



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

**2016 Russian Grand Prix
Friday Press Conference Transcript
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TEAM REPRESENTATIVES – Ayao KOMATSU (Haas), Paul HEMBERY (Pirelli), John McQUILLIAM (Manor), Otmar SZAFNAUER (Force India), James KEY (Toro Rosso), Beat ZEHNDER (Sauber)

PRESS CONFERENCE

James, if I can start with you. Toro Rosso have made a good step forward over the winter but perhaps you haven't maximized potential over these first few races. Is that why John Booth has been brought in? What can you expect from him? What do you hope for him to deliver to the team?

James KEY: Well, to answer that question in two halves. We have underperformed this year in terms of the points we've got. This has been for various reasons I think. There's no one area that you could say has been a weakness. In Australia we had various issues we probably don't need to go through again. In Bahrain unfortunately we lost Carlos early because of getting hit by another car. In China it was OK but we got fairly badly affected by the Safety Car, as did some of our competitors, so we had to fight our way back. So all of those circumstances are different but we believe we should have got more points certainly and, you know, we need to recover from that. But that's not the reason John is here. John is with the team as a consultant, to visit the races over the coming months and help out where he can. It's a big operation; we have grown very quickly. We've got a lot of people doing a huge amount of detailed work and John is there to help us step back a little bit and look at the wider picture and see if we can draw things together a little bit more in the coming races. So it's purely there to help us. And I think with his good experience and his very clear enthusiasm about joining STR, which is very welcome, I think it can only help and strengthen the team.

One of the areas in which he has a reputation for succeeding is in bringing through drivers. Your drivers are heading into their second season. Is this a season in which you now expect them deliver rather than hope that they will?

JK: Yes it is, year two for sure. It was a great story last year with Carlos and Max and we warned them and I think they acknowledge that year two is difficult, not only because the expectation is there but it's not a repeat performance, it's a step up, and we worked hard in

winter testing on trying to ensure that that step up was understood and recognised, so the consistency of tyre management, thinking smartly, using your capacity to think about what's going on in a race rather than just to drive, as most rookies do in their first year and so on. That's the benchmark we set and I think since Bahrain they've done a pretty reasonable job of that to be honest with you. But certainly the expectation is there; the pressure hasn't gone for sure.

Thank you for that. Ayao, if we can come to you. It's obviously been quite a transition for you over the winter, coming to a new team, following Romain. I wondered how complicated a process that is for an engineer and in your time at Haas have you been able to implement the systems and procedures you wanted to?

Ayao KOMATSU: It's not complicated as such, but it's certainly a new challenge, a completely different challenge. The team is set up in a different way, much smaller, less people but also the parts situation is quite different as well. But it's a very good challenge. It's really good to be part of the building up of a new team, so really enjoying it. In terms of implementing and process, of course we are not there yet, we're miles from that, but we have so many different areas, we can improve every single area. Every event, every day we are finding some new problems, new areas we need to improve. So it's just a matter of prioritising them because we haven't got many people, so we need to be realistic, but whatever is the highest priority, the highest sensitivity we are just tackling it. So really step-by-step, again, our target is still trying to finish the races with both cars. We achieved that for the time in China. We'll try to repeat that here and hopefully with a slightly better performance. So yeah a good challenge.

After the results of the opening two races of the season, China was a more difficult exercise, even though you got both cars home. In the past couple of days Romain has been full of praise for the response back at the factory. What has that response been and what did you learn from that race?

AK: Quite a lot. Obviously I feel there were more questions than answers, so obviously we couldn't get the tyre to work really well in China and we were really struggling with the balance and consistency and some of the direction we took during that weekend, when we reviewed it, which we weren't convinced that was the right decision. But again all of us are learning and the good thing is that everybody is working on the same vector, facing the same direction, working as a team. So, OK, we only got a few number of people but everybody is working hard with the right attitude, so that sort of analysis... we haven't finished our analysis and I don't claim that we understand exactly how to solve it but at least we have started to identify the problem and we are putting in place the way to improve. But we've still got miles to go.

