



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

2014 Bahrain Grand Prix Sunday Press Conference Transcript

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DRIVERS

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PODIUM INTERVIEWS

(Conducted by Brian Johnson)

What a race! Lewis, what's it like to win the 900th Formula One grand prix?

Lewis HAMILTON: It's great to see that we have such a great crowd. It's the first time we've had a night race here. I'm so grateful to the team for working so hard to get us up here. It's my first time winning here in Bahrain, it's taken me a long, long time, so I'm really proud.

But what a race, probably one of the most exciting Formula One races for a long time, would you agree?

LH: Yeah, it was exciting. Nico drove fantastically well throughout the race; very fair and it was very, very hard to keep him behind, particularly at the end. I had built a gap, that was OK, but he was very fast on the option time so I was on the knife edge the whole time and a real relief when I got across the line.

Congratulations, mate, fantastic race. Nico, you got the fastest lap and you helped to make it one of the most exciting grands prix I've seen for a couple of seasons, would you agree?

Nico ROSBERG: I strongly dislike coming second to Lewis, that's really not something I enjoy doing but on the other hand it was definitely the most exciting race I've ever done in my whole career. I hope we were able to give all of you fantastic racing in front of the TV. Today was a day for the sport. We put on a massive show as team Silver Arrows so I hope you had a lot of fun in front of the TV and I'll be back next race to take the win.

Sergio, what was it like following these two guys and what's it like being back on the podium again? You're enjoying this aren't you?

Sergio PÉREZ: Yeah, I mean, it's been a while since my last podium. This podium is very special for me guys, I told you already on the radio. This is only my third race for the team and it was a really, really good one. The strategy was really close for us. It was looking a lot easier until the safety car came because when the safety car came in we were going on two stops so the people behind, the Red Bulls, they were on there stops but we managed to keep it just to the end; one more lap I couldn't manage to keep him back.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Lewis a great battle with Nico, no other way to describe it. Just tell us how tough it is to race with a team-mate that hard and not go off and what it means to you to win it?

LH: Well, this weekend started off well and then I seemed to lose pace while Nico picked up his pace. Today, I knew I needed to get a good start and things generally went my way, except when the pace car came out. I've never won here. I won I think in Formula 3 back in 2004, so it's been a long, long time coming. The safety car came out, we had different tyres. It was one of the most difficult races... I think the last time I had a race like that would probably be Indianapolis, 2007. So, a long, long time. Nico drove fantastically well. When you're with your team-mate it's very, very hard to make the right decisions of where to put your car, where to brake, all these different things, but yeah, it was great.

And Nico? Your side of the story. Obviously at the start, the outside at Turn Four and then later on you attacked him around Lap 18 and 19, again wheel to wheel for a couple of laps. At the end you had a go at it. Is it going to be like this all year?

NR: Yeah. I didn't have the best of starts. It was still good but Lewis had a little of a better one and that's the way it went. And then, yeah, I was quicker today, which I was pleased about and gave it a run. Tried to overtake at the end of the first stint, couldn't make it stick. And then we tried to invert the strategies, just to give me a shot at the end, again to overtake. That was the plan before the race so that worked out well and I tried to keep a good pace on the Prime, knowing that I'll have a shot again at the end with the Option. It was a good battle again but unfortunately couldn't make it happen today. Lewis did a good job defending but, y'know, it was a massive fight out there and that's what I'm here for. For racing like that. I think it was a good day for the sport, which is important, because of recent little bits of criticism. I think they're all going to be rather quiet tomorrow – which is a very good thing. It's good that us as Silver Arrows, we made it happen – but of course I am very unhappy with second.

Sergio, it's been, let's face it, quite a tough period for you since the last time you were at the podium towards the end of 2012. What does this mean to you today?

SP: It means a lot. It's a very special podium for myself. As you say, I had a really tough time, my time in McLaren where I was basically quite far... I never have a chance to fight for a podium in all my year. Really, coming into Force India and being able to, only in my third race, to be able to qualify fourth and then straight away being able to fight for the podium was a great feeling. An amazing podium. The Safety Car makes things really hard for me. It was looking quite comfortable before the Safety Car came in and once it came it was really difficult also to switch the Prime tyre on. It was extremely hard as we had a Safety Car for a long period. So I arrive into Turn One after the restart with my team-mate... just couldn't stop the car, locked the front wheels. Tried my best to keep the position and we managed and then we had the Red Bull coming really quick at the end. Fortunately we managed to keep the podium.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Ralf Bach – Sport Bild) Nico, who took the decision that you stay out two laps longer in the first stint – and when?

NR: The team makes the decision for strategies. We did exactly the plan we discussed before the race. Everything went exactly to plan in order to give me the best opportunity to have a shot at overtaking him at the end of the race. So, it was absolutely... the team played it as fair as they possibly could today, let us race flat out. I don't think you need more evidence than you saw that we're here to race this year and there's no team orders. We want to put on an amazing show for you guys out there, and you at home, and today we managed. Of course that's the small positive, but as I said I really don't like coming second.

Q: (Paolo Ianieri – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Lewis, how difficult was it to defend with the Medium tyre against the Soft tyres of Nico?

LH: It was incredibly tough. As I said, it was one of the toughest situations I've been in for a long time. The Option tyre, for us, we believe it is worth six-and-a-half tenths. To hold that behind, to keep him out of my gap, out of my slipstream and the DRS was very, very hard. To be pushing flat out for ten laps... it was an exceptional race, I think, to be able to have that. Me and Nico haven't had a race like that since back in our karting days. I did think today, I was just saying to him today, there was a race we did years ago in... I don't know what year it was, in karting, our first race together. He was leading the whole way and in the last lap I overtook him and won the race. I thought today for sure he's going to do the same to me, and get me back. That's what was going through my head.

