



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

2014 British Grand Prix Thursday Press Conference Transcript 03.07.2014

DRIVERS – Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso), Max CHILTON (Marussia), Valtteri BOTTAS (Williams), Jenson BUTTON (McLaren), Felipe MASSA (Williams), Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes)

PRESS CONFERENCE

Lewis, if I could start with you: obviously you were on pole here last year, a former winner of the event, I see you've got the Union flag on the underside of the peak on your cap. Your feelings on racing at home and coming home?

Lewis HAMILTON: It's always a special weekend or week for us British drivers. Coming here, seeing the fans, already having been at Goodwood and seeing how many people were there and the support that's coming into this weekend. It's very exciting for us and the feeling of being at home is really a great feeling. And the support, as I said, for me and Jenson and the guys here, it's unlike any other place we experience. I'm really excited to see everyone and I hope that we can put on a good show and that the weather stays good.

You spoke after the race in Austria about damage limitation, particularly after what happened in qualifying. Clearly, I guess this weekend you want to start on the front foot and stay there. So I wonder what lessons you've taken away from the setbacks lately?

LH: There's not really many lessons. There's been these two races where we had a technical problem in Montreal and then in the last race I faced some difficulties on the driver side. Sometimes it goes well, sometimes it doesn't, but you're always going from strength to strength, so we've learned some things but nothing we can particularly point out.

OK, thank you for that. Jenson coming to you. Similar question really to the first one to Lewis: the feelings on coming back to the British Grand Prix and racing in front of your home crowd. It's a race you've not won, but you've always enjoyed being here.

Jenson BUTTON: Yeah, it's always very special coming home for this grand prix. I think for every driver Silverstone is a special race. It's a great layout; always a full house, whether it's sunny, hot, raining, windy. But it's especially special for a British driver racing at home. Whether you're doing well or not you get the support. It's been very overwhelming actually the last few days since Goodwood leading into this home grand prix, I think for all of us. So I'm very much looking forward to driving on the circuit tomorrow and seeing the fans.

It's your fifth season with McLaren this year. How do you see things developing from here?

JB: We will see. For me, right now, it's about doing the best job I can. The whole team, us as a team are working every day to do a better job. We're not where we want to be, we're not where McLaren is used to being, and we know that, so we're working very hard. In terms of the future that's something I can't discuss right now.

OK, we'll move on to Felipe: congratulations, I believe it's your 200th grand prix this weekend you will be celebrating. So your thoughts on that and also on his rich run of form at the moment for you and the Williams team?

Felipe MASSA: Yeah, I think it's a fantastic race to celebrate [at]. I think it's an important achievement. It's already a long time, when I started in 2002. It's really a great feeling to have 200 races, in a great team, Williams-Martini home grand prix as well, at a great track, fantastic fans. So I hope we can have a very strong race, like we had in Austria, so I hope we carry on fighting [and we are] competitive. So I'm really happy and I'm really happy with the team I'm celebrating 200 grands prix [with] as well, so I hope we have many races in front. It's a great placed as well. Everybody knows everything about Formula One, everything about racing cars here. Sometimes you just see pictures and you have no idea how fans have amazing pictures like that to sign, that are very close to us. It is a great feeling.

You're kind of unusual I guess to have got to 200 grands prix and it's the first time you've come here racing for a British-base team – that doesn't happen very often. Your thoughts on that, the Britishness of the team and what that represents to the country.

FM: Yeah it's a great team. It's a very important race for me; it's a very important race for Williams as well. For us, me and Valtteri, as well, for the championship. We are working very hard to improve and be better and better race by race and I think that's what we are managing to do and it's really a great feeling and I hope we have a good one.

Valtteri, coming to you. As Felipe was saying obviously it's a good run of form for the Williams team at the moment. You got your first podium a couple of weeks ago in Austria. Do you feel you can take on the Mercedes again this weekend.