Thank you. Paul, coming to you, Jenson here yesterday was suggesting that because of the change in time of year that we are racing here and a possible increase in temperature we might see some difference in strategy, we might go to a two-stop. Is that what you are expecting, what are you hoping for?

Paul HEMBERY: I think in reality, having looked at today's results, unlikely. It's likely to be a one-stop race still. Unless something dramatically changes before Sunday, that's what we see so far.

You obviously have an increase in test days for the 2017 regulations coming up, that's been acceded to. What's the plan for that and for the teams involved? What coming up in the future?

PH: Well you can imagine, a lot of hard work. Very big changes, not only in the physical size of the tyres, but also in the characteristics of the tyres; what we are being asked to deliver. The first phase is working with some V8 cars, up until probably the end of July, where we'll be working on the current tyre size and developing new concepts in terms of materials, the actual physical shape of the tyres and also the compounding in particular. That's the first phase, then we move on to a hybrid, we believe, based on the availability of the vehicles, from the end of July. So, yeah, it's an intensive programme.

Is that it for this year's programme on those tyres? What happens over the winter?

PH: Well, there isn't going to be an end-of-season test this year. We were originally planning for it to be available in November, to give the product to the teams. It looks likely now that the first time we'll run with all the cars will be next year when they define the winter test plan and I know there is a lot of discussion underway at the moment for that, to decide where we go, when it's going to happen.

Otmar, if I could come to you, six points from the three races so far. Compared to last year, you had 11 at this point, so the deficit isn't massive, but like James, there's maybe a sense of missed opportunity. What's the key to overcoming those missed opportunities from the drivers' side and from the pitwall.

Otmar SZAFNAUER: It's difficult to predict red flags, for example. That's hard to do. From the drivers' perspective, I think in our second race they both had lap one incidents. There is a higher probability when you qualify where we have been qualifying for that to happen. If you qualify up front it's a little bit easier to get away. So they just have to do what they are good at doing – getting through the first lap or two cleanly, and then after having good strong races and having good strategy. Over time... there is no such thing as luck. You make your own luck, so if you work hard it should come. I think we've got a decent pace in the car and if we just continue working hard we should score some points.

Last year you also had the positive impact of the B-spec car coming in mid-season. What's the development plan for this car across the course of the season and are the resources in place to give you a chance of surviving in what's a really tight midfield battle?

OS: Yeah, it really is a tight, fierce competition in the midfield. We do have a development plan that also has to be rationalised with what are doing for 2017, so last year we had the fortune of whatever we developed in that year carried over to this year, but next year that won't be the case. So we'll have to address that when we come to it. But we have some significant upgrades coming at the next race and some more planned thereafter.

Great, thank you. John, you've been with the team quite a while now. You've been through a lot of the upheavals that have come and gone there. How would you characterise the situation at Manor at the moment? Last year it was always about the team rebuilding, has that process been completed?

John McQUILLIAM: Not fully completed. The team is a lot stronger this year than it was last year. So we're a lot bigger, we've had some recent starters who are very experienced and who are adding to our capabilities. So we are still expanding and the atmosphere is very

optimistic. We've got two good rookie drivers who are really pushing the car and if we keep a nice steady progression of the car's performance we think we can challenge the cars immediately around us and start moving up, so there is a great sense of optimism.

What's the plan for the near future? Otmar was talking about development; can you give us an insight into what's happening with your team?

JM: Yes, we've got some developments, actually very similar to Otmar, so we've got a fairly big upgrade coming for Barcelona and there are more upgrades planned for throughout the season, so we're pushing hard throughout this year.

Thank you. Beat, coming to you; last but not least. I just wanted to get an idea from you about Felipe today, whether he ran that new chassis and what the feeling was? Was he more comfortable?

Beat ZEHNDER: We did run a new chassis, as you all know. He's still struggling with brake performance, he's not too happy. Compared to Marcus he was quicker, but Marcus underperformed today, he was not happy with the car set-up at all. It's very slippery out there and he struggled a lot.

For both of them, and for the team in general, it hasn't been the easiest start to the season and the rumours of financial difficulties at the team continue. Can you give us an idea of what's happening behind the scenes and how things are at Hinwil?

