



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L' AUTOMOBILE

## **2017 FIA Formula One World Championship**

### **Abu Dhabi Grand Prix**

#### **Friday Press Conference Transcript 24.11.2017**

**PART ONE: TEAM REPRESENTATIVES – Maurizio ARRIVABENE (Ferrari), Toto WOLFF (Mercedes), Christian HORNER (Red Bull Racing)**

#### **PRESS CONFERENCE**

**Can I start by asking all of you to pick our personal highlight moment from the 2017 Formula 1 season?**

**Toto WOLFF:** My personal highlight was the birth of my son, this goes beyond anything else. My Formula 1 highlight is probably Hungary, which for me was a very difficult race and very difficult decision-making at the end of the race but somehow was important to reconfirm the values of the team.

**Maurizio ARRIVABENE:** Hungary, for different reasons. Then I have to say also Monaco. Monaco was a quite good race. But Hungary in my opinion was the best. I have to add also Brazil, because in Brazil, when the championship was gone, I think the team demonstrated character and also they reacted quite well and so, if I have to make a choice, Brazil finally, for the reasons I described before.

**Christian HORNER:** Well, it's been a year of births all round, so earlier in the year being able to witness my son born earlier in the year in January. Then, probably Max's overtake on Lewis, because we haven't seen it much, to win the Malaysian Grand Prix. Yeah, that was a pretty sweet moment.

**OK, thank you. Toto, four consecutive Drivers' and Constructors' titles, the same as Christian managed a few years back. So only one question: can you keep it going in 2018, or were the problems that you encountered this year a warning sign that the tide is beginning to turn?**

**TW:** I think the years before were outliers. We managed to have a really good package together, between chassis and power unit, and this year what we have seen on track, the fight between the three teams, is probably becoming more the reality for the years to come. The most important thing is to stay humble, feet on the ground, not take winning for granted but on the contrary, respect the others, respect they job they are doing and if you win in adverse conditions it's even sweeter. In so far, our expectations for next year are to have a competitive car again, win races again and be in the fight for the championship.

**And Christian, Max is the highest points scorer over the past five races, even ahead of Hamilton. Is that a sign of what's to come in 2018?**

**CH:** Yeah, the problem is that the championship is over 20 races this year so...! The last five have been good for him. Obviously we want to try to take that momentum into 2018 and so, yeah, the recent couple of months have been quite rewarding.

**Maurizio, five wins and five poles, that's more than Ferrari have managed for quite a few seasons now. So is there satisfaction in that or sadness that the title slipped away from you in September and October?**

**MA:** Of course the number of pole positions and so on they are important somehow but the most important is the championship. The good number that we have at the moment is demonstrating the good job of the overall team

but the fact that we were not able to win the championship means that it's not enough, so we have to push forward to next year to do it better.

**A final question from me: if you think back 12 months to when we were here in Abu Dhabi and think about how much has changed in the sport since then, and then project forward to November 2018, where do you think Formula 1 will be at that point. Toto?**

**TQ:** Well, 12 months ago Bernie was around. We miss the odd hand grenade flying through the paddock, but this is new times and what we need to do is support the new owners and the management to grow Formula 1. I wouldn't want to predict what will be in 12 months from now. There are quite some things that have been kicked off, some good, some less so to us, but most importantly we are all stakeholders of this fantastic sport and coming back in 12 months I would like to wish that this sport is growing in audiences, growing in fan appeal and that's basically it.

**Maurizio?**

**MA:** I think we have for sure a good sign of renovation, of commitment, demonstrated by the new commercial rights holder, so for sure we have some positive news. For sure, we are focusing a bit more our attention on the spectators – television and also the spectators at the track. They are quite proactive but the problem is to find the right balance between team needs and commercial needs, talking in general. But I think we have a good sign that they are telling us that the future could be a good future for Formula 1.

