



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

2013 German Grand Prix Thursday Press Conference Transcript 04.07.2013

DRIVERS – Nico HULKENBERG (Sauber), Sergio PEREZ (McLAREN), Adrian SUTIL (Force India), Daniel RICCIARDO (Toro Rosso), Sebastian VETTEL (Red Bull Racing), Nico ROSBERG (Mercedes)

PRESS CONFERENCE

Good afternoon to all six of you. Not much time between the last race and this – Silverstone still very much fresh in our minds. I think all six of you had a very eventful race in Britain. So let's start off with your thoughts on the race in Silverstone and the afternoon you had there. I guess we should start with Nico Rosberg, as you won.

Nico ROSBERG: I had a good afternoon! It was a very good race weekend in general and I'm really to come out with that result at the end. To have a fast car in the race as well, which has been our weakness in recent weeks and months. So to have improved there was great. And home grand prix for the team, so to win there was absolutely fantastic.

Yourself, Sebastian – contrasting experiences.

Sebastian VETTEL: I think we had a solid weekend. We were able to qualify well right behind the Mercedes, which was I think the best we could do on Saturday. But on Sunday we had good pace in the race. Obviously, it's difficult to know as Lewis had a tyre failure very early on but I think we could have matched him in terms of race pace. But after that, quite frustrating to lose the lead due to a technical problem, but as I said after the race these things happen. So I think we've understood the problem, fixed the problem, so we move on.

Sergio, what about you, what stands out for you from your race at Silverstone?

Sergio PEREZ: Tyres I think. I think the race itself was better than expected. We had better race pace and in the race itself it was a good strategy and so on. We were able to do better than expected but then with the safety cars it got us in the wrong place and towards the end I didn't have good tyres and the people behind were coming a bit quicker and then I had the explosion with the tyre.

Adrian, your race?

Adrian SUTIL: Yeah, exciting race, interesting race. I would say the pace was not generally as good as expected, so I had to always look more in the mirror and try to make myself as wide as possible and protect my position. I had a very good start. I was running fourth for a long time and then third after the re-start after the second safety car. It looked close to a podium but still our car was just not fast enough and maybe it was a bit unlucky the second safety car period but nevertheless I think there was a chance, a small little chance, to get on the podium, if after the re-start something else would have happened. We risked it and stayed out and then of course a lot of cars with better tyres were behind and I lost quite a few positions very quickly. But seventh in the end was some good points

for the team, we stabilised our position and we're fifth in the Constructors' World Championship and that's very important for us.

What about you Daniel, just finishing behind Adrian in eighth place after that career-best fifth?

Daniel RICCIARDO: It seemed for the last half of the race we were tied together for a little bit. The safety at the end was a bit of a lottery I guess. We were in fourth at the time behind the safety car and obviously fourth is a great position at the time, for us, for the team. Whether we pitted or not, I guess it was a bit of a gamble at the time, whatever we chose to do, and obviously we stayed out and lost out because of it. But I think the weekend as a whole went really well, from Friday through to Sunday we were always in the top 10, always strong. I think our race pace was good as well. It's positive for us. It would have been nice to get a few more points and I'm sure we'll get another opportunity.

Finally, Nico Hulkenberg. At the back a chaotic race at times but one that eventually brought you your second points finish of the season.

Nico HULKENBERG: Yeah, happy to get away with a point after quite a long dry period. It was a good feeling for me and the team to have a point. Overall, quite an exciting race with lots of wheel-to-wheel action. So it was a lot of fun from inside the car. Fortunately, I wasn't one of the guys who had the tyre problems.

So this weekend here: it's the first German Grand Prix here at the Nürburgring for you in your third season in F1, which surprised me when I read that. Does it add to the excitement, racing in front of your home fans, a new track in an F1 car?

NH: Yeah, it does. A lot of excitement. I had done the practice one session in 2011 in a Force India but it is the first proper race attempt. The Nürburgring has always been very kind to me. I've had lots of good finishes here, won a lot of races and have done many laps here. I really like the place, obviously a lot of history on this circuit and the Nordschleife, so I'm really looking forward to this weekend.

Racing in front of your home fans at a track you know well – how much does that help you and how much does it raise the goals that you and Sauber might have for this weekend?

NH: Maybe there is a bit of extra motivation but you have to be realistic with what we have. But I'll try everything to make it a good weekend for us and I'll just look forward and try to enjoy it as much as I can.

Q: Sebastian happy birthday for this week. Probably the only thing you celebrate in July given that you've not won in front of your home fans in Formula One. You haven't won in July either – which seems a strange one.

SV: I think it was much more important what we have achieved the last four years and the last three years in particular. So, yeah, I think we've have good races in the past here but also in Hockenheim. So in Germany in general. Was always close but not good enough to win yet – but I hope I have a little bit of time left to try again. We definitely try this weekend.

Q: As the defending World Champion you race with a lot of focus on you week after week. How much does that intensify when you come to a German Grand Prix in front of your home fans?