BZ: We've been in a more comfortable situation already. We have financial difficulties, it's not a secret, but I think the good thing is we are still around. We're working hard to solve all the problems but it's not easy. An annual budget this year is just a massive one and to just cover it by sponsors and the income from Bernie is just not sufficient at the moment.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Alan Baldwin – Reuters) A question for Otmar. We've seen Vijay Mallya in the press a lot in the last week or two. He's had his diplomatic passport revoked and now India have asked for him to be extradited back from Britain. I was just wondering, how does that affect the team, having a principal who seemingly can't attend any races unless they are held at Silverstone?

OS: Well, we're all used to seeing Vijay at the circuits, but he has many business interests and at the factory he used to come at Christmas time and also around Silverstone, so from that regard, from an operational standpoint I don't think it has a big impact on the team. I know he's working hard with the Indian government to resolve his issues and hopefully soon we'll see back at the races.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) A question for Otmar, James, John and possible Paul as well, if you'd like to comment? Although the 2017 regulations have been finalised they had actually been talking about them for some time. But do you have sufficient time going forward to develop the cars given the change in the regulations, things like wind tunnel tyres etc? Is there enough time to do the regulations justice by next year?

JK: Well, you never have enough time. I think you always value more time, particularly with new regulations. But it is in time for 2017. As you say, we have been discussing them for a long time now and the basic principles have been kind of kept, even though they have been

refined and changed etc, the way forward effectively was agreed technically earlier this year and that's what the teams I believe have based their activity on. Some activity, in fact, was going on before then, certainly a lot of simulation activity to try to understand what these tyres and the wider track would do. So I think that there is enough time. It's going to be busy and as Otmar said you've got to compromise this year versus next year a little bit to get it right, especially if you are a smaller team, but I think there is time to do a reasonable job of it.

John, what does that mean to a team like Manor, which basically has just got itself back on its feet and everything changes?

JM: It's going to be a challenge for us of course. I guess we would have preferred the regulation change to come a year later. The thing it does mean is that there is no carryover of parts, so it means that there has to be a brand new car with enough spares ready at the first race. Almost every single part will be new for next year and for a small team it's a big task to redesign effectively every single component on the car and being a small team we have to very much do that in series rather than in parallel. But going back to answer your first question, yes, there is enough time. As James says we have known what the regulations were. There has been a little bit of uncertainty as to whether what agreed early in the year will be carried forward. I believe it will be and we've been working on that in CFD and in the wind tunnel, so we have a small development programme running for 2017 and again it's a balancing act between how much time we spend on '16 and '17, but there is enough time to do it.

Q: Otmar, when does that shift take place?

OS: It's a million dollar question. It depends on many factors, including what compromises you have to make on this season's performances versus next. That all depends on how many points you've scored by a certain time. But like James has said, we started looking at what these regulations would do already, mainly through simulations. We will soon start our wind tunnel programme with physical parts and the tyres so it's happening already. The big question is when do you completely switch from one to the other and we haven't quite made that decision yet. We're still pushing for developments this year; as you said, we've only scored six points so we have to ensure that we hit our performance targets this year before we completely switch to 2017.

BZ: As John said, the financial impact is a massive one and for a small team like Sauber it's really difficult. It's not only the cars and not being able to carry over parts from one year to the other, it's the list of investments you have to make starting with tyre heating blankets and... and... and... We're talking about millions and millions here, so for a smaller team it's really a difficult time.

Q: (Boris Gubkin – Rambler News Service) Paul Hembery, I wonder how much the cheapest tyre costs?

PH: The cheapest tyre? We only make expensive ones! There's no such thing as a free lunch. Quality costs. Well, I'm not really sure how to answer that. A Formula One tyre – we don't really determine a cost because you could have the material cost of the tyre but if you add in the overall costs of research and development and the overall project cost then they run to thousands and thousands. I'm not really sure how else to answer that.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Otmar, James, John, one of the prices you will pay for the increased performance is obviously the fact that the engines are going to consume more fuel. How do you view that from an engineering perspective, will that have any impact on your designs, on your philosophies?