**And Christian...**

**CH:** I think if you reflect on the last 12 months, as Toto says, many things have changed. This time last year Bernie was still running the show. Obviously in January the business was sold and a new management structure came into place. I think what's been quite interesting and quite dynamic about that is that there has been a steep learning curve for the new guys involved but they have embraced ideas, concepts; they've come with a very fresh, unbiased approach and while they have been going through a learning phase, a building phase over the last nine or ten months, a lot of things that may seem trivial have changed – just how we deal on a day-to-day basis. I think what is going to be fascinating is to see the lessons that been made this year, the infrastructure that's been put in place, the people that have recruited, how that's going to affect future years, because it's not going to be just next year, it's going to be the next three to five years. I would certainly hope that in 12 months' time we are sitting here with all of our drivers in contention for a world championship and for it to go right down to the wire. Toto has had it far too easy the last four years and hopefully Ferrari and Red Bull can give a much harder time next year.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Ysef Harding – Xiro Xone News) For all three, we often ask the drivers this at the end of the season, but what do you have planned for the end of the season and what will you look forward to in the short time we'll have off before next season?**

**TW:** What we have planned? Unfortunately there is not really an off-season anymore. The car build is happening as we speak, trying to put the final developments on the launch spec. There is a part of the factory that is almost 24-7 at the moment. There is no downtime between the end of the season and the start of the season. Probably the only time we have it a little bit easier is between Christmas and New Year, we send the office staff on holiday but everybody else is pretty much flat out during that time as well.

**MA:** I thought that Toto was giving some information about what they are doing, but he is smart enough and didn't give us any information, unfortunately. Having said so, I agree that there is not anymore an off-season. We are working all the time, especially when you have to work on the gap that we still have, so you have certain people, the people that they are all year at the track, for example, the guys who are working during the grand prix, they are taking a bit of vacation, not that much, and all the others they are still working on the new car.

**And yourselves? Are you going to take some time off, are you going to have a holiday?**

**MA:** I don't think so. Maybe Christmas but I'm not even sure. But I don't like to sit for hours at the table, to be obliged to talk to people, to be nice. One day. Fine, I have to do it, but I don't eventually like it

**TW:** You're not into talking.

**MA:** No.

**TW:** Well, I'll pretend to look at the young driver test next week and stay here with my family for two days on the beach and then have two days off. And during Christmas and New Year – as an Austrian you have to go for a ski, hopefully not injure myself this year.

**What could possibly go wrong? And Christian, how about you, are you going to take some time off?**

**CH:** Yeah, we're all going to Toto's; we're just debating which hours – the summer house or the winter chalet, where to go. There's a month between now and Christmas and while the operation side of things comes to a close on Wednesday this week, after the test, back in the factory the design and production side of the business is all running flat chat. So there are commercial things to get tied up between now and the end of the year. So usually you're flat out right up until just before Christmas. Then you break up for Christmas; then you get ill. Yeah, I'm looking forward to Christmas with the family and yeah, then before you know it it's new year and away you go.

**Q: (Andrea Cremonesi – Las Gazzetta dello Sport) A question for all of you, it's about what we heard today that there is a McLaren issue about the fin and if you talked to your technician about that and if you are worried for the overall picture of the cars next year?**

**CH:** A month of so ago we had a meeting and I thought we all agreed that we were going to leave the fin as it was and stick the number there. And then in usual fashion we left the meeting and things changed and Zak decided he couldn't see his rear wing – he's obviously signed a major sponsor for next year and he's trying to get as much coverage as he can, so McLaren presented another variant. The problem is that the aerodynamicists then looked at it and said "well, that screws up the rear wing, so we don't want that". So I'm not quite sure, as we sit here, what we got. I think it goes back to what's in the regulation, which is no fin and so we have to just work out where to stick the number. Maybe we'll have another chat and see if we can persuade Zak this weekend to put the fin back.

**TW:** I personally hate the fin.

**CH:** You've got one driving for you!

**TW:** True, not all fins! I personally think it ruins the shape of the car. Obviously it has an aerodynamic purpose and some cars benefit more from having the fin and have more stability and more crosswind instability, but overall it's not the nicest of elements in general.

