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Press Information

2012 Brazilian Grand Prix Sebastian Vettel Transcript

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Unilateral

Q: Sebastian, after such an incredible afternoon, has it sunk in yet that you're a three time World Champion?

SV: No. I've hardly had any time for myself yet, really. It's very difficult to find the right words, especially after the race today. I think everything that could go wrong went wrong. As a matter of fact, though, I think we always kept believing. Instead of getting angry and frustrated about the situation, imagine yourself, you are the wrong way round at turn four. It looked exactly like that (what I can see now), I had a lot of cars coming and I was in the wrong way. Obviously, then I went off the brakes, because obviously everyone was going in this direction and to join them, I tried to roll down hill and avoid cars driving backwards and we kept the car damage to a limit. Obviously we could see in the dry conditions later on that the pace wasn't there and I was obviously slow down the straights, which made it very easy for others to pass us and very difficult for us to pass someone then we lost radio, we probably did the pit stop at the wrong time. I went on another set of dries; a lap later it started to rain. Came in for inters, the inters weren't ready because we had no radio communication, they couldn't hear me. And then we obviously caught back up in the wet in intermediate conditions. Fortunately the pace was there because, as you know, you can make up for the loss of car pace that you have by probably driving a different line and trying to do something different to others. Then to limp home, under the safety car - obviously at that moment I didn't know if it was enough. I was told a couple of laps before that it should be fine, but then I didn't know. I saw the crash between Nico and Hamilton, obviously retiring, so Hulkenberg and Hamilton out of the race, and I knew that Fernando was ahead, and they were ahead of him at the time that I could see during the first safety car, so I didn't know. Then, to get told (that I was ahead in the championship) was unbelievable. Unfortunately the guys couldn't hear my answer because the radio was broken. No, it's difficult to find the words right now. Obviously it's still full of adrenalin. Incredible race today, as I said. I think they tried everything to make it even harder for us, not just the others but also the circumstances: as I said, with the damage on the car, losing radio, in these conditions, when communication is so crucial, stopping just a lap too early, not having the tyres ready because communication wasn't there. Where do you start, really? I think you guys had your show and we had to really fight until the end.

Q: You've broken all sorts of records by becoming a three time consecutive World Champion; what does it mean to you?

SV: It's difficult to find the right words. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think there are only two guys who have done that before. Obviously you need to be in the right place at the right time but I also believe that you can create your own luck and work for what is coming up. I think that one of the great things about Formula One is that you can not necessarily compare only yourself but you can compare your time, your era if you like to ten, 20, 30, 40 years ago. Obviously times have change but I think they will keep changing because that's what we do. I think if you look around the world there are a lot of things that have changed. People around the world learn not only in Formula One and in every other sport but also in everyday life. I don't know what to say. We are in Sao Paulo here, the place where Ayrton Senna was born and came from and the place where he was buried. To come here and win the Championship for the third time, I don't really know what to say. I have to say a big thanks to everyone in the team. Of course, this sounds like a bit of a standard phrase. Sometimes we get criticised for bringing up standard phrases like that but I really feel that as one of the guys in the team, I don't feel more important or less important. Of course I know I'm driving the car and of course I know that if I turn right in a straightline I hit the wall and that's it. It's pretty easy in that regard, but I really feel as one of them. What we achieved today is not what happened today in the race. It's what we've been working for since I really joined the team. Together, everyone here at the track, back at the factory, it's a massive amount of work getting done throughout the whole year. Now, tomorrow the season is over and the guys are already flat out for the last couple of weeks preparing RB9 and next year. You cannot afford to lift. Obviously, I think I'm in a very very fortunate position, compared to many guys in the team, but I think you do this job - there might be some but all the guys in the garage and all the people I know in the factory - you do this job not because you really care what is written on the cheque you get at the end of the month. I think you do this job because you just love Formula One, you love motor sport, you love the excitement here. I said to the guys yesterday: 'am I nervous? Yes.' I think if I wasn't nervous now, imagine, I would fail, what am I doing here? I have a great chance, I'm in a great position and I don't really care what's going on. So I said 'yes, I am nervous' but then again we are nervous every time. It's what we need to get us started, to get us in the groove so that we are present, we are sharp, as soon as the lights go off we are not sleeping, we react and we are there. And today we had many of these occasions where you can argue you have to be present otherwise it goes wrong. It was a very tough race but we were present all the time. We remained ourselves throughout the whole year, even though people did some things that we would never consider doing, trying to achieve our targets but it's not in our hands, and it's not our job to rate and to comment so much. We have to make sure we do our own homework and most importantly, I said them to yesterday as well and throughout the year, 'enjoy.' Many times I try to stop and on the grid there are so many fans around here... on the parade lap they scream... yeah, maybe sometimes they scream for Alonso, sometimes for Massa, sometimes for Schumacher, sometimes for Rosberg. That's not the point. In the end you are one of them and it's a privilege to race in front of such a big crowd, so many people coming to see you racing and having the chance we have had today just makes it more enjoyable. I think many times in these kinds of situations it's so easy to lose focus. Obviously we have won 2010, 2011. I had a very smart guy who once told me the hardest thing was winning after winning, because you get the attention, you get the pressure but you focus on how to win again, rather than focusing on the small steps it takes. That's what I always try to remember myself or remind the guys in the team. It's just another day, another race and we have to be ourselves and make sure we enjoy it and the rest will be just fine.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Q: (Cesare Maria Mannucci - Autosprint) Can you describe the accident on the first lap from the start?

