



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

2015 Spanish Grand Prix Sunday Race Press Conference Transcript

10.05.2015

DRIVERS

1 – Nico ROSBERG (Mercedes)

2 – Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes)

2 – Sebastian VETTEL (Ferrari)

PODIUM INTERVIEWS

(Conducted by Maria Serrat)

Well, Nico, first win here in Barcelona and first win of the season.

Nico ROSBERG: It was a perfect weekend. Great to be on pole and great to win the race like this. Very, very happy. Also thanks to the team, the car has been awesome, all weekend perfect, so yeah, really great.

You looked very strong, especially strong in the first stint and at the start, where you held onto [the lead].

NR: Yeah, finally I got a great start as well. It's been a while coming but today it worked out really well.

Congratulations. Lewis, the biggest chance was at the start, what happened there?

Lewis HAMILTON: I just clearly got a bad start. I had lots of wheelspin. But as Nico said, it was a good race, he did a fantastic job and I'm grateful that I could get back up to the podium for the team.

You're on the podium, your 75th podium, and also looking at the championship you're still leading the championship.

LH: Yeah, but there's a long, long way to go. This was a difficult weekend for me, I'll definitely take it... looking forward to Monaco. It's going to be a very tough race for sure but I'm looking forward to it.

Congratulations. Moving on to third. Sebastian, once again on the podium this season. Was the second position and option?

Sebastian VETTEL: I think it was. Obviously we were hanging in there pretty well. We had a good start, we were able to get past Lewis and then we did the right thing, covering him at the first stop. But then unfortunately they switched to a three-stop and they were just too quick. So we couldn't really keep up with the pace they had today, third is the best we could do and very happy. The car is great and it's great to see the fans, all the Ferrari flags, so very happy.

You didn't mirror their strategy and also you were complaining a little bit about traffic. Do you think that maybe a three-stopper would have given you a chance?

SV: I think as a racing driver you always complain about something, especially if you're German! I think we tried everything we could. Obviously going through traffic is never easy but in the end it's the same for all of us – sometimes you're a bit luckier and other times you lose a little bit more.

Thanks and congratulations. Nico, last question for yourself. Now you're bouncing back. Turning point here in Barcelona and we're going to Monaco. Home race, pole last year and victory last year.

NR: Yeah, but I'm just enjoying the day today, you know. Winning here in Barcelona was great and just enjoy that with the team tonight and then we look towards the next race.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Nico, many congratulations on this first victory of 2015 and just tell us what this win means to you really and where you go from here?

NR: Just a fantastic weekend. Everything worked out on Saturday and Sunday. It all came together. I'm very happy and that's it.

Closing in a bit on the points?

NR: Yeah, of course, seven points. At one point I thought maybe, who knows, maybe Sebastian can keep Lewis behind, which on the one side isn't good for the team, but in terms of my points... it's always a compromise, for my points that would have been better. But that's the way it is. Seven points is better than nothing and a fantastic team result today to be first and second, especially after the two-and-a half-week break. Everybody brought upgrades here but still we're dominating in such a way and that's fantastic to see and more than at the last race.

A 45-second margin between you and Sebastian at the end there.

Lewis, coming to you, a lot of talking points from your afternoon. Essentially you ended up where you started but the work you had to put in to get back to that second place was pretty phenomenal. Tell us about your race, your start and then the decision to switch to a three-stop strategy.

LH: Yeah, obviously I had quite a poor start. It's been a long time since I've had such a poor start. I tried my best to recover – I nearly dropped back to fourth at the start so I was very fortunate to keep third – and then it was just trying to fight... Unfortunately, this track isn't very good for overtaking. Actually it's the worst for overtaking. It's impossible to follow here, which is a shame. I don't know how it was further back but for the guys at the front it's just... it doesn't matter what you do you cannot get close enough even with the DRS, which is a shame. Nonetheless, I did everything I could behind Sebastian and did enough, I think, in the first stint but then I had a very long pit stop and then had to kind of do it all again. But fortunately towards the end it was enough to get it done on a three-stopper, I was able to get by. Yeah, if I was behind him in traffic I wouldn't have got past. I'm grateful I could gain those points for the team and it's kind of damage limitation for me, so it's not bad.

Very well done. Coming to you Sebastian, obviously the good: you're on the podium again. The bad: the 45-second margin back to the race winner, which I'm sure you didn't probably expect through here. Did you think it was on to keep Lewis behind you or did you feel that once he started to gain pace on those harder tyres that it was getting away from you?

