



Press Information

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TEAM REPRESENTATIVES – Toto WOLFF (Mercedes), Guenther STEINER (Haas), Franz TOST (Toro Rosso), Mario ISOLA (Pirelli), Toyoharu TANABE (Honda)

Q: Guenther, last time you were in this press conference you talked about the need to unlock the potential of Pirelli's tyres. What solutions have you found in the last couple of races?

Guenther STEINER: We haven't found any! I think sometimes when you get the tyre to work it is working and sometimes it isn't. I think in Monte Carlo, with the family of the softer tyres, we got them to work, but we don't have a solution. If you ask me 'what is your solution for the next race?' I don't know. Maybe we haven't got one. It's like we fall into it or not. We are working hard and for sure by going on and using the tyres you learn more and more but do we have a proper understanding of it, I would say, no.

Q: What did you learn during FP1 this morning?

GS: Again, the track is very dirty. It seems like we can get the tyre up to temperature. I said 'it seems', I didn't go conclusive here because FP2 will be a lot more relevant because the track will be cleaner and we can learn more. At the moment everything seems to be OK, so let's see what in the next hours is coming.

Q: What can you tell us about Ferrari's upgraded power unit? You had it for the first time in Monaco, but what difference are you expecting it to make here in Montréal?

GS: I think the difference it should make here, because here the power is much more needed than in Monte Carlo. We had it in Monte Carlo just to see that everything works and for sure it helps there as well. But at the moment we are not running it; we are running it only tomorrow, so I cannot come to a conclusion here.

Q: Tanabe-san, this is the first real power track of the season. How much are Honda looking forward to it?

Toyoharu TANABE: It is a very good question and a bit difficult to answer for me. But anyway, I frequently told you that we are still in the position of catching up the top PU manufacturers, in terms of power and also the reliability. We are still developing for both. It means we know our position is a little bit down from these top competitors. But in terms of the performance since the first race of this year, our forecasts showed good performance on the track, so I'm looking forward to seeing tomorrow and then the race here,.

Q: What do you think is the gap to Mercedes no?

TT: I cannot tell you an exact number, but we will see the gap.

Q: When can we expect the next Honda upgrade?

TT: Our development is ongoing and we are considering when we introduce the next step up. But we are observing the current situation on the PU, mileage and then damage, and we are discussing with the teams when is the best timing to introduce new, updated PU to the trackside. It's not only a Honda matter; we are closely working with the teams, for both Toro Rosso and Red Bull. At the moment I cannot tell exactly when but we are looking for a new, updated PU.

Q: Thank you Tanabe-san, good luck this weekend. Toto, we're talking engine upgrades. You've got one here this weekend. Where is it better?

Toto WOLFF: Well, we hope it's a tiny bit better than what we had before in terms of specification, but the biggest difference is just that it's a fresh unit. The other one has had quite some high mileage. With mature regulations it becomes more and more difficult to extract pure lap time performance out of the engines. You're trying to find a bit more reliability, maybe run a bit harder, longer, but you are not finding these kind of big jumps that we used to see in past years.

Q: Where do you the balance of power this weekend, between yourselves and Mercedes in particular?

TW: If I would know! Guenther surprisingly summarized it well! The track is pretty dirty after FP1 so there is not really clear picture, people have been sliding all over the place. We were very competitive but you need to be sceptical as to whether this is really the balance of performance. FP2 is going to give us more guidance.

Q: We've got the same tyre compounds this weekend that we had in Monaco. What lessons have been learned from your Monaco strategy with Lewis Hamilton?

TW: Quite some lessons. We got it wrong in Monaco, in our assessment of how long the tyre would last, so that was an important step for us.

Q: Thank you and good luck this weekend. Mario, talking about that strategy in Monaco, how surprised were you that the mediums lasted 66 laps?

Mario ISOLA: The problem was not related to the wear life of the tyre, more on the performance life. On a track where it's so difficult to overtake, like Monaco, Lewis was able to keep everybody else behind him – that's the point. The hard was working well. The best information for us was that all the three compounds in Monaco, that usually is a track where everybody is using just the two softest of the three chose, all three compounds were working well.

Q: And what can you tell us about tyre wear this weekend?

