



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

2013 Malaysian Grand Prix Sunday Press Conference Transcript

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DRIVERS

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PODIUM INTERVIEWS

(Conducted by Martin Brundle)

We're going to start with Sebastian. That's your 27th victory. You now match Sir Jackie Stewart with that but it looked pretty close out there on laps 43 and 44, take us through that.

Sebastian VETTEL: Obviously it was very close wheel-to-wheel racing. I think there wasn't much room for either of us so obviously it was a tight battle. I think probably I was a little bit too keen too soon because I obviously in terms of strategy was on the soft tyre towards the end, on the softer compound, felt I had a little bit more, so yeah, obviously enjoyed the fight, had the upper hand in the end. Throughout the whole race it was very close. Mark was always a little bit ahead – I was stuck in traffic. In the middle of the race I wasn't quite sure about the strategy but towards the end it seems to work very well because we were able to save that extra set and it came off with a little bit more speed.

Obviously there is going to be a little bit of friction, we heard on your team radio "congratulations, but there is a some explaining to do". How do you feel about the race itself in that respect?

SV: I think obviously it's very hot today and I think if there is something to say then we need to talk internally. For sure we both enjoyed that. Of course, I'm standing in the middle now, so I probably enjoyed it a little bit more. But there is plenty of time to talk about.

Probably a good time for to walk across to Mark and see how he felt about. You had a great race Mark, the tyres worked well through the early part... you had a great start, that's not always your strongest suit but you were in good shape at the beginning of the race.

Mark WEBBER: Yeah the first part of the grand prix went very well for us. I think very tricky conditions for all of us on the intermediates to start with. In the end, yeah I think we got the right strategy I think early in the race with the inters, getting the crossover quite nice. Then really it was just controlling the race and getting everything in place towards the back end of the race. Obviously I had to mark Lewis off a little bit in the middle there and then after the last stop obviously the team told me the race was over, we turned the engines down and we go to the end. I want to race as well, but in the end the team made a decision, which we always say before the race is probably how it's going to be – we look after the tyres, get the car to the end and in the end Seb made his own decisions today and will have protection and that's the way it goes.

So you were surprised when he went past you?

MW: Yeah, well I turned my engine down and started cruising on the tyres and the fight was off. Anyway, we know he's a quick peddler but I was disappointed with the outcome of today's race. In the end the team did a good job, I had some good fans here from Australia, so thanks guys. I did my best.

Can you take any positives away from today?

MW: Yeah I think there were a lot of things I did pretty well, from my driving, the start on the inters, there are a lot of areas where you can get that wrong, obviously like Fernando, that's unusual for him. So in the end you've got drive slow on these tyres, we're not pushing flat out as usual, all the leaders are driving very slow to save the tyres.

I'll move to Lewis Hamilton, our third-place finisher. Lewis, you similarly had a very tough fight with your team-mate but it seemed to be all about saving fuel for you at the end of the race.

Lewis HAMILTON: Yeah, absolutely. The team did a fantastic job, it's great to be up here for them. If I'm honest I really think Nico should be standing here. Generally he had better pace than me throughout the race. He's a great team-mate and did a fantastic job today. On our side I was fuel-saving for a long, long time and unable to keep the pace of the guys in front but nonetheless we brought it home, the guys did a great job and I'm proud to be up here for them.

Nico was certainly asking in very strong terms to be allowed to come past you at one point, but at that point I think Ross had called the race off hadn't he?

LH: Yeah, I can't say it's the best feeling being up here but racing is racing and I really just have to keep looking forward.

We've got to ask you about that pit stop – you fancied stopping at McLaren, for old times' sake maybe?

LH: Yeah, I just did a Jenson. He did that a couple of years ago. Used to, for so many years, driving to the McLaren pit stop I don't know how I got it wrong. So big apologies to the team.

I respect you're such competitive drivers, such competitive athletes. You're all kind of happy/unhappy up here today. It's been that kind of race. But at the end of the day, Sebastian, looking pretty good for the championship – not in the long-term but for your championship position obviously it's been a great day.

