



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

2015 Chinese Grand Prix Sunday Race Press Conference Transcript

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DRIVERS

- 1 - Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes)**
- 2 - Nico ROSBERG (Mercedes)**
- 3 - Sebastian VETTEL (Ferrari)**

PODIUM INTERVIEWS

(Conducted by Edwin Moses)

Lewis, the gap was relatively small in the first part of the race. What happened in the second part of the race?

Lewis HAMILTON: First of all, a fantastic job by the team. It was great to have a smooth weekend, getting the sessions and really dialling in the car and today was kind of that effect of really putting the car in the place I wanted it and it was really just controlling the gap between myself and Nico and saving the tyres for when I needed to use them. I had lots left in my tyres at the end there [and] I was looking forward to eking out a gap but the safety car came out. But we've had such great fans here this weekend, thank you so much for the support everyone with all the big banners.

Second question would be: when the safety car came out was the comforting to you, because I know you had a significant gap at the end of the race, which was comforting?

LH: The safety car at the end wasn't helpful, I guess for anyone, because it's kind of an anti-climax when you have a good race like that. But naturally, as long as no-one was injured and all the cars got back safely that's what matters.

Alright Nico, another one-two for Mercedes-Benz. As a competitor I know it's tough being a member of a team and an individual as well. How was your race today?

Nico ROSBERG: Well, you wouldn't know how it feels to finish second; you never did, did you! Well, that's the way it is. I gave it everything in the end on the prime tyre to try to close the gap to Lewis and just took some risks. But it didn't pay off because my tyres just died off in the end, so there we go, I wouldn't have managed to get any closer.

But your tyres were good enough to keep the gap between you and Vettel that's for sure?

NR: Yeah, definitely. We're happy with the gap to Ferrari, having beaten them here after they beat us in Malaysia. It was very important for us as a team, a good, important comeback, so more of that for sure.

Sebastian congratulations, good to see you again. It was a tough day for you. The prediction was that Ferrari's tyres would be perhaps superior and close in on the gap after the second pit stop?

Sebastian VETTEL: Yeah. First of all, a huge honour to have you up here. I feel a bit small. OK, I mean racing drivers are small. I think it was a good race all in all. I think we were a bit closer probably on the softer compound of tyres and we were able to put some pressure on them. We tried to put more pressure by stopping fairly early for the last set of tyres, but I think on the harder tyres they were just that bit too quick, so they were able to pull away. From there onwards we tried to control the race and bring the podium back home, which is a great success for us, very happy. Thanks to the team. Thanks back to the factory, to Maranello, and obviously to all the support here from the fans.

At the beginning of the season people were questioning whether Ferrari was going to get back on the podium. How do you feel today?

SV: Yeah, good. It's been three out of three so far, so it feels pretty good. Obviously a big change over winter. A lot of things have changed. It's nice. I feel really happy in the team. The guys are great, so I'm really enjoying the work and hopefully we can get a little bit closer to challenge these guys.

Thank you. One more question for you Lewis. Off to Bahrain next week. We wish we could see you at the Laureus World Sports awards, as well as Nico and of course Sebastian, as you all have been there. It started off good this year. I know you'll be hoping that you remain... it's better to be good than lucky! But you need luck in this event.

LH: No, of course, but as I said the team have been doing a fantastic job. We did a great job to come back from the last race where we kind of struggled a little bit. And to come here and kind of up our pace and improve, it's all down to the guys that are here building my car and the guys back at the factory, so massively proud and happy that we could get the job done today.

Q: Lewis, many congratulations. Was the race as expected in terms of the challenge from Ferrari and, also, can you talk us through that radio message you got from the team about speeding up? Were you aware that Nico was getting so backed-up towards Sebastian Vettel?

LH: I wasn't controlling his race, I was controlling my own race but, great race, I'm really happy. Definitely going into the race we thought it would be a lot closer and we knew the Ferraris were very, very good with their long run pace and also looking after their tyres. So, today the real goal was to manage the tyres. And, as I said, my goal was to look after my car. I had no real threat from Nico through the whole race. So, I just managed it and got to really enjoy it, to be honest. A few of the real good fun laps were the laps before the pitstop, which I really enjoyed. Ultimately it was a much smoother weekend than we had in the last race where we got the whole, full practice sessions, on my side of the garage at least. And it made a real big difference to the balance of the car for the race. So really happy, and yeah, kinda excited.

Q: Nico, can you talk us through your view of the race today. Started second, finished second but you sounded at times as though you felt at times under a little bit of unnecessary pressure maybe?

NR: No. It's just now interesting to hear from you, Lewis, that you were just thinking about yourself with the pace in front, and necessarily that was compromising my race. Driving slower than was maybe necessary at the beginning of stints meant that Sebastian was very close to me and that opened up the opportunity for Sebastian to try that early pitstop to try and jump me. And then I had to cover him. So, first of all it was unnecessarily close with Sebastian as a result, and also it cost me a lot of race time as a result because I had to cover him and then my tyres died at the end of the race because my stint was just so much longer. So I'm unhappy about that, of course, today. Other than that, not much to say.

Q: Lewis, would you like to respond?

LH: Not really! My job is not to... it's not my job to look after Nico's race. My job's to manage the car and bring the car home as healthy and as fast as possible - and that's what I did. I didn't do anything intentionally to slow any of the cars up. I just was focussing on myself. If Nico wanted to get by he could have tried but he didn't.

