



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

2013 Malaysian Grand Prix Post Qualifying Press Conference Transcript

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DRIVERS

1 – Sebastian VETTEL (Red Bull Racing)

2 – Felipe MASSA (Ferrari)

3 – Fernando ALONSO (Ferrari)

TV UNILATERAL

Sebastian, a late call for a second set of intermediate tyres in Q3 and it worked out well for you.

Sebastian VETTEL: Yeah, I think generally an interesting qualifying session. We knew that rain was on the way and then... to be honest we expected already some [rain] at the beginning of qualifying but it didn't come, so going out on dry [tyres]. Obviously I think we had a bit of a different approach to other people. Q2 was quite on edge I would say, so probably the rain helped us a little bit. Otherwise I think we would have had to go out again. But in that case it was just enough to go through to Q3. Then in Q3 with the circuit drying, it was clear it was better to change tyres. We confirmed that pretty early. I think we did the right thing. Very tricky because you don't know if there's more rain coming or not, but we took the decision. Bit surprised by the gap but a decent lap and I was very happy obviously. It was quite tricky because some parts of the track were still wet and others were dry but overall a very good session for us. We managed to save some tyres, which could be crucial tomorrow, so we'll see what we can do.

Felipe, ahead of Fernando on the grid once again, as in Melbourne. Ferrari [look] good in the wet, did the rain help you?

Felipe MASSA: Well, I would say maybe yes. I don't know if we were able to be second and third in the dry as [there were] some other quick cars, like Webber, Kimi, maybe Mercedes as well. So I think it was a good qualifying for us. We took the right decision at the start to change tyres and managed to put a good lap together as well. I think maybe the rain helped a bit.

Fernando, in third. You won here last year obviously and you're in the top three on the grid now. What's your approach to the race tomorrow?

Fernando ALONSO: Try to do a good race and try to score as many points as possible. We are not sure about the performance, the car in race pace. Obviously every long run we do is a little bit inconsistent – sometimes we are OK, sometimes not – and we need to see tomorrow how the race goes. We did not have big problems in the long runs on Friday. In

Melbourne the race pace was OK, so no reason not to be optimistic for tomorrow. But we'll see what we can do.

Sebastian, back to you. You went from pole to third in Melbourne, what's the story going to be tomorrow?

SV: Well, I think if you start in the front you always want to finish there as well. Obviously as Fernando touched on, it will be a long race and difficult to know the true pace. We confirmed more or less what we saw in Melbourne. I was very happy with the balance of the car once again. I think also considering where we were last year here, a big step forward. But these days racing is a little bit different. Hopefully we'll find the right amount of percentage less than 100 per cent to start the race tomorrow. Managing the tyres will be crucial and then we go from there. We know the pace is there so hopefully we get to the chequered flag in the same position.

Q: Sebastian, in Q1 it looked like you were trying to not take too much out of that set of tyres, so that you could use them again in Q2, and you ended up 15th. So, were you living a little dangerously? Was your heart beating a little faster than normal?

SV: Yeah, obviously it's difficult to know how quick you go if you don't try to go 100 per cent – which I think it's fair to say that we tried that. Yeah, was quite tight in qualifying, I think, in dry conditions. And across the line I knew that maybe it's not quick enough but it turned out to be just OK. Obviously we were running quite late and we could see if other people... well I couldn't but the team could see if other people are going quicker. And once it was enough we obviously came in to save the tyres because we used them again in Q2 and it was just enough to get to Q3. Obviously there was a bit of rain on the way and I had a little bit of rain on the track as well. I don't think it really slowed me down, for cars that came after me I think it was a little bit more tricky up to a point where it was just too wet for dries. So once it was clear the rain got worse, it was also clear to us that our plan worked out with a little bit of help from the rain. Good to save the maximum amount of tyres possible.

Q: A number of teams had problems with weather radar during the course of the session. Can you confirm whether you at Red Bull have some extra set-up, some individuals that are placed around the circumference of the circuit that are giving information, or do you have any additional information.

SV: Well, I think we use what everyone is using, so mostly referring to the radar – which we know sometimes is very accurate and sometimes is not. To be fair, in this place, I think it's very tricky to be very precise because the weather changes so quickly. Also, considering the amount of rain that comes down and the circuit not really changing, it's quite impressive, which I think is related to just this place, high temperatures etc. We saw it yesterday during practice. The rain came down and there was steam on the track. I didn't have an effect for a long time, until it rained hard and then obviously you have to come in and change tyres. So it was similar in that regard but in terms of what we do, I think it's more or less what other people are doing as well.