SV: Yeah, I think in that regard it's obviously a long race. It's good at this stage of the year to score points and we go from there but thinking about the championship right now, it's

way too early. I think it was a great race for the team today. I think we did better on the tyres than we expected. Obviously it dried pretty quickly but we had a pretty clean race in terms of tyres after that.

Q: Sebastian, congratulations, your 27th career victory, equalling Sir Jackie Stewart and on a day when one of your main rivals for the championship, arguably, Fernando Alonso scored no points. You said at the midway stage in the race, something along the lines of “I’m faster than Mark, let me through.” But in the end, you did it yourself. Can you tell us how your race unfolded.

SV: Obviously it was an interesting one to start with and mixed conditions. I think we weren’t too bad on the crossover going to dries. Probably a little bit too soon. Some places on the track looked pretty dry but they turned out to be still quite a bit damp. I think coming out in traffic didn’t help, so I lost the lead at that time, which I think put us in position two, three at that time because after that it was quite a long race, trying to look after tyres. Towards the end I feel I had quite a strong pace and obviously at the very end on a new set of medium tyres had a bit more speed and it was a close fight but I think... yeah... as you can see I’m not entirely happy. I think I did a big mistake today. I think we should have stayed in the positions that we were. I didn’t ignore it on purpose but I messed up in that situation and obviously took the lead which, I can see now he’s upset, but yeah, I want to be honest at least and stick to the truth and apologise. I know that it doesn’t really help his feelings right now but I think other than that, obviously a very good race for the team. We handed the tyres I think pretty well today. To sum it up, apologies to Mark, obviously now the result is there but... yeah, all I can say is that I didn’t do it deliberately.

Q: What exactly do you mean? Was there some understanding between you that you’ve broken?

SV: No. I think obviously we talk about these kind of things before we go into the race and it’s not the first time we race each other. I think the difference in pace at the end probably wasn’t fair because he was trying to save the car and the tyres and, as I said, I did not ignore that but I should have been aware, to be honest. Obviously then took quite a lot of risk to pass him and that was the end of the race then.

Q: Mark, obviously there have been some times in the past when you’ve been very close together and things have been said. Your reaction to what Sebastian has just said.

MW: Well, I was happy with how I drove today. I think it was a very good team result. We went into the race a little bit worried about how the race would unfold for us as a team in terms of performance. You still have to drive the grands prix these days at eight-tenths – it’s not like the old day when grand prix drivers are driving flat out and leaning on the tyres like hell – because the tyres are wearing out. So it’s not the most satisfying thing for us as grand prix drivers these days – but it’s the same for everybody. And then yeah... got myself into a position where we were controlling the race. I was being told the target lap times, again in relation to how the tyres are. Obviously Seb and Lewis come back to me at one point in the race, I responded and lifted the pace up and got away around the stop. And then we had a pretty good situation tee’d up towards the end of the race. And then after the last stop I thought that it would be interesting how the team would deal with it and I was ready for a sprint to the end. And then the team obviously rang up and said “the race is... the pressure is off now. We need to look after the tyres to the end. Basically don’t fight each other.” I turned the engine down. We have some codes in terms of getting the cars to the

end. In the end I'm happy with how I drove and... yeah it doesn't... yeah, emotions are... probably not the best time to talk at the moment.

Q: Lewis, congratulations on your first podium as a Mercedes driver. You don't look particularly happy about it. In your case you retained the position and Nico stayed behind you to the finish. Describe your race.

LH: The team did a fantastic job, so I'm very happy to be up here representing them. They've been working so hard over the winter and obviously welcomed me into the team so to be up here and to be on the second row for me and Nico is a great feeling. But of course, I don't feel spectacular sitting here. Obviously I think Nico deserved to be where I am right now but obviously the team thought that, I guess, with the position in the Championship perhaps it was logical to stay in the positions we were in. But yeah, I have to say a big congratulations to Nico because he drove a much smarter and much more controlled race than I did today.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Peter Windsor – F1 Racing) Sebastian, you said that you apologise; would you go so far as to say – without wanting to put words in your mouth – that if the situation arises, you feel that you owe Mark a win now?

