



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L' AUTOMOBILE

2017 FIA Formula One World Championship

Austrian Grand Prix

Sunday Post-Race Press Conference Transcript

DRIVERS

- 1 – Valtteri BOTTAS (Mercedes)**
- 2 – Sebastian VETTEL (Ferrari)**
- 3 – Daniel RICCIARDO (Red Bull)**

PODIUM INTERVIEWS (Conducted by Martin Brundle)

Q: Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, what a cliffhanger of a race that was, wasn't it? I hope you enjoyed it. And your three stars of today are up here on the podium. Valtteri, that was a tough one. This man was catching you at the end but you kept your head, you kept your tyres. It looked like you had it under control at the beginning but it ended up very close indeed.

Valtteri BOTTAS: Yeah, I had a bit of a déjà vu in the end, what happened in Russia. He was catching up but the problem in the last stint was that I had a massive blister in the rear left since lap five or so; that made it quite tricky. In the beginning I could control the pace but in the end the backmarkers made it quite tricky but I'm really happy. It's only my second win in my career. Thank you guys for the support and a massive thank you to the team (for) making this possible so thank you guys.

Q: I've just seen a piece of paper from your start. You were right on the edge of the perfect start almost to a few milliseconds. You got away with that one! You took off well, didn't you?

VB: Yeah, I think that was the start of my life. I was just really on it today so it was good.

Q: Good stuff. Second victory for you, third consecutive podium, you're on a roll.

VB: Yeah, there's still a long year ahead. We're not even at halfway so this makes good for the points but it's still early days and we're still developing as a team.

Q: OK, moving on to Sebastian. Well, you're twenty points ahead now in the World Championship, second today, a lot of people out there very happy about that. How do you feel about the race?

Sebastian VETTEL: Well, how would you feel if you were just shy of half a second behind the winner. It was very close. Yeah, I was told he was in trouble; I was pushing anyway. I felt much happier in the second stint, second part of the race. In the first part of the race I was struggling a little bit to feel the car but then as soon as we put (on) the supersoft tyre, the car came alive and I had really good pace. I was catching little by little but then he obviously struggled so the last laps it was getting really close. I think I had Perez which cost me a bit of time with lapped cars. I think I needed one more lap because he was really struggling to get up the hill but yeah, obviously (I) wanted to win but nevertheless it was a good result.

Q: You were on the radio, talking about the start. You felt it was a bit keen, did you?

SV: No, I don't think he... I was pretty sure he jumped it. Ask Daniel about it.

Q: Yeah, because Daniel was on the radio... I will do exactly that. Daniel Ricciardo, fifth consecutive time on the podium and once again Daniel, it was a mega-overtake that was the key for the race for you, down into Turn 3 at the start. You got your elbows out against Kimi.

Daniel RICCIARDO: Yeah, it was a fun race, some decisive moments at the start and then defending from Lewis the last couple of laps. It got pretty close but I just stuck to my braking points and when I thought the limit was and held (him) off. Five in a row is awesome, but to get it here in Austria... You know Max got the home podium last year and I was a bit envious, so it's nice to be up here this year. It's nice to see all the Red Bull and F1 fans here.

Q: And Lewis was homing in as well. You were pretty under pressure at the end.

DR: Yeah. I think the second last lap was the tightest. He got the DRS and he got a good exit out of (turn) one; mine wasn't so good and he got close but yeah, nice to hold it off and I was very pleased to see the chequered flag.

Q: He had a run down the outside into turn four; I thought he might have you there.

DR: Yeah... I wasn't going to brake if I didn't need to but yeah, I thought it was clean and fair so that's good.

Q: Now I haven't been up on the podium since you started the shoey stuff, so I hope you're not going to deny me the honour... as long as I can keep it, as long as I can keep it for charity as well. I think we need four shoes though. I think it would be good to have some other shoes as well. Valtteri's not up for... Valtteri, I need one more word with you.

DR: I didn't start this! I didn't start this!

Q: Valtteri, you were Driver of the Day, the fans voted you Driver of the Day, so congratulations on that, and I also believe, as I'm sure you do – thank you very much, you've got to do it quickly, haven't you? This is going for charity. Thank you very much. You've got to finish it off if you don't mind. This is the world expert at shoe-eyes. That's how you do it. Valtteri, you're now a contender for the World Championship. You're now really bringing yourself into play.

VB: Yeah, we're not even at the halfway of the year so I definitely believe – and the team believes – so it's still a long year ahead and like I said, we are still developing so I'm just loving every moment and it's very good.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Q: Congratulations to the top three finishers of the Austrian Grand Prix, our winner Valtteri Bottas, second place Sebastian Vettel, and third place Daniel Ricciardo. Well Valtteri, second win, how does this one compare to Russia, your first?

