



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

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TEAM REPRESENTATIVES – Nick CHESTER (Lotus), Andrew GREEN (Force India), Giampaolo DALL'ARA (Sauber), James ALLISON (Ferrari), Paddy LOWE (Mercedes), Paul MONAGHAN (Red Bull Racing)

PRESS CONFERENCE

If I could start with a question for all of you: coming in next year are further restrictions on driver aids and team radio assistance. Can you give us your thoughts on the difference it will make that fans will be able to appreciate? James, why don't you start?

James ALLISON: Well, if it has its intended effect it will make it so that the drivers who are most on top of their game can do a better job than the ones who needed to be led a little bit more by the hand. I think on the whole the drivers are all pretty good in Formula One so I imagine that within six months or so, or maybe sooner, it will feel very much like it did before but maybe in the transition to that there will be a few mistakes made and maybe some interesting events as a result.

Giampaolo?

Giampaolo DALL'ARA: Yeah, well, I can tell you about the engineering side of it: it changes quite a bit the way we work, approaching the issues involving the driver more and the engineering side of the car. Eventually I think the result is what James has just mentioned. The driver will be more in charge of what he is doing, also on aspects that today maybe are driven from the back. Judging then the perception on the spectators, this is very difficult from where I sit, honestly.

Thank you. Paddy, there is obviously a big list of things you can and can't say on the radio. How do you remember all those things?

Paddy LOWE: I know. It's actually quite tricky. We police ourselves on the intercom. People often ask: "Can I say that? Can I say that?" But yeah, we will work our way through it and get used to it in time. As the other two have said, I think we will see a little bit more variability. But the big thing for me is that to a larger extent if a driver has a good or a bad start that will be down to his skill and less dependent on the team's performance on configuring the start.

Nick, a step in the right direction?

Nick CHESTER: I think everybody wants to see the drivers being in charge of their own starts, so I can see why it has come in, but I'd echo the comments earlier, I think people will get used to it very quickly. There might be a few little mixes early on but it will settle down fairly quickly.

And Paul, looking ahead to next year, obviously more sweeping changes as well, what difference will that make?

Paul MONAGHAN: I think you'll see a little bit more variability. We'll see the odd fluffed start; we'll see a bit of a shuffle up of the grid order approaching turn one. Mid-race I think when the drivers get used to it and depending on how the teams treat the level of automation there will be subtle differences maybe in ultimate performance you can extract from the car, after that I think it will settle out. What the fans will see? A little bit at the starts maybe but once you're in the race I'm not sure there'll be much other than less radio traffic.

A final thought from you Andrew?

Andrew GREEN: Yeah, I'm the same. I think within a few months the differences will be quite subtle. Like people have said, maybe a few fluffed starts. But the main thing is that the radio is going to be quite quiet.

OK. Coming back to you then James. Back on top with a victory in Hungary for Sebastian, but another technical problem on Kimi's side. What was the reason for that and what expectations do you have both in terms of performance but also reliability for the remainder of the season?

JA: I don't think we tend to go into the nuts and bolts of why our bits and pieces fail on our car but enough to say that we had a problem with the ERS system that meant that we were unable to continue in the race. Initially we lost a decent amount of power and then thereafter unable to continue. I hope we have put that behind us with the modifications that we've made during the last few weeks and for the remainder of the season, I think it's going to be a bit like the first half. We're not a bad car, but we're not as good as these guys [Mercedes] and if they have a bad weekend while we're having a good weekend then we can upset the apple cart a bit and if things pan out more normally then we tend to come in behind them. So let's keep our fingers crossed that they have a bad weekend and we do the opposite.

Q: Paul, if James is saying the Ferrari's not a bad car compared to the Mercedes, it looks as though the Red Bull has become a substantially better car in the last month. Obviously a double podium in Hungary. Big progress on the chassis side. Was that a question of new parts or was it just, as much as anything, unlocking the potential of what was already there?

PM: It's a combination. We have some new parts there. We've improved the car a little bit in many areas, not just, shall we say, focussed on one of them. It's starting to show benefits. We've seen the benefits in increments and in Hungary it was more complete, shall we say. It was nice to be challenging at the sharp end of it again and I think at the moment we have to accept Mercedes have a bit of a performance advantage. Maybe they have a bad weekend, maybe we have a good weekend and then I think it's all up for the fight, isn't it? We'll put ourselves in there such that, if we can benefit from circumstances then we're there to do so.

