't change the way... at the moment there's no reason to change. There are a lot of points still available so the

approach is exactly the same as it has been all year long. It seems to be working, so we'll just keep that up for as long as we can. But we do expect there are going to be some difficult races ahead. Obviously Ferrari have been ahead of us for the past few races, so keeping up with them, if not passing them, is going to be tough.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Abishek Takle – Mid-day) A question for Kimi. At what point did you know that you wouldn't be driving for Ferrari next season and when did the Sauber talks actually start?

KR: In Monza I knew. Obviously I know people from there [Sauber] from the past and basically it started after that.

Q: (Edd Straw – Autosport) Kimi, you said you still know people at Sauber and you've obviously kept ties with the team. Has it always been a bit of a thing in the back of your mind that it might be a nice thing to do later in your career, to go there, back to where it started?

KR: No. I don't think it's always been there. Obviously, you never know in the end what will happen. This is just how it ends up to be going actually, and yeah, I wouldn't say there have been plans for a long time that this is going to happen, so...

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Kimi, you have said that you are only interested in winning. Do you have to find a new target for next year when racing with Sauber?

KR: I don't know. I don't think... I mean, obviously the aim is always that. I mean, is it realistic? Who knows? You can only aim for the best, best positions and see what comes up.

Q: (Rebecca Clancy – The Times) Lewis, since we last saw you in Italy, McLaren have announced that Lando Norris will be driving for them next season. Just want to get your views on having a fellow Brit on the grid – and also, as a youngster, would you seek him out to give him advice at all?

LH: I wouldn't give him advice. Obviously if he asked for it, he could get it if he wanted. If I'm really honest, I don't really look at nationalities. I don't look down the order and think; 'there's another Brit', or 'there's another German,' or anything like that. I just... that's not something that really appeals to me. England's always producing good drivers. They have them; there's quite a lot of them. It's not like Formula One's never going to have a British driver, so... yeah, wish him all the best.

Q: (Beatrice Zamuner – Motorlat.com) Question to all four drivers. What are your thoughts on the idea of fielding a third car to the grid.

KM: I think it's kind of... it sounds quite exciting. I think it would be great to see three Mercedes and three Ferraris, but then from there, I don't know whether it would be good to have 30 cars on the grid. I think the pitlane would be quite tight as well. It could be good, it could be bad. I don't really know.

LH: I quite like the idea of more cars. More teams maybe, rather than three drivers in a team – would be a handful.

KR: I think it would be nice to have a lot of cars but then, I don't know. So many things that it will change. It's pretty difficult to work it out.

BH: From a drivers' point of view I think it would be great to have more cars. From a team's point of view and all the other logistics that would entail, I don't really know, it's not my place. It would probably make 2019 contract negotiations a bit easier! But yeah, actually, from a drivers' point of view it would be cool. I'm also used to having a few more team mates than maybe some of the other drivers on the grid.

Q: (Ben Hunt – The Sun) Question to Lewis. Obviously you went to Shanghai for your fashion launch, you went back to New York, you're now back here in Singapore. The other drivers talking about preparing and getting in shape. Is your ability now to step off the plane and switch from fashion business to F1 business? Do you find the ability to do that easier now in your career. And is that what keeps you fresh, coming into this week?

LH: It's not that I find it easy. As soon as I leave the races I'm able to switch off. I've got, obviously other things that I'm doing, and in between, trying to fit in the training, for example, in the last week, has not been easy. But that's not really how every single week goes for me – it's just a hectic time for me with a lot going on in the outside world for me. But yeah, I mean, I've travelled a lot more than I have all year long in these two weeks. But I think yeah, from experience I've been able to move around even more than I have these past two weeks and still arrive and be able to switch into race mode. So, there's not a single moment during those two weeks, whilst I have those other things going on, there's not a single moment that I'm not thinking about racing, not thinking about the championship, how I want to arrive. Make sure, knowing that we're coming to a difficult race, that you need to see if you can bring more to. So, there's not a moment that I don't think about it.

Q: (Phil Duncan – PA) Just on that Lewis, do you think it's a bit of a gamble tying the two together? The fashion and the travelling and the Formula One and winning the Championship.

LH: Not at all. Just referring to the question before, I get a lot of energy from these different things that I do. I find it stimulating and I think you'll see that my results have shown that for the past several years. As I've said, I've travelled a lot more than I have this year. This has actually been the year I've travelled the least, at least in the last five years, so...

Q: (Masahiro Owari – Formula Owari Masahiro) Lewis, I'd like to ask about the Japanese Grand Prix, a couple of weeks later. Last year you broke the course record in Suzuka. Are you confident to break it again this year? And how important is winning at Suzuka for you, and for the Championship.

LH: Naturally, it's very difficult to say how important that race is going to be from now, because we've got this race to go – but every race is obviously as important as the other – but we will, no doubt, if it's dry, break the record again this year. Our car is two to three seconds faster, whatever it is, than it was last year, so someone will break the record for sure, continuously throughout the weekend. And it's such a great race, as we all know. It's such a great circuit that everyone loves driving. It's going to be pretty crazy through that first sector with the amount of downforce that we do have on our car. So, I think everyone can be excited for that.