JMcQ: It does have an impact. At the moment, I believe that the fuel capacity's going to stay as it is or maybe go up by five kilos so it's not going to have too big an impact as far as the chassis design. If we get the expectation, the cars will be draggier, they will have the ability to run with wide open throttle more often so we might have to see a little bit more fuel saving in the races which is sporting and tactical. Technically, I don't believe there's going to be a big change to the layouts of the cars.

OS: I think these hybrid power trains were introduced with goal of - or an intent - of reducing the amount of fuel that we use over time and yes, although the cars will be a bit draggier, if the fuel limit stays the same, then effectively it is like reducing it over time, but I still think we should look at doing just that and over time reducing the amount of fuel we use just to complement the philosophy that we had when all this was introduced.

JK: I agree with Otmar. In the longer term it's always a good thing to target ever more efficiency. I think these power units are incredibly efficient now anyway, they are really extraordinary things. For me, really, it's a case of regulation compatibility. These engines were designed around a given chassis and a given aerodynamic set-up - in fact for that matter, a given tyre design and we've now changed that and you've got to make sure that your power unit and the way you use it is compatible with your chassis design. So I think if we do need to squeeze a little bit more just to ensure that races don't become fuel-saving events, then that's probably the right thing for the sport but certainly in a longer term we need to look for continued efficiencies as we go down the line.

Q: (Angelique Belokopytova – AutoDigest) So back to regulations: F1 regulations are becoming more and more complicated so my question is for all of you: did it have some impact on your work, did it make it harder and how are your expectations for next season? Are they more positive or negative?

BZ: I don't think that the regulations are getting more and more complicated; they have been complicated for quite a while and one of the reasons – talking now on the sporting side – is that you have to close every possible loophole and this makes the rulebooks bigger and bigger. Will it be better for the show, the 2017 regulations? I don't know, I hope so. At the moment I have my doubts, although I hope that I'm wrong.

Q: James, a complex set of regulations; regardless of the complexity a changes in regulations always gives a team an opportunity to do something special. Is 2017 that change an opportunity rather than a hindrance?

JK: Definitely it's an opportunity – like you say, any big regulation change is an opportunity to go either way, actually. You can also get it very wrong so you have to play it carefully. But it is an opportunity and I think – as we've said before – with time, the more time you spend on next year's regulations therefore the less you spend on this year, you're kind of making a sacrifice, maybe short term but for a longer term benefit and the longer term is the future ultimately because your baseline car is where you start from, so I think it's a carefully balancing act. I tend to agree with Beat, I think the rules are complex anyway. The cars are a very complicated unit now, particularly with the power units and we've added various operational things like three compounds etc this year, the tyre compounds which have added complexity to a weekend but for good reasons in many cases. So I think the

complexity is maybe a little bit increased for 2017 but I don't think it will be a problem. I think most technical departments will welcome the challenge.

Q: Ayao, from your side of things, complex regulations, is it just another set of problems that you have to solve over a race weekend? Is it good for a race engineer?

AK: Well, we've only done three races and a half so I'm too busy thinking of this year rather than next year. We've got our design department and aero department so I'm largely leaving them to think about it and I'm really concentrating on this year's operation but yes, certainly if you operate efficiently it's a good challenge and it's an opportunity, for sure.

Q: Otmar, do you just take the rules that you're given and work with them?

OS: Well, it's a good question: will the show be better next year? I think that was the intent of the regulations and I hope that that will be the outcome. If it isn't, I think we've recently seen changing sporting regulations where it didn't improve and we quickly went back. The difficulty with these regulations is that it's going to take some time to go to something that doesn't improve the show quickly, so hopefully we've got it right.

Q: Paul, the shift to three compounds per weekend has obviously been successful this year. That complexity hasn't harmed the sport particularly.

