



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L' AUTOMOBILE

**2017 FIA Formula One World Championship**

**Mexican Grand Prix**

**Saturday Post-Qualifying Press Conference Transcript**

**28.10.2017**

**DRIVERS**

**1 – Sebastian VETTEL (Ferrari)**

**2 – Max VERSTAPPEN (Red Bull Racing)**

**3 – Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes)**

**TRACK INTERVIEWS**

**(Conducted by Damon Hill)**

**Sebastian, what a great lap, tell us all about it?**

**Sebastian VETTEL:** Yeah, it was quite a lap I have to say, I'm really, really happy. It's very difficult here. It's very slippery and difficult to get everything in one lap. I had a little bit in the first sector and I managed to get that right, so I had a good start. Then I had a bit of a moment in I think Turn 6. I nearly lost it there, I had to go down to first gear, but I didn't lose any time and then I knew in the last sector if I just kept it clean across the line it should be enough and it was, so really, really happy.

**You've had to work really hard, I think Ferrari have really been working all weekend trying to get close. Is the car the racecar you want to have tomorrow?**

**SV:** Yeah, yesterday wasn't that good for us in all honesty, but I think overnight we improved, we had a lot of things we worked on and changed and they all worked. So for now I'm really happy. For tomorrow, we'll see what happens, but the race pace should be good.

**Max, what a tremendous effort. We really thought you had pole there. I expect you thought you had it too. Great performance, great qualifying, tell us about your laps?**

**Max VERSTAPPEN:** I'm super annoyed. I don't know. Actually in Q3 it just got a bit more difficult, couldn't really get the tyres to work. Of course, yeah, second is good, but not in the way I want.

**Well, I'm thinking you probably feel like you deserve a podium don't you?**

**MV:** Well, deserve is a big word but I gave it my all today in qualifying but it was just not enough. I really wanted that pole position but at least we have a decent starting position.

**Well, we've seen what you can do today, what a terrific effort. Thank you very much for showing us what your talent is all about. Lewis, you tried everything today, but maybe the Mercedes is not the car for this track today. What's going on there?**

**Lewis HAMILTON:** Yeah, I mean those guys did a great job, they're obviously very quick. I gave it everything I could, honestly I think the last lap could have been a couple of tenths quicker but still I wouldn't have been able to match these guys.

**As far as the championship goes, you're not concerned with where Ferrari is, where Seb is, they've done everything they need to do?**

**LH:** We're still in the running for the win I think. We'll see what happens with Max, but I'm hoping that I get to at least have a battle with one of them.

**Big day tomorrow, wishing you all the best for tomorrow. Seb, what needs to happen? You've got a slender chance left now for the world championship. You just have to go down that empty track and take the race for yourself do you?**

**SV:** I mean we have to maximise every session, whether it's practice or qualifying. Obviously today is really important and tomorrow we see. You know yourself, it's not as much in my control as I would like it to be, so it depends on what Lewis is doing, but for us we go all out. We attack and see what we can do. We deserve a good result, Ferrari deserves a good result so let's see what we can do tomorrow.

## **PRESS CONFERENCE**

**Well, Sebastian it looked like a great lap, but let's start by talking about 50 pole positions. What does that number mean to you?**

**SV:** It sounds like a lot. I guess it is a lot. I don't know really what to say. It's a big number. I'm very, very happy with today. Before qualifying I didn't look at it that way, so I was surprised myself to hear just now. I think every session you try to get the best. Quali has obviously been tough for us, and really rewarding when it worked, just like today. So really, really happy with the session that we had, with the lap I had at the end. So I think at the moment, right now, that probably means more than the raw number, but for sure overall it's a great achievement.

**And how confident were you of getting pole position in Q3 given the pace of the man sitting on your right?**

**SV:** Yeah, he was very quick in Q2. I don't know where he pulled that one from, so we had to stretch, I think, all of us. It's very difficult around here because there is not much running I believe. The altitude has a different affect on the asphalt in terms of ageing, so it's very slippery for all of us, very easy to do a mistake, very difficult to find that limit, to understand where exactly it is, where you can push, where you can't, where you have to be careful. And then he goes four tenths quicker than everybody else, it's a bit "how do I do that?" But I knew if I get the first sector together then I'll have a better chance and yeah, it worked just in the end, so I was really happy with my first sector, so I was really happy with my first sector. And then I was able to build on that. Had a moment in six, where I nearly lost the car, but managed to go through without any time loss. From there I felt really comfortable and again able to push to the end. Obviously when I saw how much I was up crossing the line, I knew it would be close, but it should be enough. But I didn't know what the others are doing; I guess the track improved a bit. When I heard it was enough, then, yeah, it's like an explosion in the car. I had one yesterday with the extinguisher but today was a real one, so I'm really happy.

**Q: Coming to you Max, Sebastian has just been eulogising about your pace in Q2, so how frustrated are you that you're not the man sitting in the middle this afternoon?**

**MV:** I mean you always try to go for pole position and Q2 was looking really good but somehow in Q3 I couldn't switch the tyres on and, yeah, I couldn't go faster, simple as that. On this track, it's really slippery and for me the front tyres were not working, so just a bit of understeer and, on this track, you need to turn the car very quickly in the very low-speed corners and that was not happening in Q3, so I couldn't improve. Yeah, of course, I mean second is still a good place but I think, yeah, especially after Q2 I was hoping for more.

**Q: Is there anything you might have done differently, with hindsight in Q3?**

**MV:** It's difficult to say. Basically, we did exactly the same thing as in Q2 but both sets, they didn't really switch on as well as I had in Q2. Somehow also the last sector was a bit more difficult. So yeah, really difficult to understand but sometimes you have that in qualifying, that you put a new set on and somehow it's a bit more tricky.