MI: We need to wait until FP2 because it is a session where all the teams are collecting relevant data on tyres. We have some estimation. I believe it is not a surprise that everyone is targeting a one-stop race in Montréal because the wear is not high. It is a circuit where the rear degradation can make a difference, so saving the rear tyre is probably a target for everybody here. If we make a comparison to Baku rather than Monaco, because Monaco is a street circuit that is quite unique, we have tyres that are one step softer. The weather conditions expected are good, so they probably struggle a bit less with warm-up. I will talk to Guenther later in the afternoon to understand. But I can tell you, he was coming here with a jacket and outside it's 28 degrees so probably he has a problem with the temperature in general himself.

Q: It's been a busy few weeks for Pirelli, looking ahead for 2020. You've been testing F1 tyres and F2 tyres. What can you tell us about those tests?

MI: Yeah, we made a plan with F2 where at the moment we have eight sessions already planned. Obviously we have to concentrate the development this year to be ready latest in December. If necessary we are also planning some back-up sessions in the Middle East at the end of the year. For F1 the plan is confirmed. We have three sessions, one in the middle of September at Paul Ricard with Renault, one at the beginning of November at Paul Ricard as well, with McLaren, and we are trying to find a solution with Mercedes for the last session, that will probably be in December. All dry sessions for the moment. We will start soon to make a plan for 2020, where we have 25 days of testing to distribute to the teams that are willing to test 18-inch tyres.

Q: And how was the F2 18-inch tyre holding up in testing?

MI: We did just one shakedown in Mugello, but it was really a shakedown to understand the driveability of the car with an 18-inch tyre. Don't forget that the F2 car is without power steering, so the first target was to understand if they need to adapt the car, and if how to adapt the car with the new tyres. And we are going to test in Aragon in mid-June, so in one week's time.

Q: Thanks. Franz, a double points finish for the team in Monaco, your first since Spain 2017. Just how pleased are you with progress at Toro Rosso this season?

Franz TOST: So far Toro Rosso has a competitive package together. We have a car that is fast, a car that works well from the mechanical side as well as the aerodynamic. And with Honda we have a very strong partner on the power unit side. We have two competitive, high-skilled drivers. Both of them are doing a really good job and the team is improving as well. The complete package, I must say, currently is quite good.

Q: Tell us about the team, because Daniil Kvyat said yesterday in this press conference that the team has improved in many areas since he was last with Toro Rosso. What are those areas?

FT: We reshuffled our aerodynamic department. We changed a lot in the production to increase the quality. Also in the assembling we changed many working methods and processes and I think everything together came up with the result that the car is quite good.

Q: And what about Kvyat himself? How much has he improved since he was last with you?

FT: Daniil is much more experienced now. He is much more mature. He understands the technical side much better. Last year, as well all know, he was working at Ferrari in the simulator. I think that he learned there also a lot and everything is coming together with him and therefore he is showing a good performance. But also I must say that Alex is coming up with a very good performance and I think he is a surprise and he also this morning was quite fast, because we must not forget that he is here the first time and he has to learn the track. It looks very easy from the outside but also Canada has some tricky corners, as we know, and he is making good progress. As I said before, we have two real competitive drivers. They have high natural speeds; they are quite good, talented.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action / Speed Sport) For Guenther and Franz, Liberty is on record saying they want to increase the number of races. Unlike the big teams, you cannot afford to have extra staff to rotate. How concerned are you about the stress and strain on your staff and their families?

FT: I don't care about the families. If we have a lot of races... we have 52 weekends, we can have 26 races. Where's the problem? If we get the money for all the races, that's important. Then I don't have a problem.

Guenther, anything you can add?

GS: Yeah, I care about the families! That's what I would like to add. Because then the people working are happy. I think if we reorganised a little bit the weekend, how we run it, we maybe could make some savings there. With days at the track. We cannot save days but we can adjust it a little bit. I agree with Franz, if the new races bring financial benefits, why not do it? But we need to be clever about it and try to find the days somewhere else. Just putting more and more on is maybe not productive. And also, we need to be careful what the spectator wants. There is a saturation factor which I am not entitled... or I have not the knowledge. Maybe Toto has because he knows a lot of things. When the saturation happens. In general, if we can make the weekends a little bit shorter for the people that work here, I think we can do a few more races.

Toto, shall we just open this up to you as well. What are your thoughts?

GS: He's the expert!