**Maurizio, what about you, you've also got a Finn in the car, do you want one on the car?**

**MA:** I'm quite neutral. I'm waiting for a decision. What is quite funny is that Zak said that the fin was interfering with the rear win, and in the meantime he said he would like to have more commercial space. So somehow he is removing the fin and doesn't have anymore that commercial space, and on top he needs to find space for the number, so I think there is something wrong here.

**TW:** You see what we talk about in the Strategy Group...

**Q: (Arjan Schouten – AS Sportweld) For Christian: Max told us after Brazil that Renault switched the power of the engine into a bit safer mode, with a bit less power. Any signals that it will be a similar case here or will it be last race, risk it all?**

**CH:** I think obviously after the events of Mexico you can understand Renault being a bit nervous in Brazil, which is also a quite high altitude race. But coming here, last race of the year, nothing to gain or lose in the Constructors' or Drivers' championship, I think we should go for it with both cars, and hopefully that will be the approach of our engine supplier too.

**Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Maurizio, talking about the Finns...**

**MA:** You have Bottas too!

**Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Yes, but do you think Kimi is the unluckiest driver on the grid after 94 races without a single victory?**

**MA:** I don't trust on luck or not luck, even if I'm Italian. I trust on fact and fact means points. Bad luck or good luck is not influencing this. Sometimes it could be in terms of perception or because maybe other drivers are crashing on his car, the final reality is the points you are scoring and this is what is making a driver good or bad. We are happy about the performance of Kimi, by the way, otherwise we are not confirming him.

**Q: (Andrew Benson – BBC Sport) How concerned are the three of you that the overall revenue and team payments appear to have gone down under the new owners – and how confident are you that they'll go back up again?**

**CH:** Well, inevitably as they've invested in an infrastructure their costs have gone up. The model that they have, compared to the previous management, obviously is significant different – but perhaps, in the world that we live in, it's appropriate for where the commercial rights holder wants to take the sport. So it's inevitable that they've got to invest. At the same time revenues are slightly affected by Malaysia not renewing, etc., but I think the rights holder made a very generous offer to those teams that want to take it to effectively advance monies to ensure that the money next year available to the teams is the same as this year and the latest forecast, on an interest-free basis. They've offered to basically fund that bridge for those teams that wish to take it. So, and of course, when you're building a structure, you've got to invest in that. Obviously, they've moved premises, they've moved offices, they're running a different ship to how Bernie operated it. Bernie was the salesman, he was a one-man show, which was always going to be unsustainable because there was no individual that could single-handedly replace him. So, I think with the structure that's been put into place, hopefully dividends and benefit will come – but it's going to be a little bit further down the road. Probably we're looking at 2019, 2020 and particularly 2021 before we're going to see the fruits of their investment.

**Do you see it the same way Toto?**

**TW:** The question is where does investment come from. Is it the prize fund or... when you invest, are you raising capital and you make a rights issue and dilute the shareholders, or do you dilute the teams? I don't know. To be discussed. But as a matter of fact, they are in the first year. I think year number one needs to be a honeymoon period after Bernie. We are maybe also a little bit spoilt, because over the last ten years at least I've been around, we had a growing prize fund, every single year we could rely on a per cent or two at worst; at best ten per cent and in so far, we have been also relying and building our structures. You need to support them, because it is our joint platform, and grant them this period and then hopefully see the hockey stick business plan is actually coming to fruition, and this is a dip; a momentary dip that we see, and hopefully it's going to grow again soon.

**Maurizio, your view?**

**MA:** I think for sure they were not investing so much money to have a sport that is falling down. After one year it is not easy to judge. I know that early December they want to present to us their plan for the future. I hope there is going to be at least a three-year plan. So, this year we were a bit together, a bit. We were together with them to support, to work and to try to build up the future but, as Toto mentioned, as Christian mentioned, it was the first year. It's not easy to judge – yet. We need to sit down with them and see, and to look at their business plan for the next few years and then we can have a judgement of a clear picture of where we want to go. Where Formula One wants to go.

**Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Maurizio, given where you ended last season, being contenders for the championship and then losing it, how would you summarise the season and what can you realistically aim for next year?**

**MA:** To summarise the season, if you want to have a quick summary and want to use the example of the glass of water – don't like wine – mid-season we were thirsty, and end-of-season we were using the water because we take a pill because we have a bit of headache – and that's the summary of the season. Apart from that I think the team was pushing pushing, really hard. They were working well. We have certain circumstances that they were not in our favour. I have to say congratulations to Mercedes. They won and they deserved the Drivers' and Constructors' Championships. For next year we try to do our best to be better.

**Q: (Louis Dekker – NOS.nl) For all three. Do you agree with me that Kimi, Valtteri and Daniel need a victory more than their team-mates? And, to Christian, is it possible for Red Bull to win this race, after today, after today's test, do you think?**

**CH:** The opposition looked very strong. I think we'll be stronger on a Sunday than we are on a Saturday – but that's not unusual this season. Daniel's already had a victory this year, I'm sure he'd like to add to that but yeah, obviously, we'll be doing the best we can to finish the season on as high a note as possible.

**Toto?**

**TW:** Yeah, certainly Valtteri would want a victory. He had a rough time after the summer break and recovered – but Lewis has been very good today, again. He is in an extremely good place and after Friday it's difficult to judge. Maurizio normally on Saturday goes up a lot in performance and, as Christian said, they are pretty strong in the race. And when you look at the long runs today, again it's very close together. It's a tenth or two, depending who's in the car.

**Maurizio?**

**MA:** Talking about Kimi, if you look today at the long run, he's in quite good shape – but we know that it depends on how, if Sebastian was pushing at the limit or not. It depends if my friends here, Red Bull and Mercedes, they were pushing or not – but I think, talking about Kimi, Kimi today was in quite good shape.

**Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action / Speed Sport) A question for Christian: traditionally a Toro Rosso driver has moved up to Red Bull. You have Max for three years, you want Daniel for three years, you have Carlos waiting in the wings, so what is Red Bull's plans for Pierre and Brendon? Where can they go for three years, or even beyond?**

**CH:** Well they can stay where they are, at Toro Rosso, as things develop there; we can do what we've done with Carlos Sainz and make them available to other teams. So I think, for us, it's all about having options and investing in talent and youth. Red Bull this year has gone as young as investing in kart racing drivers, at 13 and 14 years of age. We have some exciting talent in Formula 4, and it will continue to invest in that young talent. One of our young drivers won the Macao Grand Prix last weekend, so yeah, the Junior Programme's working well but if there's not room within Red Bull Racing, which hopefully there won't be, for at least the next couple of years, then if the drivers have the opportunity to further their careers, we're not adverse to making them available to other teams.

**Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Referring to James' question earlier on about Liberty, etc., what was the one key standout point that they brought to Formula One this year, in each of your opinions, and also, what is the one major point you'd like to see them bring out next year?**

**MA:** As I said at the beginning, they focus their attention on 'spectacularisation', to go nearby the spectator at the track, and also TV spectator. They demonstrate a lot of enthusiasm and commitment. Now, I think, for next year, we have a meeting in December where they're going to present what they have in mind, and at that stage we can have a conversation with them and eventually a suggestion. I don't want to suggest anything without knowing what they have in mind – I would like to talk about what, until today, I think they were doing. For sure they're pushing. It depends on what they want to do in the future. First year, it's normally easy, because you start from a certain point: you have a lot of expectation and you go up. The second year, you have to prove you are solid and you are looking forward at least for the future. And the future is not one year, it's at least, normally in the company, it's a three-year plan.

**Toto?**

**TW:** I think what stands out for me is opening up on the social media rights: that is the first thing they did at the beginning of the season and it gave us more possibilities and more visibility. I come from a financial universe. For me, it would be interesting for me to see how the business case, what the vision on the business case is and how the numbers will come together.

