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PART ONE: DRIVERS – Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes), Sebastian VETTEL (Ferrari), Daniel RICCIARDO (Red Bull Racing)

PRESS CONFERENCE

Lewis, four-time champion, amazing scenes at the factory when you went back there to celebrate your third title with Mercedes, clearly it was very emotional as well. What's made this season special?

Lewis HAMILTON: I thin every single individual in the team. Their commitment has never wavered. They've been ruthless in how hard they worked throughout the year. Obviously I've been there five years, so to see the team grow, to see the individuals that I work with grow in their understanding and in their work ethic. This year being that we were fighting with Ferrari excited everyone and encouraged everyone to another level. To go to both factories and to see everyone... at HPP every single race that I've driven has been powered by an engine that they have produced, so it's been a great journey with them. And then to go to Brackley and see all the guys there. I arrived there and they were standing... I had to walk from the gate, which has never happened before, everyone was standing on the side of the road. It was just great to have that welcome and to be able to celebrate both championships with them.

OK, and Sebastian, your side, what's the mood at Maranello? Have you and Ferrari improved enough and learned enough during 2017 to believe that you can go one better and become world champions next year?

Sebastian VETTEL: Well, I think if we can do a similar step for next year then... no, don't get me wrong, it's a joke and Germans don't joke so much, then it should be a walk in the park. I think what I want to say is that the step that we have done this year was incredible. The way the team has come out with a competitive car at the beginning, the way we have improved both chassis and engine, on all fronts I think it has been outstanding. We have been close for most of the year, not close enough when it mattered, but that's what happened. From that we made our conclusions, we learned our lessons. So I believe that those will help us next year. We are completely fired up. Obviously it was bitter but now I actually think it's a positive that we have a couple of races to approach, to look forward to and look forward to next year. So we'll see. Obviously everybody will be pushing very hard over the winter. I think we have the right, I think we proved that this year. We have what we need. It all starts again next year, so let's see.

And we will have a unique situation with two drivers going for a fifth world championship, so that's something to look forward to. For the two of you then, it's been a close duel between you for the world championship this year. Can you pick out one particular highlight of your duel this year. Lewis?

SV: Shall we start with Baku?

Yeah, let's start there.

SV: Break the ice. But he didn't do much. No, I don't think we need to touch on that again. I think it's been a good season, close... More wheel-to-wheel would be nice.

LH: There needs to be more races like Barcelona kind of thing I would say.

SV: That was a bit too straightforward for you to pass, but it always depends on what side you're looking from. But for sure when you're chasing down, that's really intense and really nice. I think Spa was a really intense race. I was trying to push him all race. I probably had sort of a chance but he was very clever defending, up the hill, up Eau Rouge. I think it's been a fun year. Obviously when you are racing that close, with hardly any mistakes, I think it's fair to say also that this year Lewis probably made less mistakes and in the end he was just the better man and he deserved to win.

Anything else to say on the subject?

LH: No, I agree with what he said, in the sense that it was great to have those close battles. Spa was awesome. To be fighting a four-time world champion whom you respect, you expect nothing but the best from them and no mistakes, so when you have races like Spa where it's really down to one of you making the smallest mistake, and none of us did, I'm looking forward to many more of those races in the future.

Great, so do we all. Daniel, I'm sure you guys want to get in on the act as well. First of all, is that a Movember month you've got going on there?

Daniel RICCIARDO: Yeah.

How's it growing?

DR: It's going great. Why not?

Indeed. So, slow start for Red Bull and a strong finish once again. What are you doing behind the scenes to make sure that it starts strong and that you are right in the thick of the championship right from the get-go in Melbourne next year?

DR: On a personal level, just make sure that I fill in the blanks I guess. There's been some great races. Obviously I would love all 20 to be great and not all 20 have been. I think, yeah, for me, just to assess the year once it's all settled and then just try to understand what I could have improved. I'm sure there's on-track stuff but also off track. Obviously I give every year a good crack, but give next year a proper crack. I mean between us all we've got eight world titles, so it's pretty good! But, yeah, obviously we want nine. It's cool, I've been pretty pleased with the year. I've still got some improvements to make and I'm looking forward to extracting a bit more from myself.