Q: Sebastian. You tried everything today. The undercut, everything really strategy-wise that you could. Mercedes just had a little bit too much for you today but also at the end there, Kimi was catching you. Were you worried about him catching up to you towards the end of the race as well?

SV: Not really. I think I was in control. Obviously would have liked to have kept on racing, would have been close but in the end I still had a decent gap, obviously. I guess it's a bit similar with Kimi and myself and Nico and Lewis. Obviously I try to be very aggressive. I think it was lap 29. That meant 27 laps on the Prime and I wasn't sure if we really should try it - but then, I guess, we wanted to put pressure on Nico, which obviously makes the last stint very long, so at the end naturally you struggle with the tyres. I think Kimi was able to stay out a bit longer and therefore was a bit quicker at the end of the stint. But we tried everything we could today. I think it was very close, especially the first pitstop. I didn't expect it to maybe be that close, so maybe I should have pushed a bit harder on the out-lap. Obviously it's tricky here because you always try to look after the tyres but all-in-all I think it was a very good race for us. We were really able to put again some pressure on them, especially in the beginning of the race. Towards the end I think they were just too quick. They were pulling away. Nico had a sequence of really, really quick lap times - so we couldn't do that - but all-in-all, as I said, closer here, which is great for us, and in front of the other teams. If we keep doing that, and keep getting closer, obviously there's a point where we are some real challenge for these guys, which I'm looking forward to.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Niu Hong Lin - China Radio International) To both Lewis and Sebastian, question about the Laureus award. Since Sebastian has won the prize last year and you've been nominated this year and there are a lot of histories from 2004 and 2010, so do you think all those nominations, all these years, do you think there's a special bond between this kind of award and F1?

SV: Well, I think it doesn't matter which sport you do, the special thing about the Laureus award is that you get judged by professionals, by sportsmen, by athletes, male and female. It's a very unique award and it has been an incredible honour to be nominated. Obviously last year I didn't really deserve the nomination or anything, so Lewis deserves to be nominated this year but to win the prize last year was fantastic and really something that stays with you for good, I guess. Also to have Mr Moses on the podium today - he's really one of the top athletes in the world, ever, that the sport has seen so it was great to see him. It's a great event, it means a lot, just the nomination already and obviously to win it, I don't really need to comment. I guess Lewis is in that seat this year so I'm sure he's very excited.

LH: Not really, unfortunately I'm not too excited because I know that I haven't won it. I think it's a great award and very very prestigious and I'm proud to just be amongst the people that have been... the great athletes that have been nominated. I'll keep pushing so that at some stage I do get it.

Q: (Flavio Vanetti - Corriere della Sera) Sebastian, did you expect more performance with the new soft compound in the stint or was it the maximum you could achieve?

SV: You mean with the new tyre? Well, I think Nico was on new softs as well. I'm not sure about Lewis but I guess as well so yeah. We tried to save a set yesterday but unfortunately they did as well so I think it helped but we did all we could. Obviously it's incredibly difficult. The closer you get, I was all the time something like 1.5s and then just before the pit stop, falling away a bit, around 1.8s-2.0s. To really get close, I tried desperately to get into the DRS (zone) but I couldn't. Obviously it gets more and more difficult, especially with the type of corner you get here, opening onto the long straight, makes it quite tricky.

Q: (Frederic Ferret - L'Equipe) Lewis, did you think that this weekend you could be beaten fair and square by Ferrari or did they need something to happen to Mercedes to be beaten? And Sebastian, did you have to try something different to beat them?

LH: Well, evidently, I guess I probably did.

SV: If we could have beaten them, I wouldn't be sitting to the left of Lewis, he would sit to the left of me so the answer is probably no and the answer to could we have done something

different, I think we tried all we could. I don't think it was in range to do a one stop or a three stop. I think both were slower. So the two stop was fairly straightforward for everyone and I think we tried to be as aggressive as we could be. Yeah, so the answer is still no, unfortunately, but as I said, very happy that we were significantly closer than four weeks ago.

Q: (Dan Knutson - Auto Action and Speed Sport magazines) Lewis, we only hear some of the radio transmissions on the TV. We heard the team asking you to speed up a bit and nothing more. Were there further discussions and did you speed up a bit?

LH: Well, there wasn't really a time when I wasn't... I mean I'm out there driving as hard as I can but within the constraints of the tyres. They kept coming on the radio and asking me to pick up the pace and I'm kind of 'well, I'm trying to manage these tyres, I've basically got...' It's like you have £100 and you have to spend it wisely over your stint and I was trying to make my stint go as long as possible and whilst keeping...

SV: ... how many pounds you had left at the end?

LH: I was hopefully still wealthy at the end of it.

Q: (Michael Schmidt - Auto, Motor und Sport) Why is this circuit particularly difficult to follow another car? Why are the tyres, here, in the wake of another car, more destroyed than on other circuits?

SV: Naturally, I think always with quick corners we struggle to stay close. The corners we have leading onto the straight, the most obviously straight, the long back straight, is initially quite slow but then it gets quicker and quicker, so that makes it quite tricky to really stay close and in general, the thing is if you try to overtake someone who is just as quick as you, maybe slightly quicker or a little bit less quick, you don't really have that much of an advantage to really stay close. You lose downforce, the tyres start to slide, which means that they start to overheat and you struggle more and more, the closer you get. That's what makes it tricky. There's really no difference here to other circuits, I guess.

Ends