



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

2013 Indian Grand Prix Post Qualifying Press Conference Transcript

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DRIVERS

1 – Sebastian VETTEL (Red Bull Racing)

2 – Nico ROSBERG (Mercedes)

3 – Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes)

Q: Sebastian, it seems to have just been a seamless weekend for you. It seems to have all gone perfectly so far.

Sebastian VETTEL: Yeah – so far it's a brilliant weekend. The car has run basically very, very well since yesterday morning. We didn't have to change a lot and through qualifying it just got better when the track ramped up. New tyres again, new tyres again and yeah, the car was amazing. It's a great circuit, I really like the flow of the track, especially around the middle sector with all the high-speed corners – but for sure it's not a secret if your car behaves the way you want to through there then for sure you're going to enjoy that a lot. So, I think we did that today. Great result – also for the team. Obviously Mark is on a different strategy so we'll see what the race brings tomorrow.

Q: Your third pole position here, you've led every lap so far, you must start favourite to win the race tomorrow – and take the ultimate prize.

SV: Yeah – I'm trying not to think about it. Obviously it's difficult when every second person in the paddock asks you the same question. But I think we've done pretty well in the past, focussing on every single step and I don't see a reason why to change things for tomorrow or the next couple of races. So, yeah, we're in a good position. I think we worked hard to be there and yeah, tomorrow is a long race, as I touched on, with strategy I think it will be tricky to always do the right thing – but there's a lot of laps so I think we have a quick package and should be in good shape tomorrow.

Q: Nico, you said yesterday it was a tough day. Obviously a lot of progress made.

Nico ROSBERG: Yeah, and to be honest we're – I'm – completely on a knife's edge. Really pushing the limits this weekend, just trying to extract that little tenth more out of the car. Trying different things, new ways, new setups and until now it works. So I'm very pleased with that. Qualifying in second is better than I hoped for – because of Mark being on another strategy, so for the moment it's looking OK. The race is still going to be tough because it's very different circumstances here with the Option tyre really struggling at the beginning of the race tomorrow and then Prime will be OK but also the balance of the car is all very different. So, we'll see.

Q: The strategy really is what it's down to. Is that preferable for you drivers? Is that something you enjoy?

NR: Well, I'm very interested in it, yeah, but it's so complex that you really rely on the pit wall to do their job – but of course I prepare for it well before the race and look into it and also discuss what my preference is and all of those things.

Q: Lewis, third on the grid and obviously great that the two Mercedes are second and third – best of the rest as it were – behind Sebastian. What are your feelings?

Lewis HAMILTON: It's been a tough weekend. It's been a tough weekend for us and incredible... congratulations to Sebastian, it's obvious that that's some serious pace that they have, especially with Webber on the Primes just behind us. But we've been pushing, as Nico said, as hard as we can. We really want to get a great result this weekend. Strategy is going to play a huge part but I was a little bit surprised to be where we are but generally, bit by bit, adjusting the set-up and everything, we got a reasonable balance and hopefully tomorrow we can push together to try and stay ahead of the rest.

Q: Any traffic issues out there?

LH: I did have through eight and nine. I did have someone in front of me – I'm not really sure who it was, I was so focussed on the road. It didn't help (To Vettel: "It might have been you!"). I think it may have been one of the Red Bulls, but I probably didn't lose too much time. Yeah, anyways, look forward to tomorrow.

Q: Sebastian, did you consider the same strategy as Mark?

SV: Well, I have to start on the different tyre so obviously the strategy is different. It's all difficult now, as Nico touched on, obviously. It's very interesting, surely not easy. I think in the end if everybody does his bit then it probably doesn't matter too much. Surely the race will be different in the beginning if you start on the opposite tyre. So for us three I think it's the same thing but then obviously I think Mark is the first car on Primes – with a different strategy.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Q: Sebastian: 43rd pole position, as I said, you've got an amazing record around here. What is it about this circuit?

SV: I don't know. I really like this circuit, especially the middle sector. I think it's very challenging with all the fast, or high-speed corners. It really depends, obviously, if the car does what you want. I think that's what all of us enjoy and in particular you get to enjoy that around these couple of corners. So, yeah, the car's been strong since Friday morning, since yesterday morning. We didn't have to adjust that much. Of course you always trim a little bit – in the right direction hopefully. But, yeah, we've been very strong on both compounds, so a good result, and also a good result for the team with Mark sitting in fourth, right behind those two guys.

Q: Interesting with that strategy certainly. I wondered if you'd considered that or how much of a threat that strategy is?

SV: Which one?

Q: With the medium tyre.

