



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

**2013 German Grand Prix
Friday Press Conference Transcript
05.07.2013**

TEAM REPRESENTATIVES – Sam Michael (McLaren), Tom McCULLOUGH (Sauber), Pat FRY (Ferrari), Paul HEMBERY (Pirelli), Paddy LOWE (Mercedes)

PRESS CONFERENCE

Paul, can I start with you, and welcome back. Can we recap? We saw what happened at Silverstone, we know the changes that have been introduced with the tyres. Logistically, how big a challenge has that been for Pirelli? Also, tell us the reasoning behind the changes here and at future races this season?

Paul HEMBERY: Just to recap, at Silverstone we'd underestimated the impact of swapping the tyres. The cars were two, maybe three seconds quicker this year. Whilst we'd allowed the teams to do that, we'd underestimated the impact on the tyre. When you swap them around that creates a point with the metallic belt that we have on it, on the left-hand side, the camber side, and that created the weakness. We got that wrong and we needed to get it right going forward. So making changes, coming here the metallic belt has changed to an aramid belt, which is something the teams tested briefly in Canada. And going forward further again, we'll introduce the 2012 structure with this year's compounds for subsequent races. Logistically, yes, very, very tough. Obviously back-to-back races and our team in Izmit in Turkey have performed a few miracles, working flat out, as you can imagine, to get here, ready to race this weekend.

Can you put a figure on the amount of tyres you've had to produce in the 48 hours?

PH: I think it was about 1000, something like that. We had a few maybe in stock but we had to produce them. But they work very well and we have to give a lot of credit to them.

Pat, a difficult morning for you and one half of the garage at Ferrari. What was the problem with Fernando's car and how much did you lose by the lack running?

Pat FRY: Well, I think every time your car doesn't get out on the track you lose out really. We had a reasonably full aero programme that we effectively had to give up on. We did a little in the afternoon but nowhere near as much as we wanted to. It's just one of those silly little electrical problems. It takes you a while to work what's wrong and by the time you do it just takes too long to sort out.

Do you feel Ferrari have lost performance with recent developments and upgrades and if so how easy it to fix that decline?

PF: It is a development race all through the year isn't it. We've brought some good upgrades and there's some that have been a little bit more temperamental that we're trying to understand. So again you would have seen there were different specs of car running here again in each side of the garage in the morning and in the afternoon.

Tom, if we can turn to you. Silverstone was your third points finish of the season. It's a vastly different situation at Sauber to last year. What exactly is the problem?

Tom McCULLOUGH: Well obviously last year we started the year very strongly, scored a lot of points at the start of the season and moving to the end of the year we weren't quite as competitive on a regular basis. The start of this season has moved us a couple of positions in the team ranking from a competitiveness point of view and that very quickly drops you out of the points. So as opposed to fighting in the points, you're just dropping out of the points. We're working very hard with the car to improve it to try to get back into the points-scoring positions on a more regular basis.

As a member of the engineering department, how restricted are you by resources as you try to develop the car to make it go faster?

TM: You always have to work within your budgets, from a technical point of view, where you're pushing very hard on the correlation side to understand the car as well as we can do. We have an update package coming for the next race, which we'll be evaluating at the next test. So we're still pushing very hard and obviously the more you can push the better.

Sam, McLaren's problems have been well documented this season. As it stands at the moment, how much of your resources are focused on the 2013 car compared with next year's 2014 project?

Sam MICHAEL: Well the 2014 car has been in development for a good nine or 12 months now. As with all teams, you're just balancing up how much resource you put on that versus this year. We're still developing this year's car; we still have parts coming for it. We'll definitely do that until the shutdown – which is only three weeks away. I think once we get back we'll see what the competitiveness is like around sort of Monza, Spa, Singapore and then make a call on how long we keep pushing on that. At the moment we're working on both cars. There's still a lot of things... although the actual components wouldn't directly carry over, the understanding of the flow mechanisms around the car is still valuable.

So if results improve, it's worth persisting with this year's car. If they don't, by the time we get to Singapore, is that where you say 'no, we're going to switch the focus to 2014', a season Martin Whitmarsh, your team principal, has already said is a very important season.

SM: Probably, you would... it's probably going to be based on those factors. You'll be looking at correlation, seeing if the parts you bring, over those two or three races post-shutdown work, and work strongly, and start giving you results you might continue. But it depends how much carries over. Probably the piece that carries over the least is the exhaust because it's so different to next year and not relevant. Most of the other parts, as I said, even if they're... of course they won't be the same bits of carbon but the actual academic studies that you're doing in the company are still valid.

