



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L' AUTOMOBILE

## **2017 FIA Formula One World Championship**

### **British Grand Prix**

#### **Friday Press Conference Transcript**

**PART ONE: TEAM REPRESENTATIVES – Christian HORNER (Red Bull), Claire WILLIAMS (Williams), Vijay MALLYA (Force India)**

#### **PRESS CONFERENCE**

**Q: Vijay, the target for this year was to match, or even improve, on last year's Constructors' standings. So far you're pretty clearly in fourth. Tell us about that and the upgrade you have on the car this weekend.**

**Vijay MALLYA:** Well, there is a specific upgrade for Silverstone. We take this particular race very seriously because it's our home race and there's no question that development must continue through the season, given that this is a brand-new car, and we are in fourth with a fairly comfortable lead over Williams but nothing can be taken for granted and we wouldn't like to be complacent. When I launched the car I said we must retain fourth or even aim higher. That still remains the objective – because I believe in setting the bar high – but whether we can actually catch Red Bull or not remains to be seen, particularly towards the tail-end of the season but we are pretty focussed on getting the job done.

**Q: What's the strategy, could you share it with us, with regards to the name and the brand of your team going forward?**

**VM:** When I bought this team ten years ago – and we're all very proud of the fact that, as an independent team we have survived amidst a great amount of speculation for ten years and are still going strong. It was Force India because it was the first time an Indian team showed up on a Formula One grid. It met the aspirations of millions of young Indians who never thought that would be possible but then we were running around in P23 and P24 and the then management seemed very happy about it. Since we have consistently now improved and are a serious contender on the grid, it's time to broaden our horizons, attract more international sponsors and sadly there is no Indian Grand Prix any more. Indian sponsors seem to be passionate about putting all of their money into cricket and so we must appeal to a more international audience and so the idea of changing the name of the team was mooted. We've had several discussions, no decision has been taken but we have listed a few options and we'll take it forward at the appropriate time.

**Q: Christian, Daniel was here in the press conference yesterday, talking about the upgrades situation, saying a decent step is expected for Budapest. From what you're seeing from your relative development rates to the top two teams, are you likely to converge, do you think, in the second half of the season?**

**Christian HORNER:** I think certainly since the first European Grand Prix in Barcelona we've consistently managed to chip away and get closer to the front of the field. Daniel's

had a great run: five consecutive podiums including a victory in Azerbaijan, and I think our most competitive race of the season to date was actually last weekend in Austria, finishing within six seconds of the leader without any safety cars and obviously beating a Mercedes. So, incrementally, we're getting the performance on the cars and hopefully that can continue over forthcoming grands prix.

**Q: You were with your peers in London at the live event this week. As the boss of a leading team and particularly one that has a strong marketing background, give us your opinion of that and what it all meant.**

**CH:** Well, of course, as Red Bull we've done an awful lot of those kind of events around the world with a team that we have dedicated to running show car activities but I think the London event was fantastic: it was taking Formula One to the public, it was free of charge, it was combining a music festival with running the Formula One cars, under the background of Big Ben, up to Trafalgar Square, around, y'know, from Whitehall. It was fantastic to see it so well supported and so many people coming out and the enthusiasm and passion and excitement. I think also to see the drivers having fun and enjoying it as well was a great advert. So hats off to FOM and the Liberty guys for putting the event on... As their first big statement of promoting Formula One.

**Q: The same question to you Claire, really. Your thoughts on what it did for Formula One in the UK – and is there open support from the teams for this kind of thing?**

**Claire WILLIAMS:** As Christian said, it was a fantastic event for all of us to be involved in. It's great to see the new owners are thinking and having that kind of vision and involving all of the teams in doing something like that. And to come to London, it's an iconic venue for us. To have all the teams there, the cars, the drivers, was just great to be able to take Formula One to a new audience and I'm sure a lot of those people probably haven't been to a race before or watched us on TV, so hopefully it will extend our audience but the activities going on ahead of the actual running itself were fantastic as well – the education pieces that are so important as well. We had Dare to be Different, Formula One in Schools was there, we had a presence there, it was just really good to see all the children there as well.

