



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

2016 Australian Grand Prix Sunday Race Press Conference Transcript

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PODIUM INTERVIEWS

(Conducted by Mark Webber)

Well, how about that folks. What an absolute cliffhanger of a grand prix. Nico, what an incredible race, it had the red flag, a big shunt with Fernando... how did you see it, mate? It was a very, very measured drive from you to get the victory for you today. Fifteenth win for you, mate, so well on your way, maximum points first round.

Nico ROSBERG: First of all, did you have fun this weekend everybody? That's great to hear, you've been awesome. Thank you very much for the support. Thank you Mark. Yeah, it's been a great weekend. Thank you to the team, they have done an unbelievable job, giving us this incredible car. The car's been unreal today. To beat the Ferraris was treat. We absolutely loved it and I'm super excited.

Seb, said I haven't been up here for a while, he's right. Here we go. Lewis, mate, form man all weekend, start was tricky obviously and then the red flag and going to that medium tyre, so it looked like for you to come back and deal with those Toro Rossos was a real handful, so how did you deal with that?

Lewis HAMILTON: Honestly, it was a great race. I loved the fact that we had to come through from far behind. The team did a fantastic job as always. But yeah, it was very tricky out there. Obviously, I'm glad that no one was injured in the shunt. Afterwards it was just trying to get through the traffic, with these tyres on, particularly with the guys at the front who had a faster tyre, it's impossible to follow around here, as you can see for all of us. No, but I'm really happy to get the result, it's a great result for the team.

Yeah, but you seem pretty happy with second. Good recovery, mate. And then obviously on to Bahrain, you're the form man, great momentum with the team and I'm sure you can bounce back in Bahrain, right?

LH: I've had much worse in the first race. Honestly, I take this as a real bonus to have come back from seventh. A long, long way to go; bagged good points today.

Sebastian, my old mate. Seb, no, no, no. I get drunk very fast these days...

Sebastian VETTEL: I know! And then you start singing 'Summer of '69'.

Well, it happens quick! Mate, you were out of the gates early doors, you looked like Sebastian Vettel of old in terms of clean track; off you went. That red flag was a punishment and also the pit stop and a little mistake at the end there but you did pretty much as expected – go for it.

SV: Yeah, I went for it. Obviously the start was mega, I was very happy. It reminded me of Hungary last year, where I passed both of them also down to Turn One. Then I think we settled into a rhythm nicely, you know it's much better when you're in front, you can control the race and the pace. Obviously the red flag, you can argue, didn't help us but nevertheless we had our chance. We didn't expect probably what both of them did going on let's say the hardest compound and going to the end. So we tried to go more aggressive. Maybe it didn't work but ultimately very happy with third. As I said tried everything, hopefully it works next time when I'm here. But it's great to be in Melbourne, great to be in Australia. Shame that I don't have you as a team-mate anymore!

Oh, well, mate, no, it's not going to happen now, mate, I'm too old, but well done and looking forward to Ferrari fighting back over the next few races.

SV: Thank you.

Nico, finishing with you, mate? Long season ahead, maximum points here. How do you see the next few races going and dealing with the great battle that you two have, that intra-team battle, looks like you have a bit of an advantage, so how are you going to manage to keep Lewis at bay

NR: Yeah, early days, but a perfect start. We have to keep an eye on the red guys, because they are very close, as you saw today, so we need to give it everything to stay ahead, for sure.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Q: Nico, many congratulations, your 15th career victory, your second in Australia in three years. Almost 40 laps on a set of medium tyres to win it. A question of judgement really. Tell us a little bit about that and what we going through your mind really, either side of the red flag and then as the other two were catching you at the end.

NR: The strategy was crucial today. So I'm really thankful. The team did a great job on that side as well. We are really strong in strategy amongst other things. I don't want to single out one thing, we're strong in nearly all areas but that did it today. So I'm thankful. It was the tyre choice also on the red flag. I was glad to see that they were on the supersoft. I wasn't sure that was going to be the case. I was happy that I was able to follow quite well with the medium. I was a bit concerned about the restart with the medium, that that tyre would be too cold but it worked out OK. It was fine. Yeah, red flag. Definitely necessary and the right thing for sure to clear out the incident.

Q: Lewis, coming to you, a game of two halves I think they call it. Setback at the start and a fight back at the finish. You were calling at one point for a change of strategy when you couldn't get past the Toro Rosso in the first stint. So, some thoughts from you on tactics and also, particularly on the start and how it got away from the pair of you with Sebastian and the other Ferrari.

LH: Well, generally for me a great race. I think it was really exciting. Obviously it's always great when you get away in the lead, especially with all the work we did in the past days, but it doesn't always go your way. Having to fight back from behind, it's very, very hard to follow as we all know from the history here – but ultimately the team... just really proud of what the team have done to enable us to be on the front, finish on the front today. Ferraris obviously are there and in the battle as you've seen today, so hopefully some exciting races coming up ahead of us. I did the best I could with a difficult start and, yeah, just grateful I got back. Damage limitation really because obviously Nico could have had a lot more points than me today.

Q: Sebastian, coming to you. Great start, first time with the single clutch so maybe a few thoughts about that. You just held the lead at the first stop but then we talked about the red flag. You were on a very aggressive strategy, do you think without that it might have been on today? And are you encouraged by the race pace that you've shown today?

