



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

## **Press Information**

### **2013 United States Grand Prix Sunday Press Conference Transcript**

**17.11.2013**

#### **DRIVERS**

**1 – Sebastian VETTEL (Red Bull Racing)**

**2 – Romain GROSJEAN (Lotus)**

**3 – Mark WEBBER (Red Bull Racing)**

#### **PODIUM INTERVIEWS**

**(Conducted by Mario Andretti)**

**Sebastian, I'm still out of breath. How in the world do you do it: eight straight, I mean you're rewriting the record books. Tell us about it. Second last year, top podium step this year. Tell us.**

**Sebastian VETTEL:** I don't know, honestly! It's impossible to know what to say. First of all, I would like to say thanks to the crowd. It's unbelievable. It's only our second race here. Second race here and we've got more than 100,000 people coming on Sunday. I think this is one of the best races we have all season. The whole city is going crazy, so it's phenomenal to race here in front of the crowd. The car was fantastic. It was a bit tight at the start; Romain had a good start initially, I didn't know whether it would be enough. It's tough judgement up the hill and then I just tried to focus on myself. We had incredible pace again in the car and could control the gaps. I don't know, eight in a row is... you are a legend, you know....

**Your first win on American soil. Your debut was on American soil as well?**

**SV:** Yes, 2007 in Indianapolis. To come back [to the US] last year and finish on the podium and today to win the race is incredible. I don't know what to say.

**Fabulous, congratulations. I guess you're going for nine next week?**

**SV:** We'll try.

**Romain, congratulations, your best effort of the season – sixth podium. You have represented Lotus in a very proud way. I guess number one in the team next year, right? Let's make it official. So congratulations. Tell us about your race today?**

**Romain GROSJEAN:** Yeah, good race. Good start, I could pass Mark and almost got Sebastian. The car was working very well today. I'm very proud to represent Lotus and my

guys that are working in Enstone. It's a fantastic team. Being between those two cars is our best – everyone did a 100 per cent job. It means a lot to do a podium here in the United States. I like this country. It's always good to come here, so glad, and looking forward to come back on that beautiful track and hopefully next year we'll be one step ahead.

**Mark, I guess this is going to be your last stop here in Formula One at the Circuit of the Americas, so not a bad effort today, third, a podium.**

**Mark WEBBER:** Yeah. Obviously pole position was very important yesterday, so I knew it was going to be important and that it would cost me a lot better result today. A little bit disappointed not to qualify better. We knew it was not going to be the easiest to get into turn one from there. We had a good launch, a good start, but then obviously we all wanted to be on the outside. I got a little bit boxed in and then I had to pass Lewis. Then it's not easy to pass Romain. He drove very well. He was very clean on the exit of eight, nine. The DRS in the end was a little bit short on the ratios but in the end that's how you get the ratios for the whole race. So, good job for the whole team and I'm happy to finish on the podium in front of the American fans for the last time, in Formula One anyway. I'll see you next year with the Porsche.

## **PRESS CONFERENCE**

**Q: Sebastian, your 12 win this season, seventh from pole, 38<sup>th</sup> of your career but probably the most important number is that it's the eighth in a row. Never been done before in Formula One. You got a bit fed up answering questions about it in anticipation but now that it's actually happened and you've actually done it, how does it feel?**

**SV:** It's incredible. I think it's one of those things that you never expect to... one of those records that you never expect to be beaten so it's very difficult to find the right words. I didn't really answer the questions the last couple of days because at the end of the day what makes me jump into the car is not a certain number. But certainly today, when you realise that you've done it, it makes you very proud in that moment and, yeah, I think it's very difficult for all of us to realise what it actually means. If you look back, and if you look those names who had similar records or outstanding performances in the past, I think it's impossible to understand. People look back and they talk about that time and about certain drivers and one day people might look back and talk about our time and what we've done as a team. I said it on the team radio, the spirit is fantastic. Everybody's just happy to turn up, give it everything he has and I think – if there is one – that's the secret. Yes, we have a phenomenal car; yes, the car has been mostly very, very reliable but I think it's the mindset we have going in, really trying to give it everything we have, not miss a single step... yeah... How to, after the race, not to turn around and think that there was a little bit left here, a little bit left there. Another very, very, very strong weekend. I think people tend to forget that every single weekend is a challenge on its own. It's not eight weekends as a whole. It's every single weekend. And to have such an incredible run, it's very difficult to realise.

**Q: Romain, your sixth podium of the season. I think you just said in your own language that it's one year ago that you became a father. It's been an amazing turn around from last year to this year but obviously this was a race all about your start and particularly then about soaking up the pressure from Mark in the closing stages. Tell us about it.**

**RG:** Yes, exactly. We knew that the start would be crucial for us and then the race, if they were going ahead, they had too much speed for us, basically. They're doing a fantastic job with a phenomenal car, as Seb says. But we can... he spoke about the spirit in his team and I think we have the same: every guy is happy to come in the morning and happy to work and check things. Y'know, drivers will always complain about this and this and this. They change it and it brings us to second at the end of the day. So, a very good start, a very good strategy, same as everyone else – I think I was just a little bit better on the option. I said in my own language that one year ago my wife sent me a picture of a pregnancy test saying that 'well done Champion, you're going to be a Dad!' So America brings me a lot of bliss and pleasure and looking forward to come back here.

