



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L' AUTOMOBILE

## 2018 FIA Formula One World Championship

### Belgian Grand Prix

#### Thursday Press Conference Transcript

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**PART ONE: DRIVERS – Daniel RICCIARDO (Red Bull Racing), Fernando ALONSO (McLaren), Pierre GASLY (Toro Rosso), Carlos SAINZ (Renault)**

#### PRESS CONFERENCE

**Q: Fernando, I'm going to start with you. I've just introduced all four of you with your current teams, but all four of you will be racing elsewhere next year. You've said you won't race in Formula 1 in 2019. Can you just tell us how you came to that decision?**

**Fernando ALONSO:** Well, it was a decision that probably I started thinking about last year, probably, and then this year, in 2018, there were a lot of changes into the team, with the engine manufacturer changes and things like that, so I thought it was worth staying one more year. I enjoy driving these cars, with the new regulations, with the big tyres, the big downforce, I was having fun and I think this year it was some kind of joy to keep racing and to have another go. But at the same time I made some changes and some priorities into this year, with the Super Season and the WEC championship and other things also, towards this direction and yeah, this year, a couple of months ago I decided that it was the right time, because I feel strong, I feel I'm driving at a good level and I want to say bye-bye to this sport when I feel strong, not when I feel not competitive or I don't have any place to go and then you say bye-bye. I prefer to take my own decision and find new challenges that maybe Formula 1 cannot offer me at the moment.

**Q: Thank you. Daniel, you will also have a new challenge next year, swapping Red Bull for Renault. Tell us how you came to make that decision to move teams next year?**

**Daniel RICCIARDO:** Yeah, it was a long thought process, for sure. I guess I've been kind of bombarded with the question already at the end of last year. When Max announced his extension with the team then it kind of turned a bit of spotlight onto me. I obviously took my time with it. By no means an easy decision at all. I guess I got to a point where I felt I was ready for a change. I guess that was the long and short of it. I'm ready for a new challenge and I think just for me personally just some fresh motivation. That sounds easy saying it like that but it wasn't easy. A few sleepless nights, for sure, trying to come up with the best conclusion for myself but once I made that decision and pulled the trigger I felt comfortable with it and it feels right moving forward for next year.

**Q: Thank you. Carlos, coming to you, obviously you are going to replace Fernando at McLaren in 2019, but there was a Red Bull seat available at one stage, so can you talk us through the timeline for what happened with your future?**

**Carlos SAINZ:** As soon as Daniel was announced in Renault, there was obviously a period of time where I didn't know where I was going to go. I had been preparing my options and McLaren has been one of them for a long time now. I have been in touch with the McLaren management for a year or two now. Because of that I was very calm about the situation. I just had to wait to see what happened and take my own decision. In the end it turned out to be good. I'm about to leave the Red

Bull family in a good way. I owe pretty much my Formula 1 career to them. Thanks to them at the moment I am going to McLaren, because they put me into Formula 1 and I have been able to do a career thanks to them. I think I am opening a new chapter next year; my first two-year deal with the team and I just cannot wait.

**Q: Thank you. Pierre, you probably had the least stressful break in terms of not having a decision to make, but you will be promoted to Red Bull next year. Twelve months ago you weren't even racing in Formula 1. Can you believe the progress and how quick it's been?**

**Pierre GASLY:** Yeah, it's pretty amazing how quick things go in Formula 1, so for sure super excited about this new challenge. Yeah, pretty much I was surprised, like everyone, when I heard the news about Daniel. I had Helmut on the phone, who told me that they would take their time to make the decision. Difficult to disconnect when you know there is a seat available in Red Bull but I just tried to enjoy my break. I was just waiting for a phone call just to know if I will stay with Toro Rosso or jump into the Red Bull seat and Helmut called me to tell me that they made the decision and they want me to race for the team from 2019 onwards. Just super excited about it and it's a massive step in my career and now I need to stay focused on the coming races, because we are talking about next year but there are still nine races to go with Toro Rosso but for sure it's going to be a massive jump for me in my career.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Scott Mitchell – Autosport) Daniel, with the decision to leave Red Bull, how much of that is down to maybe doubting the potential of that partnership with Honda. Obviously it's a big change for the team and they obviously needed to do a bit of convincing for you, so how much of a factor was that in the call?**