SV: Yeah, the start was quite good. I was quite happy. Then I think I was bit too early on KERS and didn't get KERS until turn one but nevertheless, I was side by side with Mark and he squeezed me to the inside, so your angle for turn one becomes worse and worse. It's very easy if you try to be stubborn and fight until the apex that everyone just keeps turning in and you are the one parked on the apex and you lose your front wing so I had to back off, obviously slow down a lot, go down to first gear, everyone around the outside used that momentum, and I lost a lot of positions. Then down to turn four, I was benefitting from the slipstream in front, relatively safe to Paul who was behind, as far as I remember, and then I got the hit in turn four for no reason. I don't know what happened. I think someone probably... I think it was Bruno, I was told it was Bruno... he was probably fighting someone into turn four. It was drizzling since the start of the formation lap and it was quite slippery in turn four, we knew that. Maybe he forgot. The same thing I mentioned about the fact that in turn one I had to back out of the situation because your angle just becomes narrower. If he was on the inside, which I suppose - I haven't seen the footage - BOOM and I was the car that he used to stop himself. They didn't help us.

Q: (Leonid Novozhilov - F1 Life) Sebastian, what do you think about your fans? Do they help you in your success?

SV: Well, I think the support we had this year is again even more than we had last year. Obviously we are still a very young team in that regard, we cannot compare ourselves to Mercedes, Ferrari, McLaren and these kind of teams. They have been around for centuries and for us, we are still pretty young, but we can see and feel that our fan base is growing, there are more and more people coming to the track with Red Bull shirts, supporting us. More and more people write and support. The amount of positive feedback we get is obviously very useful, it helps you a lot. People obviously try to lift you up if everything goes right and they try to knock you down when you do a mistake or you do wrong. I think first of all, for yourself, you have to remain the same, let's say, neutral, as in, you're never as good as they are, as they say and never as bad as they say. If you remember that, I think it already helps a lot, at least it does for me. If you feel down or things go against your way, then it's incredibly helpful to have support and many people telling you that they still believe in you. Support outside from the fans but also inside; I mentioned the guys working on the car in the garage - imagine you walk into your office and everyone gives you - without saying a single word - the feeling that things will be alright. It gives you confidence, energy without having to say anything. It's extremely useful and very helpful and it only helps you to be stronger.

Q: (Flavio Vanetti – Il Corriere della Sera) Seb, what about driving with the damage you had? Was it worse in dry conditions and did the rain in some way help you?

SV: I think in the end we had the conditions that we were supposed to have, as in, nobody knew when it starts to rain, nobody knew how much rain there would be and nobody knew when the rain would stop. I think the best example for that, even though we have all the technical equipment you can imagine these days: radar, forecasts and so on, you wouldn't pit a lap before the rain arrived if you would know. We did, which didn't help, but I think generally, to answer your question, in the dry conditions we were not quick enough. I was stuck behind Kamui but we were nowhere on the straights, and also our tyres were suffering and we were not quick enough to fight, to go through the field because the car

was damaged. I looked at the floor and it didn't look nice. I'm quite happy because I could continue. Many times you have an accident like that in that corner and that it's, that's the end of the race so I was very happy for that. In wet conditions I think you can make up a little bit of time here and there by - I wouldn't say commitment because I'm sure everyone else is committed. Everyone is pushing as hard as he can and what he feels comfortable with in his car but I think you can verify in terms of the lines, the usual things when it starts to rain. Obviously it's quite slippery here in the wet and I think we benefitted from the time we had in intermediate conditions because I think we were quite a bit quicker - or more competitive than in dry conditions.