TW: We're a good combination. He knows all about tyres and temperatures and I do about saturation! I think Guenther summarised it very well. I think we... saturation is something that needs to be considered. Formula One is exclusive and adding more races is not adding to the exclusivity factor. On the other hand, we are all asking Liberty to increase revenue and doing more races is obviously the biggest leverage in that respect. In my opinion it's a fine balance. We need to respect that, at the moment, the travelling population, all the race team, is pretty flat out. I don't think you can really do much more than 21 races. You need to work with a second shift. We have started to rotate a little bit – but then you can't really rotate the very senior personnel. So, if we do more races, my opinion is that it needs to be linked with more income and spectacular new tracks or markets that we open up. That would be important.

Q: (Éric Desrosiers – Le Devoir) Sorry, I have to ask, maybe to the three team managers: how do you like the new installations here on the circuit?

FT: It's a very nice facility, thank you for this. Generally, I like to come here to Montreal, and especially now, we have much more space. People have – not only teams, also journalists and the marketing side – have much more space for working. A big thank you to Montreal, to the city, to the government that they approved this and authorised the building. I think it's a big improvement.

Toto, the facilities...?

TW: It's a bit cold here, that's the only one in the new facilities. But like Franz said, it's fantastic that Montreal has committed to Formula One racing by building such a state-of-the-art facility. They have done it really well, because we have kept the authenticity of the track and the island but equally built a purpose-built facility that's great.

Guenther?

GS: There's nothing to add, just to say thank you for what the city did here. It's always good to have new facilities, because the old ones were run down – but very good that they came up with the money to do this. Thank you.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines / racefans.net) Tanabe-san and Toto. As engine suppliers, as well as, in your case Toto, the team principal of the race team, the current engine formula was originally devised in 2009. It was given a reprieve and will now run through until 2024. What sort of formula would you like to see from 2025-onwards that would keep your two companies in Formula One. And then, to the other two team principals: what sort of engine formula would you like to see?

TW: I think that we are in the middle of a transition of technology, at least on the road car side, and as much as we, most of us, are fans of the loud, traditional engines, it's not where the technology goes and where the perception on sustainability goes – so I believe we've done the right thing in keeping the regulations almost stable for the next term – because it would have caused a tremendous amount of development to come up with the new formula. Also, it is not quite clear where this next generation of power unit actually should be. Listening to our chairman of Daimler, we expect 50 per cent of our fleet to be either hybrid or electric by 2030, so I think if this is the direction technology goes, we could as well have an engine that will have a higher hybrid component, renewable energies or electricity. Today, it's maybe around 20 per cent, maybe that ratio is going to go to 50 per cent. As long as it's an exciting engine – the sound is something that we need to address or at least talk about it – but I believe the hybrid component is going to increase after 2025.

Tanabe-san, what's Honda's position?

TT: As Toto said, we think it's a kind-of transition phase now and then we just finish discussion over the 2021 PU regulation and then we keep current concept until 2024/25. Then, one of the reasons, we couldn't find any next step, green, sustainable and then high efficiency PU confirmation now. So, it means we need to discuss again and start again, what should be the pinnacle of Formula One race PU technology. I believe the same thing as Toto. We keep a hybrid and then what we can do is improve the current principle of the current Formula One PU.

Guenther and Franz, your thoughts...

GS: I think we need to stay current with technology. I don't know that the technology will be in 2025. Toto and Tanabe-san know much better what is happening there. It was asked from Dieter, what do you like? We all like a loud, screaming V10 or V12 but that is not, in this time, it is just not acceptable any more. So, I think I would like that Formula One stays current in technology with what is happening. The engine manufacturers know what it needs to be: it needs to be sustainable, adding more electrical element, as Toto said, so, I go with them. For me, the point is, we need to stay up with technology in F1 and not go back to what I like, because I was young then.

Franz?

FT: I think currently we have a power unit which is on a very, very high technical level and, unfortunately, this has not been communicated in a way the power unit deserved. We have a small engine, two energy recovery systems and all these components together is the technology for the future because with this engine also in a normal street car, maybe you can do 100km with one litre,

two litres of fuel, and then you come home with a filled battery. They all are talking about the electric cars, and I'm just asking where from do they get the energy? It's not like in Formula E when 20 cars are outside on the track and behind there are 50 diesel aggregates spending their energy. This is nothing serious in my opinion – but the great manufacturers go to the Formula E or have built electric cars. I'm just asking where they get the energy from? I think we have, in Formula One, the technology for the future. As Toto said, maybe the hybrid part, electric part will increase to 40 per cent or even more. That's fine, but from the technology itself, for me, this is the solution for the future.

