



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L' AUTOMOBILE

2017 FIA Formula One World Championship

Italian Grand Prix

Post-Race Press Conference Transcript

DRIVERS

1 – Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes)

2 – Valtteri BOTTAS (Mercedes)

3 – Sebastian VETTEL (Ferrari)

PODIUM INTERVIEWS

(Conducted by Martin Brundle and Jean Alesi)

Martin BRUNDLE: Lewis, you're now leading the world championship again.

Lewis HAMILTON: You know what.... You know what...

MB: You might just have to punch through this [noise]

LH: Yeah, you know what, love it here in Italy and I love the passion of the fans, particularly the Ferrari fans, they're fantastic. This energy is like nowhere else we ever really get to see, apart from maybe Silverstone, so I respect it, I appreciate it. But I'm happy. We did a great job. The team did an exceptional job this weekend and me and Valtteri – Valtteri also did a great job – I think we owe it all to them.

MB: I didn't of too many problems, one lap you said you felt the power was going down a little bit, but you were coasting for much of it, saving the engine I guess.

LH: Yeah, firstly Mercedes power is definitely better than Ferrari power, so it worked well this weekend.

MB: Whoah, volcanic! You were up with Lance into the first corner and Esteban Ocon behind you. A little bit nervous of the new kids in town?

LH: The start was a little bit difficult for sure, because the grip was quite low, but it was a great day, a great result for us. We've got a lot of British supporters here as well, so I'm really grateful for that.

I'll leave you with your friends and go and talk with Valtteri. Valtteri, a couple of great moves from you. You had to make up some ground early on.

Valtteri BOTTAS: Yeah, like with Lewis the start was tricky, but just needed to keep my head down, get the places step by step. The car was so strong today. Like I said on the team radio, it was amazing today how quick we were and it was pure joy to drive. The pace was good, I enjoyed it and a perfect result for us as a team.

MB: Any dramas at all?

VB: No drama.

MB: Very reminiscent of 2015 and 2016. Now, I'll hand over to Jean to talk to Sebastian.

Jean ALESI: Sebastian, a few words in Italian for the Ferraristas.

Sebastian VETTEL: Allora, grazie a tutti. Tifosi, io sento di essere la migliore pubblico al mondo, davvero. Questa guerra é difficile – lo so che arriviamo, arriviamo! Forza Ferrari, grazie!

Sebastian it was quite difficult at the beginning to catch up straightaway, you had to make some overtaking. How it was at the beginning?

SV: It was entertaining. It was quite good fun. Obviously my start was not so good, I had a lot of wheelspin. It took a while before I could really trust the car and then I made some progress. We got some good overtaking there. Then we were a bit isolated. We didn't have the pace of the leading two drivers today. Nevertheless, going round, seeing the people gives a lot of hop. Even if this race has been difficult I know that we have a very, very strong car and we will have a very, very strong end to the season, I'm sure of that.

MB: Congratulations Sebastian. Lewis, you beat Ferrari today by over half a minute. With Spa last weekend have we seen a key turning point in the season, and the championship?

LH: I think it's all just to do with the team pulling together and trying to maximizing everything on the car and Valtteri and myself really trying to do the best job we can with the car. But today the car was fantastic and really a dream to drive. But a big thank you to all the fans who came out today, grazie a tutti, and I look forward to coming back next year.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Lewis, you've obviously taken the championship lead for the first time, one key talking point; the pace of the Mercedes compared with the Ferraris, on the supersofts particularly, I think you were 22 seconds ahead at the end of the first stint, another important talking point. And also interesting, this is the first time this season we have had a back-to-back race winner and I wondered about your thoughts on what that says about how open and competitive this championship is?

