



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

2015 Singapore Grand Prix Sunday Race Press Conference Transcript

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DRIVERS

- 1 – Sebastian VETTEL (Ferrari)
- 2 – Daniel RICCIARDO (Red Bull Racing)
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PODIUM INTERVIEWS

(Conducted by Eddie Jordan)

Sebastian, was this your best ever race, or one of?

Sebastian VETTEL: It must be one of; I think it was pretty intense. Obviously we had a bit of a breather with the safety car. Still, lots of pressure from behind. I think Daniel had a very good race, looking after his tyres very well, which made it a bit tactical towards the end with the stints. Second stint I was dictating the pace. Obviously around here it's not so easy to overtake, so I was using that. And from then, at some point, chipping away, trying to control the gap. Fortunately that worked. It's obviously a great day; we had a really great weekend, thanks to the team.

So, we want to know also, because on Friday a little bird told me you were quietly confident, you thought you had a lot left over, and then you did that magic qualifying lap yesterday; you kind of showboated a bit didn't you, you just wanted to rub it in, to see how good you were?

SV: Not really. Friday was not perfect I would say but we improved the car overnight, which was very important and then we picked up so much pace. The car was fantastic yesterday with one lap. Amazing the feeling I got; so much adrenalin in qualifying. And the same today. I was able to look after my tyres, control the pace, so all in all a perfect weekend so very, very happy.

I'm coming back to you, don't you worry. Daniel Ricciardo, ladies and gentleman. Looks like you're a bit of a local boy here? There are a lot of Aussie flags here. You have a lot of support. Come on let's hear you. Come on you can tell me, I know he's your old team-mate but he did back you up didn't he? He did try to stumble you. He wanted you to let go, so that Kimi could pass you?

Daniel RICCIARDO: I think Seb experimented a bit today. The start of the race he just went, but realised towards the end of the stint I was coming. I think if wasn't for the safety car it would have got pretty close in terms of the pit stop – maybe an undercut was possible. But, yeah, then the

second stint seemed like he had learned for the first, backed us up and then just went after that. I think both safety cars came out at a pretty crucial time. Nonetheless, his pace was good and it was quite representative of qualifying, you know. We seemed to be the two quickest cars today.

You talk about being the quickest car: were you surprised, because you targeted this race didn't you? You always thought that Red Bull would be strong here.

DR: Yeah, it's really good to back it up. We came in here pretty confident. I'm always careful not to be overconfident but yeah I think the pace we showed all weekend was strong. The race pace was good; I think we matched Seb, so we've got to be pretty happy with this weekend. It's nice again to capitalise; Budapest we had a chance and we've done it again here.

Kimi, hot race. Last time you were on the podium it was in Bahrain and this is the first time this year we've seen the two Ferrari drivers on the podium. Is this the sign of the future?

Kimi RÄIKKÖNEN: Obviously we hope that. I must say Friday was fine for me and yesterday we struggled for whatever reason and I didn't expect much better today. I was a bit surprised to finish third yesterday with how difficult the car felt and today was a struggle again but obviously we had enough speed to be in third place but I had no chance to do anything about the first two. I could follow them at the beginning but once my tyres dropped off that just went. It wasn't that nice to have that kind of difficulties but you know we still finished third and when you have a bad few days and you finish third it's pretty good and for the team nice and hopefully we can repeat them.

I just ask you one tiny question: how many starts did you do on the simulator after Monza?

KR: Two.

That's not what I heard. He's lying to us. Seb, you must love this place, don't you? Four-time winner here. What is it about Singapore?

SV: The party on Sunday night I guess.

Are you going to party tonight?

SV: I think we will have some drinks, yes, definitely. My drinks bottle failed half-way through the race, so I'm quite thirsty. We need to make sure we....

What's the plan now? Six races left. Can Ferrari really take it to Mercedes?

SV: If we have more weekend like this, yes. But all we have to do is look after ourselves, maximum attack and then what they do is not in our hands. We still have a small chance, maybe we can make the impossible possible; we'll definitely go for it.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Sebastian, obviously you controlled the race throughout, from your first Ferrari pole position. First stint you attacked from the outset; beginning of the second stint you did the opposite and were pacing yourself. How did you perceive the threat from Hamilton and Rosberg at that point of race? You then speeded up and how much did losing the lead, on the one hand, to the two safety cars balance out against the fact that in both cases you were able to stop under the safety car? How did that help you?