VB: Well, the first one is obviously very special but it is only the second in my career, so that is also very special. It is important in the championship, at the moment, to get closer to the guys in front, Seb and Lewis. So it feels very good, very happy and we really had a strong car today and for me it was like the perfect weekend: pole position and a win so it's really good to continue from here.

Q: Just about the start; you said on podium it was the perfect start but were you a little bit nervous on those opening laps; did you think you might have over-cooked it?

VB: No, when the car was moving, the lights were off so that was the main thing, so probably one of my best starts, maybe even quite risky, I think, but there's not much more to gain at the start and I knew I had to make a good one.

Q: Sebastian, talking of starts, how good was yours?

SV: I think it was OK. Obviously, it's always distracting... from my point of view he jumped the start but... obviously I was sure that he did; it looked like it from the inside of the car but it's not for me to judge at the end of the day so I probably was a bit late because it's quite tricky then to keep standing still but yeah, I think it was OK. I had a bit of wheelslip later on but overall I thought it was a good start.

Q: Valtteri's reaction time: 0.201s.

SV: Don't believe that.

Q: OK. A few comments please about the end of the race; the supersoft tyre was marking up quite a lot. Just how much of a handful was it?

SV: Marking up?

Q: Blisters and...

SV: Well, not for us. I think obviously Valtteri was more in trouble than us. For us, I think it was OK. I struggled a bit on the qualies... sorry, on the ultrasoft tyre. Yeah, second stint it was much better. I preferred the car, just not enough time, like Russia, I ran out of time.

Q: Half on eye on the championship today, you've extended that gap to Hamilton.

SV: I wanted to win. It's been a race where the last couple of years it wasn't really going in my direction so I'm happy to be on the podium, I think it's a really nice trophy. The race here means a lot. Obviously I have a bit of a background with Austria so yeah, I really wanted to win so probably not entirely happy because I didn't.

Q: Daniel, you seemed particularly elated on the podium and on the slow-down lap. What does this one mean to you?

DR: Yeah, quite a lot. It's, for us as a team, as a brand, y'know, Red Bull, this weekend's always a big one. On paper it's not our strongest circuit and yeah, if it was a dry race we didn't really... probably expect a podium if all the top guys finished. We knew Lewis had his grid penalty but yeah, we thought he was going to come through the field quicker, I guess quicker than he did.

So, it was a race where we had good pace. I was surprised that we were able to... I could see Seb for most of the race in the distance and he could see Valtteri, so just impressed with the pace that we had. And then Lewis has putting on a charge at the end. I think he was on the ultra-soft and yet he was really able to get some pace out of it. The second-last lap I didn't get the best exit out of Turn One and he got a good run, so I defended into Three, and then I knew he had DRS so I had to defend in Four and yeah, I was just going to do all I could, basically, to keep the podium and I knew it wouldn't be easy but I'm happy to have held that and, good for the team, good for the fans.

Q: Your fifth consecutive podium. Do you feel you're here on pace now? Legitimate pace. Do you feel you're an equal to Mercedes and Ferrari?

DR: Yeah, I think that's probably the biggest satisfaction with today. Don't get me wrong, the kind of relief over the finish line was for sure for the podium but I'd say the biggest happiness for today is that we had raw pace. Obviously Baku was a victory, but things happen in the race. Today we earned a podium on a circuit which for sure isn't our strength. The car is certainly getting there and it's all I can ask for.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Angelique Belokopytov – Autodigest) Daniel, congratulations, quick question, how do you feel, how are your thoughts when you are at one lap to be sure to step on the podium and you see Lewis Hamilton jumping so close suddenly. What happens in your head and how did you manage to keep your head cool?

DR: I think the first thing that comes in my head is the word 'fight!' I know there's going to be a fight on my hands and it's just get prepared for that, get excited for that and just the main point is just to keep cool. I knew I would probably get to a point where I needed to defend, so in the heat of the battle still make sure you know where you need to brake, you still keep your wits about you, even if there's a car alongside you, still look at the apex, still look at your braking point and just know where the limit is. I know if I brake at the very limit, if I'm on the inside I should still theoretically hold my line. So, yeah, it was a tough last few laps, I had some sweat coming down and my eyes were burning a little bit – that made it a little more exciting, the last few laps. Just a bit of a novelty one, otherwise it was fine. Just had to keep it clean, the traffic, the backmarkers... you're always a bit nervous when you come across them, and at what point on the track but fortunately they didn't affect the outcome of the race.

Q: (Dan Knutson – Speed Sport/Auto Action) Valtteri, Seb said he needed one more lap: what do you think?