Finally, Paddy, your first Friday press conference as Mercedes' Executive Director Technical.

Paddy LOWE: Thank you very much.

Good to see you here.

PL: It's good to be back.

Lovely to see you in the paddock. How do you fit into the existing structure, into the technical director structure at Mercedes? What are your day-to-day responsibilities?

PL: Well, I've only just arrived, as you know. At the moment I'm just trying to find my feet and get to know the company. A lot of people to get to know – get to know how they work. I'll be supporting Ross and Toto and also the technical team – Bob, Aldo and Geoff. At the moment I'm looking all around, seeing how I can help.

Q: Have you cast a fresh pair of eyes over the 2013 car and identified areas where improvements can be made?

PL: Yeah. I'm looking at the very short term as well as into next year and how the organisation is structured as well. So, wherever I can help immediately, I am. But there's no particular focus.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action / National Speedsport News) To the four team guys, was there ever a point during the race at Silverstone when you considered withdrawing your cars – and reasons for leaving them in.

TM: From our side we monitored the data very closely during the race. We knew the operating limits we were working within, and how we were using the tyres. We speak quite closely with our Pirelli engineer and he was giving us some feedback as well. So, from our side, everything was good.

Sam?

SM: Yes, it was discussed on our pitwall. It was more a discussion focussed around what we thought the FIA may do or may not do, rather than us actually making a decision to pull McLaren cars out by themselves. It was more a discussion about what we should do in between that time. Just in case that happened.

What was the discussion at Ferrari Pat?

PF: I think in that type of situation it's always tricky and you've got to try to work out the best way to contain it. Silverstone is now the highest loaded circuit that we go to – it obviously used to be Indianapolis – and the type of failure, if you see it, was likely to be structural fatigue failure. So the first thing you do is look at where people were getting to. I think Lewis broke on lap nine or eight, we failed on lap 10, someone got to lap 14. So instantly we were thinking 'well, you've got to minimise stint length.' We were advised by Pirelli to increase the pressures, which we did, and you try as much as you can to contain that situation. So I think from around the first round of tyre failures, we were always going to three-stop because that was a less risky way. To try and two-stop from there you would be well past the mileage that the tyres were obviously failing at. We tried to contain it that way. And then obviously, after the second failures, there was another request to go up on the pressures again – and you can see our pace drop off as we increased the tyre pressures.

But not a thought of pulling out?

PF: I think we were thinking of how we could contain it and make it as safe as we could rather than pulling out. There was some conversation with the FIA on the intercom about the tyre pressures we were running behind the safety car but in the end we just have to manage it.

And finally Paddy?

PL: Very similar to Pat's reply. We were keeping a close eye on what the FIA might do in terms of a decision but for our point of view it was more a matter of management. Whether through pressure or instructions to the driver about certain corners and kerbs and so on.

Q: (Kate Walker – GP Week) We learnt last night that the GPDA members have considered withdrawing from this race. I was wondering what discussions you'd had from your drivers about potential withdrawals and how you felt about that?

PL: It's not something we go involved in, no.

Pat?

PF: I haven't discussed it with either of the drivers. We've obviously gone through the changes here, why we think things will be an improvement but we've left it at that.

Sam?

SM: No, it's not something we discussed with the drivers. They came back from the GPDA meeting and said that they'd made that decision. We respect that. Both of our drivers, and I'm sure the rest, are fully aware of the changes and investigations that Pirelli have done over the last four or five days. It has been a pretty monumental effort to get the tyres that they've got here. I fully appreciate that. Had a lot of conversations with Pirelli directly and we're happy with the direction and changes that they're making. Both of our drivers are fully aware of that and understand it. At the same time you can kind of understand their concern: they just don't want a repeat of the last race. So we respect them because of that.

Tom?

TM: Similar really to what Sam was saying. We went through all the technical changes that have been done and the operating limits that have been recommended by Pirelli and the drivers were pretty confident that things would be OK.

Q: (Pierre Van Vliet – F1i.com) Question for Paul. I understand that on top of the young driver days in Silverstone, Pirelli is planning some more tests – a private test in Paul Ricard next week or Barcelona at the end of the month. Is that true – and which teams are going to be involved?