LH: Well, it's obviously an incredibly exciting season and the last two races have been incredibly strong for us as a team. We've gone from strength from strength and really shown real strength and depth and I think it's the way we have come together in this second half so far is exceptional. I'm not really sure why the pace of the Ferraris was not close as it usually is, particularly as it was in practice, but today the car felt fantastic, particularly in that first stint. I guess because we had a bit of breathing space behind us initially it was easier to extend the life of the tyre. I suppose if in the past we would have had a Ferrari behind we would have been pushed more to the limit. And Valtteri did a fantastic job just to get through and get a one-two here. I know it's not easy for the Italian fans to accept but I think ultimately we did the better job this weekend, collectively, as a team. But it's still close and there's still a long, long way to go. We're going to another track next that the Ferrari should be quite quick at, with the extra downforce they generally are able to add one, so the fight will continue. But it is amazing to come and have the back-to-back wins. It's been a long, long time that Sebastian has been leading the championship, so with all the ups and down to now be just slightly ahead is a great feeling.

Valtteri, your ninth podium of 2017, you had two cars to pass in the opening stint and you did that in a straightforward way. But maybe you could talk about the margin with Ferrari and your thoughts on why this race evolved the way it did?

VB: Yeah, actually three cars to pass in the beginning. The start was quite poor for me, just a lot of wheelspin. One of the Ferraris got ahead and I had to get him first, which was normally going to be the difficult part and the most important part for us today. But also then pretty quickly got to P2, which was good, and the car was so well balanced today and so strong. For sure we were quick in a straight line, but this weekend also we were really quick in every corner of the track. I think we just found a different kind of stability this weekend that we haven't found before. But this is a really

unique track. We can't rely on that 'OK, now we are quickest'. That's not the case. It's going to be a completely different story in Singapore, next weekend. Yes, we were quickest here. We had a perfect result, Lewis won, so well done for that, me second is great for us, but now it's whether we can learn from this weekend what we need to and be strong again in Singapore.

Sebastian you described it on the slow-down lap as a difficult day. I wonder if you could just drill down into that what aspects in particular were difficult for you and answer the question why you feel that the pace wasn't closer, either on the supersoft or the soft?

SV: Well, to be honest, I'm still pretty overwhelmed from the lap back to the pits and the podium ceremony. I think it's been amazing, the power of the people, to see so many fans for Ferrari is unbelievable. Yeah it was a difficult day, a difficult start. I didn't straightaway feel the car; I couldn't go with Kimi and Valtteri, so I had to wait to make progress. Then my race was fairly isolated. We tried to keep as close as possible but we simply didn't have the pace. I'm sure there are plenty of reasons, but I don't want to get too technical today. The last 20 laps I was struggling. I went off in Turn 1 and I think something broke in the car. The left-hand side of the steering was a bit down and I couldn't trust the car, especially on braking and it's a braking track. So the last laps I don't think they showed the pace we could have gone. Overall you could say it was a bad day, but I know the team is on the right way and there is a lot of stuff that is going to improve. Overall, it has been amazing so far to see where we are but I know that we only get stronger, so I'm in a very, very positive mood, despite the number and all that. I am not worried about these... overall, it was a difficult weekend but I know that there is still a long way to go and we have got the people behind us so it is a great feeling.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Peter Farkas – Auto Motor) Sebastian, how much of a role to you think it has played in your struggles that there was no dry P3 where you could have optimised the car setup after it was not really perfect on Friday. Is it a relief, in a way, that this is such a unique track and there will be no others like this until the end of the season?

SV: Well, Monza is specific. I've had races here... simply the fact how confident you feel in the car can make a big difference. I wouldn't say I don't trust my car or don't trust our car but I think this weekend has been a bit up-and-down. Practice, for sure there were a couple of things on the list that we would like to try but didn't get the chance but I'm sure that's the same for everyone. I had a good feeling on Friday. The long run was a bit scrappy because of traffic but in terms of raw pace, the Mercedes looked very strong. They confirmed that. I think it got a bit closer with worn tyres towards the end, second stint, I think you cannot judge. We were running on our own, they were probably just cruising – because no pressure from behind. So you can't read the whole race but overall you need to be fair and say that they did the better job and they deserved to win – no doubt about that – but I think considering the day yesterday and where we started from, I think it was the optimum result.