**DR:** There are a lot of unknowns with everything. Obviously even the move where I am going to be next year. There is still a certain amount of risk or unknowns. Nothing was really that clear cut. Sure, Honda still really need to prove themselves at the front. But honestly there wasn't really one key factor other than really myself and wanting to have a change of scenery I guess. That was probably the biggest, overpowering thing but it wasn't necessarily the engine deal or this or that or the financials or whatever. It was really just me coming to a point... it's been five years with Red Bull Racing, or will be at the end of this year, ten years with the company and obviously it's been amazing and great but it just felt like now is the time to take on something new. So that's pretty much how my decision came.

**Q: (Edd Straw – Autosport) Another question for Daniel. Was Max Verstappen's presence in the team part of it, in terms of obviously Red Bull have thrown a lot behind him, he's becoming a bit of a focal point, there were various troubles earlier in the year. Do you feel that for your new challenge you needed to get out of an environment where there was a team that seemed to be building up around Max?**

**DR:** No, is the short answer. I think externally around media and maybe some fans' perspective as well that might be seen as the case, but honestly, internally, yeah in Baku and that we had an incident and a couple of on-track things, more round ourselves, but as far as equality went within the team, as I said, probably from the outside sometimes people thought that, but honestly hand on heart there was never any concern with that or any sign of that. So it wasn't, I guess, is the answer.

**Q: (Christian Menath – Motorsport-Magazin.com) Daniel, can you talk us through the timing of your decision-making, because there has been some confusion about that? Helmut Marko said he was quite sure you were going to sign the contract with Red Bull but then you didn't.**

**DR:** Yeah, it was all tight with deadlines. It's not something I knew for weeks or months. It was all pretty much... when it got announced right before the break... obviously Renault was part of my considerations for some time; they didn't come out of nowhere at the last hour, but yeah, I was really torn, obviously, with what to do and that process took time. At the end, still on the race weekend in Budapest I wasn't sure what I was going to be doing. Did the test on Tuesday and took

some time to think about it over the next 48 hours and then came to my decision. It wasn't easy and there were a lot of factors, variable that I had to try to weigh up, but I think as I said, in my mind the key thing for me personally was that I felt it was time to make a change. This year, particularly the first part of the year, up until Monaco for sure, it was an amazing start to the year for me. There were so many positives. So there was a lot of like good momentum and energy but I guess still at times I was feeling, for whatever reason, I felt personally a little bit frustrated – within myself, not necessarily with things that were happening in the team – and I was just trying to understand why and I guess when I weighed it up a change of setting, a new challenge was probably the answer I need.

**Q: (Jerome Pugmire – Associated Press) Fernando, would you at some point in the future consider returning to Formula 1 or is this definitively goodbye?**

**FA:** Right now, I'm thinking it's a goodbye. But, you know, life changes very quickly. Life has also taught me in the past how things may change, in a couple of months' time or in a years' time. As I said in the press release, when we announced the retirement, it's to leave the door open, because I don't have the crystal ball to know what is going to happen in the future. As I said, for me it's a bye-bye, but who knows in the future.

**Q: (Jacquelin Magnay – The Australian) Daniel, you've talked about needing a new challenge and wanting a new challenge, what was happening in Red Bull that made you so unloved, and in terms of the contract negotiations, did they have a right of reply at all and did you go back to them?**

**DR:** I never said I was unloved. That wasn't the case. As I said, there was no real highlight other than probably the routine sometimes if you... we don't have a nine-to-five job and we're not going to the same office everyday. But I guess many years of more or less going to the same factory or whatever, that kind of routine, I felt like at time my enjoyment of the sport was becoming a little bit, I don't know, dulled down, a bit numb at times, and I just thought part of the routine was causing that. I'm still... I think Fernando just touched on it, I'm discovering myself in life and it's changing pretty rapidly. How maybe I thought 12 months ago is not how I think now but I guess part of that process and touching a little bit on the routine I think was something that I felt was... I don't want to say getting the best of me, but was having a little effect on me. I think to be clear, and I'm probably going to get asked loads of questions about it, there was no falling out, no bad blood or anything with anyone in the team, with the bosses, or anyone at all. I know the contract stuff, I think people assumed I was pretty much done with Red Bull and ready to sign, but I'm pretty sure I always just said I was close to doing something but I never really said it was going to be 100% with Red Bull, so there wasn't anything that changed overnight that caused this decision and that's pretty much where it was. And there was another part?