**Q: Big weekend for Williams at the moment, for the team and for the family with the anniversary, with the film. Tell us what the feeling is about where the team – and the family – is at this major milestone.**

**CW:** It's been quite a busy week! We launched the Williams film on Tuesday, which was very nice. It's been a long time coming. It's been about three years in the making. We had 300 people in London watching that on Tuesday night. We had a bit of rain which kind of dampened things a little bit but it was reviewed really positively, which is nice to see, and obviously it doesn't tell the traditional story that that you might expect: a chronological tale of Williams and our track performance over our four decades in Formula One but rather the human story and the kind of story of my parents' involvement in the team over those 40 years. So it's a very personal account of Williams and one that we just hope Formula One fans, and fans maybe that aren't fans of the sport, will enjoy seeing as well. Then, obviously, we're celebrating 40 years here, so we seem to be celebrating 40 years a lot this year! The marketing team at Williams have been really busy but it's been really good fun and it's just great to be able to do all of that, and this weekend we're showcasing a couple of our heritage cars: Nigel's 1992 Red Five and the six-wheeler as well. Great to be able to show those to the fans here.

**Q: Just a quick one, Felipe Massa seems to be going along well, are you both thinking of going again next season?**

**CW:** Yeah, there's a lot of talk already isn't there, about drivers across the paddock. For us, we've decided we're going to hold off a bit on our driver decision. We've got a fight on our hands on the race track at the moment and to be distracted by those kinds of conversations isn't something that we want to be happening at the moment. As Vijay said earlier, they've got a nice points haul on us at the moment we need to focus on, rather than anything else.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Given that the mission of a Formula One team is effectively to market performance and Wednesday in London was actually a major marketing exercise, both for the teams and for the sport, would you ever consider making attendance at an event optional for your drivers?**

**Christian?**

**CH:** Good old Dieter, he gets stuck in. Look, all the drivers were there, bar one. I thought it was a great turnout from the drivers. We didn't insist our drivers had to be there, we asked them to attend and they were very happy to turn up and take part and I think they actually really enjoyed it as well. So, it was a shame there wasn't a full complement but I don't think it detracted from the show. The reaction from all the fans to pretty much all the drivers was fantastic.

**Vijay, your thoughts on that?**

**VM:** I thought it was an excellent event. I'm glad to see, at least in my ten years of time in Formula One, some very serious marketing that Liberty has commenced. Whether it's social media, whether it's the F1 event in London, I think Chase Carey summarised it when he said he wants every Formula One weekend to be like a Superbowl final. That can be only good for the sport. It will only promote the sport, get more revenue and hopefully we'll get a share of it too.

**And on the subject of drivers turning up being optional Claire?**

**CW:** Yeah, I don't want to get sit in judgement on anyone who didn't turn up on that day when I don't know the real facts behind it. I'd rather focus on the drivers that were there and the great job that they did. Ricciardo did a fantastic job – I think breaking a lot of the rules that all the drivers were told in the briefing!

**CH:** They were controlled turns!

**CW:** They were great turns. I thought they were fantastic turns! He did a great job, they all did a great job and to see our drivers... when Lance came in and was able to do the controlled turns, etc., the grin on their faces was great. I think they did a great job to promote Formula One, the drivers out there. To see them all in one place and to see them walk down Whitehall was a fantastic event. Talking about that, and the positives rather than anything else is what I would rather do.

**Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action / Speed Sport) Vijay, now that you're spending all of your time in the UK, have you changed how much time you spend on the day-to-day running of the team?**

**VM:** In the past I used to be at the race track but, as I've always said, in any enterprise, there's the front office and the back office. Both the front office and the back office are equally important. The team has enjoyed considerable success, particularly over the last two years. I've been more a part of the back office than the front office over the last year or so – but I'm delighted at the way things are going for us.