OK, a final question to all three of you: it's been a year of significant changes, Formula 1 has had a different approach in many areas this season, especially in digital and social. How do you feel things have gone and what have you appreciated and what remains to be done?

LH: I think it's been a positive. I think it's been great to be able to drive and push the cars as we have. I think there is still work to be done in lots of different areas. But I think in general, Formula 1 has taken a good step forward, obviously with Liberty coming in. I think they've done an exceptional job this year. Being that they have very little experience in Formula 1 I think they have learned a lot and helped move the sport forwards already. So I'm excited to see what they continue to do moving forwards. I'm hoping that there are some changes put in place over the next years with the decision-making process with how they decide what they do with the cars. Obviously it's a big power struggle with Ferrari and Mercedes, and then those that have perhaps even less say, though it shouldn't be like that. So I hope there are some improvements there. On the racing side, I hope moving forwards, overtaking gets easier. Not easier, but being able to follow each other is really what the sport needs. The more overtaking the more fun it is for people to watch. That's what I'm hoping for, but this year has been a positive year and I hope that next year I'm hoping that all three of our teams, and McLaren as well, can be in the mix. I think that would make the championship way more fun than it has been this year.

SV: Well, from a driver's seat the cars are much more fun to drive again, you can push a lot harder, which is the way I think Lewis and myself we got to know Formula 1 when we joined, more probably for Lewis than me, because I was more on the sidelines at that time. That's great, that's what we drivers want. It's great to see that the cars for faster. They're never fast enough, because we always complain. I think that's been great and made the racing better, the races for us more enjoyable. Whether that ends up in a better show and better TV, it depends on the race. But I think on that, wishes for next year is that everybody calms down. Some races are boring, so what? I don't see the problem in that. I don't think we need another record, another record every race, to have more overtaking and more overtaking. It's true that overtaking sometimes, especially if you're behind and you're fast and you can't get past for those reasons, it annoys you. But then again if you make the move there is a massive reward inside the car, sometimes out the car. What I want to say is that overtaking should be an achievement and not handed to you. So there's a difficult balance but as I said, sometimes just relax and calm down and accept a boring race or a boring two races in a row and then there will be another great race after that and another one. So there are some things we can't foresee even if it's a time when we want to control everything, some things are good if they are not in our control.

DR: There have been pros and cons in my opinion. Probably still more pros. Obviously being able to go faster is always nice but it does come at a price when following and that. Some tracks have been kind of transparent compared to last year, you've still been able to race hard and follow close but some tracks you need a pretty big speed advantage to get close or to make a move. I think Seb's right in some ways, that's just the way it is and that's the way some tracks are laid out. I think the wider cars and all that look great and they've given us more downforce and grip but when they take up more space on the track you have less clean air to try to find so it does make following harder so that one is good and bad. The off-track stuff has been pretty cool. It's been interesting. It's certainly opened up a lot of little things. The paddock is one area where there has been room for that to be more exciting for fans. People in the paddock, to have a common area to go to, to get a bit more of an atmosphere in there, whether it's through some music or they've set up the bar. Yeah, they're experimenting and it's going in the right direction so it's been cool to be a part of it.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Adrian Rodriguez Huber – Agencia Efe) The question is for Seb and Lewis. Your next logical step would be to match Juan Manuel Fangio's five titles. What does the name Juan Manuel Fangio say to you?

SV: Certainly we will never match him in how successful he had been in such a short time and so little races. Obviously back then it was different. Racing was different. I had the pleasure to chat with Stirling, Stirling Moss, and if you ask him about Juan Manuel Fangio then I think you get a much better answer because he knew him and because he knew his skills in a car. I think as a racing driver if you come to a point where you say that... because in a way you always tend to think you are the best, otherwise there's not much point I guess, but if you reach a point where you say 'that guy was just better than me' it says a lot and if you look at Stirling's record I think it has been incredible, not just in Formula 1 but in all the other categories as well. So he must have been really, really special. And as I said, to have achieved what he did achieve in that time, where a lot of things needed to come together, the cars were not as reliable and all of that, still he managed to be that successful, I think he's probably the best we've ever had in terms of putting it together, in terms of skill, in terms of how brave they were at the time. I think racing at its core remained the same until today but the racing itself has changed massively since the '50s to today.