**Q: (Jacquelin Magnay – The Australian) The right of reply?**

**DR:** There was like back and forth over the last few months. In the end, the deal and that, I think we had all come to a happy place with and it was then just up to me. I knew what was in front of me so...

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – Globoesporte.com) Carlos, are you disappointed that Red Bull chose Pierre instead of you. Pierre, how do you think you will be in battle with Max next year ?**

**CS:** Yeah, I think it's impossible to be disappointed to be leaving a team to go to McLaren. It's one of the dreams I had as a kid and to be joining McLaren in the future, it's impossible to be unhappy. Yes, I've been part of the Red Bull family for a very long time and I always said that Red Bull was one of my main objectives but as a racing driver, the McLaren family pushes you a lot to that and it is impossible to be disappointed with that and I think that pretty much covers it.

**And Pierre, going up against Max next year?**

**PG:** I think it's pretty exciting. I think Max is one of the best drivers on the grid at the moment. Of course I am only in my first season in Formula 1 and I'm still taking experience, but I think there is a

great opportunity ahead of me. I have a really good relationship with Max. I know him a really long time; we raced together in karting. I think as a team we have the potential to do great things together and yeah, I've worked with the team for a couple of years now. For sure, I will have things to learn in the first few races and the first months, because I'm still quite new in Formula 1. But my long-term target is to be the best in the sport and if I want to be the best I will have to fight against the best. I think Max is one of the best drivers on the grid at the moment, so I take it as an amazing opportunity to drive next to him.

**Q: (Abhishek Takle – Mid-day) A question for Daniel again. You were talking about the routine and about needing a change in environment. You were obviously earlier in the season linked to drives at either Mercedes or Ferrari so you had begun to think about life beyond Red Bull. Then when that didn't happen... when you think about life outside the environment you are in, does that make the environment you are in a little less appealing and you want that change more?**

**DR:** I don't know. I feel like... I don't feel my presence in the team this year has changed. I think it's probably shown particularly on Sundays. The desire and everything is still 100% there. The desire to race and be the best – that certainly hasn't diminished. I don't think so. I don't think anything changed, really, over the process. It was more me, when I was away from the track, away from the sport, just laying in bed at night, more things were running through my head. I think just asking myself more questions; what I want and where I see myself... something like that!

**Q: (Marco Conseco - Marca) Question for Fernando. What kind of car are you going to leave for Carlos at the end of the season?**

**FA:** Well, I think he will drive next year's car so I guess that hopefully there is going to be more performance in it and a better car to achieve better results. That's our aim at the moment in the remaining nine races with the team; prepare the 2019 car the best way we can and so I don't know exactly how the car will be or what performance Carlos will find – but what is 100 per cent sure is the team is an amazing team, as Carlos touched on before. McLaren is an amazing organisation, the second-best team in the history of the sport. This is something you will feel immediately when you come to the factory, when you enter the MTC, you meet the people, the engineers, the design office, the mechanics. Everyone is committed and determined to put McLaren back on the top. That's something that, you know, is quite special when you join this kind of organisation. That will be the first feeling; the first moment of joy and hopefully the second will be in the Barcelona test.

**Q: (Andrew Benson – BBC Sport) Question for Fernando. Fernando, you talk about new challenges that Formula One can't offer you. Do you mean winning? Winning one particular race? Would you have stayed if you could have had a competitive car, and what do you feel about the fact you've not been able to get a competitive car despite your obvious abilities?**

**FA:** I think the challenges are, year, probably bigger than the challenge that I can find here for next year. The triple crown is something that I've been saying for a couple of months now – or years – that to be the best driver in the world there are two possibilities: winning eight World Championships in Formula One – quite unlikely now for me – or the second is to master different series and different cars. The sportscars, I think I'm doing quite OK at the moment; so I'm happy with the performance we're seeing there, and in the Indy 500 I felt competitive also last year, and there are other series that can put you in a different level in motorsport if you can win with different cars and in different series. The possibilities for next year here. They've been a few, or a lot. It depends on how you look at it. I did not stay because, as I said also last week, winning now, there are probably only two teams which they can win. They continue with their drivers for the following years. And the Formula One we are seeing now maybe is not the Formula One I dream of when I was a kid, or when I joined in 2001. That's a bigger reason. As Daniel said before, when you come to the same place for many years and you repeat the same thing, see the same people, there is one day that maybe you don't get so emotional about the challenges. That's the reason why.

