



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

## Press Information

### 2015 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix Sunday Race Press Conference Transcript

29.11.2015

#### DRIVERS

1 – Nico ROSBERG (Mercedes)

2 – Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes)

3 – Kimi RÄIKKÖNEN (Ferrari)

#### PODIUM INTERVIEWS

(Conducted by David Coulthard)

**Q: Nico, that must taste good?**

**Nico ROSBERG:** Delicious! The best ever!

**Q: It's been an incredible end to the season. This was, to me, your most dominant win of the season, so tell us a little bit about the race and the hunger you took into this final race of the season.**

**NR:** No, I mean, yeah, Austin was sort of the low point of the season. It was a tough weekend and since then I've just come back a lot stronger and I'm very happy about that. I'm excited about how the end of the season went. Next year can come any moment. It could start tomorrow if it were for me, no problem, I don't need any holidays! But, no, it's great to end the season like this, go on holiday like this and thank you so much, you've been awesome again this weekend, for all your support and everything, thanks to my team, absolutely stunning car you've all given me again today – just unbelievable. Ecstatic.

**Q: You mentioned Austin there. We could see the disappointment as the realisation the championship had slipped away at that race. Can you tell us a little bit, give the fans at home an insight. You've got the enemy within the team, you work together to develop this great product but your success is Lewis' failure and his success is your failure. Can you give us an insight into how you manage that? Because you guys have known each other since you were kids.**

**NR:** Yeah, it's always tough to race Lewis, he's doing an awesome job and he's one of the best out there, so an even better feeling to win, definitely against such opposition. It's a great battle internally all the time. That's what I race for, such battles, and I look forwards to more next year.

**Q: Does that mean you guys can go and have dinner together now and reflect on what was an amazing season for the team?**

**NR:** Let's skip that part – maybe we'll catch up in the Amber Lounge later on.

**Q: Lewis, an amazing season for you – your World Champion Ladies and Gentleman – it's been a great season for you, I couldn't help but notice it doesn't seem to have finished quite as strong as it started. We heard you mention that there have been some changes to the car and it hasn't quite suited you but is it as simple as that or is there something else we need to know now the season's over?**

**Lewis HAMILTON:** Well, firstly it's been an amazing – an amazing – year, and happy 44<sup>th</sup> UAE National Day. So happy to be here and celebrating it with the UAE, they've done an amazing job for this show – and what a great crowd we've had today. No man, it's been a good year. I'm happy. I'm happy it's over, for sure. So now we can really enjoy. I really have to take my hat off to this team who once again did an amazing job in building this car. The pitstops today, the performance through the whole year, they've surpassed their own expectations, our expectations, and so we've truly shown that Mercedes-Benz is the best team in the world. I'm proud to be a part of it.

**Q: Just to touch on strategy, we heard you again on the radio, asking the team “can I go the distance on these tyres?” We know the team have to deliver the one-two result. Nico earned the pole, he was leading the race – is that just the inner racer in you? Even though you probably know ahead of time that there's nothing that can be done, that's why you're pushing your engineers, pushing the team.**

**LH:** No, I think in hindsight once Nico pitted I would probably have backed off a little bit and I would have made those tyres go a lot longer. The tyres were still fine at the end so I honestly felt that I could potentially have taken them to the end. But as that didn't work out, going too long was probably not the right thing to do – but y'know, we gave it a try and did the best job I could with it.

**Q: I'll just come around to Kimi Räikkönen. Ladies and Gentlemen, statistically this is the most popular man in Formula One. You probably say less than any of the other drivers, so welcome back to the podium. It's not been a great season for you but that was a World Champion's drive today – so why has it taken so long in the season to deliver this great performance?**

**Kimi RÄIKKÖNEN:** I think we started better this season but obviously not been ideal this year. That's how it goes sometimes. And y'know, the speed has been there but mistakes and problems and stuff like that. So the end result hasn't been great many times but today, or this weekend, was a bit better. Everything was working well and things were running smoothly, car handling well, so, it was good – but obviously not enough still to beat these two but, y'know we did our best.

**Q: Nico, finally with yourself, the smile says it all. The World Championship is the one thing... this is your 14<sup>th</sup> victory. You can take pole positions, you can win grands prix – how are you going to attack the winter and come back next year and try and beat this man?**

**NR:** Well I look forward to it as I'm sure it's going to be another great season next year. I'm sure the team is going to give us an awesome car again. Of course we're aware of the threat from the red guys and we don't want them to come too close and we'll give it everything over the winter. I'll try to keep it going, the current form, starting next year.