Q: (Scott Mitchell – Autosport) – A question to the three team bosses. We're all quite excited to see what we're going to get for the 2021 regulations, sooner rather than later. Guenther, in one of your earlier answers you mentioned maybe condensing the schedule down. That might be a way to fit in more races or reduce the load. I believe one of the suggestions for 2021 has been to move parc fermé to the beginning of Friday, shuffle the Friday practice sessions back later. Where do you stand on parc fermé to before you've run on track. I guess that would cause slightly more headaches for the engineers and move the preparations to simulations before the weekend?

GS: I'm OK with that, because that's what I said before. We just need to plan it well, how we do it. So that we are prepared for it. We adapt all pretty quick here. There's enough people working at it. That would be one of the solutions – to start on Friday the event, which now starts on Thursday, because we are all here, but we could do that job also from other places. That would be one of the solutions and that I think is the intent of it.

TW: I think if you can compress without reducing the show, then that is something we should look at. I believe that for the promoters it is not great. The Friday is an important day when they are able to generate some revenue and attract some audiences. We are not keen on the parc fermé format from Friday to Sunday. There is no motor racing formula out there that doesn't allow the cars to be touched over the weekend and I don't think we should start with Formula One, the pinnacle of motor racing. You open up a can of worms with penalties because cars will end up in the wall and they will need to be rebuilt and I think from the sheer idea of how we can add more variability, more unpredictability, have more cars braking down, I think we will achieve the contrary. We will spend more time and resource in the virtual world, runs cars harder on dynos to make them last, because we know we can't take them apart over three days, so I don't think this is something we should touch. There are many other areas that make sense, but this one, not for us.

FT: Of course there are a lot of discussions going on and I'm not a big friend of this solution to be honest. As Toto mentioned before, Friday is an important day also for the organisers from the financial side. Whether we are now here one day earlier or later at the track, I don't think this makes a big difference. We have to increase the show, we have to reduce the costs, we have to distribute the money in a fair way. I think these are the most important points. The parc fermé story is absolutely secondary. OK, it's being discussed now among the teams but I don't think these changes are important for the topics I just mentioned before. I think we don't need to change anything in this way.

Q: (Andrea Cremonesi – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Two questions for Toto: one is about the complaining of Lewis yesterday. He said he wanted a different Formula One. He's the most successful driver in the hybrid era. I would like to know your comment about this. And the second question: it could be ugly at this moment but I would like to know what has happened about Niki's 10 percent of the team. Are you going to buy it?

TW: I think, on the first topic, drivers want machines that are difficult to drive and that are challenging and that is clear. I think when we need to look at chassis regulations going forward, that can be a point of discussion. I'm not entirely sure that we can go back in time. I think if you put a car on track it's going to vibrate, not drive in a straight line and not do what the driver wants; I'm not sure the drivers would be happy about it but I kind of get the point that when you look at the images of Mansell and Senna collapsing after the end of a race that is exciting and they should be gladiators, so I can understand where he's coming from.

On the Niki situation, we haven't discussed that yet. It's too close to the tragic event. That is going to be a topic we will address with Daimler in the next few weeks and months.

Q: (Maxime Sarasin – 98.5 FM) I want to go back to what Lewis told us yesterday. He told us that it was too easy for pilots to drive, that he was not exhausted at all after a Grand Prix and he could maybe do two or three others in the same day. And he didn't feel that at that time, he was saying

that new pilots were coming in are maybe the best athletes that they should be and he told us that that shouldn't happen right now. So I really want to know what you think about that, what are your thoughts about that and do you think that going with technology should at least make an obligation to have drivers to be the best athletes possible for Formula One.

FT: In my opinion, the current level of the drivers from the fitness side is the highest I've ever seen in Formula One. You must not forget that we now have drivers who started motor sport when they were six or seven years old. That means that when they come to Formula One, they've already done 10 to 15 years of karting first and then the junior categories and I'm not talking about the Red Bull and Toro Rosso drivers. Our drivers have special physical training plans. They have their own coach, they have a nutrition plan. That means they are so well prepared that the driving itself is no longer so exciting for them and of course, you cannot compare this time with – let me say – twenty or thirty years ago when Nelson Piquet and Nigel Mansell or whoever collapsed after a race. They never saw a fitness centre from the inside and some of them were smoking as well and in former days, I remember that some cars did not finish the race and then they talked about gearbox problems. Hey, they were smoking beforehand and they were not fit enough to finish the race and then they put it in any gear so that the car stopped. They were not fit enough. This is the reality and nowadays we have really really good drivers in Formula One and we have a very high level and therefore you don't see accidents – which on one side is very good – from the entertaining point of view is boring. Friends of mine say you don't even see a crash after the start in the first corner because they all manage to do it. It's because the driving level is very very high, I think the highest we've ever seen in Formula One and this we continue. But this is nothing to do only with Formula One; this is in all the other sports as well, in skiing and so on, therefore I think we should be happy to see these drivers.