**CH:** I think so many things have opened up, whether it be the digital platform, whether it be access, etcetera, etcetera. I think we've all felt that – probably the standout moment for me was the investment that they made in the promotion they did in the UK, in London, the Trafalgar event where they had 19 of the 20 drivers there, all the cars running, a completely free event and pop concert for the fans to come and engage with Formula One. So, I think that was a pretty big thing they put on this year.

### **Something you'd like to see next year?**

**CH:** It's going to be very interesting. I think in December we're going to sit down and hear what their plans are for the next 12 months and the season ahead. So I think it will be with great interest that we sit and listen to what plans they have.

**Q: (Andrea Cremonesi – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Question for Maurizio and Toto: I would like to ask you which is the strength about your rival that you want to be in your team? And for Christian, if you are a little bit surprised that Sebastian made some mistakes. I mean Singapore and Mexico.**

### **Toto?**

**TW:** Wasn't it a question to Maurizio first? I could have two minutes to think about it! Ferrari is a fantastic brand and has been in Formula One forever. There's a lot of passion and emotion around the brand, and you can see the racing team, they're very passionate but on the other side we are very passionate about it too. So, there isn't a thing that comes into my mind where I would say 'this is what I want'. We have great respect for them, I have great respect for Maurizio and what he's been able to achieve with his team and they are great rivals.

**MA:** I think, how you tend to respect the team that have won four Constructors' Championships and four Drivers' Championships. It's normal that they are strong. For that I have a lot of respect but it could be even better if we're able next year to fight with them and finally to win! Having said so, I think one of the strengths of Mercedes, apart from the brand they're representing, how the team is organised, it's also their habit to win. Sometimes you are going to have a pole position and it's becomes an event. Pole position must become a habit and not an event. This is what I mean for a habit to win. It doesn't have to be perceived as an event, the victory, or the pole position. It must be the natural result of the work that you are doing. In this way, I have a lot of respect for this guy but in this way, we know what we have to do for the future in our side.

**And finally, Christian, Sebastian's starts in Singapore and Mexico. You worked with him for many years, were you surprised by the way that went?**

**CH:** I think they were racing accidents: they just seemed to involve our driver alongside him. It was just coincidence. Sebastian's a great racer and he's driven a very strong campaign this year. I can only imagine it might be something to do with a bonus: maybe it's not as generous at Ferrari as it is at Red Bull for finishing races but no, I think it was racing incidents that happened and just coincidence that Max was there on both occasions.

**PART TWO – TEAM REPRESENTATIVES: Zak BROWN (McLaren), Cyril ABITEBOUL (Renault), Mario ISOLA (Pirelli)**

**Q: Will all three of you pick your personal highlight moment of the 2017 Formula One season. Zak, why don't you start us off?**

**Zak BROWN:** Highlight of 2017 or specifically the Formula One season? I think it would have to be the Indianapolis 500, was a special moment for McLaren and Fernando and I think the entire racing world. So, I think in 2017, we'll look back on that Month of May as a pretty exciting moment.

**Mario ISOLA:** I would say the test in Barcelona because with the new regulations, the new tyres and the new targets, it was not easy, and we had also a big challenge and the famous five seconds, the expected improvement of the tyres, and the cars, of course, and Barcelona was the moment in which we confirmed that everything was OK.

**Cyril ABITEBOUL:** Well, frankly the 2017 season has really been a rollercoaster so there have been lots of highlights, lots of ups and downs. I guess the best representation of that might be Mexico where it was at the same time a very difficult moment, so you may be a bit surprised by that answer. It's important to make a favourite moment that matters and a moment that shows you that some things that work and some things that do not work. It was a race where we put a lot of effort to actually be extremely competitive and we could see that we were extremely competitive on Friday but we also see that we were too competitive and that we took too many risks, in particular on the engine side with a lot of retirements, lots of issues and those issues, as they are always very difficult, when it's in our team or on any customer teams – for us, there is the reputation of Renault, all the work and effort that we put into that. And at the same time, while Mexico was a highlight, it was a win of Max in those circumstances it was a very strange moment and definitely a moment that I will remember.