LH: I agree with Seb. Naturally, he's just a leading icon in motorsport. To have achieved what he achieved in the time, when danger was really at its worst. I think he's the driver that I think everyone admires most, perhaps being that it was in the most dangerous period of time in motorsport. I think to even be as close as we are, I feel very honoured to be this close to such a great sporting icon. If anything I actually feel like he's under... I think he should be celebrated more for his success. It's not really mentioned a huge amount. Often you hear about Ayrton and Prost but I feel he's the godfather of the sport in terms of the drivers.

Q: (Flavio Vanetti – Corriere Della Sera) To Sebastian: Ferrari proved to be closer to Mercedes this season. Now you need the final step. Do you think it will be a tough one or not?

SV: Yeah, massively tough. The level is very high. Mercedes has been very competitive the last couple of years and again this year, despite a regulation change that obviously helped us to get a bit closer. But for next year it's the same story – you need to make that step. That final step you're talking about is always the hardest. But that's why we're here. That's the name of the game. As I said, the team is ready. The people in Maranello are already fired up. I think we have some good projects in the pipeline. Some will take time, some will come soon, but that's the normal fight.

Q: (Frank Wostenberg – De Telegraaf) For all three, what do you consider the best overtake of the season and can you explain why? Your personal best?

DR: Too many to choose from! The attempts on Valtteri were fun, in Austin. Kimi in Monza in Turn 1 – that was from downtown, so that was pretty fun. Baku was a deciding one. There's a few.

LH: I admit, I have a very bad memory, so I don't really remember much past Austin...

SV: Not much to remember, you didn't have to pass many people this year!

LH: I passed you a couple of times, that was enough! Those were the most exciting ones.

You had a bit on in Brazil as well.

LH: Yeah, Brazil was awesome, starting from the back. Yeah, I think the closer race we had were the ones I enjoyed the most. Obviously the worst ones for me were Monaco and Russia maybe. Other than that I think it was a pretty solid season.

Seb, how's your memory?

SV: I don't know. Thanks to Daniel for mentioning...

DR: Don't say me in China!

SV: That was actually quite good! I completely forgot that, I was about to say Valtteri in Barcelona. But yeah, maybe also the one on Daniel as well.

Q: (Phil Duncan – PA) Lewis and Seb, this is obviously the first year you two have gone toe to toe for the title, well, for most of the year. I was just wondering if you could assess each other's strengths, if there's been any surprises along the way, and the weaknesses you may wish to exploit in 2018?

LH: erm... yeah... I think at the end of the year you start to sit down and review those. All I can say is that any weaknesses Sebastian had or feels he had, or doesn't think he had, he'll work on those over the winter, as we all do. No-one's perfect. Even I have things I need to work on, so I have to expect that he's going to bring... he's going to raise the bar next year and I have to make sure I do the same, otherwise the result will be different next year. There was a comment earlier that Mercedes were the quickest this year. I think ultimately, overall, obviously we won the Championship, we were more consistent, we didn't failures, we made less mistakes – but I think Ferrari had a very, very good season. If you look at the beginning of the season, at least half the season, they were in the lead. That wasn't by sheer luck, that was because they had a fantastic car and did a great job. Obviously when you apply the pressure, things... it's easy to buckle, and I think towards the end of the year that is what happened. I think next year they're going to come very, very strong. I anticipate... or rather I hope Renault bring a better power unit next year and I think Red Bull are going to be there with us next year as well. So, I think for us it's all about raising your game every single opportunity you get. I would expect nothing less from either of these drivers to be raising it next year.

And Seb?

SV: Well it was toe-to-toe did you say, for most of the season, but not for the important part of the season, so in a way I'd love this press conference to be less relaxed but that's not the case. I think it's been fun for us, obviously, a massive achievement, a massive step. If you look where we were in

2016, I think we did the biggest step out of all and probably from winter testing we were right there. I think also one thing that hasn't been our strength as a team, was 'go with the development' and I think especially this year, that was probably the most important part to stay in the fight and I think we proved that we did. I think historically we lost out as the season progressed but this year were, in my point of it's been hardest because there's so much potential still, so many big steps you can make if you're doing well, but we managed to do them as well and we stayed in the fight. Obviously we had two or three races that turned out to be very costly, for different reasons and, as Lewis touched on, they've been very, very strong all year, very consistent. But yeah, in the end we weren't good enough to take it to the last race and take the championship. So, I think we know what we need to do. There are lessons that were obvious, some were a bit more hidden but I'm sure we'll dig deep enough and try to find all of them.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Sebastian, your team-mate has more than 90 races without a victory. How would you feel yourself with that kind of run of results?