VB: Well, for sure he was getting very, very close and they had more pace at the end. In that stint I was really struggling with the rear left, I had a big blister which was getting bigger and bigger and it was affecting more and more the stability of the rear, and also the backmarkers: sometimes I was losing time, especially in the last one, he lost more time so it was quite tricky

with those – difficult to say, one more lap. Anyway, in other words I was happy the race ended that lap.

Q: (Flavio Vanetti – Corriere della Sera) To Sebastian, we saw you in the first part with some struggling situations and in the second one you were flying. So, in the end of the day the buzz is that Ferrari is just a little bit behind Mercedes – or almost at the same level? Looking at Silverstone, above all.

SV: I'm looking forward to Silverstone, should be a lot of fun with this year's cars, first of all. Thinking about today the pace, again, it was a match, I think we were racing for the same tenths. In the first stint Valtteri was quicker, no doubt he was pulling away, opening a significant gap which allowed him obviously to come in later. Second stint he had fresher tyres, he ran into a problem – but overall in the second stint overall for us it was better in terms of balance. The first stint, probably for Valtteri was better. So I don't think you could say that they were quicker on the ultrasoft, we were quicker on the supersoft. I think it was very close and probably he was happier with the car in the first stint than I was and the other way around in the second stint. We started from zero, he had eight metres advantage when the lights went off, and then we finished half a second behind each other. In the end, I think we had the same pace.

Q: (Luis Vasconcelos – Formula Press) Valtteri, you had nearly eight seconds on Sebastian when he stopped and normally the leader stops the lap after but you stayed out quite a while. Were you doing that because you were not so confident about the supersofts or because you were trying to clear Kimi before the pitstop?

VB: That is a good question – the team was controlling the stop and they just kept me out. I could see from the pitboard that the gap to Kimi was around 20 seconds. So, it was really close to getting ahead of him with the pit window. I was just trusting the team really and in the end of the stint the ultrasoft started to wear, which was quite late. It was a really robust tyre as well. For me the supersoft in the first three laps was good and then I had a blister in the rear left, which compromised the stint. I think it was good to stay out and minimise the time on the unknown supersoft really.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – GloboEsporte) Sebastian, now it looks like Valtteri is definitely in the fight for the world title, and it may be that he can take some points off your main competitor, Lewis Hamilton – which is not the case with Kimi Räikkönen who is coming behind. What analysis do you do of this situation. Also, if you are more worried with the FIA more rigorous to check especially the floor of your car that supposedly was bending.

SV: I think we have a very quick car. I had obviously the... I was fortunate in the past to have very quick cars and they have always been checked a lot because people believe that something isn't right. So, I guess if you go back to Mercedes and ask them about the last three years, they've been checked many times, so I see it as a compliment which I pass on to our aero department, chassis department, vehicle dynamics, everybody working really close with each other, we've done massive improvements, obviously, since last year, new set of regulations so I think it's a compliment. I'm not worried. I know the guys are pushing but there's no intention to build something that is not legal. What was the first part of the question?

The championship fight

SV: I don't really care. Obviously, I'm not too happy today because I didn't win. At the end of the day I had the clear aim today to win. Yeah, didn't quite make it, it was very tight. Points-wise I know that the higher-up you finish, the better it is with points but whether it's Valtteri, Lewis or someone else I think you're fighting anyone out there for the race. That's been the primary target today, the last races and will be next races. Then I think you change your minds fairly quickly in terms of who is a contender and who is not. We're still quite early, there's a lot of points to get, so I'm not too bothered at the moment.

Q: (Ysef Harding – Xero Xone News) Daniel, congratulations, you've been really been putting in a lot of work for Red Bull, obviously. To get a podium here at Red Bull Ring, what does it mean for the team? What's been doing it for you? Has it been Odessa, the trips to LA? Has it been ribs? What is it, man, what's been keeping you on form in these last few laps?

SV: If it's ribs you have to share, you know that.

DR: Yeah. Actually I did have ribs last night. I did have ribs! Yeah, certainly the schnitzel and the ribs are helping.

SV: I had schnitzel! So maybe next race, Saturday night we have to dinner together and I'll have what you have.

DR: What, bangers and mash? Look, for sure I'm getting more comfortable with the car this year. Things are moving forward and I don't know I can just see a little bit of a little sweet sport and it's nice you know. I feel like we have got good momentum. The team is getting more positive, I'm getting more positive, so all that kind of forms into one and then you get a taste of a few podiums and you kind of want more. I knew the start would be important today, trying to clear Kimi and then once we got into that third spot then it was just trying to be relentless and keep the pace on. Yeah, outside of F1, sure, life is good. America is great when I go there, so I still need to go for those chicken waffles, so yeah, soon!