Q: (Ralf Bach – Sport Bild) Lewis, what do you think about the current Ferrari philosophy to let their drivers fight each other? It makes your life a little bit less difficult in the races. What do you think about it?

LH: Ferrari's philosophy to let their drivers race? I honestly hadn't even noticed it, if I'm really honest. They're racing – it's nothing to do with me. I don't see how it makes my life... how does it make it less difficult? I still have to fight this guy (Raikkonen). How does it make it less difficult? If you watch the races, it's more likely the position that they've put themselves in as opposed to the position we've put ourselves in. Valtteri's been in the position to help in different scenarios. I don't think you've seen many races where it's been the same for them.

Q: (Candra Kurnia Harinanto – Jawa Pos) Kimi, have you already thought that you will end your career at Sauber?

KR: There's a big chance, for sure! I'm not interested in any numbers or records, purely what I feel is right for me and that's it. We'll see what happens in the future.

LH: How many seasons will it be?

KR: No idea. I was two years doing holidays.

LH: Yeah, but with two more years, how many seasons will that be in Formula One? Sixteen seasons.

KR: Yeah. Not a lot.

LH: Still a lot. I think it has to be admired.

KR: We'll see. Hopefully I'll stay healthy and all those things.

Q: (Julien Billiotte – AutoHebdo) Kimi, there have been some reports that you could be interested in taking up a management role at Sauber, once you're done racing, whenever that is. Is this something you have on your mind for the future?

KR: There's zero discussion on that. Obviously I've signed my contract as a driver and I hope I stay there as a driver. Who knows what happens in the future, in two years or whatever. When it's all said and done, I've no idea. I don't know myself. There's always speculation and everything but I don't have any contract about that.

Q: (Don Kennedy – Hawkes Bay Today NZ) Brendon, there's been a bit in the media about what Dr Marko has said about possibly ten drivers looking for a seat at Toro Rosso. Obviously you're one of those and that you need to improve. Have you been given any idea by him what he means by improvement or by the team, what they mean by improvement?

BH: Actually I've been improving all year and I haven't really had a direct discussion about an exact result but it's clear I haven't finished in the points enough times, when you compare with my teammate. Some of that was out of my control, some of it part in my control but honestly, like I said before, I'm just focused - one race at a time - on doing my job and I'm very confident of the job I do behind the scenes and also I know that I've been improving the whole season. Yeah, just focused on Singapore this weekend. It's a big opportunity actually for us at Toro Rosso. Historically the team's done very well here. Last year they took fourth place with Carlos in some tricky conditions but if we take the last two races, we think this would be a strong opportunity for us. Everyone can see that I've been strong in certain scenarios but haven't been able to capitalise so I think if what you're referring to what he's saying - I haven't been following the press - but probably I need some more results in the points.

Q: (Don Kennedy – Hawkes Bay Today NZ) Some more luck, maybe?

BH: There's a bit of that too but I need to try and create as much luck for myself.

Q: (Stefano Mancini – La Stampa) Kimi, will you help Vettel to win his championship this year?

KR: I can only drive one car, obviously. There's always a lot of talk, a lot of things which can be helpful, can not be. It's always easy to say that this and this will happen but in theory it's so difficult to get it right in many ways so we will see what happens in the racing, if we're close to each other and this and that. Obviously we know our rules; it's pretty simple.

Q: (Jake Michaels – ESPN) Lewis, you're obviously in a tight battle with Ferrari this season but how wary are you of Red Bull this weekend and do you expect to see them fighting for the win?

LH: Not really sure... I've not spoken to the team as to... they'll let us know in the meeting we have coming up, whether or not Red Bull will play a role in this weekend's race but they've been there or thereabouts in quite a lot of the races, so you have to assume this is usually a good race for them. I think they've stopped developing their car quite a long time ago to focus on next year's car, from what I've heard, so they're just driving with what they have, that's what I heard. I think this weekend, it's a downforce circuit, they're always good on their rear tyres as well so this should undoubtedly be a strong weekend for them, as it was last year.

Q: (Edd Straw – Autosport) Kimi, you've made it very clear that you're racing for Sauber and carrying on racing because you want to but, as was talked about earlier, you're carrying on

to an age where a lot of drivers will have stopped, so what is it that Formula One gives you personally that makes you want to keep going?

KR: Racing, that's about it.

LH: Talking to you guys.

KR: Yeah. Best time of the weekend, for sure! No but honestly, I always said that I will stop when I feel it's right for me. I don't need to comment how I feel. Obviously the racing is the part that I enjoy most and that's why we are here. Obviously it's always been a big part of the race weekend, all the other stuff which is normal for us, but it's not the reason to come here. The reason is to drive and race. It's not the big part of the weekend any more as it used to be because obviously everything changes a bit but that's the only reason, really. The other stuff that comes with it, it's very normal, it's always been there. It comes with the package. It's not often that you get a package where you only have the good things. It's OK. We all know each other. It's the same answers, same questions every time so it's not too difficult.

Ends