SV: Well, as we just proved, racing drivers don't have good memories, so I'm pretty sure if you ask Kimi, he's not aware of that number. So, yeah, I think we generally look forward. The sport is teaching us to look forward too, there's always the next race, the next update, the next step you're looking forward to, so I think in a way it teaches you to... not forget but just to focus on what's coming rather than being occupied with what's behind you. So I don't think there's a big deal. There's always some sort of numbers that work in your favour and some numbers that don't work in your favour.

Q: (Louis Dekker – NOS) For Daniel, consider the RB14 will be a winning car, you can hunt for the championship: how do you cope with Max and do you fear the internal relations in the team then? Will you remain friends?

DR: I hope so, keep him on my birthday list. So we'll see. We said at the start of this year it would be a good problem to have. If we're both fighting at the front and having some battles. If it's ultimately deciding a world title we would happily run with that challenge. So, yeah, we'll see. This year we again had high hopes for that. I believe next year we will close the gap. Is it enough to fight for a title? I think we can certainly get close but we'll see. I don't want to predict too early. I'm sure we've learned a lot this year and I believe we're going to put in the right work in the winter to start strong. And then that'll be exciting. Max improved this year from last year. I think he... I won't say came a long way because he was always there but he certainly improved and I think next year it's going to be a lot of fun, so looking forward to that. And hopefully we can add a world title to the eight that we have.

Q: (Aldona Marciniak – Fakt) To all three of you. Many F1 fans refer to this race as a last race of a certain era, because it's the last race without the Halo. Is it a justified opinion, from your perspective, and will you think about it, stepping into the car this weekend.

SV: I wasn't aware... I mean I am aware but I wasn't thinking about that. Yeah, probably they are right. I think the cars will look different next year. Everything I've seen so far looks different but on the other hand I think it's something that we all get used to – but yeah, it's no doubt that the cars look better the way they are now but I'm sure that, as I say, we'll get used to it and we'll work on the aesthetics so it will look fine as well. So, in the end it's probably less of a big deal.

Lewis?

LH: It's the last of the era of cars looking good, I think. It's the last race where the cars will look good. I think from next year it's all downhill in terms of how it looks – but safety will go up, at least, and... yeah. Maybe start a new flip-flop brand next year and be successful in some way.

Dan?

DR: Not much more to comment, to be honest. We'll make sure our helmets are polished this weekend, so they look good because they'll be a bit harder to see next year. It's fine. I don't think it's going to be as dramatic as most people make it out to be so, yeah, should be fine.

Q: (Graham Caygill – The National) Question for Lewis. This might be a bad idea because you've just said you've got a bad memory, can you just talk through your memories of being at Abu Dhabi. You took pole position in the first year, you've won three times here, you won your second world championship here, so you clearly go well here. How well motivated are you to get a fourth win here this weekend?

LH: The first race I was quite determined to win that one because there was a car that Sebastian ended up getting – I actually got the car anyway, so it was OK, but there was a car up for grabs if you won the first race, which I was pretty motivated to get at the time. I was obviously leading and then the rear brakes failed, so Sebastian won it. But yeah, I think we both have three, and so... we have this battle of wanting to get ahead of each other always, so of course I'm extremely driven this weekend to try to finish the season off as strong as particularly, I've been in this second half of the season. Obviously, in the last race Sebastian won and I don't particularly want to give you this one. I'm looking forward to having hopefully at least a good battle with these guys this weekend. Either way I think it's just about approaching it the same: giving it everything, as if you are still fighting for the championship. Regardless of whether you win or not, as long as you've given it everything, you can walk away proudly, knowing that you've had a solid season.

Just for the record, what was the car in question?

LH: It was a Mercedes SL Black Series. Do you still have yours? I haven't managed to get one. How many miles on it?