**Q: (Marc Surer – Sky Germany) Question for Christian. What is your opinion about the start of Bottas in Austria?**

**CH:** It was the perfect start. He had an unbelievable reaction and didn't get caught – so in that case it was the perfect start. Daniel came on the radio and said that he thought Valtteri had jumped the start because he saw a little bit of movement. But I think a little bit of movement has been permitted because sometimes when the cars select a gear there's a bit of movement, etcetera, etcetera. I think perhaps it's something for the FIA to look at, the tolerances that are allowed because of course because sometimes a precedent gets set and then engineers try to grab that little bit of an advantage. Of course if you are moving slightly then it helps to pick up traction, you can see exploitation happening – so hopefully the relevant guys in the FIA will look to tighten it down so there's very little tolerance.

**Q: (Pierre Durocher – Montréal Journal) Question for Claire. We made the trip to follow naturally Lance, I would like to get your comments on the progress Lance has made since the Canadian Grand Prix and, the second part of the question, it's a weekend of celebration for Williams but at the same time I would like to know how you feel about the recent comments that Jacques Villeneuve made about Lance. He's been quite hard on him. I wonder how you feel about it?**

**CW:** Hopefully I'll have forgotten the second part of your question by the time I come to it. Lance has done a fantastic job in the last few races but he has actually all year. You may have only just seen the results on the race track but if you could see the hard work he's put in behind the scenes over the course of the year, it's been really impressive. We came out at the start of the year and said he, as a rookie, is going to take some time in order to familiarise himself with Formula One. This is a big step-up from the junior formulae. I think people can underestimate that step at times. So he's taken the first few races to get used to Formula One, acclimatise himself, acclimatise himself with the engineering side of things, with the new circuits that he hasn't been on before. And that's taken some time but as you saw in Canada he broke that duck and scored his first points and then went to Azerbaijan and had a fantastic race and similarly in Austria after a really difficult weekend for the team, both our drivers managed to score points. So he's delivered against everything we expected of him and I'm looking forward to seeing how he'll move forward for the rest of the year. It's great to now have two cars that are scoring points for us in the Constructors' Championship. With regard to Jacques' comments, he's obviously been pretty vocal in the media. I don't want to go into a huge amount of detail about it. I don't think there's any need. The way that Lance describes it, he just wants to get on and let his track performance do the talking. I think that's what we should do – because that's when the critics will stop: when Lance proves he deserves to be in Formula One, which we all at Williams believe anyway.

**Q: (Rob Harris – AP) Question to Vijay. Is removing India from the name of the team some sort of retaliation? Because obviously you have been charged with money laundering and they are fighting your extradition.**

**VM:** I've been charged with a whole variety of things – but let that be kept to one side and let the legal process take its own course. The potential removal of the word 'India' from the team name is nothing to do with the events surrounding me. As I've said before, we need to appeal to a more international audience. We need to cater to the needs of sponsors who have global businesses – and sponsoring Formula One isn't exactly cheap. It was ten years ago that the team was named Force India in the hope that there would be an Indian Grand Prix, which took place but sadly stopped after that, in the hope that we would have a whole bunch of Indian sponsors – but they preferred to put their money into cricket. So I have to look elsewhere. And in doing so I also need to give a more international platform for the team for the next ten years. You can't keep thinking of name changes every year or

every other year. So, this is in a work-in-progress stage right now but certainly it's something we are seriously thinking about.

**Q: (Ysef Harding – Xiro Xone News) To shift gears a little bit, this is for Vijay Mallya. As well as the success of the team you've also brought in a new sponsor and with that you've brought a unique colour to the grid but along with that it has allowed you to bring in a great organisation like breast cancer care. What is it like working with that group and what about your new sponsors this year?**

**VM:** Well, the car is pink because the sponsor, BWT, wanted a pink car. They sponsor other forms of motorsport and if you notice they also insist on pink cars. Now, at the end of the day I think that pink looks pretty attractive. As far as association with the breast cancer initiative is concerned, I have always supported charities. I have supported more than 20 different charities in my life. It came naturally to us, with a pink car, so we are very happy to be able to assist in this initiative.