**Q: OK, staying with you, can you tell us what impact Carlos Sainz has had on the team in his short time there? He's qualified seventh, eighth and eighth, points on debut. How do you evaluate him?**

**CA:** Well, frankly from that summary I think the answer is in the question. It's a very good assessment. He's clearly brought lots of energy, he's brought his motivation, his willingness to continue to progress and to continue to show what he's capable of outside of the sort of Red Bull environment which is a very good environment but sometimes also a strong environment for a driver to cope with. So he's done that, he's also scored some points. We hope he's going to score more points tomorrow or Sunday but also he's shown some very useful directions for the development for next year, because he's coming from a different environment. He was capable of bringing some ideas, suggestions. He's got a very good understanding of the mechanics of the car, the fundamental of the car and it's coming at a time when things were not complete for next year so that's very useful and we are happy to have made that decision.

**Q: Well speaking of that, you'll be hoping, like every team to improve your chassis for next season, but for your engine clients a lot is riding on you improving your power unit so Red Bull and McLaren can get amongst the winners next season. Should we expect to see Renault at the level of Ferrari and Mercedes motors next season? Is that what we should expect?**

**ZB:** Good question, James.

**CA:** You know I don't want to make any promises. First thing will be reliability because we've seen this season that you need to walk before you run and I think we've been on many occasions too aggressive in the way that we were trying to bring performance and extra power to the engine too quickly because of the expectation of all customers including the yellow cars, so I think we need to go step by step: first be reliable then accumulate as many miles as possible during the winter tests – I think it's important for any chassis organisation. I understand, talking about Red Bull, that they changed their philosophy and are planning for the development of their car but if the engine is not reliable it's going to be useless. So we need to get that. And if we have that, I am extremely comfortable and confident that we have the sort of technological bricks to bring to the engine in order to make steps and to catch Mercedes.

**Q: Zak, you have a lot riding on that from Renault. Will you be satisfied with anything less than podiums in 2018 from your team and the opportunity to win some races?**

**ZB:** Well, that's certainly our goal. We're very confident in the Renault engine. They've got a great history in the sport and won half the championships in the last ten, fifteen years. And of course it's a complete package: the drivers, the team, the chassis, the power unit and we're up for it, we're excited, we're well prepared. We think we have the tools that we need so podiums are what we are going to be going for, whether that's the third, second or first step – hopefully it's a combination of all the above.

**Q: You referenced Fernando's appearance at Indianapolis in your earlier answer; give us a word on his tests in WEC and also in your Daytona 24 hours team? How competitive was he and what are you learning about his versatility as a racing driver?**

**ZB:** Well, he's a true racer. I wasn't at his test in Bahrain so I've only spoken to him briefly about it. I think he found the way the cars, with their energy systems and the recovery work, are fascinating. I was at the test in LMP2 and as you would expect he was awesome, very focused and what we saw was the least amount of fall-off over a run that we've seen of any racing driver in our cars so he is definitely on the top of his game right now.

**Q: And Mario, you unveiled your 2018 tyre line-up yesterday in the paddock here at Abu Dhabi with some new additions. What will they bring to the racing and do you expect to see most races next year featuring all three compounds and more variation in strategy as result?**

**MI:** This is exactly the target to have more compounds. We don't have more compounds at each race; the system is the same as this year with three compounds selected by Pirelli in agreement with the FIA. But with a wider range we can have the right compounds at each race. This year was a bit tricky because with the hard compound, which was a bit too conservative and the other four compounds available, we have to race on twenty circuits with only limited movement across the compounds so the idea is absolutely not to generate more confusion, it is to keep the same philosophy, different colours immediately recognisable by spectators who also decided the name of the pink (tyre) but all the three compounds useable at each race so different strategies: one stop, two stop or even more.

