



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

2013 Bahrain Grand Prix Sunday Press Conference Transcript

21.04.2013

DRIVERS

1 – Sebastian VETTEL (Red Bull Racing)

2 – Kimi RAIKKONEN (Lotus)

3 – Romain GROSJEAN (Lotus)

PODIUM INTERVIEWS

(Conducted by David Coulthard)

Sebastian, fantastic victory. You're laughing and I haven't asked you a question already!

Sebastian VETTEL: No, it's good to see you. First of all, thank you very much, fantastic race. Big, big thank you to the team. A flawless, seamless race from start to finish. I knew it was crucial straight away after the start to get into the lead if I could and then go from there and look after the tyres. The pace was phenomenal. The car was very quick and it just started to get better and better towards the end. Really, a beautiful race where you could push every single lap. We took care of the tyres, so overall very happy. Also to have a woman on the podium [is good], I think it's not happening every day. Gill Jones, she takes care of our electronics in the team, she looks after the boys, so great to have her up here as well.

There certainly was great wheel-to-wheel action on those early laps. Can you recall much of it? Was that just instinctive racing or can you give us a standout point from those early laps before you went on to your dominant victory?

SV: There's no alcohol in this, so I can recall, yes. It was obviously very tight already in the first corner with Fernando on the outside. Unfortunately I had to give way. I wanted to line it up to get Nico probably on the next straight but then Fernando squeezed in. But then I got him back which was crucial. I saved some KERS and could out-accelerate him into Turn 6. And then Nico was a tough one. I really had to think for a while because he was quite quick down the straights. Obviously the headwind today helped all the cars behind but still it wasn't as straightforward as I was hoping for and then again quite tight and out of Turn 4 I

again managed to save a little bit of KERS up and got him on the inside and the track was clear and we could unfold the true pace of the car.

It was a great race. If I could come to our second-placed finisher here: they call him the Iceman but they should really call you Mr Consistency. Another podium. Tell us about your strategy today. On reflection do you think that was the right one? Was second place the best you could hope for?

Kimi RAIKKONEN: Yeah, I think yesterday wasn't ideal. We planned to... I wanted to already, Friday, try to do a two-stop because it felt OK and today it worked well so we gained a lot of places. I didn't have a very strong first or second lap, so I lost two places. After that the car started to come to me and I could start pushing more and more, and in the end it was OK.

If I could move around to your team-mate Romain Grosjean. If anyone is getting a feeling of déjà vu, this is exactly the same podium we had last year. Romain, great race. You must feel a little bit of pressure off the shoulders because although this is only race four, the first three races didn't really give you the results you were looking for. How do you feel?

Romain GROSJEAN: Yeah, that's completely true. The first three races have been consistent but not what where we wanted. We worked hard, the whole team. It wasn't easy to find out what was missing to get the feeling back into the car but basically we got it. Started the race with a strategy a bit different from everybody. We started on the hard tyre, thinking that we go long on the first stint, but got the debris on the car, so the race was a bit harder and we had to do some good fights on track but this is why we're racing and what we enjoy. So, very pleased to be here, same as last year. Now just keep this consistency and get the results.

Well, we're very happy to see you up here. If I could just come back one more time to our race winner: I'm just spotting, you've got some lucky charms outside your boots, I've never noticed that before. Do you want to tell us about that before giving us your feelings about where you are in the championship right now?

SV: I don't know, probably in a good position regarding the championship...

DC: Can you show the fans around the world or is it top secret?

SV: Not top secret but I don't get my legs so high because I'm not a woman... I've had them for a long time and they seem to work. One is actually from my grandmother, actually the other one as well. Again, very, very straightforward race and incredible the pace we have today. We surely did not expect that. In the end it was quite controlled. We managed the gaps and we still had enough tyres to push towards the end. The other thing I would finally point out is congratulations to Renault. It's the same order as last year so basically the first three cars on Renault engines. The guys back in Viry in France are pushing very, very hard and sometimes get criticised for not having the strongest engine but in the end we stand up here, three Renault-powered cars, so *merci beaucoup*, well done to them and looking forward to the next races.

Q: Sebastian, was that the sort of race you expected? Long periods when you just seemed out on your own, driving against a delta – or did you just expect it to be much more closely competitive than that?