SV: Yeah, definitely. I think we were a lot closer. Last year this was one of our worst tracks so there's plenty of positives. Surely we expected to be a bit stronger in qualifying, it wasn't the case but I think we had a bit of a rough session yesterday. So I think today was a lot better for us, we were a lot closer. Surely the red flag didn't help. Equally we benefitted at the start. The guys did a great job so, I think yeah, it was obviously a pleasant surprise, or a pleasant event, seeing that the start was great and I was overtaking both. It was a bit tight with Nico into Turn One but in the end we made it and even had both cars running at the front, so couldn't ask for me really. And yesterday was forgotten at that point. Then you can argue the red flag didn't help us but equally, y'know, one time it plays into your favour, the other time it catches you out a bit. Today I think, nevertheless, we had a great race. We went for the aggressive route – maybe with hindsight we could have done something else but I'm not willing to blame anything or anyone. We are a team, we win as a team and I think today we won 15 points. It's a shame to see that the second car didn't make it but I think there's plenty of positives, as I said. The team seems in good shape. We know that we can up our game and we want to put pressure on these guys.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Flavio Vanetti – Corriere della Sera) Sebastian, same result as 2015, are you feeling the same mood as last year or not? Better? Worse?

SV: Of course we expect more this year. Last year was a bit unknown. I think we were happy to be on the podium after the season that Ferrari had in 2014 and I had in 2014. This year we obviously come with more expectations. Naturally, when you finish second in the Constructors you want to challenge for first. I think we managed to close the gap more than anyone else so there are plenty of positives. At home in Maranello there has been a lot of work going into this car and I think this is the right car that should allow us to put a lot of pressure on these guys. We know that the benchmark is high but as I said, we are on the right track, things are coming together, so it's not entirely the same result – I think Nico was second last year. I'm sure he's happy about that but all in all, we are a lot closer so plenty of positives.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Congratulations Nico, victory from P2 on the grid. Did that have anything to do with your Finnish sisu?

NR: Of course, the sisu was there today, for sure. It was a great fight and a great race and I'm really pleased, to win the first race of the season was awesome. It was a good kickstart to the season.

Q: (Will Dowell – Fox Sports) For Lewis and Nico, can you please each take us through your start and turn one?

NR: Yeah, so the start was OK but I was on the dirty side of the grid so it was to be expected that the guys on the left were going to get away a bit better. It was very close with Sebastian. I tried to just go for it in turn one but Sebastian did a great job, he braked on the limit and so there was just no way to get into there on the inside so I had to back out. It was fine but disappointing obviously to lose another position to Kimi as well after the start.

LH: My one was quite eventful but fortunately I didn't get any damage but obviously lost a lot of ground. Getting off I just fell to maybe third or fourth. I was on the outside of Nico and Nico was forced wide or something maybe and I was on the outside of him so a little bit on the astroturf and the grass so I lost a little bit of ground. Got overtaken by quite a few people and after that did something to try and fight my way back which was hard work but I enjoyed it.

Q: (Stuart Bell – Maxim) With the new additional radio bans, what was the race like for all of you?

NR: It was good, it was a good challenge because now it's more down to us on track so that was cool. You also feel more in control and it was more of a challenge like that. They did make another change just before the race so we did get more information on strategy, just need to review whether that's the way to go forward now or if there's an even better way to do it. Let's see.

LH: For me it made no difference whatsoever. Didn't enhance the race. As Nico said, it's cool that we can... just for example with our engine we can control and decide what we're going to do with it for once. Otherwise, I don't think the changes are necessary in that area, it's more with the car, to enable us to follow each other. Sebastian was right behind me on a better tyre but just because of the aero... that's why he went wide, I guess. It's just so hard to get close and that's what we want to do, we want to be able to get and close and not have to use the DRS on the straight but be tucked up because you're slip-streaming someone because you're close enough, you know?

SV: I don't think it changed much in the end. There's a lot more for us to remember but you can argue that we're here to race as hard as possible, not to play some memory games. I had a bit of an issue somewhere halfway through the race, because we had an issue with the software but I don't think that's very exciting for the crowd when I'm struggling with software issues and then don't get displayed what I should have on the display, so I asked and fortunately we were able to fix it but it didn't change much for the racing side of things.

Q: (Jawad Yaqus – TheRoar.com.au) Nico, do you feel that the three wins at the end of last season have given you any momentum going into this weekend?

NR: No, everything starts from zero, it's a new season, new car. I feel that everything is starting from scratch, I'm just happy to get a good start in such a way into the season and that's it.

Q: (Don Kennedy – Hawkes Bay Today) Nico, were you aware of Lewis on the outside going into the first corner, because it seemed a reasonably aggressively sort of move to keep him out? And how important, psychologically is it to finish ahead of Lewis in the first race in the championship?

NR: I just realised now when Lewis was mentioning it, so I will have to look at it and if I did push you out wide then I apologise of course, that was not the intention. I was of kind of on the edge myself as you could see.

I'm just happy to have won the race and beaten everybody else, that's what I'm ecstatic about.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Sebastian, how disappointed are you that the second car didn't get any points?

SV: Well, as I said, I think as a team obviously we try to score as many points as possible. I think you could see in the first stint that there wasn't much between Kimi and myself. I think we were very close this weekend and ideally we would have fought for the same place on the track. I have no problems with Kimi, I get along well with him and equally, in general the first guy that I want to do well other than myself obviously is Kimi, so it's a shame that he didn't see the chequered flag. Until now, I don't know what is the

problem. In the past we had a radio so it was nice to hear what was the problem but I was only informed that he had to retire. I don't know why. Maybe you can tell me why?

Q: There was a fire in the airbox so...

SV: Thank you very much. I was not allowed to get that message.

Ends