**Q: (Graham Harris – Motorsport Monday) A question to all three of you: you're sitting third, fourth and fifth in the race for the world championship and none of you are works teams. A question in two parts: one, what would you name as the single thing you most want to take you to that next step to fight Ferrari and Mercedes constantly, and second, with the new engine formula for 2020 are you looking further afield to bring in, possibly, new automotive suppliers to make you into works teams. Is it something you are discussing?**

**CH:** I think the first part of your answer is, we would love the engine to be a non-performance differentiator. Obviously there is still a pecking order and these engines are also extremely expensive, so as a customer it's disproportionate the amount of money we are spending on these engines. I think what's really interesting is that Formula One is effectively at a crossroads with the new regulations, because those regulations theoretically come in 2021 and there will be probably an eight to ten-year life on those engines, so what we are looking at is actually is Formula One's relevance pretty much up to 2030. Now, by 2030 how many people are actually going to be driving cars? Are they going to be autonomous? Are they going to be electric? The world is changing so fast in that sector. So Formula One has some serious questions that it needs to answer today in the choice it makes for the engine for the future. What is Formula One's primary purpose? Is it technology or is it a sport and entertainment, and man and machine at the absolute limit? I sense that with the new ownership that has come into Formula One that creating great entertainment, creating great content, the noise, the sound, the exhilaration of seeing the drivers as the star is of absolute primary concern to them. So I hope that with the opportunity there is with the regulation change that is being discussed at the moment that the fundamental aspects of cost, performance and attractiveness to the fans, therefore the noise, the acoustics of these engines, are a key factor in the set of regulations they come up with and I think that in turn will produce good racing, reduce costs and bring back some to the appeal that engines of a bygone era used to produce.

**CW:** In answer to your first question, which was how would Williams improve on our position, lying currently in fifth. Probably the answer is twofold. We have to make sure that we have the resource in place back at Grove so that we could achieve that, whether that be personnel, equipment or budget. A lot of it is down to budget, as obviously the former doesn't come without the latter. Budget for us comes through greater sponsor acquisition, a partnership with a manufacturer for example, or the redistribution of income in Formula One. So any of those would be great, they would considerably help us. As much as I always say it's not about the money, it's what you do with it, when you are competing with teams with three times the size of your budget it's always going to be really difficult to make that jump into the top three in the championship. When it comes to engines, I think Christian answered it more eloquently than I probably could. We are looking at a road map

for the next decade in Formula One where the engines are going to be and we must make sure that they probably aren't as dominant as they have been, as much as we have benefited from our wonderful partnership with Mercedes, I think for engines not to play such a role in the performance differentiation would be a good thing and then, equally, as an independent team, for engines not to cost as much money would be really useful for us. But then the wider aspects of fan engagement, having engines that are lovely and noisy is something that we would like to see back in Formula One.

**VM:** Well, we have always had a limited budget compared to the big teams in Formula One. We have a culture within our team to spend our money wisely and to get the maximum bang for buck and at the end of the day everybody is passionate about pushing that last pound as hard as you can. Having said that, if we get more sponsors we might spend a little bit more money, but I wouldn't spent all of it, I would give some back to shareholders because I don't believe that money can necessarily ensure that I'm going to be at the front of the grid. There may be people who spend a lot of money and who are able to therefore develop a car that is more easily at the front of the grid than we can, but if somebody turned up and gave me a hundred million more and asked me "well, can you beat Mercedes?" I don't think I'm going to say "yes, I will". It's how you spend your money that is more important. The income distribution pattern: I think everybody knows my views, it's completely lopsided and needs to be addressed. With a little bit more in our pocket we can make that incremental step and certainly fight in the top three consistently. As far as engines are concerned, as Claire has mentioned, we have also benefited from a fantastic power unit with Mercedes. I have been with Mercedes for nine years already and they are a fantastic partner but they are expensive. Going forward, as Christian said, looking ahead to let's say 2030, we definitely need an independent engine out there at a reasonable cost, which is available to anybody.