## PRESS CONFERENCE

**Q: You knew what Lewis was doing, obviously, in terms of strategy in the final part of the Grand Prix, the offset on the tyres etc, and you responded. Are you pleased with the way you drove today?**

**NR:** Yeah, for sure, ecstatic with the way it went, because really master-managed... controlled the pace through the race and managed my tyres and used them optimally and pushed all the way through to the end, so had good pace there with tyres that's for sure and had a lot more laps on them than Lewis's so very pleased with that, definitely.

**Q: I wonder which of the two of you goes into the winter feeling the happier?**

**NR:** I'm feeling very happy.

**Q: Lewis, you're a three time World Champion, it's been a record-breaking year, which of the two of you goes into the winter feeling the happier?**

**LH:** I think being World Champion sounds a lot better than winning the race, so that's good.

**Q: Tell us a little bit about your race because we were let in on quite a lot of radio, partly, as David Coulthard just referred to there, your question whether or not there was an argument for staying out, but also in the final stages there to do with the engine modes and some quite firm instructions from your engineer, what they wanted you to do. Maybe you could just let us into that a little bit and also from a strategy point of view, you pitted after Vettel who went onto supersofts and you put softs on, so maybe you could just explain that?**

**LH:** Well, I just did what I was told pretty much, most of the time and then yeah, I tried as hard as I could in the first stint, I tried to keep a relatively decent gap to Nico, looking after my tyres and then my right front... or both fronts went off quite early and Nico was able to... in the clean air, was able to look after them. In the second stint I was quicker and getting close and then... I could make the tyres last longer, yeah, of course, but after that it was really down to the team, whether or not we went to the option or the other tyre. I'm not sure which one was better but the prime tyre was quite good. I'm not sure whether or not I could have taken it to the end but some part of me just wishes I'd just given it a go. But no, the engine modes were going up and down throughout the race, not really sure they were like that because they had lots of life left in my engine but I'll ask when I get back to the debrief.

**Q: Kimi, your third podium of this championship, you finished eleven seconds behind Lewis which is about 0.2s per lap over the Grand Prix distance here. Do you take encouragement from the way that Ferrari's finished the last couple of races going into the winter and next year?**

**KR:** I think the whole year, as a team, has been quite good comparing last year and obviously not so good for myself but the speed has been there and it's just not been able to produce the results and having some issues and mistakes but this weekend has been pretty OK, the car's been handling well. I think in the race we could have been quite a bit closer but we had some issues at both pit stops so we lost some time and then I slowed down a bit. But I think we had a reasonably good speed, they didn't really pull away a lot from us. At certain points, I think we were catching them and then they were pulling out but not an awful lot in it. It's never nice to finish third but I'll take it after previous races. I guess it always could have been a better finish but OK, I think it was more or less what we expected to get.

## QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

**Q: (Lennart Bernke – Bild) Nico, Lewis, will you get each other a Christmas present?**

**NR:** Hmm, maybe a Christmas card.

**LH:** I don't think we've ever done either so there's no reason to change.

**Q: (Rami Akhawi – Car on Web) Nico, about next year, are we going to see you as a World Champion, because already you entered the season with great victories, so is it the same way to start 2016?**

**NR:** Well, unfortunately 2016 is so far away. At the moment I'm just enjoying now, enjoying the wins. I'm going to party tonight, I'm enjoying the fun, enjoying that I progressed also a lot in the end of the season, too late for the championship of course, but so great now to have it and that's it. I can't tell you about next year unfortunately, but I'll give it everything

**Q: (Fadi Kallassina – Arab Shift) Lewis, what's your feeling for not getting the first position with the 44 celebration national day?**

**LH:** I'm really grateful to have been associated with the UAE with the 44<sup>th</sup> national day. Yeah, I'm still going for that 44<sup>th</sup> win. I'm quite happy with the amount of wins I've had in my career. Of course, I always want more but I have to be grateful for the ones I do have. Hopefully we've got another three years with this team so I'm looking forward to next year, to come back fit and healthy and let's see what we can do next year.

**Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Kimi, does it now, afterwards, feel any better to finish the season fourth (in the Drivers' championship) instead of being fifth and especially after being 12<sup>th</sup> last season?**

**KR:** Not really. You guys have been asking between me and Valtteri for a long time and still it doesn't make much difference to me. It's not what you think, a Finnish championship, it's a World Championship and there are winners it goes from there. If you don't win, it doesn't make an awful lot of difference if you're second, wherever you finish. I'm happy to have had a kind of OK race in the last one but it doesn't change anything really of how our season went, what to expect for next year. One of the better weekends but we'll take it and go from here.

Ends