**Q: Just picking up on your first answer in this press conference; this year has obviously been the fastest for Formula One as you mentioned. Can you give us some numbers around that and also how the science of your tyres has evolved to cope with the loads involved and yet you're still going one step softer for 2018?**

**MI:** When we design a tyre, we have to consider the end of the following year because obviously during the year we have a lot of development on the car and the stress on the tyre is growing at every race, so it was very useful to have all the data from the simulation of the teams and that gave us the possibility to tune our indoor testing in order to test all our prototypes and check that in terms of integrity they were OK, so this was the approach. And then we were expecting these incredible lap times in some cases, because also the speed in the corner considered that in some famous corners like turn three in Barcelona or Copse at Silverstone or at Spa, we had an increase in speed of 30-40kmh on these kind of corners so all of the lap time improvement was in cornering and not, for sure, on the straights where the additional drag from the wider tyre is limiting the top speed.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Dominik Sharaf –motorsport-total.com) Question for Zak and Mario: you decided to cancel your tyre test in Sao Paulo last week, due to safety concerns so how do you feel about sending your mechanics, your engineers to a race in 2018?**

**ZB:** You know we obviously were disappointed not to test. Understood, it was a conversation that we had with Pirelli and for 2018 I think we just need better security in the system. I think each team is responsible for their own individuals. We would never put anyone at risk and yeah, unfortunate incidents but we're fully prepared to go back to Brazil next year.

**MI:** Yeah, I obviously have the same opinion. We talked before on Monday morning after what happened on Sunday night and we agreed, together with McLaren, with the FIA that it was better to cancel the test rather than taking any risk with our people. Next year, I'm sure it will be different because you have to learn from what happened, not just to accept that and next year we will be prepared and I'm sure that also the organisers will put additional effort on that.

**Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Following up Dominik's question, it's not as though the attacks this year were the first ones. If we go back five years, Jenson Button got hi-jacked etc, or attempted hi-jack. There have been continuous attacks so you are saying next year is going to be different. What makes you so confident that next year will be different?**

**MI:** But this year we had quite a big increase in this kind of facts so you are right, when it happened to Jenson I was not involved in Formula One but we know that sometimes it happens. It can happen also in other countries, not only in Brazil but it can happen everywhere and we need to put the best effort to ensure that we are protecting our people in the best possible way. Then, if it happens, it happens.

**ZB:** It was unacceptable this year. I agree. I think the frequency was greater than in the past but everyone's discussing it so I fully expect the organisers, the city, the FIA, the teams, everyone to sit down and discuss how we can improve the situation so I don't think we're not going to not do anything about it. We are going to take more preventative measures, whatever those may be.



**CA:** It's obviously extremely sad what happened but Brazil is a great country, it's a great group of people with a fantastic culture for Formula One. We don't want to lose them from the calendar, for sure. There were incidents but my understanding is when the police force was in place, nothing happened so I think it makes sense to make sure that the police forces that were there on site on Saturday and Sunday are also in attendance on Friday and Thursday, if this is what's needed. Obviously this type of event is shedding a very bad light on the country, whatever is happening, so I'm pretty sure that they will do the necessary in order to avoid that in the future.

**Q: (Beatrice Samuner – Motorlat.com) Zak, what is the current situation concerning your title sponsor and are there any American brands in your sights?**

**ZB:** We're having a good commercial... well, it's not the off-season yet but we've had a good Q4. We have signed two sponsors that we haven't announced yet. One is US-based so I think people can expect to see more great brands on the McLaren racecar next year.

**Q: There was some speculation in the first press conference that it had to do with the rear wing which is why you wanted to get rid of the fins. Can you confirm or deny?**

**ZB:** Well, the rear wing is the very valuable spot on the racecar that with the current engine fin with the tight blocks the rear wing. I don't think we... I've only been in the strategy group meetings for a year now... we don't think enough commercially about some of the technical regulations that we discuss and so that there, if you look at today's racecar, front wings are no longer commercially viable. We've got bargeboards and aerodynamic devices blocking the chassis side and now we've got this big engine fin that blocks the rear wing, so that was really more of a case of starting to free up some commercial locations on the racecar.