SV: First it was fairly simple: you drive a bit into the unknown, so I was trying to put a gap. I was surprised by the opening laps to put five seconds straight away. Then eased off; probably was

pushing a bit hard at the beginning, which allowed Daniel to just be that two, three, four tenths quicker at the end. Obviously I had a bit of margin left but the safety car answered all the questions about the first stop. And the same for the second stop. I think it was pretty straightforward when to stop, because you obviously take the advantage of losing less time through the pit lane. I did pretty much the opposite on the second stint. I knew that it's impossible for Daniel, for anyone, to go 40-odd laps on the prime tyre, it will just fall apart at the end, so I think some 35 or 36 laps to go, I knew we were approaching the pit stop window plus. I knew that one of the Mercedes was on the prime tyre, which obviously allows them to be on the option for the final stint, so I said, 'OK a couple of laps to go'. When the pit stop window more or less opened for the final stint, allowing to finish on the prime, to go for it, open a gap, put some three or four seconds between me and Daniel, so that we can react in case he dives into the pits and he doesn't get the undercut. So it worked pretty well. I was controlling the pace in the second stint for a while and then, as I said, went for it. In the last stint I knew that with the prime they were a bit more resilient - obviously the safety car answered all the questions, as I said, and I could maintain the gap. I wanted to put, fairly quickly, two or three seconds between us, to make sure that Daniel doesn't get too excited, to try and attack in the end. And it worked. I knew that the prime tyre would favour us probably a bit - and it did. At the end we faced some traffic but he never really got close, so I could control the end fairly well.

Very well done. Daniel, your best result of the season so far. After the first stint your engineer said that your pace and degradation were both very good, so was there any optimism at any point that you might get the win today or did both stops coming under the safety car put paid to chance of doing something with strategy that might have helped you?

DR: I think that sort of dictated the race really. I'm not saying there were any guarantees but I think in the first stint we were coming on quite strong. It was obvious Seb pushed pretty hard at the beginning to break let's say the DRS and all of that, but then as the laps were ticking down we were starting to come alive, I was able lean on the tyres a bit more and I could see it was working in my hands. So when I saw the safety car come out I was a bit frustrated, but I knew there was one more stop in the race, so I knew there was one more chance to do the same thing, replicate the same, let's say, procedure. Seb learned a little bit from the first stint - started off a little bit easier in the second stint, then broke away. Then I think again as the laps ticked down I was probably able to make the tyres last a bit better on the option and close in, but then safety car again. So, thanks to the guy on the track, appreciate it. I was tempted to swerve, clip him! That was that and then with the prime, as Seb said, that was pretty much it. It's hard to overtake here but we tried to do what we could. We just got the fastest lap at the end, so we proved our pace all weekend. I'm proud of that. Good to get another podium. Really happy for the team. As I said yesterday they've done a really good job, particularly the last couple of races I think the chassis has really come alive, so thank you to them for that. So, yeah, congrats to Seb, it was a good race.

Q: Kimi, your 79th career podium. On the radio you were getting messages about the tyres being out of range and bringing them back into range. Is that what prevented you from doing more today?

KR: No, not really. I think for whatever reason yesterday morning already in the practice we had difficult handling with the car and then through qualifying it was not exactly what we wanted and was a bit surprised to still be third. Obviously it was good, with all the difficulties I felt. It kept happening in the race. Obviously when you have new tyres the car's more or less OK and then Sebastian was not pushing on the second set and the last set, the stints, it was quite easy but once

we started to push I started to struggle straight way with the same issues with the rear end. It obviously was a bit tricky race but in the end with the difficulties we've had in the last few days we still finished third. It's OK. It's not ideal but I'll take it and, for the team, it's a great result. Hopefully we can improve on this and all the areas and try to keep it going for longer and longer and build on this one again. I think we've done an amazing job as a team and we keep doing the same things, I'm sure we're going as a team the right direction and we get where we want to be in the end, for the future. So I think it was OK. Not ideal but I'll take it.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Daniel Johnson – Daily Telegraph) Seb, just talk us through, from your perspective, what it was like when the man came on the track. What did you see? I guess that kind of thing is pretty worrying from your seat.

SV: I don't know. I had to look again because I wasn't sure whether I had a problem with my eyesight or I saw somebody crossing the track. I went on the radio and said "some guy's running across the track!" I think I saw him taking a picture. I don't know. I hope it was a good one at least. I hope it was in focus! Yeah, pretty crazy, we approach that corner at around 280-290klicks so, I don't know, I wouldn't cross the track if I was him. It was crazy, obviously, and we had a Safety Car straight away. Maybe in the next year we need to block the grandstands a bit better. Fortunately nothing happened to us and nothing happened to him – as far as I know. The other guys didn't see him, so I was the first one to come around.