SV: We just came out of the cars a couple of minutes ago but surely I want to talk with him again later on without all of you. As I said before, I didn't mean to ignore the call, it's something we talk about many times in the year and yeah, I should have behaved better today.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – O Estado de Sao Paulo) Lewis, we could hear at the end of the race while Nico was parking the car, 'remember this one,' he said to the team. Will you remember it too?

LH: Of course, of course. How can I forget?

Q: (Michael Schmidt – Auto, Motor und Sport) To all three of you, I understand the technical reasons why you have to pace yourselves at the end and why there are team orders, but let's say for the fan, is that the price we have to pay that the teams tell you in the last stint not to attack any more because everybody was excited about the fight between Mark and Seb and everybody was a bit disappointed when we heard that Rosberg was not allowed to attack you, Lewis.

MW: I'm a huge sports fan and I think we want to see people give their best to the end. It's extremely unusual to have both cars at the end of a race together and I think the team's position is... we've gone through this many times with our own team and obviously now is a different situation for the future but... yeah, it's part of Formula One. I think that when you have 500 employees and it was nip and tuck for Sebastian and I to be in the fence in turn one, Michael Schmidt's happy but is the factory happy, are we happy? So when the blood is boiling and everyone is on the edge, then yeah, we are professionals, we are world class, we did the job today but it's not an easy situation for the team. It's always spoken about, always has been, always will be. If you had one car teams, it's not a problem. In some teams to have a one car team is the ideal scenario but three cars, four cars, it's always going to be the same thing, that contact between teammates is the worst scenario for a team.

Q: Sebastian, your perspective?

SV: If I take my race, obviously, as I said, I felt a little bit more comfortable because I had new tyres at the end, a new set of tyres which I think worked a little bit better today but yeah, it's very different racing to how it used to be in the past, even to last year, it's another step, so it's a bit more extreme, just trying to look after the tyres and driving into the unknown. I think you see on TV as well how pieces of rubber are flying off and how we suffer on those tyres and obviously the last thing you want is to risk a puncture and then therefore don't finish the race so I think we would all enjoy it if we had a tyre that was stronger we could race harder on it, but equally I think situations like that come up no matter what kind of tyres you have. Obviously, as Mark said, you have a certain responsibility for the team as well and a lot of people in the factory working all year and obviously you have two cars and I think you have to take that into account as well.

Q: Lewis, your thoughts? Obviously this circuit is a fairly extreme one but do you see the picture continuing?

LH: I probably do, yeah. These tyres make it very hard, very difficult to make them last and particularly for me today, I wasn't really able to make my tyres last as much as I wanted. I was fuel saving from an early point in the race which lost me a lot of time but generally these tyres make... it's not fun, I didn't enjoy the race. It's not the same as back in the day when you had stints where you are pushing to the maximum the whole time, you had tyres that would last. Now you're just... it's like you have a hundred dollars and you have to spend it wisely over a period of time. It makes racing a lot different. It's more strategic rather than pure speed racing.

Q: (Matt Coch – pitpass.com) Sebastian, you say you didn't ignore the instruction on purpose but I suggest that it was a deliberate move to pass Mark, so I wonder how you can say that you didn't ignore the instruction when clearly passing was a deliberate action.

SV: I think it's not an easy situation for me. Obviously I'm the black sheep right now. Obviously I put myself in that position so, as I said, all I can say is apologies to Mark. I know that right now, obviously, having just come out of the car, it's probably difficult to explain everything but the pass was deliberate, obviously I wanted to pass him, you could see that, otherwise you wouldn't even try, but I didn't mean to ignore the strategy or the call. I made a mistake, simply.

Q: (Kate Walker – Girl Racer) Lewis, you said that Nico drove a really smart race and we did hear from quite early on that you were getting a lot of fuel messages, Nico was getting a few. Were you guys fuelled just on the edge of what was acceptable, were you racing too hard? What was your problem with fuel?