**Q: (Luis Aguirre – Reforma Group) A question for Mr Mallya. I would like to ask you about the situation between Checo and Esteban in Baku and Montreal. How was it for you to see that fight and to watch your team having the big team's troubles, no, I mean the fight between them and how is going to be the approach of the team to avoid those kind of things in the future?**

**VM:** You know, what happened in Montreal is not something that really concerns me. Esteban wanted to overtake Checo because he felt he could attack Ricciardo. Checo felt he was better placed to do the same job. Ultimately none of them succeeded in doing that but nevertheless the team scored points. What happened in Baku clearly was a great loss to the team, otherwise there was almost a podium for us. That's unacceptable with our two cars hitting each other. I don't think it's road rage. I don't think it was deliberate in any way. It was just the excitement of the moment and an error of judgement. Both drivers have been spoken to. We don't believe in making team rules or giving team orders but at the end of the day I think both of them fully appreciate that is their responsibility to bring the cars home and score as many points for the team, because that's precisely what Claire is going to be doing with her drivers and we need to stay ahead.

**Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Taking everything that has been said earlier on about the Mercedes advantage, the engine differentiation, going to the next step etc there is a team/engine partnership that appears to have got its calculations wrong and they are looking at possibly taking a Mercedes engine next year. Given that this would require certain regulatory concessions, or so it appears, how do you feel about the fact that Mercedes could actually be supplying a team with substantially better resources than both the Mercedes engines and Christian how do you feel about a team that could suddenly possibly beat you?**

**CH:** First of all, it's got to happen first. We've been there before, from our side of the fence, and it didn't happen. Speaking to Zak the other day he said he thought he was watching

the same movie that we lived through a couple of years ago, so it didn't sound particularly hopeful that there was going to be a Mercedes in the back of a McLaren next year. But whatever issues there are it's McLaren's business and if they had that engine... they have had it before... if they had that engine they would be more competitive than they are today.

**CW:** I'm not privy to the conversations that may or may not be going on between McLaren and Mercedes. Clearly, it would not be ideal for us but I don't think Williams have a place to interfere with that. Those are conversations that need to go on without us.

**VM:** We all want McLaren to be competitive. It's a team with great history, a great presence in Formula One and I'm personally sorry to see them struggling the way they are. So it would be good for the sport in general if McLaren returned to being as competitive as they have been always. But having said that, if they want a Mercedes engine it's really between Mercedes and them. As far as regulatory aspects are concerned well those have to be ironed out, because I don't believe that the FIA are going to silent spectators to a situation where McLaren has no engine. But that's a second step. Clearly, Mercedes has to agree to supply McLaren, if McLaren indeed disengages with Honda. But, if I remember correctly, at the last press conference that happened, I believe in Austria, both McLaren and Honda confirmed that they were still together.

## **PART TWO: Cyril ABITEBOUL (Renault), Andy COWELL (Mercedes), Jonathan NEALE (McLaren)**

**Q: Cyril, 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary for Renault in Formula One. The retro look that we saw in London, I hear it might roll out again with the team again later this weekend, retro cars on parade. Tell us about this moment and what F1 has meant to Renault?**

**Cyril ABITEBOUL:** How long have you got! Forty years, that's a lot. Lots of success. I think the best way I would summarise it, every time we've been in Formula One and attacking Formula One we've been successful, whether in the late 80s-90s with Williams, 2005-6 obviously with Fernando in the blue car and then later with Red Bull Racing. That's why obviously the pressure is very big, that we've been successful and the expectations are high, that we get back at that level. For Renault it meant also that Renault has moved from being a French carmaker to a European and then a global carmaker. A global brand. Part of a very large alliance and about to become the largest carmaker in the world with Nissan and Mitsubishi. So obviously everything has changed. Formula One has changed. We have changed and that's what we want to celebrate with this anniversary.

**Q: Now, Robert Kubica. The comeback seems to be gathering pace. He had a second test this week at Ricard. What can you tell us about that. What are the plans for the Hungary post-grand prix test in the 2017 car, and how close is he to being ready to race in Formula One again?**

**CA:** Well, that's a second test after obviously a first test. The first test was nothing more than an opportunity for him to get back behind the steering wheel into a Formula One car – but there is a big caveat, is that it's a Formula One car from 2012 with demo tyres, with V8 engine, normally-aspirated, fantastic noise but doesn't exactly match the current F1 car. So, whatever we do is not quite representative. That second test, however, we sort-of walked more towards what could look like a plan in order to assess, to give both him and us the opportunity to assess a little bit more his limitation and his abilities. What I can tell you is that he is still quick, he is still very consistent and, more importantly, he still has this energy, this drive, this sort of enthusiasm that he has always had, he always carried to him and to the team. Really too early to talk about next steps. I don't want to add to the speculation. Right now the focus is on, y'know, getting the most out of the overall line-up

and package that we have and then we'll be thinking about 2018 in due course – which is not just now.