Q: Andrew Green, coming to you from Force India, talking about upward performance curves, you're certainly a good example of that with Force India. New car, of course, introduced a few rounds ago certainly contributed to that. What do you think is possible for the rest of the season for your team?

AG: Well, I mean we've bought new parts here, we've got new parts coming for the next couple of races. I think once we get to Singapore, we'll start to begin to understand where this car actually sits – that's where we plan to bring the last of this current suite of updates to the track. We're looking to start moving ahead of the guys behind us, obviously for sure, and looking to see if we can stay on the coat tails of Red Bull to a certain degree. If we hadn't had the issues in Hungary, we were racing well in Hungary. Hungary was a shock to us, gave us a bit of a shot in the arm. We've learned from that, we're moving forwards. We've got some exciting races coming up for Force India.

Q: Paddy, first of all, any update on the cause of Rosberg's tyre failure from your side. What did you see on the screens?

PL: I think we've really only seen the same the same thing that everyone else has seen on the video. So very unusual situation where there seemed to be some bits of tyre structure coming out up to a minute before the actual terminal failure of the tyre. Not something I've seen before. So Pirelli have obviously taken the tyre away to analyse. I think we'll have to wait to see what emerges from that. We're double-checking everything to do with the car as well, obviously. But yeah, that'll be something we'll work through the evening.

Q: Obviously the reversed qualifying battle between Rosberg and Hamilton this season. Last year 11 poles for Rosberg, this year just one for him in the first ten races. Hamilton seven last year but nine from 10 this year. As the technical boss, the guy who oversees all of this, what do you see is going on there?

PL: I think it's just the two drivers' form as it varies. I know Nico was finding it quite difficult at the beginning of this year but actually he picked himself up from Spain onwards and he's shown himself a great competitor to Lewis, so the battle's far from over. As we can see, it isn't always won on the Saturday grid position so the championship is wide open to the end.

Q: Coming to you Giampaolo, obviously you have bought some updates to the car this weekend. How happy are you. It certainly looked reasonably encouraging from the practice runs this afternoon. Obviously you can't draw too many conclusions from Friday but how satisfied are you with what you bought to the track this weekend.

GD: At the moment we are finding what we are expecting to find. Difficult to say, as you mention, what this will mean for the race. What leaves us with quite some optimism more in general is that we got to the point where, after some frustration after losing some momentum, we expect some updates to come. Some are already here, as I mentioned. This is mostly on Ferrari's side: we have an upgraded power unit fitted which is seemingly giving up some laptime. On top of this, let me add, it's one of those tracks where our car feels more comfortable. It was lately some track-by-track troubles that here we don't expect to have. Plus, in the next couple of races and ultimately Singapore we expect some major aerodynamic update which for us means the main target of getting back into the fight to get the guys here in the midfield in order to be able to score points more regularly than we are now.

Q: Finally Nick, a couple of talking points for you. On the one hand obviously encouragement with Romain Grosjean I think seventh fastest in that practice session, on the other an accident for Pastor this morning. How much does that kind of thing set you back in a race weekend?

NC: Well obviously it does set up back a little bit. Pastor was having quite a good P1 session until he had his off, and then that disrupts his P2 because it took us a while to get the car back together. So he's missed a bit of running in P2 but he's got back out there, proved the car out again and I'm sure he'll be back on it for P3.

And encouragement from the performance of the other car?

NC: Yeah, quite pleased with Romain in P7. I think there's only nine-hundredths to P4 and the car's going quite well.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Mike Doodson – Grand Prix Week) I've been very puzzled by the clutch stories we've been told. We haven't been given a lot of information about what the procedure was and I wondered, now that it's no longer what it was, whether one of you could explain to an ignorant journalist exactly how these clutch procedures worked. I understand there are two clutches, you give advice to the driver over the radio, you're not allowed to do that any more. Could I ask for a volunteer from the front row to go through the procedure just for me?