Felipe, in terms of the information you were getting about the weather, can you track your thoughts through the course of that qualifying session and how you thought it was progressing for you?

FM: I think it was pretty good. Even on the... we go out, I did one timed lap and it was a pretty good lap straight away with the conditions, which was more water on the track. And then I stop, I change the tyres, looking at many people stopping as well. I go out with a new set, track was already quicker because already the dry line starts to appear. The rain was a bit less, so even in one lap you find a completely different track, so the track was much quicker. I managed to put a good lap together. Even if already I have a bit of graining

in my first timed lap because the track was too dry maybe for the Inters. So, maybe I was suffering a little bit on the second and the third sector – but I mean maybe everybody was having similar problems. Anyway, the lap was good, so it was a good start for both of us. I think maybe since a long time we don't start both cars with a good pace as well in the top three. I think it's a good job for the team as well. For the team that was preparing this car in the winter as well. So, I'm really looking forward for the race tomorrow. It will be a difficult long race. Anything can happen with degradation, with strategy, with rain. But let's concentrate to do the best we can tomorrow.

Q: From what we've seen so far in the practice sessions, obviously the tyre degradation different for some teams from others, how decisive is the strategy for tomorrow and what are your thoughts on what we're likely to see?

FM: Very important. I mean, we know how these tyres behave with the high temperature. For sure you have teams which suffer a little bit more than the other teams. So, we need to concentrate on doing the right job. For sure, if I do the right job it can also be many positions at the end of the race.

Q: What about from your perspective Fernando? What have you learnt so far from the practice running that will help you in the grand prix tomorrow?

FA: Well, I think we need to use all the information we have from yesterday in the long run pace and also in this morning a little bit. Also, in qualifying, I think all the laps you do in this race track are important due to the changes that constantly you have: the temperature, the weather conditions, etcetera. So for tomorrow I think we expect some rain around – like all the afternoons here, so if it arrives before the race, at the start of the race, in the middle of the race, at the end of the race, we don't know, so we need to be ready for any change. The only good thing, the only positive thing that we have is that the car performed really well in both conditions: in rain and in dry conditions. So, we are not afraid of what is coming from the sky. Whatever arrives, we will take it and hopefully we will be competitive.

Q: Talk a little bit about the timing as well of decision-making. Obviously today it was important to get the timing right. Wet conditions like we had here last year when you won the race, it was really important – because it's a long lap here – to make the timings right. How important is that within the team to get the decisions clear?

FA: It's very important. I think here the characteristics of the circuit are quite... extreme let's say, in terms of tyre stress, so to do a extra lap with the wrong tyre can cause you a lot of time – or more than at other circuits. So we need to be spot-on the decisions tomorrow. We need to be very concentrated because there is no room for mistakes tomorrow in the race.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Livio Oricchio – O Estado de Sao Paulo) Fernando, you are experiencing something new at Ferrari now and maybe also in your Formula One career: your teammate is as fast as you, maybe even faster. Does it stimulate you?

FA: I think I've been racing 27 years now in motor racing - I'm getting old – so it's not the first time that we have very close competition. It was very close the last three years as well, but I know that for you it was not that close in terms of results because I think Felipe had some bad luck, some incidents sometimes, some mechanical problems other times but the last three years was much closer than I think that it looked in the points at the end. So this year it is again very close, no big difference, maybe a little bit closer and for sure the last two races we are behind on the grid but so far on Saturday there are no points so we need to keep working for Sunday. It's the best news for the team, because we need to

have a competition between the two drivers in the team, we need to share information between the drivers in the team and now I think all the data that we have from free practice, from qualifying for everything is very useful to compare and to analyse to make ourselves better, so this is only good news for the team and we will push each other to our own limits and this is good news for the team.

Q: Felipe, do you want to respond to that? Do you feel completely re-energised?

FM: Yes, sure, I feel very happy, very automatically driving the car. I like the car that we have this year much more compared to the car we had last year. I think I understand a lot more the direction for the set-up and everything - we even understood that last year, from August to the end of the year. I feel really happy driving the car. When you try to do something you don't feel comfortable with you maybe cannot do the perfect lap with the car so I think that's really important for me, for the team. The best thing for the team is always to have the best drivers finishing in the best positions, so that's really a positive point for the team and for myself as well, for Fernando, so I think it's a good direction.