SV: Surely I did not expect that. I think, yeah, was pretty dominant today, as I said, certainly not the expectation. Yeah, in the beginning, obviously quite tight, wheel-to-wheel racing. I

knew it would be crucial to get in the lead if I can because then you have a little bit of an advantage, looking after your tyres and managing the race from there. I could feel that I was able to pull away and the medium compound felt pretty strong but then obviously we had three sets of new hards and for us the car seemed to work very well on those tyres. Obviously I realised in the second stint that I was able to open a gap so I thought, 'right, I'll take my chance as much as I can to pull away.' Because you know it can only help at the end of the race, you don't know what is going to happen. It probably buys us some flexibility. Fortunately we never got into a pressure situation again. But a very strong race. We were able to look after the tyres and really manage every stint the best way we could. I have to say, big compliments to the guys at home, to the guys here, on the strategy side. Yesterday wasn't probably that straight forward but we decided to save the tyres that I mentioned and they seemed to work very good today and we had a very strong race, it all worked in our direction, so very pleased.

Q: Speaking of strategy, Kimi, you said you wanted to make a two-stop strategy work. You felt that was the right way forward. But did you need to be five, six places further up on the grid? Was it qualifying that cost you a chance of the win today?

KR: I think it didn't help but I think overall we would not have had the speed for beating Red Bull in here this weekend. And even if yesterday we could have been a few places better but still we couldn't have challenged on speed whatever we would have done to the front. So, I mean, I don't think on the speedwise we could really have challenged for the win. But I would say then second was the best that we could achieve and also third for the team so a good result.

Q: Romain, at the end you seemed awfully pleased with that third place, congratulations to be back on the podium. You say 'this is where we should be'. Do you also believe this is where you should be?

RG: We've got a difficult start to the season. I think we've put in a lot of work and effort to understand what was exactly going on – and it wasn't easy to find out but basically I think we came back where we should be. Yesterday qualifying was a bit disappointing but never mind, we had a lot of new sets of tyres for today, which was good. At the start of the race... well after the first few laps there wasn't optimism because we have a lot of big debris coming into the radiator and the rear brakes and we had to pit it very early because the temperature was going up. So I knew that the two first stints would be normally quite long on hard tyres and then do short on mediums but we had to pit and change the tyres. But then the car was good. And I think it was one of the races where I had the most overtaking manoeuvres and fights on track. Easy, not so easy, and the last ten laps was pretty good because I had a Force India in front of me. I knew I was much quicker but for how many laps is the medium because they start to lose pace? So I was trying to take care of them but at the same time pushing hard and finally back on the podium. The same podium as last year, so it's pretty good to be here.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Abhisheck Takle – Midday) Sebastian, as you said, dominant performance today but how crucial was it to get that place back from Fernando early on and do you think you would have been able to win with the advantage you eventually you had without getting him back at the start?

SV: Well, certainly we had more pace than we expected today, which I think is related to the way that we worked with the tyres. We know that the car is quick, we saw that yesterday

that we were able to pull a strong qualifying lap together. Sure, it was crucial because another car in front and especially once you start to settle into a rhythm it's difficult to overtake. I think today it was probably helped a little bit by the fact that there was quite a strong headwind down the main straight, so the advantage for DRS or for overtake was probably a little bit bigger than usual. At the beginning, I thought that if there was a small chance to get into the lead I have to take it because then I can take care of the tyres the way I like and hopefully divert the race the way that we planned beforehand, whereas if you sit behind someone and get stuck then you struggle, you lose grip, you start to slide and the tyres start to go off and you might have a different race, but surely with the pace that we had, I think we could have had a strong race, even not being in the lead immediately but I preferred it that way for sure.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Kimi, you have been on the podium six times here in Bahrain; which has been the best of these six races?

KR: I don't know. It doesn't really matter. Second is obviously better than third place but we haven't won and that's what we try to do. Today we got good points, we didn't lose too many to Sebastian but obviously it doesn't help to finish second if he's winning all the time. So we try to find something but all of them have been improved, in a way.

Q: (Kate Walker – Girl Racer) Sebastian, we've heard quite a few negative comments about Pirelli's rubber so far this year but the loudest voices that have complained have come from your team. Now you're actually leading the Drivers', leading the Constructors' (championships); we're seeing you do very well. Does this mean that we're going to see an end to the complaints from Milton Keynes about the Pirelli tyres?

SV: Well, I think that certainly the fact that we won the Constructors' championship the last three years makes people listen so probably more than other people. At least, from my point of view, I did talk about the tyres, I did complain but I always said that as long as there are other people doing a better job then we have no right to complain, we need to catch up. I don't think you have to be a genius to see that from race to race some people suffer with the tyres - maybe someone more and some people less – and cannot go the true pace of their cars. It's obviously very strategic these days but then again, it's the same for all of us. Out of four races, I think we've had two good ones and two maybe average ones but then if you look at the results, the average is not really disastrous either. To come third and fourth is a very strong result and I'm sure not complaining about the results. Comparing Formula One to a couple of years ago, you probably have to ask Kimi more than me but it's surely different, the fact that you can't push as hard as you like every lap, you have to work with the tyres and sit at a certain pace and go from there. So I think that's what we - at least the drivers that I have talked to – that's what we think is very different and to some extent less enjoyable than in the past.