Q: (Ysef Harding – Xiro Xone News) Question for Lewis, Another Beast Mode performance, back to back wins, this moment you've been building up in the second half of the season, we're now going to Singapore, it's going to be more of a challenging race for you. Is this momentum now, and you going into Beast Mode like this, is that going to carry on for the next half of the season.

LH: That's definitely the plan! Definitely the plan. Giving it absolutely everything we've got but, as I've said, Ferrari might be a little bit quicker, maybe, when we get to a couple of the tracks where it's maximum downforce, where you can add a little bit more, I think there. They've generally been quite good, Hungary they were exceptionally quick on the qualifying laps so we might see that happen in the next races. I think nonetheless it's going to continue to be really close between us all, but yeah, absolutely. Beast Mode all the way to the last chequered flag.

Q: (Nicolangelo Cioppi – La Voce degli Italiani del Canada e USA) For Lewis and Sebastian. How do you feel beating Michael Schumacher's pole position yesterday, 68, now you have 69

pole position and how you feel to beat Ferrari in his house in Monza. Is different I think from any other race track. And for Sebastian. Is it possible to win again or the Mercedes is too strong for Ferrari – because it was 30s difference between first and third.

LH: As I was saying yesterday, it's an unbelievable feeling. Having grown up playing computer games on the same day as the grand prix when Michael was racing and going through all the practice sessions on my computer while watching the grand prix and playing as Michael, and now I'm ahead in the qualifying standings, which feels crazy. I feel very grateful for all the great people that have helped me achieve that. To win here in Monza, it is such a historic grand prix. There are very, very few, if any like it. The track is so unique in its own way, in this beautiful park, beautiful part of the world and the fans... you could hear the roar. I would love to know how loud they are on the scale. The energy there is incredible. The passion that the Ferrari fans – or the Italian fans have around the world. When I go to LA, for example and go to an Italian restaurant and the fans are there for Ferrari. They're all over the world and it's great to see. There's also some of those Ferrari fans that have, while maybe at heart perhaps are Ferrari fans, and being Italian, they've also spilled over to be Mercedes fans, which is much appreciated.

SV: Being technical you can say, I don't know what it adds up, the gap, the amount of race laps. I think we probably lacked something like half a second per lap today but there's not all the parts of the race you can judge. I'm not worried too much about the gap. As I said before, Monza is a specific place. If you have that extra bit and confidence then it makes a big difference. So, I'm not too stressed about that. We probably knew it would be a difficult race. Probably expected as well that we would be closer but all in all, it's not nice to see them two winning but I think with the third position, at least we gave everything we had and that's the most important. We gave everything for the people out there. The support has been amazing and, despite the numbers, the gap, you can name the negatives but I'm very, very positive right now, to be honest. I know that people are going into the office tomorrow more committed than before. The spirit is there, we just need to keep it up. It's a journey, we see where it takes us. It's been a long way that the team has come from three years ago but we are nowhere near satisfied despite maybe having had a good season so far, it's not good enough. Ferrari needs to be at the front and Ferrari needs to be on top of everything. So that's where we want to go. For sure, they are giving us a very, very hard time, especially at the moment, but we'll see. It's a long journey still and, as I said, I'm... yeah... still full of adrenaline from the podium, the atmosphere was amazing. You can ask whatever you want now, I don't care! You will always get a positive answer.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Valtteri, you are the fourth Finnish driver who finished second here. In any stage of the race did you have in your mind a feeling that you could be the first one to win here?

VB: Yeah, it is true no Finn has ever won in Monza. I think it's just unlucky. Obviously running all the race second not so far from Lewis you never know what can happen, so obviously you never give up on the dream of a possible win during the race – but I wasn't thinking about it too much, honestly. Just was focussed on executing our plan and being on it on every single corner. It was not the day for the Finns today but maybe next year, who knows?