**Q: Has the evaluation shown that he is capable of racing a Formula One car?**

**CA:** I would not say that – and I don't want to say yes or no. It's not like a test that you're passing at an exam. We've not seen any obvious road blocks. Having said that, you know, again testing in this circumstance and testing in a more modern car is something completely different. So, you know, again, this situation is complex. We are not doing that for PR purposes, even though we see that it is creating a lot of media expectation and focus. It's not what we're doing. We care so much more for Robert than this.

**Q: Andy, coming to you. New engine for both the works drivers. How far ahead is it from the previous one.**

**Andy COWELL:** Yes. Phase 2.1 engine, installed for both Lewis and Valtteri today. In terms of improvement compared to the previous one, it's actually very similar. It's exactly the same spec as we installed with the customers in Canada and today's been an exercise in checking the health of it and dialling it in from a calibration perspective.

**Q: We had an interesting discussion in the previous session about the next generation engines – obviously it's a big decision. Christian Horner was saying that it could be around for ten years. The car industry in 2030 could be unrecognisable compared to where it is today, but it does seem that there is a bit of consensus from the high-ups about what Formula One should do next on the engine rules in terms of parts. From your point of view, as an engine builder, what do you feel about the direction going forward? What would you like to see?**

**AC:** I think there have been two very constructive meetings held in Paris, chaired by the FIA but with Ross Brawn and his team present, with the existing manufacturers and other OEMs that might be interested in coming in and also independent engine manufacturers and suppliers as well, component suppliers. And everybody's expressed their opinion on what 2021 should bring and I think you touch on a very good point that we need to make sure that the technology that's introduced in Formula One in 2021 is ahead of the road car world in 2021 and perhaps mimicking what will be in the showrooms in 2026, so that it's a lead in to it but there's a whole load of other topics that need to be discussed and the conclusion of the second meeting is that we need to do some more work. We need to break out into expert groups and that's not necessarily us, that's people from outside of Formula One that understand about engine noise and how that brings pleasure to people that are hearing it and that's not necessarily (indistinct), the musicality of it, and then more scientific studies that we will be involved in like removing the MGU-H - we have single turbo or twin turbos. And so the FIA are going to chair several meetings, several working groups that conclude over the summer on their particular subject matter and then in September, bring that back together and try and condense that into one overall package. As ever, there will be compromise but I think if we come up with the best package for Formula One, for the manufacturers, for the fans, for the drivers, for the chassis teams etc then it will be a good step.

**Q: Jonathan, coming to you: obviously now, six, seven months into the new management structure, working with Zak Brown, can we expect restructuring of the McLaren team as you look to the future? What do you... so good evaluation period, six, seven months, what can we expect going forward now?**

**Jonathan NEALE:** I think it's great for the whole business that we have the kind of footprint that we do, where we have the premium sports car business, a Formula One and the applied technology business, the opportunity to bring that back together under one shareholding is something that I think all of us internally are pleased about. Certainly in



terms of our customers, then they don't really differentiate between which group of shareholders own which bit of the product range, so that simplifies things. The executive committee with Mohamed and Mansour are steadfast in terms of the direction of travel of the business and I think what we will see is progressive evolution. I don't think we are going to see another step change or complete restructuring, just a bringing back together, some re-clarification of what the brand is and what the brand isn't and we've got an exciting growth agenda, both in the sports car business and in the applied technologies group and obviously we've got a job of work to do to make our Formula One programme competitive again.