**Q: (Oliver Brown – The Telegraph) Question for Daniel. Daniel, this week, Helmut Marko's quotes seemed to indicate that the team felt rather blindsided in the negotiations. That you had indicated to him and Mr Mateschitz that you would sign on the Tuesday after Hungary, and you called on the Thursday. I just wondered if you could convey how difficult a conversation that was in the circumstances – and how he took the news?**

**DR:** Yeah. I wasn't laughing, trust me. It wasn't like that. It's tough. I mean they're not calls that... I don't like letting anyone down, you know what I mean? So, it's like... not many people get satisfaction, I guess, out of letting others down. It was OK. It was a call I had to make. One which for sure made me a little nervous. It went OK. When speaking to Helmut he was understanding, I think, in many ways of course. He's known me for ten years and I think he'd sensed at times some frustration or maybe something changing in me, so I don't think it completely surprised him, but sure, he was a little bit disappointed that I was moving on. From my side, of course, it makes me sad to move on but it was nice to know that I was wanted there and they wanted to keep me – but it was all very calm and respectful. So it was all I could ask for.

**Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines, Racefans.net) Question for Fernando. Fernando, you say the fact that only two teams currently really have a chance of winning influenced your decision, and that Formula One today isn't what it was in 2001 when you joined – but if you have a look at the record books, your first six years in Formula One, there were only two teams capable of winning, namely Ferrari and then after that Renault with yourself – so how much of a factor was it that you aren't in a winning team? How much of a role did that play in your decision?**

**FA:** Well, I think definitely it plays a part of it. If you are in one of those two teams, probably you keep going, even if you don't enjoy or if you enjoy the races or the trips or the amount of years you've been doing the same thing, that's for sure. Yeah, Formula One has always been a sport that dominates with one team or two teams and the package is way more important – but yeah, there have been different seasons and different years where we had a little bit more freedom of strategy, of choices, or tyres. Even if one team was clearly dominant that season and World Champion at whatever part of the year, there have always been some races with heat, with cold, with wet, with Inters, it provides some action. Same with strategy. In 2004 I think I won zero grand prix but I was in a couple of pole positions, or podiums of whatever because we chose to run light fuel on Saturday, so a gamble for the race. There has been always a little bit of action. Maybe now it's not the same. It's nothing to compare. All my comments are not to compare those seasons against these years recently, or other series compared to this series because normally my words have been taken to compare different series, or different seasons and say that I'm wrong. Probably I'm wrong. It's my decision and I'm happy with that.

**Q: (Inaudible) Question for Daniel, and also a bit for Pierre. Daniel, Max called you a lot of times the best team-mate he ever had. I think you two were very happy together – at least in the Red Bull movies – are you going to miss him next year and do you have any advice for your neighbour how to treat the Dutch boy?**

**DR:** Well, if he starts calling Pierre the best team-mate he's ever had then my heart will be broken. I've said it a few times, for how competitive we are as people, I think we managed very well this team-mate rivalry. I guess out of X amount of races we came together twice, so not perfect but also not bad. It's been good. I've enjoyed certainly having a strong team-mate and everyone here who knows racing knows that I've got also a strong team-mate next year with Nico. And with Pierre, I think firstly he owes Helmut a drink – but he also owes me a drink. Even two. But look, it's a similar position to where I was in 2014, coming from Toro Rosso into the big team. It's exciting, it's fun. I know what he's feeling and it's an awesome feeling, so just role with it. He's been doing very well this year. The boys are quite mature at young ages these days, so I think he's going to be fine.

