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2018 FIA Formula One World Championship

Hungarian Grand Prix

Post-Race Press Conference Transcript

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DRIVERS

1 – Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes)

2 – Sebastian VETTEL (Ferrari)

3 – Kimi RÄIKKÖNEN (Ferrari)

TRACK INTERVIEWS

(Conducted by Paul Di Resta)

Q: Lewis, an absolutely spectacular job. Completely done today. Fifty per cent of the job done yesterday and the finishing touches into that.

Lewis HAMILTON: What a beautiful day. What a great crowd we've had and really an amazing job from the team. We came here knowing that the Ferraris would be real quick this weekend but to come out with these points we'll definitely take as a bonus for us, so we deserve the holiday that's coming.

Q: I can see how drained you are. How physical was it out there under the sun?

LH: I was sweating. You know. It was so hot. Physical but I was obviously able to manage the pace. I think it's the last part here that really kills me, when I go and celebrate with my team, but a big thank you to everyone back at the factory.

Q: How do you look back on the first part of the season as we go into the summer break and you get some time to lie on the beach on the back of these last five grands prix on six weekends.

LH: I'm not really the lay down on the beach kind of type, I'll be doing activities, training and getting ready for the second half, but really happy with how strong it's come the last couple of races and as I said, so grateful for all the hard work and the continued efforts of the team, so they all deserve the break and I hope they keep pushing, we've got to come strong in the next half.

Q: Sebastian, I think that's the best you could have hoped for today wasn't it, getting up to P2. You almost jumped Bottas in the pit stop but I think Carlos Sainz held you up a little and a bit of a tricky pit stop?

Sebastian VETTEL: Yeah, I don't know, I think something was stuck at the rear but it was tough race. We were a little bit out of position for the speed that we had. I think we could go with Lewis today in terms of race pace. I had a good start on the harder tyre, which was good, and I was in third. Then I think we did well. I think then it was a bit tricky knowing when to come in. And then obviously we had a little bit of an issue at the pit stop, as you mentioned, and we came out behind Valtteri and then I realised right away I couldn't get him because his tyres were still too fresh, so I was sitting back and waiting and trying to line everything up for the last 10 laps and it worked. His tyres were getting worse and worse and I knew obviously how long those yellow tyres last from the first stint that I had, so I was quite confident I could get him at the end. Obviously P2 is not what we really wanted this weekend but I think it's the maximum we could get today.

Q: Did you think you were clear after you had made that contact down at Turn 2 at the end?

SV: I was surprised to be honest. I was already ahead and I was just trying to brake so that I covered the inside line and not running too deep. Then I got a hit from behind, so I wasn't sure what was going on. Then I was looking in the mirrors and I saw that Valtteri was there with Kimi and obviously after that I was clear and I was lucky nothing was broken and we could carry on.

Q: Kimi, a very strong end to that grand prix. I think you tried a different strategy and I guess you can be quite happy for Ferrari to get two cars on the podium?

Kimi RAIKKONEN: Yeah, I think it was the best that we could hope today. Far from ideal start. I think we need to improve those a bit to give us a bit more easier. We catch up with Bottas after the first stop but there was not chance to overtake at that point, so our option was to stop again and try again and at least we got one place back. Far from ideal. I think we had pretty good speed today but what can you do? Sometimes it's like that, but we take the points and go for the next one.

Q: And great to have this little man standing behind you. He looks happy?

KR: Yeah, he's always happy, so that's nice.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Péter Vámosi – Racingline.hu) A question for Lewis. Two years ago you mentioned Budapest as your top three cities that you like in the world – Tokyo and New York were maybe also there. What exactly is the order? And will you stay here a little bit and maybe doing another bicycle trip again in Budapest and check out some architecture and some buildings?

LH: You want to know what the order of my favourite cities are? I think it was New York, Tokyo, here, London, I think that's about really. I don't plan on staying. The weather is great and the city just seems to get nicer and nicer every time I come. But now it's holiday, I'm going to meet my mum and my sister and niece and nephew tonight and I'll spend the next four or five days with them. It's not too often I get to do family holidays so that's something I'm looking forward to. But I'll always have a chance to come back to Budapest. I've got some friends here. I spent some time already in the city away from the race. It's very cool, because it's still very young as well. They've got a lot of new buildings going up with the great old architecture they have there. It feels like it's growing as well in terms of how young it is, so very cool.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – Globoesporte.com) A question for Lewis. You said that Friday is normally different to Sunday. But on Friday you didn't use the blankets on your rear tyres. You get out from the pits very slowly, I believe not to heat the rear tyres...