Valtteri BOTTAS: Well, I think overall Mercedes has been performing really, really strongly. It's been difficult to keep up with them in most of the races – I think Austria was maybe a one-off, we will see. We know that we have been improving but you expect everyone else to do as well. It's difficult to say. I think this season, we are going to see, the rest of the season, it's going to vary quite a bit the performance between us and them, so we will see. We will do our best.

After the race in Austria, you always have a debrief, all drivers do with the team, when you went through and looked at everything did you learn anything, were there any mistakes there or were you happy with the way it worked out.

VB: Well, we're definitely happy with the result we got – third and fourth, a lot of points for the team, that's the main thing. I think it's like every race, always if you look into the fine details you can always something, maybe, you could have done better. But the main feeling is very positive. It's really good to continue from here. There have been many opportunities we could have done a lot better in previous races and now we've done a solid job, so that's good to see. We know we can do it, so it's good to continue from here.

Max, coming to you, home race for you as well, of course. What experience did you have last year when it was your first time and what are you looking forward to this weekend?

Max CHILTON: I'm just obviously looking forward to another home grand prix. Last year was pretty special. Your first ever home grand prix is something you won't ever forget. I'm probably a little bit biased, but I'd like to think that it is, if not the biggest grand prix of the

year, then certainly one of them. It's just awesome to have so many spectators, a lot of them are camping, and waving the Union Jacks. I remember last year, free practice one was typical English, with lot of rain, but they were still there doing the Mexican waves and having amazing spirit, so I just hope we can put on a good show for them this year.

You've out-qualified your team-mate for three of the last four grands prix. What's been making the difference for you lately?

MC: Just experience. Qualifying's always been one my strong points but when I came to F1 I struggled initially. But with experience I'm working that out and I'm developing as a driver. There are techniques you can use as well. I find visualisation really helps. It's a weird sport we're in. You very rarely get to practice what we preach. Golfers, tennis players are out six hours a day; with us, yeah we have simulators but apart from that we're not doing the sport that often. So the more you can practice, in any way possible, helps.

Daniil, last three grands prix, you've qualified twice in the top 10, but you've had three straight retirements, so I guess the feeling at the moment is one of frustration, right.

Daniil KVIAT: Well, yes, it's true. We had quite good speed, which we couldn't consolidate into some good result unfortunately. But last three races we couldn't come to the end, but I think it's been a good sign that we do have speed, we do have something to fight for and we'll just keep on fighting.

So overall then, half way through your first grand prix season, are you happy with the impression you've made in Formula One?

DK: Yeah, looking back on it, I think we've been achieving maximum from ourselves, we've been taking maximum out from our package. I was always learning some new things, it's been always a good improvement through the season. It's been good but it doesn't feel like half a season anyway. We'll see what the next half of the season will bring us.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Huansho Zhao – Formula One Express) A question to Jenson and Lewis. Murray Walker asked you two this question back in 2010 when you were still team-mates, that we had a colossal fortnight of sport, England's out of the World Cup, Andy Murray's out of Wimbledon, Britain is looking at you two, perhaps three of you, how do you feel about Sunday, are you afraid of history repeating itself. Would you like to give your 2014 answer to this question?

JB: I personally feel all the pressure is on Lewis!

LH: I think it's the other way around!

JB: He's in the best car, c'mon, make it happen! For us, for Max and I suppose a little bit for myself it's going to be tricky to get on the top step of the podium and, yeah, it would be amazing to have a British victory. The crowd would go absolutely wild. So, I'd love to see that. For us, as I said, it will be difficult but Lewis has got a shot so hopefully that will be the case.

Lewis, you feel a sense of responsibility?

LH: I was going to say exactly the same thing about Jenson, I think we should hand the baton over. No, at the end of the day we're both, all of us, are going to do our utmost to try to represent and perform for the country. You never know how the weekend's going to go, you never know how people have developed, improved – but of course, us as a leading team, hopefully we'll have a good shot this weekend and I'll do everything I can to bring at least a little bit of joy and add to the great success that some of the top athletes have.