PH: It seems to have worked quite well initially; let's see how it evolves through the season. That was something that we worked with, the FIA and the teams and ourselves to come up with this regulation. That's going to carry through, as far as we know, to next year. Working with the teams, they're all quite modest, I think they all like a technical challenge. They might fight one way or the other to move the technical regulations in one direction but ultimately they are brilliant engineers and brilliant engineers like a technical challenge so I think whilst they might be scratching their heads now, they're all still looking forward to getting an advantage over their competitors. From our point of view, the input we had from the strategy group was very much to improve the pace of the cars, so cornering from our point of view, and to try and increase the overtaking opportunities so we're making the tyres less thermally sensitive. It's down to the aero people to know whether the changes to the aero will reduce the disruption when one car's following another, so that's the area that's hard to understand because you talk to different people, they have a different viewpoint on that matter. But the objective is certainly to try and make the sport more compelling and the cars harder to drive and more enjoyable to drive for the drivers. From the spectators' point of view, to see more overtaking action.

JMcQ: Technically regulations aren't really more complicated, they are just different. It's difficult to gauge how that will affect our team for instance. There's one school of thought that would say that the bigger teams will benefit from a large rule change in that they've got the capacity to investigate more options and try out more ideas. The small team really has to pick and chose, decide the layout very early and stick with it and then develop it and hope it's got it right. When you look back to 2014 when there was quite a big rule change, I think as a team we did quite well – we certainly didn't fall back against the competition so I'm optimistic that with a rule change we'll maintain or improve our position relative to the others but it is a costly exercise but a great challenge.

Q: (Alan Baldwin – Reuters) Beat, sorry to be negative but going back to the financial difficulties, could you perhaps give some insight as to how manageable they are? We've still got 18 races to go; is this threatening the team's continuation this season, and secondly, how much of these difficulties are caused by being based in Switzerland? Is that adding to the costs and general problems?

BZ: I think this is a question which Monisha should answer, because I haven't got the overall picture. A simple figure: in 2007, one dollar was 1.5 Swiss francs. Now we have parity. So what we had income in dollars is now worth 50 per cent less. Switzerland doesn't make it really easy. The other thing is that obviously F1 personnel, technical, mechanics, you kind of have a pool in the UK, we don't have it in Switzerland so for motor sport, it's maybe not the best place to be although we have wonderful living!

Q: (Graham Harris – Motorsport Monday) Otmar, if I remember correctly, you came up with the original idea of multiple tyre compounds. Your suggestion has been implemented but perhaps not as radically as you originally came up with. Do you have any comments on how they took your comments and implemented them and do you have any more ideas that you can perhaps share?

OS: Well, selfishly it would be nice to have it implemented just as I thought. In F1 we do all get together and speak about technical as well as sporting regulations and it is a hybrid of the initial proposal that we had but like Paul said, I think it's working well, I think it does mix things up in the race. It sure has in the first three and hopefully it will stay for next year because I think it's better for the fans if you don't know what the outcome is from the onset. I haven't thought of any more ideas but we'll get together and think about what we can do for future years and see.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Paul, it was last year in Sochi that you were announced by the commercial rights holder as being the successful tenderer for the three year supply contract going forward. However, I believe that the contract still hasn't been signed and there were some fairly dramatic comments made recently that you may have to withdraw if you didn't get your testing regulation etc. Has the contract now been signed? And the second question is: obviously having been announced by the commercial rights holder you must have been rather happy with the commercial package that you were offered which involved bridge and board advertising. If you didn't spend the amount of money that you do on marketing, would there be any difference to the quality, the construction, the approach that Pirelli take from a competition point of view?

PH: Well, from a contractual point of view, there were obviously some elements of a link to the recent changes regarding testing, that was essential for us, but the actual terms are all agreed. We're now in the final phases of signing all the final documentation but that's a matter of days, I would think, rather than anything else. As I've said previously, in (comparison to) previous seasons this has actually proved to be very early in the day to have signed the contracts because historically we've actually gone into the first year of the contract before everything's been signed so there's been a lot of progress and some excellent collaboration with all the people involved.

The second part of your question: would it change if we didn't invest so much commercially? No, there's two separate aspects of our involvement in Formula One. One aspect is the technical partnership and the second part is the commercial and one doesn't impact on the other.

Ends