PH: The young drivers' test, we're taking along some of the tyres that are going to... the structure of the tyre that will be used going forward this season. Five sets. The Paul Ricard and Barcelona tests are with the 2010 Renault and it's our own testing that's looking forward for a few things for next season. Obviously it's a little bit slow now compared to the way the cars are moving.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – The Citizen) Paul, your press release on Tuesday stated that there was no safety issue if the tyres were used as intended. You also clarified that turning them around... the effect of that, the lower pressures - all that's been corrected. As a result of that, on what basis have the

specifications actually been changed on the grounds of safety, because that's the only way the rule change could be pushed through? Could you clarify that, please?

PH: Well, you've seen at Silverstone a very dramatic increase in performance, compared to previous years and for some teams, they described it as a three fold increase in loading on the tyres, so going forward, you learn from those situations, obviously, and you want to give a greater margin, so it's purely that.

Q: So it's a precautionary tactic, as it were, a precautionary measure that you need to take.

PH: Well, yeah. The rate of development in Formula One is vast. You've also got a moving target. You don't need two signals like that, do you?

Q: (Walter Koster – Saabrucker Zeitung) Mr Hembery, after all these tyre dramas at the beginning of the season, are you still able to sleep well, or do you have nightmares? And do you fear that Mr Jean Todt could perhaps have the intention to bring his French friends back into Formula One with Michelin?

PH: Well, I don't have nightmares fortunately. We do work a lot. I think everyone in Formula One, these people here, will tell you that no matter what job you have in Formula One it's very intensive so that's not an issue. I have to say that Jean Todt and the FIA were extremely supportive. Actually we were talking, before Sunday, about a number of issues going forward and I could only say that we thank the FIA for their great support, including Charlie Whiting as well, over the last week. I think that all I can say is what I see and that's a very co-operative and very supportive FIA.

Q: (Oana Popoiu – F1Zone.net) Sam, Jenson said yesterday that it's the development of this car that will help you next year. If McLaren don't manage to fix this car, how will that negatively affect next year's car?

SM: I think it goes back to the intro question that David asked. All the work we do on this year's car and any investigative work, whether it gets good correlation or not, is still valid for the 2014 car because you're trying different things to understand... you can clearly measure where you have deficiencies and when you try and do changes for the track, whether you measure them here during Friday testing that we do or any future Grand Prix Fridays. When you get those components and then you feed that information back to the design office and wind tunnel, that loop that you close generates information, whether the test was positive or negative, so that's how it will feed into next year.

Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action and National Speedsport News) Pat and maybe Paul, the minimum tyre pressures have gone up, I believe, when leaving the pits by only one pound. How can one pound make that much difference? When we look at a road car it doesn't make much difference at all.

PF: In terms of car balance, we obviously do play around with pressures, change of balance from qualifying to the race. It's a standard tool that everyone uses. And also the higher pressures... you can worsen your long run by increasing your rear pressures. It's a tool; as long as everyone is working to the same limits it's fine. There is a tendency, if you've got an oversteering car, to try and run the pressures as low as you can at the rear or higher at the front. That's just a normal way you chase a car balance.

Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action and National Speedsport News) From a safety point of view, why is it much better to have...?

PF: Well, I think maybe that's a question for Paul.

PH: Well, you've got to have a starting point and it's what happens as well as the pressures grow which is also important. Another thing we were conscious of as well after Silverstone is the safety car period which was extended. Normally that's not a great issue because you don't drop too low but when you're at a circuit like Silverstone, if you restart and you've dropped down below almost the starting pressures, then that can create other issues, so that's something else that we're studying at the moment. Road cars, well I don't think people check their pressures too much on road cars, sadly, which is why the European Union I believe have introduced new digital measurements on new cars going forward for pressures. It's still very important; whichever car you're driving, you need to check your pressures.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – The Citizen) Primarily for Pat and Paddy; the 2012 spec tyres have got a different shape to the 2013 tyres. That shape is being introduced from Hungary. What aerodynamic effect do you believe this will have on your cars?

PF: Obviously the shape of the tyre is critical to the aerodynamics around the front wing and around the diffuser. We just need to re-optimize in those two areas. Obviously we have the wind tunnel tyres for both so we need to get in and start comparing and seeing what adjustments are needed. It's impossible to say if it's going to benefit one car more than another. I don't know. I guess we'll find out in Hungary.

PL: Yeah, there are differences but we're aware of those differences because it's a tyre, obviously, that we used and developed around last year, so we can look at that when that's been finally confirmed and optimize the car around that.

Q: Could it be a benefit to either McLaren or Sauber?