Q: (Walter Koster – Saarbruecker Zeitung) Lewis, in a few weeks you will receive your champion award but there are still other awards, like for the rookie of the year, personality of the year and the action of the year. And now the Mercedes tyre queue had one for, first time, the first fastest pitstop award. Do you think that there enough awards – or can you image other awards? For example, like an award for Fair Play? For a special friendly action. Or there are no friendly actions in Formula One. What's your opinion, and the opinion of Sebastian and Ricciardo for this subject.

LH: That's a good question. I think there's a lot of awards. Do I feel there should be more? I'm probably not the right person to ask...

SV: I should get move of the year, personality of the year and also, what was the last one, fair play... well, fair play maybe not... but those two for Baku for sure.

LH: I have a friend who plays a golf tournament in England. It's called the Clown Cup, I think, and if you finish last you get the clown. So, there should be at least something like that. Not for finishing last, but for someone who doesn't have the fair play thing. You don't want to over-saturate with awards. They did a great job already, the FIA have quite a lot of awards as it is.

Daniel, what would you add?

DR: Nothing. After how long that question was, imagine there was more awards, imagine how long you'd talk for?

LH: Longest question? There should be 'journalist of the year'.

SV: Question of the year.

DR: I don't know what to say. We don't need a good sportsman or anything like that. I remember at school you'd get a 'good effort' sticker and it was just to give you something – but it was meaningless. I think, as Lewis said, I you start just handing them out... there's one award that all of us want and it's the world title. The rest doesn't matter.

PART TWO: DRIVERS – Fernando ALONSO (McLaren), Max VERSTAPPEN (Red Bull), Valtteri BOTTAS (Williams)

Q: Fernando, let's begin with you. Tests in WEC and more recently Daytona 24 Hours cars. How di they feel and how excited are you about the prospect of what you're about to do with them?

Fernando ALONSO: They felt OK. They felt great. I'm behind a steering wheel, probably every week with different cars, obviously the last two were public and were probably a little bit bigger series. I was happy, first in Bahrain, I had this opportunity to test the LMP1, obviously different cars, some technologies that we don't get have yet in F1, or that has been banned recently, like traction control and four wheel drive and things like that, that obviously required a different driving style. So limitations on fuel and things like that that were a little bit more frustrating than what we have here – but overall it has been a good experience. With LMP2 in Spain, testing for Daytona, it was also good fun. Cars again very different. More raw, a little bit and more simple and yeah, good fun and ready for next winter in Daytona, and not to have too much free time.

It's been an amazing year really. Have you surprised yourself with how versatile you are as a driver or did you expect that, when you jumped into these different things you would be competitive straight away?

FA: No. I mean obviously, you believe in yourself. You believe that you can adapt very quickly to things, so has been probably one of my strongest points in my career here in Formula One. Maybe I'm not the fastest in qualifying, not the fastest in the race, not the fastest in the wet but I'm quite good in everything – so I was ready to challenge on different series and compete against the best drivers in that particular series or that particular driving style, learning from them, taking all the advice that I can and that's quite a challenge, so I study some steering wheels.

Q: Final thought. It's the final race with Honda engines for McLaren, next year with Renault. Does that feel like a kind of a homecoming for you, given your history with them – and how much confidence are you drawing from what they're telling you about the 2018 power unit?

FA: I think it's good timing now, to change. I personally had a lot of expectations for the McLaren-Honda project, that was probably the reason I changed from Ferrari because the McLaren-Honda was a very attractive partnership after the success they had in the past, etcetera. We didn't achieve the results we wanted in the last three years. We didn't perform as we expected. So now I think it's time to change for McLaren and join forces with Renault. I'm quite optimistic, seeing what Red Bull is doing right now with a Renault Power Unit. Obviously, it is still missing a little bit on things but overall you fight for podiums, you fight for race wins and that is a very different picture to what we have now in McLaren. So, optimistic for that, no doubts. Your question about Renault, yeah, feeling at home. Coming back a little bit, coming back towards my friends and what I consider my second family, so that will be great and they are a very good company and a very good engine, zero doubts.

Q: Valtteri, coming to you. What's the balance sheet from the 2017 season for you looking like? You became a grand prix winner, you repeated it, you bagged ten other podiums. Do you take satisfaction from this season?