Q: (Abhishek Takle – Midday) Questions to Felipe. Firstly, congratulations on 200 races but, if you look back to around 2012, you had I suppose a lowest point of your career in terms of competitiveness. Looking back at that time, with all the pressure and some people saying you shouldn't be in Formula One, did you at that time think you would make it to 200 races?

FM: Well, for sure, yes. I was thinking that everything is possible. Things change very quick in Formula One. All of us, we have good times and difficult time. You always need to pass through a difficult moment. You always learn, and definitely I learned. And I still believe I have many races in front and I still believe I can be competitive and I think when you don't believe anymore, it's the time to stop. But you need to feel, not what other people say. I really feel competitive and there's still a lot more that I can do.

Q: (Ian Parkes – PA) Question for Jenson. Ron Dennis came out with some rather intriguing comments recently urging you to 'try harder'. Just wonder what your thoughts are on that: whether you agree with him even, or whether you are in fact giving your all in what is a relatively uncompetitive car again this season.

JB: I think Ron's practicing to be a motivational speaker maybe. I think when we're in the position that we have been in for 18 months, it's not easy. For anyone within the team. It's very, very difficult. So, no, I think we all need to work harder as a team. I don't think we should be pointing a finger at any individual within the team. I think we've got ourselves into this situation and we've got to fight our way out. I don't do things in half-measures. I have the experience in Formula One to know that you need to give 100 per cent and I always do every time I'm in the paddock, at the factory, on the phone to my engineers. Everything is 100 per cent.

Q: (Luke Murphy – Formula Spy): Question for all drivers. There's been some minor criticism of Pirelli lately that their tyre choices have been too conservative. I just wanted to know what your opinions were on that.

VB: I think the compound choices for the last two or three races haven't been too bad. Obviously the compounds are a bit harder than last year. Those are the compounds and they choose the tyres we need to use in the race weekend and it's our job to make the most out of them. So, that's it.

Max, anything to add?

MC: No, not really, I'll just copy what Valtteri said. The tyres are pretty conservative, they haven't been too bad.

Felipe?

FM: Yeah, sometimes a little bit conservative. So, I like... I think in the last two races it was fine. When it's one stop it's a little bit boring, I prefer maybe two or three. Two is fine. I think, y'know, using the very hard tyres is not really great, I prefer it to be a little bit better than how it is.

Lewis, I guess in a tight battle like yours, the strategy is an important part of the game – you want more options rather than less?

LH: erm... no, I was just thinking this isn't a bad thing. Pirelli have done quite a good job this year. We haven't had any tyre blow-outs, which is a real positive for us, it's what we wanted. You can't always get it perfect, so whether or not they've gone a little bit too far in that direction, we can decide perhaps at the end of the year. I'm sure they'll alter it again for next year. Of course we always want more grip, so every time they get softer, that's a good thing for us.

Jenson, anything to add?

JB: Yeah, I think the last three races it's been the right choice to have the supersoft and the soft. Barcelona felt a bit too hard but I mean it's pretty difficult being limited to only four compounds throughout the season. Here it's the hard and the medium but you need a bit of stability for the high-speed corners, so, if the temperature's alright, it should be fine.

Final thought Daniil?

DK: I have no problem with Pirelli, it's all good for me.

Q: (Sarah Holt - CNN) Tomorrow we're due to see the first female on track for 22 years when Susie Wolff takes part in first practice for Williams. That's got to be a good thing for the sport, especially in terms of being an inspiration for future females who want to take part in motor racing. I wonder if Valtteri could comment first as Susie's teammate, and also if we could hear from Lewis and Jenson as well?

VB: I think it's great from Williams that they give the opportunity and she's already been with Williams quite a bit doing development work in the simulator and did a test after Barcelona. I think it's really nice to see her getting the opportunity to drive in the race weekend in FP1.