SM: I don't think so but I don't know to be honest. I don't think anyone really knows. Probably the best comparison is that we've all done that test in Brazil, Friday, last year when we compared 2012 casing to 2013 and the changes were not significant so that's the only piece of data we've got. As Pat said, we've also got all the wind tunnel tyres and things like that. The main thing is that the changes are being done for safety so it's second order what effect it has on the performance.

TMcC: Nothing really much more to add. As Sam was saying, safety's really the most important thing, whether it increases or reduces the performance of our car we shall see once we get out on the track.

Q: (Ian Parkes – Press Association) Paul, there are no guarantees in anything but what degree of certainty can you say that the tyres you have here and the tyres that you will have from Hungary onwards are safe?

PH: Well, we wouldn't be racing if we didn't feel they were safe. You go into every race with the best information that you have and you wouldn't come to any race if you had any doubts.

Q: (Kate Walker – GP Week) We've heard this week that the possibility of a late season tyre test after Interlagos for 2014 has been mooted. How do you feel about that, will that be beneficial, given all of the spec changes we've got between the next year?

TMcC: I understood that test was now not even going to happen. Potentially we will be testing some tyres during the free practice session at Brazil but maybe Paul knows more about that.

PH: Practice isn't viable because it's so limited in running. You can maybe run one spec. The intention was to run a far more detailed, proper tyre test programme. We need to have a re-think on that one and find another way. Brazil would be ideal

because it would be a good circuit for us to run some testing, because of the nature of the circuit, end of season as well, we'll be getting closer to what we want to be using for next season.

Q: Sam, would that be what you would be looking for as well, a tyre test in Brazil?

SM: One thing I do agree with with Paul is that Brazil is a good track for outing problems on the opposite side, obviously, to what we had at Silverstone. So McLaren will support whatever Pirelli wants to do. I do believe you can do quite a lot on Fridays as well but obviously not as much as if you concentrate fully on a one or two day test afterwards.

PL: For us the most important thing is safety and the integrity of the tyre so we're working as closely as we can with Pirelli and their engineers and the FIA to help guide the process to deliver that result. Whether that needs a test at a particular place is another matter to be determined but I think the important thing at the moment is for the engineers to work behind the scenes and make sure that the right analysis is done to feed the process.

Q: Beneficial to Ferrari to have the test?

PF: Well, I think the test was discussed yesterday in the SWG and I thought that the conclusion was not Brazil but they were going to try and find another solution. That's as much as I know.

Q: So Paul, if it's not Brazil and it's not FP1 in Brazil, is there time for another solution?

PH: We need to have another chat, a more serious chat. We need to find, in more detail, what we need to do. For us, tyre testing is 14/18 specifications, 600 kilometers a day. You obviously can't do that on a Friday. We need to find a way of running this season with something more representative than the 2010 car. Equally, going forward, what happens when the new cars are actually going out? There's certainly a need to go wet testing in our opinion, we believe. Probably the teams might be interested in doing that as well seeing that half the year we seem to be racing in the rain. The new power plants, we understand, will have a dramatic impact next year and certainly wet conditions is something that we need to think about running an all team test before we actually get to Malaysia.

Q: (Oana Popoiu – F1Zone.net) Pat, how many times during a weekend do you change the strategy? And how much of that relies on your car's performance and how much on your competitors?

PF: Well, you go in with a rough plan of where you are. There's been quite a few races this year which have been on the borderline of either three to four or two to three (pit stops). I think you have a plan but then it's a case of looking at everyone's relatively pace, tyre degradation, how our tyres are doing. It's constantly being updated really. It's all done live and in simulation-land.

Q: Do you prefer it that way. Is it a bit more exciting where you're having to change plans every few laps?

PF: I think it is down to knowing exactly what the tyres are doing and how you are relative to your competitors. You will be a very clever person if you manage to sort that all out in your first simulation, to be honest.

Q: (Ian Parkes – Press Association) Paul, you've touched on the difficulties of testing going into next season; how deep is the concern inside Pirelli that you won't have enough testing going into 2014 and will encounter problems like we've seen this year?

PH: Well, the good thing is that we're now talking in a lot more detail and that will carry on over the next few weeks. We feel that there is a need to do some level of testing with representative cars. You can imagine that there could be some surprises again next season and maybe there will need to be some check on balance done then as well. But at the moment, there isn't a clear indication of what we should do and we hope and judging by the discussions we've had there is a willingness to look at solutions that work for everybody, for the sport and for Pirelli.

Ends