JA: The overall procedure is fairly long and tedious so I will try and shortcut it a bit. When you go with the car from stop to going, there's a certain amount of grip available on the track. The tyre has a certain amount of grip, the track has a certain amount of grip, you want to go as close to that available grip as possible but not over it and you don't want to go under it otherwise you're not making as much performance as there is available. Now if you were super duper skilful you might have fingers that could judge exactly where that grip is but it all happens very very fast so a perfect start is one where you can just let go of the clutch, let go of it and it closes to the perfect point where it delivers exactly the right amount of torque, such that the tyre doesn't light up and spin, but neither does it give less torque to the road than the road is capable of taking. So our job, during the weekend, is to try to judge exactly how much grip is available and to adjust our clutches so that when the driver says go, the clutch closes the perfect amount to deliver the perfect amount of torque to the road and then off it goes. And that's something that happens without the driver adjusting stuff, he doesn't fiddle around with his fingers. The way that we used to do that in the past was there's two clutch paddles, one which he holds all the way in, keeping the clutch fully open and the other which he holds in a partially closed and open position. We then, as engineers, adjust the clutch so that this partially closed and open position is at exactly the right point to get this magic start. And then when the light goes green, he lets go of the first clutch and the clutch closes to the point that is being held by the second paddle. Off the car goes.

All that's changed is that now we're not allowed to advise or make any adjustments to that biting point between when the car's on the grid preparing for the start of the race and when the driver actually does it so the parade lap start and the real start is done all by the driver and if he thinks it's not closed enough or too open, he has to make his own judgement about that and make the calls. We can be sitting in the garage going 'no, don't do that' but we don't have any power to stop him.

Q: (Mike Doodson – Grand Prix Week) I understand what you say but you could, from the pits, via telemetry, actually adjust the clutch? You could, or you couldn't?

JA: No, we can't. All we can do is instruct the driver to change a map that he himself has to do with his fingers but we can judge what he should do. Now we can't say anything. We can still judge but all we can do is go 'no!' or 'hooray!'

Q: (Joe van Burik – NU.NL) Paul, Renault Sport have indicated that they worked through the summer break to keep developing the power units. They say that they conducted some notable performance work and also concepts for next year, pleased with the results. How were you involved in the development as a client and do you expect a notable increase in the overall performance when the upgrades arrive for Russia, as Christian Horner stated before?

PM: As a client, our involvement is in several stages. Clearly we will make a judgement on the relative performance of the car and power unit package. Then we try to separate the power unit from the chassis side of things if you like, to try and offer to – in this instance Renault – to say OK, that's where we think you sit in relative terms. That sort of sets your targets, if you like, relative to how we perceive the best power unit. They will always push to get as much out of their power unit as they possibly can and it sets a target for that year, the following year and try to give them a relative positioning. If the changes are internal, it's very much the business of Renault. If the changes again become more external, which can affect our packaging, then clearly we have to be involved. What they may want to do may not fit the car or may require changes to the car and that's up to us to agree with them on an introduction and how we're going to do it. So, if that's making sense, it becomes a multi-phase project. We can get involved, we're not necessarily involved, we look forward to whatever power increase is coming in the future and hope to exploit it as best we can with Renault.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) James, how close are the driving styles of Sebastian and Kimi compared to how it was last year with Fernando and Kimi, and if they are closer, is it a big advantage for the designer of the car?

JA: They are certainly closer. I think what Sebastian wants from a car is pretty similar to what Kimi wants and that's mildly helpful but it really doesn't make much difference in the way that you set about designing the car. You're looking for downforce, they both like that. You're looking for power, they both like that. If one likes a front ride height or a spring stiffness a bit different to another, well there's very... you've got a whole range of springs and dampers that you can fit to either car. It's only flavours of set-up that change, not fundamental design parameters of the car and that would be true whether it was Kimi, Fernando or Sebastian.

Q: (Pierre van Vliet – F1i) Nick, you told us a couple of times that the Lotus team is not for sale. Is that still the case and if not, how does it influence your planning for 2016 and maybe even 2017?

NC: OK, but I'm not sure that I actually told you that but there's a lot of press about discussions that are on-going. They're not really at my level so I can't really give you a lot of information about it.

Ends