Q: (Michael Schmidt - Auto, Motor und Sport) Which one of the problems you mentioned at the beginning was the most difficult to handle and how often in this race did you think it was game over?

SV: I never thought it was game over 1) because I kept believing and 2) because, as a fact, I didn't know where I was for most of the time. Obviously I saw which position I was in on the pit board but I didn't know where Fernando was. To make out whether it was enough or not, I needed to where he was but that was not the main focus for the whole race. With the amount of difficulties I mentioned, I think we had our hands full to keep the car on the track. It was very very difficult to drive the car. I was very aggressive and snapping quite a lot, so I lost the rears many times, fortunately stayed on track most of the time. It was a pleasure but it was a lot of work. I felt happier in intermediate conditions because I could make up by choosing different lines than the guys I was racing and benefitting from that, because in dry conditions we lost a lot down the straights. I think everyone's exit speed, for example, in dry conditions was fairly similar, because even if you were two/three kph quicker it's a lot in the dry but the car was so draggy down the straights that we had no chance. I think you saw that after the restart, the train in front was gone and I was behind and I was nearly eaten up by Kamui and Mark around the outside. We lost a lot in the dry and in the wet we could make up for it.

Q: (Andrew Benson - BBC Sport) Sebastian, would you say this is your hardest title and if so perhaps the most rewarding? And if it's not either of those, how would you characterise it?

SV: I think it's always difficult because in the end, if you compare, you talk about something that happened in the past and obviously it's not as present in our heads as this one. I think, nonetheless, it was a very very tough season for us, on track, off track, a season with ups and downs for everyone but as I mentioned before, I think we always remained ourselves and kept doing it our way, and I think that made the difference in the end. I think for us, for me, it's always most important that you're happy with what you see in the mirror and you're honest to yourself, because what's the point in trying to fake or pretend being something else, someone else? You are always the first one to notice, you're always the first one to know if you are cheating yourself. In that way, I think it was because people tried everything, inside the lines, outside the lines, to beat us and the amount of questions we had to deal with, stuff we had to deal with throughout the season didn't make our lives easier but the key was to remain ourselves and I think that made the difference in a way. I'm not holy, I make mistakes like everyone else but I think the way I was brought up was to be honest and admit if you do something wrong. Yesterday in qualifying three, on the first run, I made a mistake. I was pushing hard but I overstepped the mark and maybe in that regard qualifying wasn't perfect but then I have no problem to admit it. As I said, I was brought up that way to be honest and I also believe that's a reason why we succeeded in the end.

Q: (Ian Parkes - Press Association) I think you said in one of your TV interviews just now that people have tried to play dirty tricks, but you never expanded on that, so could you give us an explanation?

SV: Sorry but I think I've mentioned everything I have to mention in a way. I think it's clear but it's not for us to rate... I said as well in the same sentence, but obviously I don't pass it on, as usual, it's not for us to rate or comment on that, because it's not our decision, it's not in our hands. We have to focus on what we have, what is in our hands and getting excited about what others are doing... what's the point? Of course you can but it only carries you away and distracts you and you lose your focus, and by that I think it's a distraction, you can't focus on achieving your optimum which is the only way that doesn't guarantee but the only way that really helps you as much as you can to be in the position that you want to be after 20 races.

Q: (Adam Hay-Nichols - Metro) Seb, congratulations. What did Michael say to you when you guys met in the weigh-in and at the rate you're going, how do you rate your chances of beating his record of seven world titles?

SV: I don't think I'm commenting on that because it's nonsense. I think that whatever he has achieved in his career is unbelievable. People tend to forget but he was dominant like no other driver ever in Formula One during his time. Obviously his comeback was a bit different. He unfortunately didn't have the car to probably prove what he's capable of. That's how it goes sometimes. I'm sure he doesn't regret anything. I'm sure if you ask him, that's what he says. I think he was extremely fair, not just today. I think he's one of the guys who can race really hard, and I mean there's not much between your car and the other car, travelling at 50 kph or 300 kph. He knows his car limits and he knows how not to overstep the mark. It has been fun to race him the last three years. Obviously for most of it I have been in a better car, so I enjoyed that, obviously, but again, today was very fair and I said thanks for not defending too hard. He said 'what's the point, you were much quicker. You were going to pass me anyway.' It's something you can learn in karting when you're racing. You come from the back with more pace than the go-karts around you or the people around you, it's to work together. There are some guys who are racing for 17th place and they are defending 17th place as if it was the last lap of the last race but sometimes in a way, you need to work together and whoever is quicker at the time maybe dictates the pace, let him go, go behind him and then every time he passes someone you go with him. I think if Michael had defended a lot, it would only have slowed both of us down and then maybe someone else is coming from behind and passes him, so he ends up in a worse position. I think he's smart enough to know in what situation he is in and what car he's fighting with at the current time.