SV: Well, difficult to say now. Obviously we decided to go for what I did together, and Mark decided to go for the opposite. So, yeah, what turns out to be the right strategy, we'll find out tomorrow. But I'm sure the race is long and you will have plenty of time to make up. In the end I think the strategies shouldn't determine the result that much. We're got very good pace, the car, as I said, behaves well around here, so we'll see what we can do tomorrow.

Q: Have you solved the problem – if there was a problem – about the start from Japan?

SV: Well, we just got surprised by how low the grip was, I think. Yeah, obviously, both then, I think we've been a bit too aggressive, too much wheel-slip and the guys behind us had a better start. So, for sure, we'll try to do better tomorrow – but quite confident. I think the starts we had before that were pretty good. Korea, I had a very good start, so I think we know how to do it, we just need to get it all right.

Q: Nico, easily your best qualifying here, your previous best was seventh a couple of years ago – so you must be very pleased with that.

NR: I am, yeah, definitely. Coming here I knew it was going to be trying to be best of the rest and managed to do that really well today with second place. And even getting Mark because he's on a different strategy. So, yeah, I'm pleased with that. It's really been a tough weekend because we really just pushed the limits, completely on everything, to try to extract that tenth or two more out of the car. I think up to now it's been successful. It's been very, very difficult, on a knife's edge all the time but for now it's worked, it seems. We're a step forward from where we were in recent races and that's good to see. But still a long race tomorrow.

Q: Question for both you and Lewis really. Did you consider going the medium tyre route?

NR: Well of course it's always a consideration. It was a consideration for tomorrow but we decided that soft tyre was the best way to go.

Q: Do you feel it was a bit of gamble to go that way?

NR: No, not a gamble. It was the best thing to do from my point of view.

Q: To go on the mediums would have been a gamble?

NR: Not really a gamble either because that strategy is also a good one, yeah? But we just through our one was better.

Q: Lewis, basically happy with third or do you think you could have pipped Nico?

LH: It doesn't really matter at the end of the day. Nico did a great job, he's been strong all weekend and on my side, I've struggled a little bit through this weekend. I struggled a little bit with something different on the car this weekend which Nico had had experience of seeing maybe in the past. I came to grips with it really quite quickly at the end and I'm really happy with the result and the lap time that I was able to get. There's always a little bit of time everywhere but we'll try and push these guys as hard as we can in the race obviously. They're in another world but we'll try to stay ahead of the rest.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Paolo Ianieri – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Nico and Lewis, obviously, as you said, you are the best of the rest and probably Sebastian will do the race by himself and you're going to control Ferrari more for second place in the Constructors' championship. Do you think that Alonso's strategy, starting with medium, could be a threat to you or do you feel confident that you have better pace than them here?

NR: Well, we've been a little bit quicker, I feel, until now, the whole weekend, but of course that strategy is a threat, because there's not that much difference between the two strategies so for sure we need to keep an eye on, them.

Q: (Sudhir P. Chandran - Chequered Flag) Sebastian , I'm curious to know what kind of music or chant do you listen to on your headphones before qualifying and the race, every single time, to get on top, every time you've gone out?

NR: Didn't you say Justin Bieber last time? No?

SV: No.

NR: Ok, I must have misunderstood or misheard that one

SV: It's not really... it's music, yes, but it's more like melodies, no singing, so no Justin Bieber. I think that was on your iPod. In the end, it's not a secret, it's just music that gets me or tries to get me in the zone so that I hopefully get the best out of myself.

Q: (Shridhar Potdar – Sakal Media) Sebastian, the second part of the season has always been fruitful for you, the last two seasons when you have delivered most and this year also you are delivering your best in the second part of the season. Is there anything special about the races, especially in Asia?

SV: Not a lot, really. I'm trying hard in the first half as well. Obviously the last couple of years it was a benefit to do well in the second half. I think generally there's no track in the calendar that I dislike. I think towards the end, we've got very good tracks such as here and the best one, I think, Suzuka. For the last race, maybe there's a little bit of that but I don't think there's a reason why we perform better in the second half than the first one. I think, as a team, we've been working very hard and very consciously on our fitness; it's a long year for all the teams so that we make sure that we're still on top of our game towards the end.

Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action and National Speedsport News) Nico and Lewis answered this earlier, so just for Seb: in a few weeks we will be in Texas, what are your thoughts on the track and also the ambiance at the track and in the city of Austin?