LH: I didn't use what?

The electrical blanket on your rear tyres.

LH: When

Friday. We saw it on the TV.

LH: We always use blankets.

Also leaving the pits very slow...

LH: You can't drive these tyres from stone cold. Just so you know. So they are always in the blankets but they might take them out earlier than..

Where I want to arrive is that you have many problems with the ultrasoft tyres. The first stint you were on ultrasoft, the track was 59 degrees, 35 the air, and you had incredible performance, everything exactly the opposite to Friday. Can you make a comment; you changed the car, you understood what was going wrong?

LH: Well, from Friday to Saturday I made a big car change. The balance that I steered towards, I made a big change in P1, because I was uncomfortable with the balance. It's difficult to make change in P1 because you have to wait for the track to come to you rather than chase the set-up. I straight away made a big change and I tried to pursue that direction but by the time I got to the end of P2 I realised it wasn't the right direction so I had to pull back and go another way. We had a bit of running in P3 but the car still wasn't perfect. And then it rained. I didn't make any changes but I knew that Valtteri had had good P2 running and we weren't too far off in the direction that we ended. All the learning you do on a Friday, it wasn't perfect, the way you drive, the way you use the tyres, then you come back on Sunday and you have to bring you're 'a-game'. Friday is not usually the day I bring my 'a-game'. In terms of the tyres, the ultrasoft lasted a lot better than I thought today. I did struggle in P2 but, as I said, I was on a different set-up. The long run was quite good and then we went to the soft and I struggled, as where in P2 I was really good on the soft. So it was completely different. I struggled at the beginning and then we got through some traffic and then I moved a lot of switches around and eventually was able to balance the car and then it was OK.

After that I was able to do some decent times and pull the gap. I knew that at some point I'd need to pull the gap to these while they were still behind Valtteri. I knew the strategy that Valtteri was on it was highly unlikely that he was going to make it last and when I pulled away from the grid I knew that Sebastian had been on the soft tyre. We knew that it would also make it very difficult to win, even for me, so that's why the gap was really important. I definitely don't think the team expected me to be able to eke out my first stint to lap 30 or whatever it was. I think they were a little bit too optimistic I would say on the other side to make those tyres go that far. Even for me towards the end of my stint my tyres were on the way out. I probably could have done another 10 laps or 15 laps on them before they were completely dead. Their pace was obviously good but fortunately I'd done enough by then.

Q: (Scott Mitchell – Autosport) For Lewis and Sebastian. At the beginning of the race on alternative tyre strategies, it looked like at one point the race might be swinging more towards Seb, especially when Valtteri pitted and Seb looked like he was going to jump him. So obviously the race went in a different direction. Could I get your comment on how the race changed and also how it impacts the momentum of your respective championship campaigns.

LH: The tyres converge. If you draw a line of the tyre life you've got the ultrasoft which starts quickest and it drops off at a certain point and there's a crossover between the soft and the ultrasoft and then there's the medium which is way off, it's a terrible tyre. So past, kind of like, I think somewhere around lap eight, the soft tyres going to be faster than the ultrasoft – but I was able to... I was taking it quite easy on my tyres at the beginning. I was able to get that gap to Valtteri. I think it was to something like eight seconds. By the time he had pitted, and Sebastian had got clean air, then I was able to react to the times that he was putting in. So we were matching times, which, as I said, the team and we definitely didn't expect. Because, as I said, there's usually that crossover – but I was able to match his times for a good period of time and that's really what made the race. In terms of how it affects our championship, I mean, last year, I don't know if we were leading at this point of last year, but last year I think we had... maybe we felt like we were a little bit stronger than we were compared to this year. This year we all know that Ferrari really do have the upper hand pace-wise but I think all around, performance-wise, in terms of strategy and... y'know, because to win a championship is not just about speed, it's about how you manage things, the strategy calls you make, mistakes, all these different things all weigh up. I think, as a whole, we have hopefully done a slightly better job up until now. So, we've got work to do, we've got things to improve, we've got performance to bring moving forwards. We've got to try and catch them – but we've got to continue to keep rising with all the other elements, which allows us to beat the Ferraris when they don't bring their A game.

Sebastian?