**Q: (Louis Dekker – NOS) Cyril, do you think - it's a question about reliability – do you think Daniel and Max will get full Renault power this weekend?**

**CA:** They will get... they will get... but you know, that question, you know it's the same for any engine manufacturers: Mercedes has more potential in hand that they are giving, making available to their drivers. Actually it was shown in the fact that with Lewis's engine change his pace was just amazing at the last race and I'm expecting the same from this race. So any engine manufacturer that enters this world, in particular with the very restrictions that we have on the number of units that we can use, has to balance performance, power and reliability. Direct answer to your question? No, there could be more that we could give to the two drivers... to the six drivers that are using a Renault power unit but that would be to the expense of reliability and in order to score points that's of use but you have to get to the finish line.

**Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) A lot has happened since we were here twelve months ago with the Liberty takeover, Bernie's departure etc; what's been your one stand-out key moment in Liberty's management of Formula One's commercial rights this year and what single item would you like to see them introduce next year?**

**ZB:** I think the communication in the paddock is very good, they are very engaged with all the teams. I think their agenda that they're working on, moving forward for a healthier sport for everyone is the right agenda. You know a year is not very long when they're learning and a lot of these circuits they're going to it's the first time they've attended themselves. So I like the direction they're going in, they're listening, they're collaborating, they're communicating and then, as far as next year, what I would like to see is the rules in place that we're going to know about for 2021. I would like to not have the negotiations that are currently going on drag out for years.

**CA:** Yeah, I fully share Zak's vision. I think that the style, atmosphere, all that has changed, the way that we are capable of opening the paddock to people but also to the world with social media. All of that were quick wins but it was important to do that. I think we are now waiting to see more substantial measures, decisions, directions that Liberty is going to take on some of the important decisions together with obviously the FIA, FOM, all of the stake holders involved in the regulation-making process. I think that's going to be important to understand the vision that they have for Formula One because so far we've had lots of discussions but obviously no decision – not a criticism, it's just a fact. Decision time is going to come in the next few months and like Zak, I just hope that it's not going to be too much of a distraction for what matters which is racing and that everything will be done for the interests of the show and the fans that make the sport.

**MI:** I fully agree with them. We are not in competition with anybody else, we share the same target. One year is not a lot of time and all the processes in Formula One are quite complicated so it takes time to analyse

everything, to take the right decisions and not just to decide quickly and make mistakes. So I like the approach, we have a lot of communication now with them and I feel that we can do something very good together.

**Q: (Louis Dekker – NOS) Cyril and Zak, do you think McLaren and Renault can chase for victories, like Ferrari, Mercedes and Red Bull? Can we have a championship with five teams able to win races next year?**

**CA:** Well, clearly the plan is to have... to continue to offer an engine that is capable of winning races. We've done that this year. Obviously we need to do more of that and we are working flat out to make that happen, as I said, with the priority being put right now and for the winter on reliability. It seems to me that for competing against these cars that they have a great chassis, so I don't see why McLaren wouldn't again have a great chassis next year so yeah, I think it should be a strong package and as far as we are concerned, we hope and believe we will be racing against McLaren and so that should provide an interesting show. Whether it's part of the mix at the top or not will depend on what we do over the winter but I think it should be an interesting Formula One to watch.

**ZB:** Yeah, I agree. I would like to think that we are going to have a chance at winning. Renault's a great team, has won many races before and I think it would be very healthy for the sport to see five teams winning and coming back to the earlier conversation of what we would like to see in 2021 is a more level playing field so when the fans tune in to a Grand Prix they don't have it narrowed down to two or three drivers that they think are going to win the race, that they've got seven, eight or nine they've got to choose from. So hopefully next year can be the start of some additional teams winning.

**Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Cyril, the upcoming Pirelli tyre test. Sergey Sirotkin is going to be driving not only in different colour overalls but also a different engine to a Renault engine. Could you explain to us exactly what the situation is? Have you released him, is the relationship over, what happens now?**

**CA:** No, the situation is that we still have a binding contract with Sergey. He's part of the team this weekend, he's in our colours. It's a contract that's going until the end of the year but we will make the necessary in order to allow him to take part in this test. He's requested that a couple of days ago, so we are in the process of making that available, possible for Williams.

Ends