



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

2013 Bahrain Grand Prix Post Qualifying Press Conference Transcript

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DRIVERS

1 – Nico ROSBERG (Mercedes)

2 – Sebastian VETTEL (Red Bull Racing)

3 – Fernando ALONSO (Ferrari)

TV UNILATERAL

Congratulations Nico, you're first ever top four start in Bahrain and you did it in style. Were you as surprised as some people that pole was yours today?

Nico ROSBERG: A little bit, yeah. It wasn't really clear before who was the quickest car, especially over one lap. I was a bit closer this morning already, so I was a bit more happy than yesterday for sure, so as a team I think we worked really during the night to improve the car because yesterday we were really struggling. So that's been going well. I'm really, really happy, that's a fantastic result. That's great for tomorrow. Of course tomorrow it's going to be a tough race for sure, with rear tyre degradation especially, so a lot can still happen.

We'll talk more about the race in a couple of moments. Sebastian, you're qualifying today: was that the pace of the Red Bull or was it a lap that could have been better? Are you disappointed with second place?

Sebastian VETTEL: Definitely not disappointed. I think congratulations to Nico; he put a very strong lap in. I think it was all his today. Initially when I crossed the line I saw that I didn't go first, so I saw second placed on one of the screens but I didn't know how much was missing, because the lap was fine. You always a little bit here or there but, yeah, when I got told the gap to P1, to Nico, it was clear that even with the perfect lap he was unbeatable today. But nevertheless, very happy. I think we managed to save some tyres throughout qualifying. As Nico touched on it will be all about tyres and tyre degradation tomorrow, once again. So, we'll see what happens but for sure it's good to start from the front.

Today, Fernando, was all about the dash for pole, though, and it was a lap, your second lap, that contained a couple of errors right at the end and you came back into the pits. Was that trying too hard because Nico's lap was too fast or were you just not happy with the balance of the car or what?

Fernando ALONSO: Well, in the car obviously you don't know Nico's lap, we don't have TV in the car yet! So we tried to complete the second lap and it was very, very similar until

the last corner and in the last corner the exit I saw it was half a tenth or one tenth slower than the previous lap so we decided to come in just to save one lap on those tyres. You never know if you have to use them again in the race, so very, very happy with third place. Normally in qualifying we're struggling a lot but today the car was very competitive in qualifying and this puts us in a strong position to start tomorrow's race with the group of the leaders and fight for the podium with a little bit more margin.

Nico, both Sebastian and Fernando have hinted at tyre degradation sorting out tomorrow's race. It's something that Mercedes have suffered from in the past, so is today your day for celebration and is tomorrow just a day to limit your losses?

NR: I really want to kick-start my season. It's really been a rough ride in the first three races and so today's really been the first normal qualifying up to now, so I just want to kick-start everything now, my whole season. I'm OK for the race tomorrow, you know. For sure the competition is going to be tough, definitely. Difficult to say if we have enough pace to win the race tomorrow but for sure we're going to try and I look forward to starting first – definitely.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Abhishek Takle – Midday) Question to Fernando: you must be pretty confident heading into tomorrow because you've shown good long-run pace and a strong start could set you up for the win, don't you think?

FA: Well, let's see. I think the race is very long so we need to wait and see how the pace is tomorrow. It's true that on Sundays normally we do improve our performance and we seem more competitive on Sunday than on Saturday. Friday also the long runs were more or less OK and not a big drama with the tyres. So, let's wait and see tomorrow. The conditions keep changing all the time here in Bahrain with the circuit running more and more categories, not only the Formula One, so I think tomorrow will be a good opportunity for us, first of all to win the podium and try to get some consistency and races in the podium and if we can fight for the win, even better.

Q: (Frederic Ferret - L'Equipe) Question to all three drivers: are you surprised by the time of the two Lotus?

NR: Where are they? **[Ninth and eleventh]** In that case, yeah, for sure, because all weekend they've been looking very quick.

SV: Did they run in Q3 or not? **[Räikkönen qualified and ran]** Yeah. Same as Nico, it's a big surprise. I don't know, that's why I was asking. I don't know what's their plan for tomorrow but yeah, they were quite quick this morning, for sure. It didn't matter the compound, they were quite quick all weekend so something must have gone wrong.

Fernando?

FA: Yeah, same.

Q: (Livio Oricchio - O Estado de Sao Paulo) Nico, the race simulation you did in free practice, you have indication that you have a good pace for the race or maybe it will be like in the last races where you were very fast in qualifying, not so much in race?

NR: I think it's not going to be... we're not going to be as quick as we were in qualifying compared to everybody else. I think it's much closer tomorrow on race fuel but you just have to wait. There's so many factors that influence that, you just have to wait and see. For sure it will be much more difficult, yeah.

Q: (Andrea Cremonesi – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Nico, when we met yesterday, we were joking a little bit with bad words in Italian about your situation.

NR: What were we talking about?

Q: (Andrea Cremonesi – La Gazzetta dello Sport) We were joking with a bad word...

NR: Ah yeah. You said that, yeah?

Q: (Andrea Cremonesi – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Yes, I know, my apologies. How did you improve the car?

NR: Yesterday we were in a difficult situation. We were not where we wanted to be and not where we were in the last couple of races, so it was all bit question marks and a bit surprising. But as a team, we really did a fantastic job to turn it around and to be absolute quickest today, it's great. That's just down to having done really really good work last night and this morning.

Q: (Andrea Cremonesi – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Sebastian, can you explain to us why you saved all three sets of the harder tyres? Do believe that there will be four pit stops tomorrow?

SV: To be honest with you, I don't know how many stops we have to do. I think you don't have to be a genius... one stop is impossible for everybody, two stops is impossible for most, I think, and then it's between three and four stops. I think we decided to do what we did because we think it's the best way. In qualifying we were not exactly sure how quick we would be. We didn't want to take any risks, we wanted to make sure that we finish in front and we believed that the soft tyre was faster, or the medium tyre, so we went for that in qualifying.

Q: (Carlos Miguel – La Gaceta) Fernando, are you afraid of Massa starting on hard tyres in fourth position? And after your 1m 32.8s on hard, could it have been better to qualify on hard tyres?

FA: Well, I think it's fantastic that Felipe is fourth. He finished sixth in qualifying but with (the penalties for) Webber and Hamilton he will be fourth, so it's better to start alongside Felipe than to start alongside Lewis to be honest. I really prefer this combination of results, that I should help the first corner attack and hopefully we can both do a good start and hopefully – with these different strategies that we have – can cover some more scenarios in the race than maybe wouldn't be in our control if we had the same tyres. It's true that we felt comfortable on the hard tyre in Q1. He also felt comfortable on the hard tyres in Q1, but he chose them for Q3. I think they are very close together and I think that when you gain something in qualifying you can lose it in the race; when you lose in the race, you gain something in qualifying so it's a difficult trade-off but I'm extremely happy with our strategy and I'm extremely happy that we're third and fourth. Tomorrow, we both need to think about being on the podium. It will be really important for the Constructors' championship as well.

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