SV: To be honest I thought it would be tricky to keep him behind because they were a fair amount quicker, as we saw, at the end of the race. Obviously we were a bit lucky with the first pit stop – Lewis had a problem – so we were able to stay ahead, I think we reacted well and we did everything we could. Then obviously they decided to pit very early, go for a three-stop. I think it was our best chance to stay out, which is what we did. Unfortunately then I came out a bit in traffic after the second stop and lost maybe a couple of seconds, maybe two or three seconds, which would have been maybe just enough to stay in front but arguably with the speed they had you have to be fair and accept that they deserved to finish in front of us today, so well done to both of them. For us I'm pretty confident we will get closer again pretty soon, so

hopefully in two weeks' time it's a different picture. I think we have done a step forward as a team in terms of performance. Obviously it doesn't really show here but I'm quite confident that in the next couple of race we'll be stepping up our game again and I'm looking forward to that.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Livio Oricchio – GloboSport.com) Sebastian, you think the big gap you have, for example, to Nico, you have on the same strategy, is it related to the characteristics of the track or maybe the reality now between Ferrari and Mercedes?

SV: I don't think it's the reality. If you take the average of the first five races, then you have your reality. I think you have to be fair and except that on some tracks you're a bit more competitive than on others. It seems that for some reason we were not that competitive here – even though I think we have improved our car. So, not happy with the gap, to be honest. Not happy at all. Obviously they had a pretty easy race at the front, controlling the gaps, controlling the tyres, which then obviously allows you to push when you need to. Whereas for us, we are pushing as hard as we could and that's where we were at the end. So, not happy with today's result in terms of the gap to the front – but in terms of points scored and global result, I think we can be very happy. It's nice to be back on the podium.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Nico, congratulations. Is this the best Mothers' Day gift you have given to your mother – and all in all, was this a so-called 'perfect weekend' for you?

NR: Well, I hope my Mum is happy – that would be great. And I'm sure she is, and I'm sure they're having a good time at home now. So that's nice. And then, perfect weekend? Yeah, it was a perfect weekend. Everything worked out: the car was great, nailed the setup for the race, for qualifying. Everything came together so very happy with that.

Q: (Peter Farkas – Auto Motor) Sebastian, do you think it would have been worth to cover Lewis when he went in for his second stop? It was a bit strange that you went in about seven or eight laps later. And, considering this gap, which is pretty big, do you still think you're fighting in the championship?

SV: The fact that we stayed seven- or something laps longer is obviously due to the fact we were on a different strategy: we were on two stops, Lewis was on three stops, so I think covering him would have been difficult. Obviously in the first stop, I guess we reacted because Lewis has such a poor stop – I don't know what happened to him – so we were able to cover him. That was a nice invitation and we took it. After that, as I said earlier, him pulling in so early was clear he's diverting, or going on a three stop, which was not our plan today, so we stayed out. All in all, they were probably a little bit too quick to really put more pressure on them.

Yes, I think I'm in the fight. We are able to improve our car. I think there's some good steps coming. Obviously our opponent is the favourite for the whole year and was untouchable last year to be fair, so I think the way you need to look at it is not that Mercedes is so strong, the way you need to look at it is that Ferrari was able to close the gap more than anyone else. I think we can be proud of that and we are very much willing to take our chance. Obviously we need to start turning things around very soon – but we are pushing to our maximum, trying to beat them soon.

Q: (Barna Zsoldos – Nemzeti Sport) Nico, in terms of preparation, is there anything significant that you did otherwise in the past period – because in the whole weekend you were so much more dominant than in the past few weeks.

NR: No, no, nothing different. Sorry. Just the same approach, keep on going, and this weekend it all came good. That's all.

Q: (Andrea Cremonesi, La Gazzetta dello Sport) Question for Nico. How important is it to break the domination of Lewis until now – and how did you manage the situation after Bahrain? In Bahrain you

seemed a little bit upset. And how do you think now in having Monaco next race... you won last year and were quite strong.

NR: So, Bahrain was a long time ago and I'm not really thinking about the past too much. Bahrain was an exciting race, which gave me a boost and the only thing that was wrong as the result – and I wanted to change that for this weekend. Now the result came as well so I'm very happy with that today. We're just going to enjoy this win as an individual race. It's great to close up seven points to Lewis, great to go to Monaco next – I really like that track – that's it. Early days.

Q: (Michael Schmidt – Auto, Motor und Sport) Lewis, what exactly happened at the start? Was it just the worse line you were standing on, that left you out to Sebastian? And then, theoretically, would it have been possible to finish the race on the third set of tyres – the hard one – if you wanted?

LH: Wheelspin off the start – nothing different just wheelspin. I don't know if the inside line got worse but mine definitely wasn't good. And it wouldn't have been good to stay out, no. We choose to do a three stop quite early on.

Q: (Luigi Perna – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Seb, at the end of the weekend, can you judge the updates you've had on the car as really a step forward or in your opinion do you have to reconsider them or change them a little bit?