Q: (Leigh O'Gorman – Walker Watson) For Sebastian. Considering your position in the championship at the moment, at the start of the race, are you more or less conscious about having to get through relatively inexperienced drivers like Esteban and Lance – or do you just take them as if they're any other competitors?

SV: I guess more the second part of your question. I mean, I think you judge when you follow, both of them did a good job. We were faster, that's clear and y'know, I knew that I had to get past quickly because with the DRS you can build a sort of a train and then it's quite difficult to get past. Plus they were very quick down the straights, both of them, but... no, I think Lance knew we had stronger pace, so he was quite fair. Esteban tried to cover a bit more but I had a very good run out of the last corner so for me it was clear I would get past and I just had to choose left or right and I just wanted to make sure, so that's why I dived down the inside. But, no, to be honest, there might be the odd

one standing out but overall drivers in Formula One have had a long history of racing and they know what to do.

Q: (Zsolt Godina – F1Vilag.hu) Lewis, congratulations. The next race is in Singapore; do you have any worries that the problems you had in the past could come back this year?

LH: Currently that's not my mind-state, no, and I will do all the due diligence it's possible to make sure that we arrive there best prepared. We have no idea until we get there what the picture's going to look like but I think we learned a lot from the past but on a hot track, Ferrari are often better in hot places. I think we'll be able to give them a good race. I think the car is continuing to improve and as I said, our understanding of the car is beginning to... it's constantly improving. Perhaps if we went back to Hungary for example, maybe we would be in a better position today with the knowledge of being there already. I go and approach it with a real positive mind-set that we are going to be fighting for a win but if that's not the case when we get there we'll just take it at face value and try to get damage limitation, I guess.

Q: (Andrea Cremonesi – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Question for Lewis and one for Bottas. Bottas, do you think that now, with this second victory in a row for Hamilton, your chance has gone and you're doing a job for him, you can do (indistinct) for the rest of the season? And for Lewis, how psychological was it... it's important to come back leading the championship?

VB: Well, you know, it is up to me also really, if I perform well, if I manage to qualify well, have strong pace, for sure I can still fight for the wins, but if it is going to be the case that for some reason I'm missing pace, if Lewis is doing a better job, me running in P2, and clearly behind then it's obviously better to help than try something silly. I'm always going to be a team player and it is up to the team to decide these kind of things, so we'll see. We'll go race by race and by every situation, but like I said it is also a lot up to me. I need to perform if I still want to fight for the title.

LH: Yeah, obviously I feel good, my mind feels exactly the same as it has the last two races and now coming here, I don't feel like I've got one up today, just continue to solidify the preparations and the execution of the last two races. Of course that solidifies your confidence and in the car and in the direction you're going but there's still a long way to go and lots can happen still, so just try to remain in the same frame of mind as I have been.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – GloboEsporte.com) Sebastian, do believe it can be hard for you to continue the fight in this final part of the championship because of the tracks: Sepang, Suzuka, Abu Dhabi, maybe Austin circuits that on paper look like they favour Mercedes?

SV: Well, I know how to read but I don't really care what's written on the paper. They're all tracks that I like, to be honest, so I'm very much looking forward to them. I think we are here to race, so if it's hard it's good. Easy is boring. I think that's what we all want and I'm definitely looking forward to it. At the moment you can say that Mercedes has an edge. Saturdays they're very strong which obviously has its contribution to Sundays, it's not a big secret but I think we are strong, we don't need to hide and there's plenty of positives. Things are coming, I'm sure they are developing their car. We are developing ours so I'm not so fussed about what they doing. I'm more focused on what's going on inside us, inside Ferrari and it makes me quite positive, what's coming, so we just need to see and then there's always the extra element of racing that you can't predict, that you can't put down on paper and that's usually the most exciting bit so I'm very much a fan of that and a fan of the moment and see what we can do.