[off-mic follow up]

SV: Not necessarily. I think he did a pretty good job. He was a quick runner, crossing from the right to the left but yeah, pretty odd. Obviously that's not what you expect when you come around, looking into the next corner.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) I have been waiting for a while to ask this question: to Sebastian and Kimi, does it feel any different to be first time as team-mates in the podium compared to previous times?

SV: Honest answer: no. I've always liked Kimi because from the very first day I joined Formula One he was one of the guys who showed me most respect. There were other guys who lost a little bit the ground under their feet but Kimi was definitely not one of them. At that time I was nobody in F1 and he was a great champion already. It was great to see that he pays that much respect. And since that day he hasn't changed. I think people love him for the fact that there's no bullshit – as he often quotes – he's here for the racing bit and that's ultimately why we're all here: we love racing. So, I don't know, I think we get along well. Obviously I had a better day, compared to him today – but if it's the other way around I think it's only fair to be as fair as him today.

And Kimi, does it feel any different to you to be team-mates for the first time on the podium?

KR: Maybe a little bit. Obviously you try to beat your team-mates. Sometimes you lose, sometimes you win but I think in the end you are happy the team did well. So, I'd rather be with him in the same team and he wins and I'm in a third place than he's in another team other than Ferrari. So obviously it's a win-win situation. I didn't have the best few days but I mean, fair enough, he was faster and I can take the third place and we try next weekend again and I'm sure we will have other good battles in the future and I think, as a team, we work well. And that's the most important thing. If there would ever come a day when we have issues, then we can talk about it and sort it out. Not

a big deal about it but we're working well. I'm happy for him and for the team first of all that we can have a good result. Obviously we want always better but it's going in the right direction for all of us.

Q: (Michael Schmidt – Auto Motor und Sport) Daniel, despite a good race you had today, at the moment your team doesn't have an engine for next year and it doesn't look like there's a solution tomorrow on the table. Are you worried? And then, obviously to Seb, what would you say if Red Bull would drive similar engines, the same engines as you next year?

DR: I think it's... now I'm not worried. I think we've still got time. It's not December yet, so if we're in this position in December then, maybe I'm a bit worried. Maybe I'm facing a year of getting paid to do nothing.

SV: You renewed your contract?

DR: Yeah! I don't know how that would feel but for sure I want to be here, want to be racing. Obviously I'm at a bit of a peak of my career, I'm learning all the time but enjoying it and want to keep racing definitely and keep racing at the front. So, firstly it's great to be back on the podium and fighting where I want to be fighting. For next year, in time it will get solved. Obviously the sooner the better for everyone to start working and preparing the car for next year. Obviously it depends on what engine you have: you design the car around that, the set of geometry of the engine – but yeah, we'll see how we go in the next few weeks, hopefully we'll get an answer.

And your part of that question Seb?

SV: Well, it's not in my hands. Obviously I think Daniel answered that question fairly well. I think as a racing driver you want to race and not worry about these kind of things. I cannot really provide him with an engine, I'm not making the decisions. It's other people to ask... and probably the champagne hits more than I thought so it's maybe better for me to shut up at this point!

DR: Do you want some water?

Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action and SpeedSport Magazines) Daniel, looking at the shorter term, as you say, the chassis has really come alive. On which of the upcoming tracks do you think you will be able to really exploit that and get a good result?

DR: I think this was our best chance, so we got close. I think we can still be proud of what we did this weekend. As I said on the podium, I think it's good that we – in a way – capitalise or make the most of our opportunities. This year, I believe we have had two: Budapest and here and we've got podiums in those races. A bit like last year, when we had the chance to win we did. I still think we're maximising everything we've got at the moment. Moving forward, Suzuka is normally a good track for us. I don't think we can expect as strong a performance as here but we can still look at the top five and maybe better. Then after that, I'm not sure. Mexico is new for everyone, so we will see how that goes but I was there already and they've got a pretty long straight, so I'm not sure how that will play in our hands. Yeah, looking forward to the last part of the season. Austin's pretty good so yes, see how we get on.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Kimi, after Bahrain it took eight races for you to get a podium. Does it feel any better now after that kind of long wait?