Q: (Peter Farkas – Auto Motor) Sebastian, Valtteri, regarding the start again: Valtteri you said that the important things was the car only moved after the lights went out. So, does that mean that you actually gambled a little bit and you were just lucky that the car didn't move because you started your start procedure before that. And Sebastian, what you do mean by not believing that Valtteri had the reaction time of 0.2 seconds. The computer said that, so how can that not be. Can you please elaborate on that?

VB: So, the start lights there is always the different variation since the five lights are on, since they go off, but the variation for quite a long time has not been massive, so you know more or

less the zone when it is going to be off and you are so alert at that point and you are gambling between your reaction and guessing. Sometimes you get a mega one and sometimes you're a bit late and today was my best reaction for the light. It is as long as you're positive and it was fine. So all good.

SV: First of all, to clarify it, I don't want to take anything away from Valtteri, I think he drove an excellent race. Obviously at the end, with a difficult car he didn't do a mistake, so he performed well. But when I said I don't believe, it's because I don't believe. I think normally the reaction times are around 0.2 for everyone. I don't think that everyone was that much slower today, that's why I don't believe that Valtteri was that much quicker. I had a strong belief at the time that he jumped the start. Turned out he didn't, so I'm guessing that there is a reason to believe he didn't but I can't believe that his reaction time was 0.2. That would be normal and in my point of view his reaction was inhuman, so... He said earlier that he is not human.

VB: Just joking.

SV: He's Finnish.

DR: Can I elaborate. Just to put my two cents in. As Valtteri said, the main thing is it was positive. The lights were held for a long time, more than normal. There is always a window but it did seem longer and when you are there and your revs are high and you're waiting, waiting. For sure, he went, but the lights went out but I guess he got lucky. I did it in Formula 3 before, once. Yeah, it was on the edge, I'm sure you react, but at that same point the lights went out. In theory it's not a natural reaction I don't believe, but as Valtteri said if it's plus then he's safe. But I don't believe he reacted to the lights.

Q: And you were convinced at the time that he had jumped?

DR: Yeah, I commented, I said it looked like Valtteri jumped. So yeah in the end he didn't jump, because it was positive, but for sure he got a bit lucky. But as Seb rightly said, you can't take the win away from him, so he did well. But that's my opinion of how it went.

Q: (Peter Vamosi – Vas Népe) Valtteri, Lewis Hamilton is telling the media that you are his best ever team-mate, he likes you very much. But have you ever told him that you beat all your Williams team-mate year by year?

SV: You had only Felipe, no?

VB: Maldonado as well. It is still only my fifth year racing in Formula One... or fourth? Fifth? Hah, hah! But yeah you know you are still at that point developing every single year. For sure, I think that Felipe Massa was an underrated driver, he is an extremely quick driver and it was not easy to be quicker than him and to get more points than him. But of course, now being against Lewis,

he is definitely the best team-mate I have ever had. He is a three-time world champion; he is one of the best qualifiers ever in F1. But like Lewis said, we have a good team spirit and that is only positive for the team and we are working well together and that is good for us.

Q: (Istvan Simon – Auto Magazin) A question for all three drivers. Silverstone is next, probably one of your favourite tracks, everybody seems to like. Do you think there are going to be some corners this year that are going to be flat with the new regulation cars and are you looking forward to that?

VB: Definitely. The old Turn 1.... I'm not ever good with the corner names, you tell me!

Q: Turn 9, Copse.

VB: Yes, for sure that's going to be flat. Then all the corners after that, Maggots, Becketts, they are going to be really quick, so it should be a lot of fun, so definitely we are going to enjoy it.

Sebastian?

SV: Well, I think the better question is which corners aren't flat! I think we are all keen to find out. Silverstone is one of the best tracks. In all honesty I preferred the old Silverstone, I don't like the new bit so much. But anyways, a lot of the old track is still there. So really looking forward to the fast corners. I think our car has been really strong this year in fast corners so I think it should be quite nice.

Daniel?

DR: Yeah, I got asked in one of the media sessions yesterday about Silverstone and I started giggling. Because, yeah, I love fast corners. I've been on the sim already and it looks like it's going to be a lot of fun. This weekend we got a taste for it, particularly the second last corner here, Turn 9, was seventh gear. It was seriously quick compared to last year and I think that's a sign of what Silverstone is going to be like. Copse – I would be very surprised if it's not flat in qualifying. Yeah, between Copse and Stowe, that section of race circuit is probably if not the best part of a racing circuit we have all year, so I think this year it's going to be a lot of fun.

Ends