Q: (Jussi Jäkälä - YLE) Valtteri, as this was your first visit on the Monza podium, could you describe it a bit? Did you feel more like a race driver or a rock star?

LH: There's more than one Finn out there? There's only Heikki here.

VB: Yeah, there's one extra guy.

LH: Excellent. Welcome.

VB: So I've got two questions today. Two Finns, two questions.

SV: There will be nothing else in the papers tomorrow. Two questions, I mean...

VB: Yes, actually it's my second time on the podium here. First time was in GP3 in 2011, it was a little bit different atmosphere. I have to say it is incredible, being so many people, obviously most of them shouting Sebastian's name but I was still enjoying it.

SV: That's because Valtteri is so difficult to say.

VB: That could be it! Thanks. Incredible, didn't feel like a rock star, honestly, felt more like a race driver but I enjoyed it.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Lewis...

LH: Hey! What's going on?

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Do you feel you need more of these one-twos to beat Sebastian and win your campaign for the championship?

LH: More of these what? Ah, one-twos. Yeah, I think, definitely, having the one-two today has obviously helped bridge more of a gap and the more we can perform like this the more we can really concrete that Constructors' title which the team are pushing... that's the priority. Of course that helps bridge the gap between myself and Sebastian. He's generally had a relatively comfortable lead most of the year, I think sometimes at 20-something points. I'd imagine that I'm.. what is it, three points ahead? I'd imagine that... I'll take that and I'm happy with that. I guess the plan for the next races is to try and extend that. As Valtteri was saying, he's done a fantastic job today and we're going to continue to push together. Valtteri's got the opportunity – if he does the job – to win more races as well this year so the battle is still strong between us all.

Q (Daria Panova – F1Only) First of all, I want to congratulate Sebastian for this fantastic podium in a special Grand Prix for Scuderia Ferrari. Question to you: in Spa, Mick Schumacher drove his father's car, the Benetton. If you had a chance to drive an old Formula One Ferrari car, which car would it be and on which track?

SV: Funny you mentioned that because Ferrari has a programme where clients can run historic Formula One cars and if ever I get the opportunity, I will definitely pick 2004. I think that must have been a dream car to drive. Circuit? I would pick my favourite track, not that easy logistic-wise but Japan, Suzuka. I think the car had a lot of downforce, very light and extremely quick, so that would be a unique experience. Yeah, something that maybe one day, if I do well in the next couple of years, could be a nice thing to do.

Q: (Frederic Ferret – L'Equipe) Sebastian, do you think that the title could be won or lost with your teammate and Kimi not taking so many points from Lewis?

SV: No. I think, you look back, there's always ways to look at points and stuff. I'm not so much interested. Above everything, you race for the team and then obviously you race for yourself, you try to do the best yourself and I think you saw the battle today. I don't think he waved me past but I didn't expect him to and it was tight. I was quick at that time and could make progress, so it was good to get past but he had a better start, he got past Valtteri so we're both fighting for the best and the optimum result today. For sure the pace was a bit down so it's always a bit more tricky but no, I mean, as I say, we're both racing. If you are racing in the same car then naturally, in a way, you're racing for the same bit of track. Look at those two, they were running very quickly and not a lot of gap between them. Also then, if you're so close to each other it's obviously crucial to be ahead in qualifying, opening laps, after that they will always be difficult. Rules are fairly clear that the teams have in terms of who gets priority and stuff like that so... Yeah, it's the name of the game so I'm not... I think much more important than look at a championship with teammates, points, whatever is the chemistry inside the team and I think Kimi's well known for the fact that he doesn't talk so much. Inside the team he talks quite a lot and yeah, we get along well, his feedback is valuable and I think we get on with each other and there's zero stress for the team which is a good thing.

Ends