**Q: Mark from your point of view. Obviously starting second. The initial getaway looked fine but it then was going up the hill that you lost the initiative. I guess your race really was dictated by qualifying yesterday to a large extent but particularly by the getaway today.**

**MW:** Yeah, pole position yesterday was where the fight was. Going to be very difficult from there. I think we were... I was very happy with how I drove today. Got a very good start. You want to be on the outside for Turn One but Romain was already there. I think I made a very good start from the left hand side, which is not the easiest here, so we did what we could. Lewis also was on the outside for clean braking so I had to be a little bit careful with Seb on the inside. And then you've got to clear people and you know when you've got to clear people you use tyres, you use everything up. Romain drove a very good race, he was very strong in the last part of the first sector which you need to be to get out of there. It's super-super difficult to stay close. I did what I could for most of the time but also the tyres are screaming at you for lap after lap and you have to drop back, give them a breather, go again. So, yeah, I did a pretty clean race. I think the performance and pace were very strong from my side but yesterday was when victory was made easier for Seb.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Frederic Ferret – L'Equipe) Romain, what was the strategy to resist to Mark, and Mark, what were the different things you tried with the KERS?**

**RG:** Well, I think the strategy was pretty clear. We were copying what Mark was doing. When he was pitting for hard tyres, we pitted for hard tyres, if he was pitting for prime or option. Then in the race I was just trying to make as much gap as I could before the DRS zone, so turns eight and nine are pretty hard to follow another car. I think we had a pretty good balance around there and then use all the power we could on the back straight, trying to avoid the DRS and then I know that by turns 17,18, 19 it was very difficult to follow me, so he was very close every time into turn one, but never had a go. I think the closest he was into turn 12 was probably ten meters. He pushed me wide once because I outbraked myself but as long as he didn't seem to be too big in the mirror that was fine.

**MW:** As usual, the Lotus is not too bad on the softer end of the range, if you like, with this tyre we qualified on. Had to do the race start, obviously I had to use the tyre to pass Lewis, so when it was time to build up towards the stop, to be patient, to go as long as possible but also knowing that Romain was covering us off, covering the move and waiting for us to pit because the Enstone guys are not rookies when it comes to strategy either. We knew we would look to have an attack on the prime but also, as you say, moving the KERS round a lot is part of my job, to try and create more pressure. The back straight was OK to use all of it, but the key areas are eight, nine and then the hairpin. It's not the easiest track on which

to follow people, I think we saw last year, obviously Seb was in traffic with Lewis, Lewis was very quick but following all the time and couldn't pass. It's a challenging venue still to pass because of turn eight and nine, I think, so in the end we did what we could do. There's not many regrets as to what we could have done differently to get the job done on Romain after that.

**Q: (Luis Fernando Ramos – Racing magazine) Mark, we have a Brazilian Grand Prix in one week, so what's your feeling as you go into your final F1 Grand Prix?**

**MW:** I'm looking forward to it, driving round in the middle of the race thinking 'yes, I'm really looking forward to it because it's time', the enjoyment factor is there but it's not like it was when I was at Jaguar or when I first started at Red Bull. That's natural, that's why the decision gets made obviously. The category has changed quite a bit in the last few years, I've done what I can, done my best but when you realise there comes a point where it's not what it once was and that's what happens to all sportsmen and women, there's a point when it's a little bit different. I've got one week to go, I will leave the paddock very satisfied. I've been dealt a very good hand, very proud of what I've achieved. I never thought I would do that when I left Queanbeyan in Australia, to have had the results I've had, to have worked with the amazing people I've worked with, to race against amazing drivers on the best tracks in the world. I've learned a huge amount about myself, about everything. One week to go and go from there. It's the next chapter when I step out of the car for the last time I will be fine with it. Back to UK Sunday night, walk the dogs on Tuesday morning.