KR: No, not really. I have mixed feelings, you know. I am happy to be in third place after how difficult it's felt in the last two days with some issues that we had. But it's disappointing in that on Friday we knew that we were faring pretty well and then to get third place is fine but it's not what we are here for. It's a bit mixed feelings but I think I take the third place. We've had some other chances to be on the podium quite a few times but either I made a mistake or something else happened. It's been a bit of an up and down year but hopefully we keep building, we learn a lot and obviously we are still some way to go to be exactly where we want to be. It's getting there and to be happy as a team in what we're doing I think the team should get a big big thanks from everyone, from us, for what a great job they are doing for us. Obviously the things that we are doing are definitely going in the right direction. For the future it is the good way. We just have to have some patience to build on this.

Q: (Luigi Perna – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Seb, this is your third win in your first season with Ferrari as Michael had in 1996 and one more than Senna. Does it mean something special for you?

SV: One more than? Was Senna ever with Ferrari? No. Ah, overall you mean. I think I could consider myself the luckiest racing driver in the world if there were as many race wins to come as there was with Michael. I don't think you can really draw that comparison. In all fairness, I think the car he had in 1996 was a lot worse than what we have this year which shows again what a great racing driver he was. I don't know. I think looking back it has been incredible. You know the way I was growing up, I just enjoyed racing and then to find myself nowadays having a teammate that I looked up to when I was young, racing him and seeing what he does, racing on a similar level to him and racing other guys that are really great like Daniel, like Lewis, like Nico. I can consider myself very very lucky that I got in a position always to have a great team around me, the last couple of years, and keep going that way. As Kimi described in his answer before, I think looking at our current situation with Ferrari, things are definitely improving. I think the spirit is very high in the team. I haven't been with the team in the last couple of years but as far as I have learned, it's a lot better so I think the direction is the right one and obviously we are very happy with today's result, very happy with the car this year in general but not yet where we want to be. We know that there's still a lot of work to do so expectations are already fairly high but I think they are always, especially in Italy, when you talk about Ferrari. So we have to keep our feet on the ground because there's still a lot of homework to do.

Q: (Don Kennedy – Hawke's Bay Today) Just adding to that, Sebastian, 42 wins, you're third now in the all-time list behind Alain Prost and Michael Schumacher. Do you think you will stay around long enough to obviously surpass Prost's record but what about Schumacher's record? Is that in your sights or do you not think about it?

SV: Well, I think, to be honest, Prost's is in sight somehow. I'm 28 so I'm not the youngest any more especially if the kids start racing at 17 now. But Michael's is just ridiculous: number of wins, number of poles, number of fastest laps. I think all the statistics you can go for you compare yourself to him or anyone to him, so I think that's far away. So if you have 23 corners in Singapore, I consider myself being in turn one and Michael in turn 23. I'm not really looking at that. As I said, I'm having a great time. I think I can consider myself very lucky and blessed the way things have turned out. I've always had a more or less competitive car, competitive team, so if it keeps going that way then I can consider myself very lucky.

Q: (Don Kennedy – Hawke’s Bay Today) Damon Hill was 35 when he won the championship so you’ve got plenty of time.

SV: Yeah, and Michael still kept racing some years ago when he was 43. I think Kimi is now 33, 34, 35, 36! OK. I think it’s impossible to predict the future. I think we are now on a good track with the team, Kimi and myself, so I think we’ve got some years ahead of us which we can enjoy. In a way you can forget the statistics, I think the most important thing is the sheer fun in life and get paid for it, that’s a great thing.

Q: (Frederic Ferret – L’Equipe) To all of you: do you think that the fact that there is no Mercedes driver on the podium this weekend is only track-related or is it the fact that Ferrari and Red Bull are progressing?

DR: I think for us it’s very much track-related. With all that being said, we expected to be strong here. I think we’re all surprised that Mercedes - or at least one of them - isn’t up here or not even... OK, I think Rosberg was fourth but we never really saw them all race in the mirrors or in qualifying so definitely an off weekend for them. I expect them to be back in Suzuka but for whatever reason, if it is that we’ve made so much progress – Ferrari and us – then obviously hopefully you will see us up here a few more times this year.

KR: It’s hard to say obviously. I feel as a team Ferrari did the same thing that we do going into every race weekend. I don’t feel that we really made something magic, it’s not like that we did something really different to other race weekends. We are there. I think we were more surprised at the last race in Monza to be that close to the Mercedes and maybe that shows us that we made a step there and maybe we just kept doing the same things here. But it’s very hard to say what they did. I think everybody’s surprised where they’ve been all weekend and who knows what happens in the next race. We can see from the last race to this race has been completely different. I think it’s better to wait and see what happens in Suzuka.

SV: Big surprise, so same as Daniel and Kimi. I guess they should be back in Suzuka. If they’re not, in all honesty we don’t mind.

Ends