Q: (Abhishek Takle - Midday) Sebastian, you mentioned that the rain helped you a little bit in the end, but looking at your pace in the dry, do you think you might have been able to take pole had the rain stayed away?

SV: It's difficult to say now. What I meant obviously was that I think the timing helped in that regard, not getting to Q3 - I think we had the pace to do that on our own. It more helped in regards to saving a set of tyres for tomorrow, depending on the conditions and in general - it's difficult to say - but we were looking quite competitive all weekend. I was feeling happy in the car so there's nothing that speaks against that but would/could/should - we don't know so I think the pace set in Q2 by Nico, I think, who was fastest, was a pretty good lap. We had a strong car but whether it was enough to beat that time or not I don't know.

Q: (Ian Parkes - Press Association) Felipe, you've now outqualified Fernando for the last four Grands Prix; after all you went through last season, do you feel that your performances now are a response to all those critics who wrote you off last season when your future was so up in the air?

FM: Well, I feel comfortable in the car. I think whenever you feel comfortable you can do a good lap and you can use the car to the maximum, it's possible. It was really clear that I was not comfortable last year and the year before, so many things around the car, bad luck, around myself as well, so there were so many things that were not working in the proper direction, but now they are and I know how quick I can be, I've showed that many times in the past. If everything works well, we can be competitive, it's pretty sure about that. I believe in myself and I think it can be really important for the team, for Fernando as well, for everybody. We need a stronger team, a strong position and fighting for the best position in every race so I'm happy, that's a good direction.

Q: (Carlos Miguel - La Gaceta) Fernando, are you looking to pass these guys in the first corner or are you confident of the car in race conditions and you must wait during the race?

FA: Well, I think the start will be the first opportunity. I think if everything goes normally I will have a very good start so we should be able to at least maintain the position, if not attack, so we will see how are the first meters tomorrow. I think that in this Formula One that we are experiencing today, the start is very low priority. I think that 56 laps is a very long race, a lot of strategy calls to make, a lot of tyre issues that everybody needs to get through during the race. Some people maybe look better in the first part, some people maybe look a little bit better in the second part or approaching the stints. I think the start, as I said, these days is of less importance than in the past but for sure tomorrow we will try to do a good start, similar to Melbourne - hopefully - and try to be first and second in the first part of the race.

Q: (Cristobal Rosaleny - Car and Driver) Fernando, do you think having Kimi in seventh place on the grid is good news for you, because maybe Sebastian has been struggling more with the tyres this weekend?

FA: As I said, I don't think the (grid) positions are very important these days or the first lap positions. If you have a good race pace, as I think Kimi has or Lotus has, I think they will arrive sooner or later in the race and will put some pressure on us, so I think we need to be very calm. Kimi started fantastically well in Melbourne, winning the race, he's very strong this weekend here but the race and the championships are both very long and it's not only Kimi fighting for the championship, so we will see. I think at the moment it's very close, Red Bull is strong, Mercedes very strong, again today, as Seb said now, in Q2 Nico's time was quite impressive so there are four or five teams that at the moment are on top of everybody. We also need to be competitive in the race to develop the car if we want to win the championship.

Q: (Flavio Vanetti – Corriere della Sera) Felipe, we heard Fernando's evaluation concerning the race pace. Is it the same for you or is it different?

FM: Well, yesterday we didn't have so much time to do a long run on both tyres, so we don't know. I don't know. I think it's difficult to be sure how it's going to be with the car on race pace, because yesterday I did a long run on the medium tyres but not many laps and then it started raining. So I don't know. I think maybe it can be that our car is better in the race compared to qualifying, compared to normal conditions in the dry, but we need to wait and see tomorrow.

Q: (Leonid Novozhilov – F1Live) Sebastian, what is more interesting for you, rain or dry and why?

SV: Well, if it's dry we obviously saved some tyres today that could help. If it's wet, I'm not sure we have enough. It doesn't make a big difference. I think we have to go with the conditions, fortunately they're not in our hands, so obviously it's good for you but also it's very exciting for us, as Fernando touched on, finding the right lap to make the call to come in or stay out. We've seen in the past that sometimes you are just on the spot, sometimes you are not, so it can make a big difference to the race but if that happens, it's very exciting for us inside the car as well. In wet conditions generally, I think you drive the car with much more feeling. It allows you a little bit more to overcome a lack of pace or something like that during the race or overtake someone. Nevertheless, I think we need to be focused every single lap and go from there.

Ends