Q: Kimi, how much different is it to seven, maybe eight years ago?

KR: First of all, I don't think Pirelli could please everybody, whatever they would do. There's always somebody who will complain, even if they changed and made them happy then I'm sure there will be people who want something different and not happy so I don't think it's their job to try to always change things if somebody's complaining or doesn't like it. Even in the past, if we would have put the same amount of fuel in the cars, we couldn't have run at full speed all the time, because the tyres would have gone off so I don't really think it's all that different now. We just made more stops and ran less fuel in those days. I would say that's really the biggest difference. I'm sure the tyres wouldn't have lasted long in those days.

Q: (Andrea Cremonesi – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Sebastian, how different is this win to Malaysia, where there was a lot of criticism, and do you think that without Fernando's DRS problem it might have been a little bit harder today?

SV: Regarding the second question, I don't know or I can't judge the Ferrari's pace. I think the last couple of races they have been very strong, so everything else but a strong performance today would have been a surprise to be honest. But how strong, I don't know. I think we felt pretty happy today and in very good shape. I don't know where Felipe finished but we can't really judge Fernando's race with the problem that he had with the DRS that I was told, so difficult to say.

The first question was? Ah yes, if you race for victory, you try to pass whoever is in front of you so I think Malaysia is a long time ago now, I think we've moved on and I think that in terms of crossing the line first there's no difference. But obviously we were in a better position at the beginning of the race already, so a very very different race in that regard.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – O Estado de Sao Paulo) Romain, we read that Alain Prost said that your problem at the beginning of the season was self-confidence. Do you think that a result like this – if that is the problem – can help you?

RG: I think that the fact that you're able to come back from a very difficult situation proves that I think he was wrong. I haven't seen him this year, I have a deep respect for what he did but I think it's easy to speak when you are not here.

Q: Did the new chassis help at all?

RG: No. It was different matters. We got a bit lost last year. Our struggle mid-season – Hockenheim, Budapest and Spa-Francorchamps – and then we came back. There is so much technology with those cars and it's true that Pirelli tyres are not easy to drive and every time we have a small problem somewhere it makes it worst but when you manage to get it right then it's OK. It was just something with the feeling of the car; when you're not confident with your car it's not self-confidence, it confidence in your car, there's nothing you can do.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Sebastian, with these tyres, who would you rate as your strongest competitor for the championship?

SV: Well, I don't know. It's a long long championship. I think if you look at the first four races Lotus is very quick, they manage the tyres pretty well in the race. Ferrari is very quick, the cars haven't changed too much compared to last year. If you look, pure performance is very tight. On a Sunday it can be different because of the way you take care of the tyres; sometimes you're in a better shape, sometimes not. But I think the Ferrari is an all-round car as in they're always quick and they've been very competitive in the race. Mercedes is surely very quick over a lap but probably a little bit too aggressive with the tyres. Yeah, a little bit surprised by McLaren but I think they will come back at some stage this year, probably already in Barcelona and that's how it is but to point out the main rivals, I think we need to look after ourselves, make sure we score points and everything else is difficult to predict.

Q: (Khodr Rawi – F1Arab.com) Romain, was it possible to do a two stop strategy like Kimi today? And do you expect the same kind of performances in the next races?

RG: Well, it would have been possible if we hadn't had to stop on lap six or seven, due to the temperature problem and the front wing from a McLaren that flew and completely blocked the radiators. We had to stop because we were having water issues and the rear brake drum was completely closed, the brakes were not working any more. Kimi was in

front of me, so it was better to stop rather than losing the brakes. Then tyre management was OK, I think it's getting better and I don't see any point where shouldn't be able to repeat the performance.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – O Estado de Sao Paulo) Sebastian, we know that Christian Horner is pushing Pirelli for harder tyres and we saw that it looks like today your car behaves a bit better on hard tyres. You had three sets of new hard tyres. Can you comment on that?

SV: Well, I'm not sure I understood everything but I think on the tyre strategy we were more or less committed to that yesterday, using all the softs in qualifying and able to position ourselves on the front row nicely for the race, and then trying to make the first stint as long as possible and go from there with three sets of new hard tyres. In the end, I think there was not that much difference between the medium and the hard, we already saw that yesterday on high fuel performance. We felt a little bit happier on long runs, probably on the hard, that's why we decided to go that way and it seemed to work. It's difficult to say how good or bad the medium would have been because we didn't have a new set of medium tyres. I didn't see what other people did but I think that the fact that we sit here is pointing out that we did a good job today on that front.

Ends