SV: Well surely it's special. As the other drivers... as Nico just touched on, I think we've done a lot of racing here before our time in Formula One so we know the circuit well. Obviously it's great to come back and especially the last couple of years with more and more people supporting the team, supporting myself. It's great to come back and really get a feeling of a true home grand prix. So, I'm looking forward to this weekend, looking forward to the support from the fans and yeah, hopefully see more and more Red Bull flags around the track.

Q: Daniel, to you next, happy birthday to you this week as well. Don't know what you got for a birthday present but I'm sure the one you're really looking for is to be Sebastian's team-mate for next year. That would surely be the best present of all – wouldn't it?

DR: Yeah, I guess so. Birthday present... that was Monday, that was my birthday, after the race. So, I was just coming down from the weekend really. Had a bit of birthday cake, not too much, of course. Obviously talk about next year was pretty frequent last weekend. For me, just keep trying to do what I'm doing, keep pushing and... yeah... it's nice to hear some positive things. Definitely. It would be a great position to be in but I've still got a bit of work ahead of me. Silverstone went well. I think that didn't hinder anything. I've got to keep doing that.

Q: Is that all you can do? Just keep doing what you're doing? You've not set yourself new goals, new targets to attract the attention of those that might make the decision?

DR: Well, I definitely try... I haven't won a race yet so definitely I've still got some further goals and ambitions so I'll keep striving for better things. But realistically to do the best I can. I think the qualifying on Saturday was good and the race, as I've said, it could have easily been better but we still got points and showed a consistent pace throughout the weekend, the whole three days, so that was important. Definitely some positive things from that and happy to keep it going now.

Q: Sergio, we come to your ninth race as a McLaren driver. What positives do you take out of the first eight races?

SP: It's been a very difficult season for us, for McLaren. Big struggle. Since the start of the season I think we have made some progress. First of all in understanding the car, get the correlation right. But to be honest I don't expect a major difference this weekend to where we were in Silverstone. I think we will be in a similar position, trying to fight to get into the points. And I hope we can score good points here because in Silverstone we should have scored points, so definitely here I aim for some points as well.

Q: Do you think you're driving better now, as a McLaren driver, than in the first couple of races for your new team?

SP: Yes, of course. The understanding of the car is getting better, the knowledge with the team. Sometimes people don't realise when you change teams, how difficult it is to adapt to the different style of the car, different ways of approaching setting up the car. It takes a couple of races – it took me a couple of races – but I think right now I'm really in good shape. Together with my team we have done good progress so I definitely thing from now on, for the rest of the season, we can keep taking the maximum out of the car.

Q: Adrian. Consistency. That seems to be what you and Force India have found. The last three races you've scored points, your team-mate Paul di Resta has scored points and you seem to have found that sweet spot.

AS: Yes, the car is very consistent. It was consistent the whole year. I think I was not so consistent at the beginning and had issues sometimes. But I hope I sorted it out and now, in the last three races, was quite good. The last one was quite smooth. Monaco was a great result and hopefully this kind of result can come. I think the car is always strong enough to be in the top six. It's all about getting it all right, all together, not making mistakes, whether it's me or someone else. We are a whole team and sometimes there are little things we can improve but at the moment I think we are on our way and most important to score now points as much as possible – we missed a few in the first few races – and just get better. We get better, we're on our way. I think together with Lotus we are almost now the fourth quickest team and that's a very good improvement and a great result for Force India at the moment.

Q: Nico Rosberg, two wins in the last three races. I can't think of anything you'd rather enjoy – maybe three wins in three races – but you must be loving the way this season is turning out at the moment.

NR: Yeah, for sure. It's a really nice time in my career at the moment. It's new. I've never had a car as quick as it is now, going to every next race, knowing that I go out there in qualifying I can fight for a position right at the front. And then also in the race the car is getting better and better so the chances are higher so that even on Sunday I can keep my qualifying position. And it's a really, really nice feeling. Very motivating also.

Q: If that's the case, do you see yourself and Mercedes as genuine title contenders this season?

NR: No, it's too early to say that. We're really focussing on getting our momentum, keeping it going as we have at the moment and just concentrating one race to the next, trying to get the most out of them, just as we have done now in the last couple of races – which have gone fantastically for me. And then we see, in a few races time.

Q: So anything could happen. You don't think you're the main threat to stopping Red Bull winning another world title?

NR: I don't really want to speak about a world title – yet.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) You are now 50 points behind Sebastian, Nico. How many percentage would you give yourself to catch him in the championship?

NR: How many percent chance? Short term, I just want to annoy Sebastian and Red Bull a little bit race by race, by being ahead of them and that's the most important thing, really, to be ahead of not only them but other teams and try and win more races. That's what I'm focused on at the moment and that's what the whole team is focused on.

Q: (Frederic Ferret – L'Equipe) Question for Nico Rosberg and Sebastian Vettel: the new Pirelli will change things; what kind of things will change for Red Bull and Mercedes this weekend?

NR: Early days. We ran them in Montreal, didn't have the opportunity to learn much there because of the weather, so really there are some question marks and we have to really try and run them as much as possible in relevant circumstances this weekend, to try and learn as much as possible. But it will be interesting and it's likely to shuffle things around a little bit.

Q: We're going to get lots of running in FP1, is that the case?