**Q: (Sarah Holt – CNN) Seb, not such a massive victory margin as we've seen in recent races but still, can you tell us what it's been like to effectively race yourself in the last few races and what's been going through your mind in the car?**

**SV:** It's not as if I've been getting bored. Obviously I've quite a lot to do, looking at the gaps. First of all, I have to match their pace. Obviously when they do come closer it's not the best feeling because you want the gap to increase always, but you don't want the gap to become smaller. I think it was clear this weekend that again we had a very strong package. Friday already looked very good, especially on the long run pace. I think in terms of set-up we might have compromised the pace a little bit yesterday. Also it was very tricky with the windy conditions in qualifying for everyone to get everything right in just one lap. It was very easy to lose out a little bit here and there but today I was happier with the balance. Already on the laps to the grid I could feel the car was more similar to Friday so I was very happy once I was in the lead after turn one. Obviously I had to wait a little bit with the safety car before I could unleash the pace but certainly it's a great feeling when you do pull away, and then it's about pacing yourself, pacing yourself to get the range, to look after the tyres etc. Certainly there are a lot of things going on but also it's a nice feeling to have a little bit of a gap because you can take it a little bit easier in some crucial places, to look after the tyres and benefit from that, especially later on in the stint. Overall, you do tend to have quite a bit of work in the car, it's not necessarily... it is a Sunday afternoon drive but not in that regard.

**Q: (Peter Windsor – F1 Racing) Just following on from Sarah's question: Seb, a lot of great drivers say they've never actually driven the perfect lap, and I guess therefore the perfect race has never been driven. How was your race today, we didn't see every corner of every lap. In your own standards, did you make any mistakes at all?**

**SV:** Well, it's different these days. If I compare when I came into Formula One, it was more like sprint racing for twenty laps, get a new set of tyres, refuel and go out and do another sprint. Today, obviously, is different because you don't refuel, the car is very heavy at the beginning and naturally, just because of the way that you have to look after tyres. Now

we've seen in the past couple of years that these tyres do need some management as well, also in terms of driving style and looking after them and making sure you don't go crazy too soon, because it might hurt you later on, so therefore, if you look at the perfect lap, you can't repeat a 100 percent lap every time, because you need to look after the car and tyres. In the end, I think what you want to achieve is the fastest race to the finish line. I think we had a very very strong race today. The last couple of laps on the softs I was struggling because I running into traffic and the tyres were falling off so we were actually the first to come in this time, despite the big gap, but then the hards seem to last very very well in the end. We had very strong pace. I think I went a little bit wide once or twice into turn 12 under braking but other than that, I obviously tried as well to keep it on the line. It is a little bit easier if you have a ten second gap to the car behind to not necessarily use all the kerbs here and there, to manage the tyres a little bit better.

**Q: (Peter Windsor – F1 Racing) The concentric doughnuts you did afterwards looked beautiful. Do you have any set-up that you put into the car before the race in terms of diff or brake balance, to make that happen?**

**SV:** No, no, definitely not. Obviously there's a couple of tricks, we had some... we do have some show runs every year and this is usually when you get to practise your skills when it comes to doughnuts and burn-outs. It just seemed like a good spot. You know, you have to do it in a smooth way otherwise I get a big bollocking from my engineers for not looking after gearbox, engine and so on, so I try to be smooth but equally you want to create some smoke and just have fun. But not any maps, particular set-ups that go in the car just because of that.

**Q: (Luigi Perna – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Seb, what do you think that Michael will tell you about this broken record?**

**SV:** Well, in a way I think I have the same approach as him, as probably every sportsman. I don't think we are jumping into the car to beat certain records. At his time, he was braking a lot of records and many of them will last forever, I think. To come even close and today to beat one of those is exceptional. I think, as a sportsman, you don't jump into the car to break records and equally you don't expect them to last forever. I spoke to him a couple of weeks ago and generally, I think he's very happy with what he has achieved and seemed fairly relaxed. I think he's riding a lot of horses lately so he's quite happy to go karting with his kids and enjoying his life after Formula One. There's a huge part of our lives if you consider that there's a lot of years left once we retire. It's good to enjoy those as well.

**Q: (John Sturbin – Ft. Worth Star-Telegram) Sebastian, on Friday, the technical directors were in here including Adrian Newey talking about next year's changes and how that might upset the balance of power. Is that something you were maybe referring to in your post-race message, you were talking about 'this is something we need to remember?' Are you worried about next year and how it might upset everything?**

**SV:** No, to be honest... Yeah, I remember Adrian said the same thing. I think we have all been there. Yesterday evening I took a shower and I had some thoughts about the day, finishing on pole. It's a little bit of a shame that obviously because of the run we've had lately, people take it as guaranteed that you deliver the result on a Saturday afternoon and Sunday afternoon because I think people tend to in a way respect the result and what it means, the effort behind it and I think it's natural that as an athlete you have ups and downs. Right now, you could say that it's rather more up and then down but you never know what's going to happen, next year is an unknown. I'm sure we will push very very hard and

I'm sure we will fight a lot to maintain our position but there's no guarantee that next year will be like this year. With the new regulations coming in, I think nobody really knows where he will stand. You will have the big teams in front but the question is who and the question is also in terms of gaps. Yesterday was one tenth between Mark and myself which is very very small, it's a small gap and certainly there's a reason to believe that next year the gaps will be bigger and the season will be less consistent for everyone. It's unknown at this stage but generally I think we need to remember and therefore enjoy the moment and the days we're having.

Ends