**Q: (Inaudible) Question for everyone but Fernando. To touch on the predictability to leave Formula One as well. I was wondering if you three agree with him on some level and if it would ever be a reason for you to quit the sport?**

**CS:** yeah, well, I think at my age and with the motivation I have, it's extremely unlikely. I feel at home in Formula One. It's a dream come true to be racing in Formula One, first in a team like Renault and then moving to McLaren. About the predictability, I think it is predictable, Formula One, probably too predictable, as Fernando has said. I truly believe the new bosses, Liberty Media, are going to make an effort to change that. I think it should be more down to the driver and what the driver can make as a difference. I'm not here to compare to any other sport but I think that would make Formula One a lot more attractive and a lot more fair also on the sportsmen that we are sitting down here. I'm going to put a vote of confidence in Liberty because I really believe they are going to do an effort on that and maybe one day that might attract Fernando back. I'm going to trust that.

**Pierre, your thoughts on Formula One at the moment?**

**PG:** Pretty similar to Carlos. I mean I'm still really young, exciting and super happy to be in Formula One – but it's true at the moment it's a bit too predictable. Mercedes, Ferrari, Red Bull, top six most of the time and then after we battle for the seventh place and that's the best we can do every weekend. I think definitely for all drivers will like to fight all with each other and also for the show, I think people at home like to see 20 cars. I think it's probably impossible but at least ten cars fighting for the podium or the win. As Carlos said, I think Liberty Media knows there is something to do there and they are trying whatever they can to improve it. I think it's quite a long process, so we need to give them time – but on my side I'm just super excited. I'm just starting my career in Formula One and I'm living an amazing moment at the moment, and amazing time at the moment. Yeah. Bit different to Fernando but definitely if they can do something to close a bit the pack altogether, that will be great.

**Daniel, you're clearly further into your career than either of those guys. What are your thoughts?**

**DR:** They said it well, for sure. We'd all love more cars to be fighting up at the front. That's the truth. I think as well, if you're in a winning car now it makes it harder to win but it also gives you more satisfaction to win. If you're overcoming eight opponents as opposed to two or three, I think the joy and all that would be emphasised. It would be welcome, and I know it's easier said than done but for sure if we're asking for what we'd like, then if all of us could battle it out, because we all got here with talent and whatever and we're all, I'm sure, pretty close so it would just be nice to see really who is the best.

**Q: (Jerome Bourret - L'Équipe) Question for Pierre. As you mentioned, switching to Red Bull is a massive step in your career. What is the biggest challenge you will face there next year and how are you going to prepare for it?**

**PG:** Well, for sure next year I'll be in a top team, so fighting for much better positions that I am at the moment. It means more pressure from the team, more responsibilities, and I think that will be the main thing. I will have a really strong team-mate also next to me – but yeah, you know I'm always excited with challenges. As I said, I think all of us in Formula One, we all want to be the best in the sport and to be the best you need to fight against the best. So, I'm happy to take the challenge. It's a fantastic opportunity for me and I think the most important thing. As I said, I'm still in my first season in Formula One so I still need to take experience, still need to learn a few things and I know I can improve myself in a couple of areas so I just need to focus on myself, keep developing myself and after just be fast on track. That's the most important thing. As long as you're fast and competitive and delivering what the team expects you to do on track then everything is fine. I know my goals and I don't really need anyone to tell me what I need to do. I know I need to deliver on track, and I'm a competitive guy, I'm not satisfied if I don't perform well, so I just need to focus on myself and deliver next year.

**Q: (David Croft – Sky Sports F1) To Daniel – because you've been left out for a while – you said in an FIA press conference a couple of years ago that it was about championships for**

**you, you were ready to win championships. What have Renault sold you and said to you that make you feel that you're still a man that can win championships in Formula One?**

**DR:** I know exactly the interview that was. I think it was after Monaco 2016. I remember it clearly and it's still the case. Look. Obviously next year, begin realistic, it's unlikely. Unlikely, I think, is a fair word. Mercedes and Ferrari are the ones doing it consistently, obviously we've been able to win some races this year but in terms of really fighting for a championship it's hard to deny Mercedes and Ferrari looking at next year. So, yeah, their short to medium-term plan looked really encouraging. I think what they've done in the last two years, the progress they've made, it encouraged me and developments they're making at the factory, and yeah, I think what they're doing with their finances, where they're spending basically, and the way they're doing it, showed me that they want to win and they want to try to get there as soon as possible. Obviously, every team wants to win, or try to make it happen – but I saw some really good signs with what they showed me in their presentation and the way they... also their honesty as well. Not telling me we're going to win in Melbourne next year – as much as I'd like that – but the reality of that, it's still going to be a bit of a process but a process which is moving forwards pretty rapidly.