SV: Yeah. In the first stint, I had a good start, obviously. We knew we had to try to do something different today. I think, as it turned out, probably Valtteri was taking it too easy and obviously, Lewis was able to pull away comfortably. Then, I think, looking back, despite the hot temperatures and so on, I think the ultrasoft worked probably better than we all expected. Obviously we tried to do something different with the soft and yeah, the fact that the ultrasoft lasted very well in the beginning, like Lewis' pace showed, and also at the end for me, the tyres felt like new once I was ahead of Valtteri, even though I spent so many laps in traffic, showed that I think the ultrasoft worked better. So, that didn't help to close the gap but I think we did what we could. We effectively passed Valtteri for P2 but then I think I got a bit unlucky with the traffic and lost a couple of seconds, and then obviously we had that little issue at the pitstop, so we ended up coming out behind – and then it was a different race. For sure we knew from the start that qualifying, where we qualified, we tried to do something different, I was happy to do that and I think the pace showed today that we were good. I think if you compare the stint on the soft to the other cars, obviously we were different fuel loads and mirrored strategy but was very good. So, I don't know. As we've seen this year the pendulum seems to swing once this side, once that side, obviously y'know if it's like this, consistency is the key. Scoring points. I didn't do myself a favour last week but I think it's part of racing. Stuff happens. Compared to last year, we lost the championship I think because our car wasn't quick enough to be a match in the final part of the season, despite what happened with the DNFs. So I hope that this year, and I think this year has shown so far that our car is more efficient, our car is stronger and still has a lot of potential to unleash – so I'm quite confident with what's sitting in the pipeline that we can improve. So, we'll see. Should be an exciting second part of the year.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Kimi, this is your ninth podium in Hungary. That's more than you have anywhere else. Does that mean that you have more good races here than anywhere else?

KR: I don't know. It doesn't really feel like a very good race here, being in third place. I think we had very good speed but obviously what happened yesterday and after the start, we never really were able to use our speed when we were on our own, catching-up. But, y'know, apart from that, you are kind of offset in the position and you know you are going to get stuck once you catch up with them. Obviously it worked out kind of OK because we were both... at the beginning I was giving a bit of a hard time for Valtteri and then Seb obviously, so they never had freedom to slow down and take care of their tyres. And there have been some issues and it paid off, so we both gained one place. But yeah, apart from that it was fun to push because the tyres, at least on my side because I stopped twice, they lasted well and I was able to go full speed. So that was fun. But the end result, doesn't really feel like a happy finish but y'know, as a team we scored decent points and I think we have a few things to improve and I'm sure we have all the speed to be higher up – but we need to tidy up a few things. I think which way you look it depends if it's good or bad. I don't think it's a disaster but it could be better, for sure.

Q: (Andrew Benson – BBC Sport) Sebastian, you had well over a pitstop's advantage over Valtteri for the best part of ten laps – but you delayed the pitstop, presumably because you were worried about the ultras. Did you wait too long? Was that a mistake. And for Lewis, how do you feel about going into the gap with more than a win's advantage?

SV: Well, obviously something didn't go as we planned. It was good that we were faster on an older tyre than Valtteri and pulled a gap. Then I think it's a bit difficult to foresee the traffic and – knowing how well you go through traffic or not – and in that case I lost quite a lot. So that was one. Then the pitstop, as I explained, but yeah, I think looking back at the race, Lewis' stint in the first part of the race with the ultrasofts, as I said, Lewis mentioned a crossover close to ten laps. I think the ultrasoft was a lot stronger in the race than it was on Friday, and then what we expected going on. You soft-of know but you don't know. Obviously Lewis' information, they don't call us and say 'our tyres still look good – you can come in earlier.' That's not how it works. And obviously the worst that can happen is that you come in earlier, you gain the position and then you fall apart at the end. You don't want to do that. I think what we did was OK. But then, as it turned out, with the circumstances and so on, we obviously lost out and we came out behind. Surely, that didn't help. I think without that it would have been a much more relaxed last part of the race, probably hunting down Lewis, but with the gap that he had, I think it would have been difficult to catch – and then it's a completely different story, especially around here to overtake. So I think we could have done the catching bit but not really the overtake, so, in the end it doesn't change much to the final result. Just that it was a bit more work than coming out ahead.

LH: Well, as I said, I really could only have dreamed that we would be in the position that we are in right now, considering all factors and based on our pure performance, where we stand compared to the Ferraris. Really happy, going into the break, particularly with back-to-back wins. I think that boost will last a long time for our team and it's encouraging for everyone so I'm excited for the break. I think everyone has worked so hard; even for you guys, travelling around the world, it's tough on everyone so it's probably going to be good to be able to spend time with family and friends and back off and then the second half is always exciting, it's always intense, particularly when we go to the long long hauls. Second half is usually... it gets a bit better on our side so we will go and prepare and make sure we come back even stronger.

Q: (Rebecca Clancy – The Times) What are your plans for the summer break? Will it be a break, will you be working, will it be holiday?