Valtteri BOTTAS: Yeah, I think the balance sheet is a bit up-and-down for me. There was for sure many good moments, and good performances but many disappointments as well. The main thing I think from this season, for me, is the amount I've been able to learn. The amount I've been able to grow as a driver and things I can take for the future. That's what matters, y'know? Lewis won the title, as my team mate, so we had a car to do it and he beat me this year. So, I've learnt a lot and that's why I'm really looking ahead.

Q: Where you've had the more difficult days, what's that been down to, can you give us some ideas – and have you been able to – and have you been able to work with the team to be confident that you'll be able to avoid that next year?

VB: I honestly think I've been through some of those things already quite many times. But you know there are quite many things. This sport is all about details, and yeah, I've learnt a lot from those tough races and just need more consistency in different circumstances, different conditions and I know by working hard, I can do it.

Q: Max, two wins and you're the top scorer in the last five races with 90 points, eight more than Lewis Hamilton's scored. And a new contract in the bag. Is this feeling like the way Formula One should be for you?

Max VERSTAPPEN: Not fully because I'm not fighting for the championship. But it's been positive, the last few races. I think Brazil maybe was not perfect but I think we know the reasons for that as well; when you lose performance from the engine as well to keep things alive but hopefully for this weekend we can change that and hopefully we will be a bit closer again. I think if we can be close in qualifying then normally in the race we should be a little bit better so I'm looking forward to that.

Q: Daniel said in the previous press conference that you've improved a lot this year. Would you like to give us some ideas of the way you feel that you've improved, how you've matured as a Grand Prix driver, some areas?

MV: I think I've improved but I think in general it's all about experience and of course if you haven't really raced a lot in lower categories and you make the jump to Formula One you have to learn it in Formula One and of course a lot more people are watching it but I think in general compared to last year, the speed was already there last year. Just sometimes - like qualifying for example, last year, at the beginning - was a bit more tricky but I think that's quite normal when you jump into a new car which is not really made around you, or you didn't really have a lot of time to get used to during the season. And I think this year with the winter tests, that helps a lot, just little details inside the car which makes you feel a bit more comfortable. Yeah, having more experience in qualifying, that helped me to have better starting positions and if you start in a better position, normally your race result is also a bit better, if you have a decent start, so I think all in all that just helps a lot.

Q: And do the dynamics of this 2017-type car - has that played to your strengths, do you feel that has been a good thing for you?

MV: I think in general yes, it's been a bit more positive because it's more like a race car. Last year's was a bit more like a toy car for my feeling, and this year it's a bit more rough and you know it's harder to drive but in general it's also just more enjoyable because you can go a lot faster into the corners without being too worried about locking fronts and stuff and I think that helped me.

Q: Do you both feel the same way, that this type of car suits your driving style more?

VB: It's difficult to say. I obviously changed teams as well and different teammate to compare with. I can't say but I'm enjoying it more for sure.

FA: Yeah, definitely it's more enjoyable.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Beatrice Zamuner – Motorlat.com) Fernando, so this is the closing chapter for McLaren and Honda and amidst many difficulties you certainly had some positives, so what is your best memory of these past three years?

FA: Ummm. I don't know. Probably on the performance side, in the races, difficult to pick up one race because obviously the performance was never there, even the P5 in Monaco I think last year is still not as fun as it should be. I think what I take from the last three years is the commitment, the spirit in the team which has been amazing. I did have some highs and lows in my career with different teams, with different performance but it was the first time that with the kind of performance we had on Sundays the team was full committed for the next race and the next step and the next aero update. There was not a single person giving up with the performance we had so that was definitely the thing I take in the last three years and the lesson that I will keep for longer.

Q: (Frederic Ferret – L'Equipe) Fernando, what is the most difficult thing you had to adapt to coming from a single seater to an LMP1 car? And were you happy by the first day of testing?

FA: I mean there are many things, you know. It's a very different environment. You first need to sit in a different position and adapt a little bit and make some compromises for the other two guys who are sitting in the same cockpit, so everything is not perfectly made for you and for your comfort, like

in Formula One. You share everything, you share the set-up, so even if you would like to change something in the car to make your speed a little bit quicker, it's not helping the overall performance of the car in general for the race distance so there are things that you need to be aware of and you need to learn. I think driving styles are completely different, probably more biased to the most efficient way of driving, like they have there, just for the fuel economy, things like that so yeah, things to learn. I was happy with the first day of testing but I think that I need much more practice and I need much more time to get up to total speed with that driving style.