LH: I think we were racing very hard to keep up with these guys because they were obviously on another level today. We were close but really on the knife edge trying to stay with them. We were trying to be as high up, as far up, as close to them as possible, but obviously I used too much fuel. I was being asked to save fuel from very early on, perhaps we were particularly aggressive on our fuel strategy which is a little bit unfortunate. I don't know what the situation was with Nico but for me, it loses quite a lot of time when you have to basically lift and coast for a hundred meters, fifty to a hundred meters before a corner. I think we can do a better job there and I think I can do a better job just looking after the tyres. I could see that Nico was not pushing too much at the start of his stints, which is where I was trying to keep up with these guys so I was perhaps pushing a little bit more, trying to really make the difference in the early stages of the tyres and took too much out of them but that's the name of the game.

Q: (Christopher Joseph – The Vancouver Sun) To both Mark and Lewis: given that F1 is a team sport and team dynamic is vital, what will you both do practically now moving forward to either repair or return to that great team dynamic you both had?

MW: I think it's very early days right now, it's very raw, obviously, and we need to work out how the team goes best forwards from here. That's obviously going to be discussed this week. I will be in Australia on my surfboard, the phone won't be engaged, see what happens.

LH: I think it's difficult to say for me what we do moving forward, but I will go and speak to the team and obviously whether or not I should apologise to Nico... I did say to him that he'd done a fantastic job. Would I let him past in the future if I was in the same position? I probably would.

Q: (Ian Parkes – Press Association) Mark, as has been mentioned, emotions are clearly raw but firstly do you at least accept Seb's apology, because that's not been mentioned yet and secondly, again emotions are raw but when you have a teammate who does ignore team orders, does it make you consider your future with the team, maybe even in Formula One?

MW: My mind, in the last 15 laps was thinking that many things, yes. Many many things.

Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action) Again, to Vettel, do you realise in the past there have been things like this between Senna and Prost, Villeneuve and Pironi, that if you don't repair this, that the whole team gets in trouble and it all goes downhill?

SV: Well, I think there's plenty of food on the table for you guys. I think it's something between Mark and myself. I think we've had situations in the past, never like that, so obviously there has been a lot of stories in the press written about our relationship etc. I think our relationship is very professional, obviously there's no problems. We are not best friends. I think it's very difficult to be best friends with any of the drivers but I think we share respect and I respect Mark as a racing driver. I remember occasions where obviously people express their opinion about Mark and his career which I thought at some stage were very disrespectful. I obviously try to be aware of what he has achieved, where he has come from, not only in Formula One but also before that and I respect that, so I respect him as a driver. Obviously we were giving each other a very hard time, probably similar to the fight that you saw today on the track, not trying to give each other much room. It's the same at every race and obviously it's not an easy battle but in terms of team spirit etc, I think we've been working very well together in the past. Obviously I can see that for you it probably sounds a bit dull, because if you look back at the results, the last three years I've had the upper hand but I think it was always very close. At this stage, can I say much more than I made a mistake, I'm not proud that I made it. If I had the chance to do it again, I would do it differently but it doesn't count now. I can't change it now, maybe in the future there's a situation where I can but I will try to explain that again to Mark and the whole team.

Q: (Trent Price – Richland F1) Mark, obviously yesterday there were a lot of unknowns surrounding tyres going into this race but you've executed basically what was a perfect race in terms of the tyre management. That must give you some confidence for the rest of the year.

MW: Yeah, you're right, going into the event we were pretty concerned. Some of our long runs before the Grand Prix itself were pretty poor but these guys are not resting on any laurels, particularly, again, our key beacon in Adrian Newey, Adrian is working hard. The thing is I think it's quite good for the neutral, good for the fans and good for probably new people that are following Formula One, but the old – let's say people who have more of a