KR: I go home with family, come back for Wednesday for testing, after that, go back home again so I pretty much spend the first week flying back and forwards between Hungary and Switzerland and then after that obviously we have some time to spend with the family so that's nice. I don't know. In the end, it's not very long to be honest, it's couple of weeks at most and unfortunately it doesn't feel like a holiday when we have things coming up so it's not like it's just relaxing completely. It's nice to have a break but I think also for the teams and for all the mechanics it's been a pretty tough last month, month and half so it's nice for them and important for them to get some free time and relax.

SV: If you were a man, I would have said none of your business but you're a lady so I will be polite.

LH: Did you say an old lady?

SV: No, I said if you were a man I would said it was none of your business but since you're a lady I will answer your question. Not very spectacular, I will just be home to be honest. Obviously I think we do enough of travelling in planes so I can't be arsed to go on a plane, I'm pretty much happy to sit in one place and just enjoy. I think we've had an amazing summer so far, I hope it doesn't swing yet because now's the time for us when we have a bit of time off. I think other than day trips on the bicycle or – I don't know – doing something boring like fishing or.. I don't know, it will be quite boring and I'm happy with that.

LH: Same kind of thing as every year. Obviously my life's a little bit different, I don't have a wife and kids and that so I'm still in a fun period! I will spend time with my... I am an uncle so I will spend some time with my Mum, my sister and kids which is always great. Then my best friend's got a stag so that's going to be interesting and then yeah, I haven't decided where I'm going for the last part of it. Then my cousin's getting married so I've got a couple of people getting married and stuff so I'm sure there'll be some partying, I'm sure there will be some relaxing but most importantly I think it's about re-energizing yourself but the way I do that is activities so I will be trying to be active, training and just gathering a lot of energy. I probably will travel a bit because I like travelling, while I can, until I'm anchored down.

Q: (Peter Varkas – Auto Motor) Sebastian, could you please give us your perspective of the crash with Valtteri? Did you think you have left him enough room, was he too aggressive in the braking and afterwards did you feel something wrong with the car because it seems you lost some parts?

SV: Yeah, I wasn't sure. Obviously I felt all of a sudden that I got hit from behind. I think for him there wasn't really anywhere to go, I was ahead and then when you are so close to another car, I think he... I don't blame him, I think he had no grip, obviously when you're so close it's very difficult to stop the car and I think he locked up and we made contact. For me, I realised straight away that I had a much better run, my rears were in better shape, I got the inside track out of turn one and I had DRS so I was quite comfortable into turn two and knowing that I'd got him and I wanted to make sure that I don't overshoot the braking but as I said, as soon as I hit the brakes and a little bit later, about when I turned in, I felt the contact from behind. I checked in the mirrors, I saw he was there and then obviously I was lucky that I could catch the car and also lucky with the contact that I didn't get a puncture, so the team told me straight away that the tyres look fine. Then I had a feel but the car was fine until the end.

Q: (Phil Duncan – PA) Lewis, given that this is a Ferrari track and traditionally you're pretty strong in the second half of the season, do you feel like you've got a couple of fingers on this World Championship?

LH: Absolutely not. No, I think it's far too early and you've seen the ups and downs we've had from this year, you've been ahead by some points and behind some points, ahead by a... But we have learned a lot. I don't believe there's ever a moment that you've got your hands on the title or the trophy. We've got a long long way still to go and there's still nine or ten races... is it nine races? So a lot can happen moving forwards but what's really important is that we continue to keep up the pressure and keep working as we have done until now. There's nothing we really need to alter. I think our work ethic has been very strong and the team morale is better than ever and the spirit is better than ever. We've just got to keep it up because as I said, we came here, we came to the last race, they kind of blew us away a little bit in qualifying, they would have done here had it been dry so we welcome the wet races, that's for sure. But yeah, I'm not really certain what to expect. We've got Singapore coming up; Singapore's another weak circuit for us so there are a few good ones and a few not so good ones ahead. It's important to capitalise on those difficult weekends such as this and I think that's really been a key strength of ours this year, we generally have come away with really good points at circuits which have generally been our weaker races but then we really need to capitalise on the races that we're really strong at like Silverstone for example which we did.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Kimi, did it make it special for you that Robin was able to see the race and the podium from such a close range?

KR: Obviously it was nice for him. You need to ask from him! Obviously we didn't have the full family here, the little one, the smallest one is at home but we will go back there and he's at an age that he will remember so it's nice obviously for him, but let's hope he doesn't get too excited and wants to go go-karting. It's not the best idea right now!

Ends