Q: (Vincent Marre – Sports Zeitung) Nico, if you could have changed the strategy during the race, that was set before the race, would you or could you have done it?

NR: As I said, the strategy was exactly as planned and it was also what I wanted. I asked for that on the radio, you can listen to it in the race. I said 'make sure to put me on prime tyres for the second stint because that's the best way for me to have a shot at Lewis at the end of the race.' So in hindsight, I would do exactly the same again and it was the perfect strategy for that race. It is a slower strategy in terms of race time, yeah, but it is the one that gives me a shot at the end of the race if I have the speed.

Q: (Michael Schmidt – Auto, Motor und Sport) To both Mercedes drivers: just at the end of the safety car period, Paddy Lowe came on the radio and said to you 'bring the cars home'. For us, it sounded like 'don't attack each other,' you obviously didn't do so and then Nico, in the last two or three laps, you didn't attack any more. Did something happen there?

NR: I was well aware that the whole world was thinking 'huh, here we go, Silver Arrows team orders, finally they're there.' That was clear to me but it wasn't that at all, it was just 'guys, make sure that you get these cars to the finish. Don't break them, don't crash.' The message was clear anyway, not really necessary to give such a message because we know that, we drive very hard but in the end with the necessary respect but we're free to race all the way and in the end, I just got a bit more overheating on the tyres in the last three laps because I was pushing so hard in the slipstream, you know, with less grip, sliding a lot and so the tyres just overheated in the last three laps and I couldn't get close enough any more. And also with the hybrid, at times you have more then you have less. It's coming and going and it's difficult to be there in the right moment when you do have it. It's not that easy, so there was then a period when I didn't have enough boost power either.

LH: I don't really have much more to say but luckily my tyres didn't go off in those last two or three laps so he seemed to lose a little more than me, so just able to stay ahead.

Q: (Kate Walker – crash.net) Question to both Lewis and Nico: Nico, you were saying that being able to race hard with Lewis is the respect that you have for each other as drivers but you were able to race very very hard and very close. Do you think that having been teammates in karting gave you more of a sense of where each other was going to put their car?

NR: No. I was just pushing to the limit, going for it and just making sure we don't crash, but all the way, as hard as possible and it worked out, and at no time did I think 'we're going to...' At no time were we at risk of taking both cars out. There was always the necessary margin, might not have looked like it on TV but there was. It was good racing.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – Universo On Line) To Nico and Lewis: that was wonderful but mainly fair. It would be nice if you could describe to us some moments... for instance, you Nico, said to yourself 'now I've got him, I've overtaken' and you Lewis 'no, he didn't get me.' Can you describe to us more details from inside the battle?

NR: I thought I'd got him about nine times but they didn't work. He always got the run back on me and he did a good job, that's it. Lewis is obviously a great driver and made it work and next time I need to do better.

(Inaudible question) Out of turn one and then he chose to go on the outside for once. Because it's difficult to see, you don't see him. I don't see where he is at times, I really don't know because there's a big dead angle in the car and so when it's so close, so many times I didn't know where he was and that's where I thought 'OK, now I've got him' and then all of sudden he reappeared again. That's it.

LH: Yeah, it was the same for me. A lot of times he was in my blind spot and I had no idea if he was there or not, so I tried to leave space. You don't know whether he's attacking or braking later into the next corner because you don't even know where he is. That was very difficult. But for me it feels like a long time that I've been able to have a real racer's race and really use whatever skills that I've acquired over the years as a youngster in karting. Being able to apply them in Formula One is a lot harder but to be able to pull them out of the bag and use them again... The time that I went round the outside or got back, just timing it right – you know, it's a fantastic feeling to be able to do that. It's one of the greatest feelings when you obviously come out on top.

Q: (Paolo Ianieri – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Lewis, do you think this could be one of the best victories of your career so far?

LH: I have to watch it back but it's difficult to really... every one is very special but of course, this one today, I think ultimately of course winning the race is the greatest thing, so I'm going to go away tonight very happy of course, but deep down inside, I didn't have the pace today and that's always still in the back of my mind and I've got to really go and work hard to try and find out what that is, because that wasn't the case in the last race. A lot of the advantages that I had in the last race Nico found them as we came here and applied them and did even better, so I've got to go now and find out what he did better than me and see if I can improve for the next race.

Q: (Cristobal Rosaleny– Car and Driver) Checo, last year was maybe your more difficult year in Formula One with McLaren. This year you have alongside you a big name like Nico Hulkenberg. Could you describe how important it is for you to be in front and taking the podium you never got at McLaren?

SP: It was very important. Obviously, when I joined McLaren, I joined a really fast team, the fastest team there of all my options back then, so when the McLaren option came to me, I didn't think twice. So I went into McLaren and I found out that we had a really tough time, a very difficult time and basically I had to... I frustrated myself very much because you come as a young driver, hoping to fight for the title, to win races and when you join a big team it's the first thing that you think of and it was not that way so I had a really tough time, more than people think, because of the fact that I had a competitive car that was able to fight for a podium. So being able to do it is a great feeling. Obviously the race, the way it paid... Yesterday qualifying was good but we were at a big disadvantage with the people behind, for example Nico Hulkenberg, my teammate, he had newer tyres than I did and at the end of the day, when we were on two stops, it makes a massive difference. He was able to stop a lap earlier and not make a difference... he jumped me, I had to jump him back and overtake the Williams. So a bit like Lewis was saying, it was a really enjoyable race, a bit like karting days when you're fighting in and out. But when you are sliding all the time and you have degradation, it was not so enjoyable towards the end of the race, but still, once you've crossed the finish line it was a great feeling for me.

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