**Q: Lewis, can you just talk us through that session from your point of view – because the gap between yourself and pole is unusually big.**

**LH:** Well, firstly, congratulations to Sebastian with the Number 50. I tried to deny him it but it wasn't to be this weekend. Yeah, I think it was a difficult session in general. I think it's been a difficult weekend, I would say, overall. As Max was saying, it's very slippery here. I think some of the issues we have with the car are a little bit highlighted here. Perhaps not as big as places like Singapore but a little bit more here. I gave it everything I could. I think the gap really is a couple of tenths more. My last lap I was two-tenths up and I didn't finish it, but still that's a significant gap. I think they just did a great job. I think their car was working a little bit better this weekend, and yeah, we're still there in the fight. I think our long run pace is definitely better than our qualifying pace.

**Q: I was going to say, you did a very long run in practice. How confident are you of your race pace?**

**LH:** As I said, the race pace is good, so not worried about that – but you can't overtake here, you need a big delta to overtake, I think it's over a second delta to the car in front, as far as I'm aware – 1.3s or something – so positioning is important but there's a long way down to Turn One. So, we should have some fun tomorrow.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Rodrigo Amozurrutia de Anzorena – Récord) Sebastian, will it be special for you to win the race where maybe Lewis will get the World Championship.**

**SV:** Well, I don't think we need to debate what's the bigger cup. For us, it's pretty straightforward. I don't think it's much point looking at what others are doing, what Lewis is doing. I think the position we are in, we need to try and maximise everything we can and then, depends on him. It's pretty straightforward, I would say but for sure this is a very nice race, a very nice atmosphere and I think tomorrow there will be even more people than today and yeah, last year I think we were fighting for the podium and weren't sure who was supposed to be there, so this year I hope that y'know.

**MV:** I'm used to it, I've had practice...

**SV:** ... so when we get to the podium, we end up there and deserve it.

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – Globoesporte.com) Max, what influence the new engine of Renault engine you use already in Austin, this qualifying? And Lewis, maybe you have some problem in the power unit. Are you worried concerning the race?**

**MV:** A tickle difference. But y'know, every step is positive so I think they can learn a lot for next year, which is positive already, in terms of reliability, so it's always good to already have that right now.

**And Lewis, any engine dramas for you? We did hear you in practice on the radio.**

**LH:** It's not something I'm thinking too much about but it has not been a clean weekend in terms of the power unit, so we'll see what happens.

**Q: (Rik Spekenbrink – Ad Sportwereld) Question for Max. What do you make of the incident with Bottas?**

**MV:** Which incident? I was on the inside, he was just doing his line and he locked up, so there was no incident.

**We heard there was some investigation**

**MV:** That can be. But for me, there is no incident.

**Q: (Mariana Jiménez – Record) Lewis, you said the race pace is better for tomorrow than the qualifying but what could stop you from winning tomorrow and would you like to get your fourth title, even though you don't win tomorrow?**

**LH:** Yeah, I mean that's obviously the goal. Pole position was obviously the goal today but it just wasn't meant to be. Honestly it was so close through practice and I think it's the first time it's been so close between five or six of us which is exciting and put us all under pressure but as I said, a lot of very good qualifying sessions I've had this year... it wasn't at the top of those. But I think, as I said, overtaking here is very difficult but the start's going to be fun. I'm hoping I'm able to move forwards there if possible and then after that it's a one stop strategy here so it's really how you look after your tyres' degradation but there's not really much degradation if any. I think in the race it's going to be very very tough but I hope that I will remain at least close if I'm not where I want to be in turn one but yeah, winning here would be.... If you've seen the crowd today it's such a spectacle from above. I saw the camera from the helicopter, it looks incredible. There's a lot of energy in the crowd so to do it on Mexican soil would be pretty neat.

**Q: (Jim Vertuno – Associated Press) For all three of you: at one point in different points of the race last year you all had issues, adventures around that first turn. How do you think the kerbs and the changes there are going to affect how aggressive you can be off the start between the three of you?**

**SV:** Well, you don't want to go there, simple as that. I know that last year we had a bit of discussion here and there but personally I don't like... we might as well put a wall. I think for the guys it's probably the same. We all try to get the corner, every time we go round. Obviously sometimes we don't but it is what it is.

**MV:** I do think this year it's normally a little bit easier. We don't arrive as fast and we have more downforce compared to last year so the locking is a little bit less of an issue but of course turn one, if you really want to go for it, you can always brake a bit too late but I think those kerbs really stop you from like braking ridiculously late, for sure.

**LH:** I don't really have much more to say, it's the same.

**Q: (Ysef Harding – Xiro Xone News) Max, you've often shown that you're a young man without fear, you don't care if it's a red car, silver car and you've often said that these guys have everything to lose and you don't. Are you planning to take advantage of that tomorrow?**

**MV:** You're always careful. I think everybody here in the paddock wants to win races so if you see that opportunity of course you go for it but I think you always respect your competitor.

**Q: (Frank – Woestenburg De Telegraaf) Max, you've been here a couple of days. The altitude, is that a factor for you?**

**MV:** Personally not, because it's actually quite nice because you don't sweat as much but of course for the car it's a lot of downforce loss, I think it's even less than Monza so yes, it's a bit more tricky and then also with the track I think in general being a bit slippery, then with a lot of loss of downforce compared to normal tracks yeah, that's a bit more difficult but personally or like physically it's all good.

**Q: (Carlos Alberto Velázquez – Reforma News) Lewis, have you thought how you will celebrate tomorrow if you win your fourth championship here in Mexico?**

**LH:** I haven't and I won't think of it until I achieve it.

Ends