MI: This is for the team managers, he said. I agree, it's a completely different... we cannot compare the era of Senna, Piquet and so on with the current drivers. I believe that the level of the drivers is very good. We are changing the car from 2016 to 2017; it became a lot more physical to drive, I don't know if it is (difficult) enough or not, for Lewis probably not. But talking about tyres, I would say that we are always trying to supply to Formula One what they want so just ask and we try to do our best. In terms of cars and so on, it's more Toto that can give you an answer.

Q: Well, Toto, what about Lewis's thoughts yesterday?

TW: You can look at the lap times. I think we have the quickest cars by now. We have changed the aerodynamic formula to take a few seconds off the cars and we are going faster than last year, so the levels of downforce are enormous and like Franz said, it's very right that the level of perfection has just increased enormously and you don't see these kind of mistakes any more. You could, artificially, make it much harder: take the power-assisted steering out, then you will have drivers like bodybuilders and they will struggle to finish races because it will be so tiring - that is easy – but it would be a step back in technology but maybe that is something we should consider in the future for the entertainment factor.

GS: Or we could ban the drivers from going to the fitness studios as Franz said, so they will be tired at the end of the race. It would be a lot cheaper. And to eat fast foods all the time! No, without joking, I think Franz explained it very well: the fitness level is just so high and the cars are so sophisticated so it's just getting better and it's evolution. It isn't that they are easy to drive, we are just so well prepared – they are so well prepared altogether. That is why they now complain about it.

TT: I just remember 20 or 30 years ago, after the race, drivers got wet and then sometimes they couldn't get out of the car. But with technology improvement, the current drivers work not only physically but also their heads. I don't know which is good but Formula One wins, I think.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines, Racefans.net) Toto, continuing what Lewis said yesterday, he actually said that Formula One should be a man's sport. I was wondering how this sat alongside the women in motorsport initiative and also what your wife (Susie Wolff) thinks about that comment?

TW: He was on a roll yesterday, I think! I don't think he meant it in the way that it was seen as discriminatory. On the contrary, he's someone who is very open to diversity and somebody who raced against Susie in Formula Renault. I think that what he meant was that it needs to be a gladiator's sport, the toughest machines for the best drivers out there. In terms of the FIA initiatives that have been merged with Dare to be Different, I think this is wonderful to see that there are more girls now looking at go-karting and when in the past there were a hundred boys there were one or two girls now you can see there are five or six and that it's starting to have an impact. We will see where that is in five years. I would very much hope that in our lifespan in Formula One we will see a girl racing competitively in F1.

Q: (Scott Mitchell – Autosport) Toto, again referencing something that Lewis said yesterday, hopefully not something that has been taken out of context. It was when he was asked about the engine upgrade here and he said that one of the things that had impressed him was the fact that Mercedes had not had the smoothest ride with developing the engine or working on upgrades at the start of the year. I just wondered if we could get your thoughts on whether there was anything in particular that was troubling with the development of these engine upgrades or has that been par for the course over the last few years when you're pushing the envelope and trying to push the engines as hard as you can?

TW: I think we had times at Mercedes where the engine was described as the determining factor in the team's success and then it has somehow transitioned to the chassis side and people nowadays are talking that the chassis is the leader of the pack but what really needs to be said is that with mature regulations it becomes more and more difficult to extract additional performance and keeping reliability and the guys in Brixworth are doing a fantastic job. Obviously I live in it and I'm seeing the struggles and the boundaries they are trying to push and the targets they set and sometimes they don't reach them completely but they keep pushing and pushing and pushing and that is very inspiring to see that the group of people have not stopped chasing performance.

Q: (Trago Mendonca – O Dia) Franz, Indycar is testing a new system to protect the drivers, the aeroscreen, a partnership with Red Bull. What do you think about the system comparing to the halo that we have now in Formula One?

FT: The most important thing is that the safety is guaranteed. If this new system is working from the optical side, from the aesthetic side, I like it more and then we will see because the car looks more sophisticated but together with Red Bull Technology they will test everything and then we will see what the solution will be.

Ends