**Q: Obviously there's an awful lot of talk about the relationship with Honda; can you clarify the decision-making process and timescale from here; does it depend on the step they make later this year to define where the relationship goes and indeed, whether it even continues?**

**JN:** The simple answer to both questions is no. I can't clarify the process or the timescale because there is no track or no set path. We have a contract with Honda and we're working through some of the challenges that we have and I can't duck the issue that for both Honda and McLaren we're not where we need to be and that this season is not only challenging but frustrating. I think when Hasegawa-san was here last week he recognised some of that frustration and whilst making progress he also acknowledged – and I thought that was very honest of him – that there is still a long way to go between where Honda are currently and the benchmark with the gentlemen either side of me. So, Formula One is all about where the best come to compete and competition is tough and unforgiving. I don't think it's something that we can just sit on lightly – either Honda or McLaren – so that we're having those kind of conversations. They're uncomfortable conversations as you would expect and they're things that we best do behind closed doors. I recognise the speculation, it's Formula One. I've only been in it for 17 years now so one thing I recognise is that when anybody says they're not talking to anybody, the answer is everybody's talking to everybody. Drivers talk to everybody, teams talk to everybody so I don't want to duck that. But we're working through our issues with Honda. We need to get it fixed. It is not sustainable in its current form.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Marc Surer – Sky Germany) Cyril, you have a new floor on your car. Does it work?**

**CA:** When you say that, everyone wants to keep from everyone, everyone knows everything about everyone too. I'm sorry about that... it's a decent step, you know, but more importantly it's a completely different function philosophy. So it's not just one part in isolation, it's also the start of something: a development programme that we're going to carry through the break and through the later part of the season. And it's going in the direction that we're hoping as far as we are talking on Friday afternoon.

**Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Jonathan, you said everybody talks to everybody, so that obviously leads to the assumption that you've been talking to Cyril, you've been talking to Andy, you've probably been talking to Honda again and again, and whatever else. But where do you go from here? I mean have you set a deadline for any form of performance improvement whereby you say 'right, that's the notice period' and can you then just simply tear up the contract and go and strike a deal with Andy? What do you do?**

**JN:** It's like speed dating, isn't it? You can't tear up contracts... let's start there. As Cyril and Andy will attest, there are no performance guarantees, looking forward, so of course we all set our plans. We set plans for chassis, plans for drivers, plans for engines, in terms of making that level of progression where nothing is guaranteed. As I said earlier about

there being a set process or some set timescale, then I think that's unrealistic. I think naturally we reach a point of inflection with Honda where we ask ourselves, internally, where do we go from here? What do we have to do differently to restore that level of competitiveness? There are clear constraints and rules, within the sporting regulations... as you pitched at me this morning, you're right, in order for an engine manufacturer to supply more than three teams does require FIA approval. The precedent for that - both the gentlemen either side of me have supplied four teams, I think Andy in '15, '16 and I think Cyril 2014. Ferrari have also supplied four teams in the past but there is a... what we want to do is to try and make sure that what we're doing is professional and good for the sport. It is good having Honda in Formula One and there isn't anybody who doesn't want to see a successful Honda in Formula One. And I say that regardless of anything that's currently going on. Honda are investing a lot and putting a lot of resource into the programme and we're working very hard with them but the fact is, given where we are in the Constructors' championship at the moment, we're not getting the job done. So there are constraints, as I say, in the sporting regulations. Everybody's talking to everybody, we are making sure that we maintain our good relationships with FOM and the FIA during this process, while we work through a difficult situation.

**Q: (Graham Harris – Motorsport Monday) Cyril and Andy, possibly some comments. You are both manufacturers and you both would like to keep Honda in Formula One because more competition is good but clearly they are lagging far behind. Would either of you be prepared to assist them in perhaps improving their performance and have they come to you yet or is that something you are not prepared to say or if they do, would you be prepared to help them?**

**CA:** I think there has been some speculation in the past about that and the speculation was not in relation to Renault. But you know from here, in Formula One - in today's Formula One – the engine has become a performance differentiator and even though at the end of this season, as part of the Constructors' definition, I think that as soon as it becomes a performance differentiator, it should be in keeping in the spirit of the regulations that there should not be any IP transfer or support for something that is making a primary impact on the overall performance of the package. So frankly I don't remember anyone volunteering for helping us when we had our problems in the past. I don't think it's something that we would love and I don't think it's something that Honda would really entertain, in all honesty. I think it's really a time issue. I don't think it's a matter of resource, it's not a matter of skill set, it's a matter of... basically when they stepped out of Formula One and when you get out, it takes an awful lot of time to rebuild and that's the sort of time for the manufacturers on the one hand and the customer on the other hand, that is the main limit. It's not about an interim measure and plus, it's extremely difficult to implement such support because their engine architecture will be very different from mine so apart from supplying an engine to Honda, I'm not going to be about to help them. No, I don't think this is really credible.