Q: (Adrian Rodriguez Huber – Agencia EFE) Fernando, whichever your decision is for next year's racing and the competitions in which you're going to race, Daytona will not be a problem but let's imagine you start next year's Formula One World Championship in a very good position. Would that make a change to you or not?

FA: No.

Q: (Angelique Belkopytov - AutoDigest) Valtteri, so he we are, last race of the season, some had some few good moments, others more difficult, so for you what could be your best achievement and your best lessons in 2017?

VB: Well, for sure for me the best achievement was of course my first win. It took for me more than 80 races in Formula One to achieve it so something really unique, something very special that you will remember always but a moment that also makes you more hungry for the future and yeah, I think those difficult races have been the races where I have been able to learn the most so I feel this season in general has given me a lot to work on and that's always positive. I'm always willing to try to improve and trying to be better person to myself as a driver. That's why, like I said, I can't wait for the future.

Q: (Silvia Arias – Revista Parabrisas) Max, you have a lot of fans all over the world, particularly in Argentina. I would love to know in which way, in a good way, does this affect you and which is the message for them for next year?

MV: Yeah, it's always good to have a lot of fans. I think it brings positive pressure with you and also when you are driving it's just great to see so many fans next to the track and even off track. I don't know how many fans I have in Argentina, I've never been there but it's always good to have and to have them on board. And the message? Well, keep supporting and I will try to have some good results for you.

Q: (Dominik Sharaf – Motorsport-total.com) Liberty Media is considering making some changes to race tracks to improve overtaking, maybe changing the layout, changing the surface. Do you have any certain corners, certain sections or certain tracks in mind that should be changed to improve the overtaking?

FA: I don't have anything.

VB: Well, there are so many tracks, so many corners. Well, of course there are always things that could be changed but it also then completely changes the track. Every track is unique in its own way. You can always modify the tracks or you can try and modify the cars.

MV: Yeah, I think we first have to focus on the cars, not the tracks. I mean some tracks are known for that but I think this year you can already see – compared to last year – that it's more difficult to follow so I think we first have to address that, then normally overtaking should be less of an issue.

Q: (Andrea Cremonesi – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Fernando, more than a question, it's a clarification – maybe I lost something in the last few weeks – about the Le Mans project. You have already decided to do that and you have already decided to do that with Toyota?

FA: No, no I didn't, I didn't decide yet on that. For sure I will do Le Mans in the future. It's a race that I feel very attracted to but I don't know if that's going to happen next year or the following or in the long term.

Q: (Arjan Schouten – Ad SportWerld) Max, twelve months ago was the period of the year that you received some awards, like Sportsman of the Year in your own country. Do you think this season was also of award-winning quality and why or why not?

MV: Well, I think in general that prize is always very difficult because to be honest, they should give that to a lot of sportsmen and I think especially in Holland, with ice-skating for example – they are very successful – so for me they all deserve that because they work really hard for it, they achieved great things, so for me I am not really into those awards too much. I prefer to win here in Formula One and get that award and at the end of the day of course – or at the end of the season - to win that championship, for me that's a lot more important than what happens in your own country because there are so many different sports involved. I find it really difficult to judge that anyway. So for me, this year, I honestly don't really care if I win it. Normally you don't really win it twice in a row anyway, so I hope it then goes to someone else who really deserves it because at the end of the day I didn't win a championship. I won two races but it would be better if you win it after a championship.

Q: (Frank Woestenburg – De Telegraaf) Max, you had many overtakes in the season; which one was the best for you and why?

MV: I don't know. I felt last year was more enjoyable to overtake. I don't know why. So, no clue, to be honest. They were not as exciting as last year, I think. In general. I think last year was still more enjoyable than those.

Q: (Darya Panova – F1only.ru) Question to all three drivers: in Austin, before the race, Michael Buffer introduced all the drivers. Did you like it and would you like some races starting with the same show? Or is it too much for you?

FA: I didn't like it. I said that already after the race. For me it was a bad joke, bad imitation of Indianapolis. It was a little bit... makes no sense to be there, waiting for that long and have two drivers in the middle of 18 bodyguards, that we were there just to make sure they were happy. I'm used to having 20 drivers, maybe the trophy and pay tribute to the country you are in, not pay tribute to 20 drivers.