**PART TWO: DRIVERS - Max VERSTAPPEN (Red Bull Racing), Stoffel VANDORNE (McLaren), Marcus ERICSSON (Sauber), Lance STROLL (Williams)**

**Q: Max, we've just had Daniel in here fielding a number of questions. Can we get your opinion? Were you surprised that Daniel has opted to leave Red Bull and you'll have Pierre as your teammate next season?**

**Max VERSTAPPEN:** Well, I think everyone was surprised but at the end of the day, he has to feel good about his decision, I think that's the most important (thing).

**Q: And what are your thoughts on having Pierre as your teammate in 2019?**

**MV:** He's a great guy. I know him already since we were go-karting together. Even at the beginning of this year he was one week in Monaco, he stayed in my apartment so playing FIFA in the evenings so we have a good relationship and I'm sure he is very quick as well, so I think it's good for the team.

**Q: Stoffel, your future is still unclear with McLaren but you know that Carlos Sainz will be in one of those seats so are you hopeful of being his teammate in 2019?**

**Stoffel VANDORNE:** Yeah, I'm confident although at the moment there is nothing guaranteed for next year. I'm feeling positive, obviously, after the summer break to come to Spa and have your home race with all the friends, family and fans that are here is always an extra... that gives you an extra boost so I think the main focus is on this weekend to really give the best performance we can and then we see what the future brings.

**Q: Your form picked up in Hungary at the last race so are you confident that you'll continue on stronger footing this weekend here in Spa?**

**SV:** Yeah, very confident. I know we had a difficult run in the last couple of races before the summer break where we had the problems with the car which we couldn't really explain and then whenever we changed everything got ourselves back to a normal competitiveness and I think we really showed in Hungary that the performance was back to where it should have been. Yeah, unfortunately we had a retirement there and yeah, I'm just looking to carry forward that momentum into this race.

**Q: Lance, moving on to you: there's been movement in the driver market, movement in the team ownership market over the last few weeks. Just how has the summer break impacted on your future?**

**Lance STROLL:** Well, for the moment nothing's changed on my side. I'm still wearing a Williams polo, we've got a race this weekend and I'm going to be 100 percent focused and committed on my job, yeah. On the other side, things have happened, really pleased for my father. He saw a great financial opportunity with Force India. They've been struggling for a long time, he sees a lot of

potential in the company and he's a businessman. He's passionate about cars, Formula One, always has been. He's saved 400 jobs and he believes that he can build a very competitive and healthy company for the future so I'm happy for him.

**Q: And do you have a timeline for your own future and what to expect and when we should expect news about what you'll do in 2019?**

**LS:** Like I said, for the moment I'm here at Williams, I'm not sure what I'll be doing in the future. We'll see what my father decides to do with me. He's a nice guy. I hope he'll take me.

**Q: Marcus, moving on to you, as these two press conferences have shown, it's been a very volatile driver market over the summer. What does that mean for a driver like yourself who's also still waiting to see what he does next season?**

**Marcus ERICSSON:** No, for me it's the same like the other guys say: you need to focus on your job and deliver on track. For me, I need to prove that I should be in F1 for next year. That's what we're all trying to do. It's no secret that I want to stay in Sauber, I think that's been part of that scene for a long time now and we've made some great progress this year so I would like to continue that over next season as well but I know the coming races will be very important for me so I need to really focus and deliver on track.