grasp of the sport and more education of where the sport was – it's still a little bit hit and miss. With what we had, probably not much of an idea that's how the race would go for us today. I was surprised that other people were not with us, completely, people won't believe that but that's the case, and also I think, for the junior categories they need to get the tyres and things better for young drivers to learn how to push the cars to the limit and drive absolutely on the edge. You watch Rafa Nadal and Roger Federer play each other and it's playing with the lines, it's playing with precision for a five set match and we all enjoy watching that but at the moment we're driving at eight and a half tenths, eight tenths, conserving our pace and some more situations like this will probably happen in the future because there's a lot of ambiguity in who's (on the) pace and who's quick. Seb feels he's strong only in the middle of the race then I could respond. The racing is completely around nursing and trying to make the tyres survive and they're not conducive to driving a car on the limit. You don't see us really pushing on the limit. Obviously Seb and I had a push in the middle in our last stint but generally no drivers are really on the limit today. I don't know if I answered your question but anyway, that's my little rant.

Q: (Abhishek Takle - Midday) Mark, obviously emotions still very high but were the situation reversed in the future, would you stick to an agreement to turn down the engine and hold station, or would you ignore the call going by what happened today and pass Seb?

MW: I think that question is not going to be answered right now. Let's just say there were a lot of things going through my mind in the last 15 laps of the Grand Prix, lots of different reasons, not just from today but also from the past. We'll see what happens. We've got three weeks before the next race.

Q: (Ann Giuntini – L'Equipe) We know you are all tough competitors and it doesn't belong to us to judge you too severely; just a question: would you be ready, if there is the opportunity, to offer a victory to Mark, not at the end of the championship when you are already champion or when it's over, but during the season. If there is a tough fight between you, and you are ahead and he's behind.

SV: I think we had that question already. I think it was actually the first question that I got. I think it's something we need to think about, I need to think about but for sure, I can only say this, obviously, like I say, I made a mistake, I'm not proud of it. As I say, if I had the chance to do it again, I wouldn't do the same but obviously there's a lot of things that need to come together, to put ourselves in a similar position but yeah, it's definitely something that will be remembered or should be remembered.

Q: (Gary Meenaghan – The National) Seb, Mark's mentioned he thought about a lot of things for the last 15 laps, can you talk a bit about what you were thinking in those last 15 laps and when did you realise that you'd made the mistake?

SV: As I said, I didn't do it deliberately so I didn't realise I had made a mistake, only when I came back but by not everybody's but the team's reaction, I realised. I had a very short word with Mark and then it hit me quite hard and I realised that – language – I fucked up

Q: (Peter Windsor – F1 Racing) Sebastian, first lap with Fernando Alonso, did you feel anything in the impact?

SV: Yeah I was a bit surprised. Obviously I had quite a good launch and I kept the lead into Turn One. We know that Turn One is not necessarily it, there's also Turn Two and I tried to defend and because it was very slippery I had to turn in into Turn Two and got a little bit of a

hit, so I'm not sure whether it was him or someone else. But when I got the hit and looked into the mirror I saw he was quite close. I don't know what happened. I'm pretty sure he carried on after that. I think Mark passed him straight away. I was only told in the end that he didn't finish the race. I don't whether that is the reason.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – O Estado de Sao Paulo) A question to all drivers. What do you think the fans of Formula One will think when they hear or they read that the winner is saying “I’m sorry to win, the second should be here and the third says “I’m sorry to be here my team-mate that is fourth should be here”?

SV: I think it's great for you because you have a lot to write about. We have quite a while until the next race it's good for you, I'm sure you don't get bored. I didn't say, I think generally, you know I'm not sorry to win, I think we both of us drove a strong race today but Mark should have won. I did the mistake. I can only repeat it now. People can think in a way what they want, they will always make up their own story, but as I said I wasn't aware until we took off our helmets really, so I'm sorry for that. But surely I will try to make up, first of all explain downstairs what happened.

MW: As I say, I'm a big sports fan and the fans of any sport will want it to be a perfect world always. We want it to be pure, we want it to be as we see – football, boxing, cycling, whatever. We want it to be real. But there is an element of naivety... for me watching some sport as well and in the case of some Formula One fans watching this situation. It's impossible for everybody to understand everything and that's the same for me watching a football match or a Champions League match. Sometimes there are things you don't understand because sometimes there is naivety

LH: I don't have anything to say.

Ends