VB: I think... it was in the press conference after the race, I already answered that question and I agree with Fernando that it was an extra thing for us before the race. It's not like we are not so busy on raceday anyway. We are quite limited with the time we get to ourselves and prepare with the team and being in a right state for the race and focused but it's part of this sport and I personally liked the fact that there was so much positive feedback from the fans. If fans enjoy it and if they're happy, that's always a bonus for this sport and for the future of the sport.

MV: Yeah, I didn't even think about what Fernando said but yeah, it actually makes sense because at the end of the day there are 20 drivers on the grid and I think you should treat that equally. Maybe for America it works but definitely not for all the Grands Prix so I hope it will not influence too many other Grands Prix and that at the end of the day it's about what's happening on track, not before the track or like before you go to the track.

Q: (Louis Dekker – NOS) What result do you need on Sunday to leave this country in a happy state?

MV: First, right?

Q: (Thomas Lund Hansen – Morgenavisen Jyllands-Posten) Max, you had one full season with Daniel. What influence has Daniel had on you personally?

MV: Really bad! He keeps farting. It smells so bad in our hospitality all the time! No, he's a great guy. Of course, on track you always try to beat each other but off-track we can have a great laugh. I think we really respect each and to be honest, I've never really experienced something like that in racing, to have such a good teammate, to really have fun with. So yeah, I hope we can be teammates for a long time.

Q: He was asked in the first conference whether he thought that would last next year, if you were fighting for victories in the championship and he said yes. What do you think?

MV: Well, I think so because we respect each other. For sure when you fight for the World Championship it will get a bit more tense, I think, on the track but at the end of the day, you always come back to where you respect each other and you have to accept if one guy is faster than the other and I think that's what we can do. And also, when somebody has a good race, we can really say to each other 'well done' and 'you really deserved that'. And I think that's also very important.

Q: (Abhishek Takle – Mid-day) To all three drivers: a follow-up from an earlier question actually. In the Austin introductions that we spoke about, they were part of something Liberty Media tried and this is the first season that they've been in charge. What do you think the changes they've made... do you think overall Formula One as a package is in a better place right now? What have you noticed in the differences?

FA: Yeah, I think apart from Austin I think it was good initiatives and a good step forward. I'm happy with the things that they are doing, the things they are thinking of also for the future. I think the fans get a little bit closer to the sport and to the teams, to the fans, you know and they can touch the cars, a little closer, they do the F1 Experience. There are a couple of things that are quite cool so I think it's going in the right direction.

VB: I agree, I think there's many positives, especially bringing the fans, in a different way, a bit closer to the sport and having more access. I think that's always positive and for sure time will still show what kind of direction the sport is actually taking but from what I've seen, the best thing, for me, has been seeing so many grandstands full this year, especially the European Grands Prix. They were pretty well all sold out and that's a good sign.

MV: Yeah, I agree with them. I think it's always good to get the fans closer to the paddock area instead of just in the grandstand because then they don't really know what's going on or they don't really get the feeling of Formula One in general. I think they are going in a good direction and they keep thinking about new things so let's see what happens in the next few years.

Q: (Silvia Arias – Revista Parabrisas) For all three: how much do you like this track and in a realistic way, what can you expect for the race on Sunday?

VB: Well, facility-wise it is definitely one of the best. Everything is just perfect, you know: our garages, hospitality. For us, plenty of good hotels around and all that is nice and I like evening races, I like the timetable of the weekend and also how it is on the track with the lights. That's all nice. As a track, my honest opinion is that it is quite average, it's not one of my favourites, not one I hate.

MV: Yeah, like Valtteri said, the facilities and everything is amazing, it's great, the hotels are great. The track itself is actually quite interesting because a lot of corners, they follow up on each other so if you miss one you're not well positioned for the other one so it's quite technical in that way. I would have liked it to be a little bit faster, those corners, but it's a bit like in Mexico, you know, there are quite technical areas where you have to be well positioned for one corner and then the next. But yeah, that's also, I think you have to master, to hit the apexes all correctly.

Q: Would you go along with that Fernando?

FA: Yup. The same.

Ends