SV: It's a good question. Obviously, if you look at the gap in the race it was the biggest gap we've had so far so your conclusion might be that it's not so good, but I think we're quite confident that we're going in the right direction. For some reason, I don't think we were so competitive here which explains the gap. Now we're obviously trying to understand and find the reasons. Either this track didn't suit us or the conditions really suited Mercedes. I think it's more likely to be one of the two, because if you take the average, obviously we've been closer in the last couple of races, so I'm looking forward to Monaco and looking forward to being closer to them again.

Q: (Chris Eichenberger – Motorsport Aktuell) Nico, what exactly did you change on the clutch?

NR: I just went to a different spec, back to last year's one.

Q: (Sebastian Scott – racedepartment) To you all: the next race is Monaco - Nico your home race – what do you particularly look forward to for this Grand Prix?

NR: It's the most legendary race in the calendar and it's the most exciting track to drive on and the most challenging track. The whole weekend, the atmosphere is very very special, everything very unusual, so all these things come together. And of course, sleeping at home is an awesome thing also, and also very strange to be home and then walking or taking the scooter to the racetrack. It's very cool. Those are the things

LH: The girls!

SV: He stole my answer, there. Just really the event as a whole, I think, mostly enjoying the track, as Nico says, it's quite challenging and you have to be quite brave and take low risks to get the reward. I hope that we are able to have a very very good qualifying, otherwise it could be quite a boring race if you're stuck behind another car, it's not so exciting, because overtaking is not really... it's not the best track for overtaking, let's put it that way.

Q: (Peter Farkas – Auto Motor) Lewis, when did it become clear to you that you were in fact not racing Nico but only Sebastian and did you think in the last stint that it was still possible to catch Nico?

LH: Well actually, I think Nico was quite far up ahead. He was 22 seconds ahead by the time I got onto my last stint and I had 15 laps to go so that was a huge amount of time for me to try and catch up. I pushed very hard to see if I could have the pace on him in order to close it but it was than less than a second really - on occasions sometimes a second so I think I pushed right until there was like six laps to go and I still had 13 seconds to go so after that I kind of realised that I should bring the car home and live to fight another day.

Q: (Peter Farkas – Auto Motor) Nico, did you fear that you had to push or even before Lewis's last stop, you were just cruising for the victory?

NR: From the team, it was pretty clear that my position was very safe because the gap was so big so it was comfortable but of course you never know, so I still tried to keep my pace up in some way and then I could see the gap, that it was under control so it was good.

Q: (Flavio Vanetti – Corriere della Serra) To both Mercedes drivers: we know you are running a dominant car but in some ways the advantage you had today is surprising you or not?

NR: Well yes, because it's much more than we've seen recently, much more than Bahrain, much more than Shanghai, Malaysia, so it's really a big step in the right direction for us. That is a bit of a surprise but it just shows that we have an awesome team at the moment, everybody's doing a fantastic job and in the development race, again we won the development race this weekend, compared to Ferrari so that's an important indication for the rest of the season.

LH: Nothing to add, really. Good question, good answer.

Q: On that subject, they always say the final sector here is a good indicator for the Monaco Grand Prix. Looking at yesterday's qualifying, you were half a second faster than the Ferraris. Is that giving you a lot of encouragement, the performance in that final sector?

NR: I don't know how... well, yeah, for sure it's not a bad thing definitely. I don't know if it's 100 percent representative but it's definitely looking good, yeah.

Q: (Christopher Joseph – Chicane) Lewis, you spoke yesterday about tinkering quite a lot with the set-up of the car for qualifying. Are you now very conscious that you have to do something like that in qualifying for the rest of the season? Is it something that you approach differently?

LH: Well, you can't change the car in qualifying but throughout practice I was tinkering, trying to get it ready for qualifying and ultimately it wasn't ideal. It wasn't bad in the race but yeah, today was a very very tough day, obviously, because I had to make up from the bad start and perhaps my true pace... I wasn't really able to show it compared to Nico, as I was further behind.

Q: (Christopher Joseph – Chicane) So are you then, in Monaco, looking at practice to aggressively...

LH: No, I'm just going to do what I did in the previous times. This is just a hiccup, I guess, this weekend.

Q: (Vanessa H Rado – Revista Enki) Hamilton, I wanted to know if you have been able to adapt to all the changes that have been made this year in the regulations?

LH: Well, not very much changed in the regulations. The things that we have... the front nose changed and the rear tyres. What else? Otherwise it's pretty similar to last year so this year is really trying to improve on last year. We had such an amazing year, kind of record-breaking as a team. For us it was hard to imagine trying to do that again or trying to beat it and that's our goal this year and I think we're definitely on the right route to doing that so I'm proud of everyone and very much enjoying the car.

Ends