NR: Possibly, yeah.

Q: (Luke Smith – NBC Sports) For all of the drivers: Pirelli are bringing in new construction of tyres for the race weekend. From a safety aspect, how comfortable do you feel racing with these tyres?

SP: Well, I think it's definitely important to change something for safety, no longer for the performance. I think it's very important that we as drivers feel safe, something that could really happen, a big accident in the last race weekend, so I think that definitely it's a good thing that Pirelli is reacting to make a change.

NH: Yeah, I agree with Sergio. I think it is for safety now and there must be some action and there is some action, there are changes and I think generally this track here is not as high speed, not as many high speed corners so the tyres don't get as hard a time as they did at Silverstone. So I'm confident that this will be safe now.

AS: Yeah, as long as it's for safety, I think they have to improve it, yes, but it hasn't been a hundred percent that it was a rear tyre issue, so one says it's a tyre issue what caused the punctures at Silverstone, some people say it's maybe kerbing or something like that, so it's always hard to see where the problem is, but four punctures in a race is too much, so they have to get behind it. I feel safe on these tyres and had no problems with them. I had some two stop races, I did a two stop strategy in Silverstone so for me the concern is not so much.

DR: Not much more to add. All I can say is that you're driving as hard as you can and you don't really put it... it's definitely at the back of your mind. As we saw at the weekend, the tyres that went... it was pretty instant... I don't think any of the drivers felt much before it happened, so all we can do is drive hard and hang on, but I'm definitely... yeah, I'm sure the changes that they've made are going to be for the best. But it's definitely at the back of our mind whilst we're in the car.

SV: I think first of all that it's good that within not even a week's time, how we were able to get a different tyre for this race which hopefully is safer for all of us. Obviously the last race was not what we want and not satisfactory so I think it's good that we have a new tyre here. How much better and how different it will be is difficult to judge at this stage but I'm confident that it's a step forward.

NR: Well, I trust the FIA is going to make the right calls, as they are, they're working on it flat out together with Pirelli, so I'm sure there's going to be progress and it shouldn't be a concern this weekend.

Q: (Ralf Bach – Sport Bild) Nico, how much is your advantage, do you think, because I learned that you tested these tyres at Barcelona?

NR: To me? Oh yeah. Obviously! Yeah, so there's no advantage and we don't know if we ran this tyre in Barcelona. You have to ask Pirelli.

Q: (Rene Hoffmann - Suddeutsche Zeitung) To Nico Hulkenberg, how do you rate the overall condition of your team? We hear stories that you haven't been paid your wage or the full wage. How do you rate the situation of the team right now?

NH: How do I rate the situation of the team? I think it's a difficult situation, like Monisha (Kaltenborn, team principal) told the press yesterday but I think she and the team and the management are working on a solution and trying to work a way out of it, to get better things. She's assured me that she's busy working on that and there's not much more I can say, other than that.

Q: (Flavio Vanetti – Corriere della Sera) To Sebastian and Nico: do you believe that the change in the tyres will let a new championship start from now and above all, in Hungary when more changes are expected?

NR: For sure it's very likely that it's going to have an impact, on performances, differences, qualifying/race, so it will be interesting. It's possible that it's going to mix things up a little bit but it's also an opportunity, yeah, for us as a team to try and understand it better and earlier than other people and try and make the most of it.

SV: I think it's difficult to foresee what's going to happen, as Nico said, but I think Pirelli has absolutely no interest in trying to shuffle things around. They obviously try to supply every team with a tyre, whether you like it or not, it's completely up to you but I think as we learned last weekend, it has to be safe.

Q: (Carlos Miguel – La Gaceta) Sebastian, would you like to have Daniel Ricciardo as your teammate next season?

SV: Well, I don't mind. As I said at Silverstone, after Mark announced his retirement, obviously I think it's early days to talk about that and even if it's not my decision, he sits here, right now so if I could I would give him the seat but equally if Kimi was there, I would give him the seat. It's not my intention to do any good or any bad to people. I think it's

something decided by the team and so far we haven't really spoken about it. At the moment, we have other concerns. As you saw last race we retired, that was the number one concern, so to fix that problem for this race to make sure that we don't retire for the same reason again and maybe a little bit later we talk about drivers as well, but again it's not my decision. As far as I know, I think Daniel is doing a very good job and all the rest is not in my hands. Sorry mate...

Q: (Don Kennedy – Hawkes Bay Today) Sebastian, it's already been mentioned that you haven't won your home Grand Prix here. Do you feel extra pressure coming here, knowing that, or is the overall picture more important to you, in terms of the championship?

SV: Well, in terms of the championship points you can score here, it's just the same as every other place so obviously it's something special to race in front of your home crowd and I feel quite happy to have the possibility to be honest. There's other nations in Formula One and other guys that don't have the possibility to race in their home country. For example, there's no race in Mexico and Sergio would probably love to race there but it's not possible. I think it's a privilege, it's not really extra pressure. I think it's nice to see the support we get and their fascination for Formula One. Motor sport has a big standing in Germany, I think, so it's good to come here, good to come to the Nurburgring. I like the track and we will see what we get.

Ends