SV: Well, I think it was fantastic last year. To be honest, we were all very surprised. Obviously, up to that point, Formula One didn't have the best record in the United States, so it was great to see that there were so many people. The whole city... I think that's really the special thing that we enjoy, apart from the track itself, that the whole city was living the Grand Prix. You could feel that there was a special vibe and that everyone was looking forward to the event. I think it was generally very positive. We obviously look forward to going there again. I think the track is tricky, very challenging, mixed, with high speed and slow corners. It was nice to be on the podium last year, nice to get a different kind of hat. Yeah, we'll try to do it again.

Q: (Luis Fernando Ramos – Racing Magazine) Sebastian, it is known how much you admire the history of F1 so what is your top five drivers of all time?

SV: I don't think it's fair to only name... that for sure there is more than five. There are different times in Formula One so if you look back recently, you've got a couple of drivers racing now but obviously if you don't look too far back, drivers like Mika (Hakkinen), Michael (Schumacher), Ayrton (Senna), Nigel Mansell dominated their times in a way – Prost – so you cover quite a lot of the last couple of years. After that, there's guys like Lauda, Piquet. I don't think it's fair to highlight one-two-three because Formula One has changed.

Q: (Shridhar Potdar – Sakal Media) Sebastian after the qualifying was over, you took an instrument from your teammate and checked the brakes. This shows 100 percent involvement, that you're very serious about the set-up and the technical preparation of the car and 100 percent involvement is giving you 100 percent commitment and earning nearly 100 percent success. So how much involvement and what motivates you to be so into the game?

SV: Well, I think first off, if you don't give your 100 percent, then you would be disappointed because you didn't give your 100 percent... No, I'm joking. It's a team effort at the end of the day, you know. The team is pushing very hard and you also feel that you have to deliver as well, as I feel part of the team, so I feel that I've got to do my bit right as

well and for sure you're very conscious, so you try to find the right set-up. The team obviously tries to support you as much as possible, before the race, at the race weekend. I love what I do, it's days like this when you get out and the car feels fantastic, it's the greatest reward you can get so for sure you want to use all that 100 percent.

Q: (Paolo Ianieri – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Sebastian, if you look at the previous three years when you won the championship, the day before, what is the difference? What is your approach, how are you going to approach tomorrow's race?

SV: To be honest, I think they've been very similar. Obviously two of the three years have been very different: 2011, you could say that it was more relaxed. Obviously 2010 and 2012 was a different situation but at the end of the day there's no secret, no secret preparation. I think we all have a certain routine we go through before a race but also the night before. I don't think I did anything special the last three times, not that I can remember and I wasn't really looking forward to the race, saying that 'yeah, tomorrow is the day, could be the day.' I was basically trying to focus on the race and in a way, trying to ignore the fact that it could be the decisive race. At the end of the day, you also have so many races a year that on the last race of the season, if you do your best and it's enough then it's fine, if you do your best and it's not enough, then it's not the last race that's to blame.

Q: (Nirmal John – Fortune India Magazine) I just wanted to ask your views on Formula E which is the new electric car racing series which is in the works. How sustainable is that kind of racing series and what does that signify in terms of the future of Formula One meeting something like electric cars?

SV: I don't like it at all. I think it's not the future, I think the people come here to feel Formula One and there's not much to feel when a car goes by and you don't even hear anything else but the wind. Maybe I'm very old fashioned, but I think Formula One needs to scream, needs to be loud, there needs to be the vibration. That's what I remember from the first time I went to see Formula One in 1992 for free practice at Hockenheim, even though it was wet and the cars didn't go out, but once they did their installation laps it was a great feeling just to be there and hear them coming through the forest and feel it through the ground. That's why I'm not a big fan at all.

NR: Well, it's an interesting thing, for sure, something new and I know there's a lot of interest and it's planned to be in the cities so it's bringing the race to the people, not the people to the race and of course it's a bit of the future, so it will be interesting to see how it goes. We need to wait and see.

LH: I agree with both of them.

Q: (Lokendra Pratap Sahi - The Telegraph, Kolkata) Seb, what has made you the driver you are?

SV: I don't know. I think in the end there's a little bit of influence on the guy you become but also you have your preference in life, you have a certain thing called taste so you do what in the end you'd like. Sometimes some people lead you to one thing or another but in the end you make the decision. On track, obviously, if you look at my career, I think there's a lot of people that I had behind me supporting me from an early age but to be fair, when I started, all this was not even... we didn't even really dream about it. I had a hobby and I started together with my father to go racing with the whole family as well. Obviously it became a little bit more serious, a little bit faster, a little bit more serious. I think you really go step by step. In the end, I think it's passion that drives us all, the love that we have for the sport, the love we have to challenge ourselves, challenge the cars and nowadays instead of racing with go-karts we just end up in bigger cars on bigger tracks with more people watching. I think the core hasn't changed.

Ends