Q: Lewis, I guess you raced against quite a lot of girls lower down in karts but they're no longer competing when you get to this level. Your thoughts on whether this will be inspirational?

LH: I didn't race against many girls. Susie was one of the very few if not the only one that I raced against. I saw her in karting but she was always in the class above me and then we raced Formula Renault together. She was great. We shared a podium together a couple of times. I think she's done remarkably well in her career. She's very very talented, so happy. It's going to be really cool, I think, to see her in a Formula One car tomorrow.

JB: Yeah. First of all it's good that it's Silverstone as well. From what I've heard, she knows this circuit as well which is a positive thing. Jumping into a Formula One car, I'm sure she'll feel a little bit of the pressure in front of the home crowd, but she's been working with Williams for quite a while so I'm guessing she knows the ins and outs of the car and the team. She's also driven already – hasn't she? – in a test and went very well. So it will be good to see her on track tomorrow.

Q: (Mike Doodson – Auto Action) This is for Max: I was very interested in you talking about visualisation. I think other drivers have done the same in the past. I wonder what is the procedure you take to sit down quietly and particularly have you ever timed your visualised lap and how close did it come to the real one?

MC: Yeah, it's something I've heard about a lot in the past. It's all trial and error. You have to try things to work out if you like them or not. It's just worked with me recently. I tend to start it the week before a Grand Prix and yeah, you just do it in some quiet space. As you know, it's not deadly serious, you just kind of practise a lap and obviously the first few laps you're miles out and then you just gradually get into it and you build from previous memories and you slowly get down to a time where everything is just there and ready to kind of be extracted into the car, so when you're actually doing your first flying laps on a Friday, it's kind of there ready to be used. It's a simple technique which helps and – as I said earlier – our sport is very weird, we're very rarely actually doing what we preach so the more practice we can get the better.

Q: Is visualisation something you all do? Yes. No. No. No.

Q: (Andrea Cremonesi – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Lewis, how important is it for you to win here and turn the championship back to your momentum, because it seems – looking from the side – that until Monaco, your season was quite smooth and then it seems that you were a little bit surprised about how hard is the fight. Is this the wrong impression?

LH: I'm not surprised. I've known how close it's been since the beginning of the year. Nico won the first race. As every race, it's important to be out ahead. I had the advantage for a few races and Nico's had that for at least the last couple. But now this is the British Grand Prix, I'm going to do everything that I can to be out in front and as I said, try and represent... when it's your home Grand Prix, it's one of the greatest experiences you can ever have as a sportsman and as a driver, so that's what I'm working towards this weekend.

Q: (Alan Baldwin – Reuters) Three guys in the front, there were some comments this week from Bernie about Monza, suggesting that it might not be on the calendar much longer. I wonder if you could just comment, as the guys who had been there the most of the six here, as to whether we should take that seriously and how much of a loss for Formula One if it were to go?

FM: Yeah, I think we're still carrying on racing in Monza. It's a fantastic place, great fans, so for sure, if we are not racing in Monza any more it would not be good for Formula One. We need to go to places that people really love - Formula One racing, like Silverstone. If we lost Silverstone it would not be positive, it would be a negative for all of us so I hope we can keep going to Monza for many many years.

JB: It's an iconic racetrack, one of the old school tracks. There's so much history. The fans absolutely love this sport, they will do anything for this sport and they're not going to be there to support us, they're there to support a certain team, but that's great to see. It's nice to see their passion, they're very patriotic and the circuit's fun to drive. It's a very unique circuit, very different to any other circuit, very low downforce circuit, always throws up a good race so it would be a shame not to see it on the calendar.

LH: Yeah, I agree with both what Felipe and Jenson said. I think it's important not to forget that this sport would not exist if it wasn't for the fans. Obviously there are certain business decisions people make but there's tracks we've been to where there's been no one in the grandstands and there's a few, particularly, which are very very special like Monza where you have a full.. you know, the circuit's just full of fans and it really does make the event. I think it's important that we try and keep that in the sport.

Ends