Q: (Frederic Ferret - L'Equipe) Sebastian, you've won three titles in a row with the same team; what is your next challenge, winning another title with another team?

SV: The next challenge, I think... first of all I want to enjoy now. I tried to explain to you the whole time that the most important thing is to be present and I don't want to get carried away with next year. I'm very happy now and I want to have a good time with the guys now for tonight and let's see how long. Surely at some stage you try to charge the batteries, it's been a tough and long season and come back in shape next year. I'm with the team. I have a contract until - I think you know better than me - at this stage, until the end of '14. I'm very happy with what we have achieved so far and I don't think this story is over yet. I'm very happy and extremely committed to give everything I have, also in the next years when I'm with them. At the moment, I don't see any point thinking about another team or something

else. I'm extremely happy in the position I am. It's incredible what we have achieved. Christian came on the radio after the race and mentioned the names that have achieved similar - and he forgot Prost! So I told him but I had no radio so he couldn't hear me, but you could hear that they were obviously very busy, everyone was shouting on the pit wall. He started with Michael, that was the obvious choice which is quite easy to remember, Senna, Lauda, Piquet and then it was starting to get all loud and noisy. I think he mentioned all of them except Prost, so I told him 'you forgot Prost, he's got four.' Fangio as well. Sorry. Nearly forgot.

Q: (Livio Oricchio - O Estado de Sao Paul) Sebastian, you came into this season having won nearly everything last year and you had a hard beginning to the season. What happened there and what happened after Singapore, where everything seemed to change for you?

SV: Well, I think one is the technical side, the other one is maybe what happens inside you. It has been a tough year, as you mentioned, extremely close. We had seven different winners in the first seven races. Up and downs for everyone. Obviously back then, I already knew that every place, every point will probably matter in the end. In the end it was closer than what we hoped for but at some stage, people were not even mentioning us when they were talking about the championship, but I think the most important thing was that we always kept believing. Since the start of the season, we were fighting with the car, the car wasn't similar to last year's, I couldn't... it's difficult for you to understand, but I couldn't use my tricks or my style to make it work and manipulate the car the way I liked. I didn't have enough rear stability mostly to work with the brakes and get the car into the corners, to the apex, the way I like. We tried everything and I think at some stage, we just did a step that was big enough and in the right direction that allowed me to do more of what I like, so naturally it came in our direction. We picked up pace, we were more competitive, we were in a better position and still it was tough, some races. For sure, it was not a piece of cake, because still the car was not like last year, you cannot compare. Obviously everyone lost a lot of downforce and stability so we were always up against it but yeah, we were always really focused on every single step. I mentioned before trying to really work on the car. Sometimes we made steps in the wrong direction, we paid the price but also we learned something. We learned then, for next time, not to confuse ourselves too much. I think this year was very tricky for everyone, working with the tyres, getting them in the right window. Towards the end of the season, more and more people were confident with that but that's because you make mistakes and you learn from them. That's because the cars get better, you improve them and with more downforce and more grip, things just get a little bit better.

Q: (Jason Barlow – BBC Top Gear) I don't know what your recall of every race you've raced is like but would you say that that was the single hardest Grand Prix you've done in your career?

SV: I said it on the radio but again you didn't hear that: I said it was for sure the toughest race not, just, of course... being in a situation to fight for the championship means that you're not on holiday but just look at the stuff that went wrong. It's hard enough if you lose radio communication for a start in these circumstances, because if there are any circumstances where you really need to talk, it's these. Then we got turned around, the car was damaged, since lap one, we were dead last, we came again... we came back, changeable conditions all the time, we did a stop for nothing which only cost 20-22 seconds and had to come in again when it started to rain the lap after but still we finished sixth. Sixth is still a very good result. Some races this year we would have been happy to finish sixth,

so we can be very happy with that, and obviously it happened to be the last race and the championship decider and it went in our favour so not much more to say.

Ends