**Q: Does the fact that there's been so much movement elsewhere change the fact that you're focused on Sauber?**

**ME:** No, I think there's always been things happening in Formula One and you never know what's happening the next day so I think you as a driver, you really need to focus on driving and deliver on track and then you have your management focusing on the other things so for me it hasn't changed anything for me. I still have the same focus on the driving and the upcoming races and that's where I will put my attention.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Oana Popoiu – Fanzone.net) Max, Red Bull will be using new fuel this race which apparently seems to be a little bit more faster in lap times. Where do you think this will take you in qualifying and afterwards in the race?**

**MV:** I think we need a little bit more than just new fuel to be beating Ferrari and Mercedes. It's always good to get upgrades. We always have to push ourselves and we are not getting the updates from the engine but yeah, we'll see. Hopefully a little bit closer.

**Q: (Arjan Schouten – AD) Max, Daniel talked a lot about his move. He said it wasn't about the money, it wasn't about you, it wasn't about his position in the team but it was about a need for a change of scenery. Have you seen any signs of that because he talked also a bit about frustration with his position in the team and sort of stuff? Is it something you have already noticed, maybe?**

**MV:** I don't know. I don't think so. Of course I think everybody has moments in their careers when you're frustrated or you're not happy with the current situation. I think everybody here wants to win races or wants to win championships but sometimes it's not like that and you have to really be patient and work hard for it and yeah, sometimes you need the whole package to come together and I think that's what Red Bull is working on at the moment and I'm confident that they can deliver a car that is capable of winning every race. We just need the whole package and we're working towards that so that's why it was also a little bit of a surprise for me that he left. If it then is a change of scenery, I'm not sure if it's the best scenery to go to but yeah...

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – Globoesporte.com) Max, if you see the numbers of Honda, Toro Rosso this year, Gasly and his teammate, they overtake a lot of... they went over all the limits of the power unit, of the six elements that comprise the power unit. Do you think Honda will be**



**able, from one season to another, to solve all these problems and also make a competitive power unit?**

**MV:** Well, they took those parts mainly because they were either at the back of the grid or something happened which is not engine related so... I think at the moment they're really comfortable and all the parts that they have that they wouldn't take any other penalties so I'm not too worried.

**Q: (Christian Menarth – Motorsport-Magazin.com) Stoffel, you said earlier in Formula One nothing's guaranteed for next year. Sorry to ask the question at your home Grand Prix but would you say it's guaranteed you're driving next weekend for McLaren, because there are rumours that you won't be?**

**SV:** I don't have any doubt. I think these days there's always a lot of rumours and a lot of question marks in the press but from my side I'm 100 percent confident. The only thing I can do is to focus on my job and I think I've shown that I'm very very close to Fernando. I think some of your colleagues have made up some statistics to show how close teammates have been with Fernando and I think I've been pretty much right up there.

**Q: (Edd Straw – Autosport) Stoffel, obviously McLaren could have confirmed you for next year at the same time as they confirmed the other driver. The fact they haven't clearly shows there's still some doubt or question marks so why are you so confident about next year and what exactly has McLaren told you about what you need to do in order to be still there next year? Is it dependent on them not getting other drivers, is there a danger of fallback or have they said 'look, if you keep performing at say Hungary levels for the next X races you'll be fine'?**

**SV:** I think the only thing I have in my own control is the performances on track and like I said before, I know I had a difficult run of races before Hungary with the problems we had on the car but then we showed that everything was back to normal in Hungary so I'm very confident for the next couple of races that the results are going to be back to where they belong. It's still not going to be a miracle in the position we are in at the moment but I'm feeling positive.

**Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines, Racefans.net) Max, when you came into Red Bull from Toro Rosso it was effectively a similar step to the one that Pierre Gasly is doing now. At that stage, Daniel was the more senior driver in the team and then of course you grew up within that team. Next year you'll be the team leader, based on experience and race wins etc in the team. Do you believe that you're ready to actually lead that team with Pierre as your number two so to speak?**

**MV:** I think, within Red Bull, I think we've always been treated equally so I don't really see a difference in that now coming up and I also don't really feel like a leader, I just try to do the best possible job for the team and for myself and of course I have more experience than him so I just try to use that to my advantage.

**Q: (Inaudible) Max, in Hungary, you were very upset and Christian Horner as well about Renault. How do you feel now and have you spoken to Renault and Red Bull during the summer break about it?**

**MV:** Yeah, I was not allowed to swear but after four years, I think at one point it's really getting really annoying but yeah, we try to make the best of it for the rest of the season and hopefully we'll still be able to fight for podiums or maybe a victory at one track.