**AC:** I think collectively we've helped with convergence in Formula One in the opening season, performance development through the year, but then the opportunity to do a big change with Honda coming in, we all agreed that Honda could have that same opportunity to change everything in the first year and then the request came from manufacturers in addition to Honda saying 'please can we take this crazy token table away because it's bad for the sport?' It's bad if somebody can't train to get better and so we agreed, yeah, take the table away because it's better for the sport because it means that you can innovate, you can introduce whatever you like and I think none of us should underestimate the technical prowess of Honda and of McLaren and I think my money is on that combination coming good and coming good pretty quickly. No pressure!

**Q: (Matthieu Piccon – Motorsinside) Cyril, you're lying eighth in the championship. For you is it more linked to the performance of your car or the fact that you're only scoring points with one driver and not two?**

**CA:** You know, it's a combination. I can't break down the elements like that. It's true that if we had two times 18 points that it would be 36, we may have a different position in the championship but equally Jo has had several reliability issues that has hurt him, starting in winter, then in the opening races of the season where in particular we were a bit more competitive than we have been in recent races which has sort of eroded the confidence that he had in himself, in the package which we are trying to rebuild. So it's a combination, but what I can say is that standing eighth in the championship is absolutely not in line with what both the plan and expectation and history that we were mentioning before, of the 40 years of Renault in Formula One. So action must be taken to make a quick change. These things take a bit of time, there are still a number of things happening in the background, we've just had our new head of aero who started last week. Obviously that person is not going to make an impact in the next few races, it's going to take a bit of time but we have to... more importantly, we have to build confidence in ourselves and in the team that what we have, what we are doing will help us be where we want to be which is fighting for the podium in the next few years.

**Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Andy, last year in September, I think, Tobias Moers announced the AMG Project One Hypercar project. Further details have come to light. I wonder if you could confirm some of them please. I believe 275 engines will be built by your factory and also something like a 30,000 service interval or something like that. Will you be building them, do you have that durability in those engines and is it based on your Formula One power unit?**

**AC:** It's a fascinating project, the AMG Project One Hypercar. It is taking the Formula One power unit and putting it into the back of a two seater sports car and then two MGU-Ks on the front axle, so independent drive to the two wheels, so 160hp per wheel. So the combined power is over 1000hp. It is a pretty incredible power train, to be honest, both in terms of creating a car that can go round the Nurburgring in impressive lap times but also in terms of driving across town and on a dual carriageway. The fuel economy is impressive; this is something that... Tobias came up with the idea, rang me up, said is it possible? I rang him back after two weeks of doing a little bit of work during lunchtimes, to see what we could. We've now got a group of about 150 people. At Brixworth, that group will grow over the coming year and the target is to build 275 power trains so the power train will be built at Brixworth, having done the development work. Fascinating actually doing that development work and doing the transition from Formula One to road car. The vast majority of it carries across. Clearly things like fuel and emissions need to be managed but that works fairly seamlessly. We're targeting 50,000 kilometers so about that and in terms of the duty cycle it is quite considerably different. If you look at a high performance road car – Jonathan will know this from his McLaren road cars – if you've got somebody that drives at five percent of the time at full throttle, that's quite remarkable. Today we've got people driving Formula One cars round this track with 70 per cent full throttle and so that's where you gain an awful lot of the benefit, swapped from the bespoke fuels that all the fuel companies develop for Formula One into a pump fuel, the cylinder pressure drops, the loading drops and everything comes to you, so in terms of that, that durability, that's the easy bit.

**Ends**