**Q: (Rene Outman – Racing News 365) To all of you: there are a lot of fans here because of you Max and reports suggest that a Dutch Grand Prix could return to the calendar in the future. If you guys had the power to change the calendar, which specific track would you add?**

**ME:** Anderstorp in Sweden. Not up to F1 standards. I think a race in the northern countries would be really good for Formula One because we have a lot of motorsport history there and a lot of fans

so I think a race in Sweden, Denmark, Finland would be really good for Formula One so I would probably do that.

**LS:** I think a street circuit. Miami, that sounded really exciting. I know that kind of fell through but another street circuit could be pretty fun.

**SV:** I'd like to have a go at Imola. I think it's always been a circuit I've enjoyed playing computer games on and always one I liked so it's a shame that we're not going there now.

**MV:** I would chose Macau but then we need to make it a bit wider, even though that's a bit hard but that would be great.

**Q: (David Croft – Sky Sports F1) Lance, just picking up on what you were saying earlier, is there no link whatsoever between your father's investment in Force India and your future driving career? Is the speculation that you'll be driving for Force India next season then completely wide of the mark?**

**LS:** Right now, I'm committed to Williams, the contract with Williams. We've achieved some good success in the past, last year, so right now I'm going to try and beat 'em.

**Q: (Sara Monterian – Motorlat.com) Max, since we already touched upon the question of the Dutch Grand Prix, there have been a lot of rumours where it could actually be organised. For example, there have been a lot of talks about either a street circuit either in Rotterdam or Amsterdam or a possible comeback for Zandvoort. If you would have the possibility to chose, which one would you chose?**

**MV:** I would chose a permanent track. I think we already have enough street circuits on the calendar and anyway I like permanent tracks more. And then I don't care where it is.

**Q: (Rene Outman – Racing News 365) Max, a permanent track, obviously we've got another permanent track in the Netherlands, the TT circuit. If you had to chose between Zandvoort and the TT circuit in Assen, which one would you pick?**

**MV:** Like I said, I don't care.

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – Globoesporte.com) Ericsson, your teammate has numbers better than you this season until now. How do you think it will interfere in your future in Formula One?**

**ME:** I think you're always compared to your teammate in Formula One, it's natural. I think me and Charles have been very close in the races but in the qualifying he's been stronger than me in the first half of the year so it's important for me to improve there and that's my main target for the second half, to make improvements in qualifying because I feel like I said, in the races we've been very similar. So of course it's important, Charles is a very good driver but if I can show that I can beat him that would be very important for my future. So starting this weekend I need to try and step that up.

**Q: (Inaudible) Max, you get along very well with Daniel over the past years. What's your relationship with Pierre because I saw you at the skiing event this year.**

**MV:** Yeah, it's all good. He's a really nice guy, I've known him from go-karting already, like I said before, so I don't expect any troubles.

**Q: (Inaudible) Lance, are you sure you will be finishing the year with Williams?**

**LS:** Well, nothing's guaranteed but right now I'm really just focused on this weekend and I'm going to give it my all like I always do and we'll see what the future holds. Right now I'm just taking it weekend by weekend and we'll see what happens.

**Q: (Christian Menarth – Motorsport-Magazin.com) Lance, are you discussing something like that with your Dad or is it just a business thing he's doing on his own or is he asking what you think about Force India, how are they on track or...?**

**LS:** No, he's done his due diligence and he sees that they currently punch above their weight. They do a really good job with what they have so like I said earlier, he sees a lot of opportunity and a lot

of potential so he sees a great financial opportunity buying them in a very difficult position and he believes he can help grow the company and make them as competitive as they can be. At the moment I'm at Williams, we'll see what happens with me in the future and I wish him all the best with Force India. It's definitely a very exciting future for him but like I said, right now I'm really just focused on this weekend and what I'm doing the rest of this year.

**Q: (Jaap de Groot – De Telegraaf) Max, after Hungary there were some doubts about the motor. It was planned to change it next week in Italy and then there were some doubts that maybe you were forced to change it here in Belgium and take the grid penalty here. How's the situation?**

**MV:** From our side it was never a doubt because I still have enough parts so it's all OK.

Ends