



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L' AUTOMOBILE

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Post-Race Conference Transcript

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DRIVERS

- 1 – Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes)**
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PODIUM INTERVIEWS

(Conducted by Mark Webber)

Lewis, I've seen some top performances from you over the years mate, but the last 24 hours, with qualifying, equalling Michael's 68th record pole position and the execution of today's grand prix was absolutely clinical. Run us through it.

Lewis HAMILTON: Thank you, man. I heard it's your birthday, so happy birthday. I don't know if the crowd can hear us, but the crowd has been amazing this weekend, so big thank you to everyone for all the support. It's been a strong weekend for myself and the team. The team did an amazing job and I'm really grateful for all the hard work. The support has made all the difference, seeing all the British flags amongst the kind of Irish orange has been amazing. Sebastian put a great fight on, but this is what I said I was coming to do, so I did it.

Sebastian, it looked like a really, really...

Sebastian VETTEL: It's Mark's birthday today, so happy birthday!

Thank you very much. It's not about me today, believe it or not, it's about you guys. That looked like a tough fight. Obviously you two were really duking it out lap after lap after lap. Obviously maybe not the most spectacular race, wheel-to-wheel, but as a racer I could see what you two were laying down.

SV: Yeah, it was good fun. It was really intense, because as you said, every lap I was waiting for Lewis to make a mistake, and he didn't. He was probably waiting for me to make a mistake; I didn't. Re-start? Maybe that's why maybe I'm not entirely happy. I was fearing that I'm not close enough but I was too close. So on top of the hill I had to go out and then it's a drag race, I'm on the outside and nowhere really to go, but it was good fun. I think we had a very good pace. If you compare this track

to Silverstone I think it was a lot better here, so yeah, we've done good steps forward and looking forward to next week obviously, our home race, so yeah, it's been a good race overall.

Well done, big points, mate, big points. Danny Ric – well done!

Daniel RICCIARDO: G'day mate.

Well, the safety car came at a nice time. You were sitting in there and then there's new fresh tyres ready to go and you made the most of it. A beautiful re-start at the top of the hill against Valtteri and then you got it home. You held Kimi off, which was sensational, so a huge result for the team though, right?

DR: Yeah, it was. You know, Max dropped out early. Firstly, thanks... I know it's pretty much full of Dutchies here, so thanks for hanging around, appreciate it, we all do. Then Kimi had a penalty so we got into fourth. We had pretty good pace mid-race and then we got the safety car. I knew we'd been given a bit of an opportunity with that and it was good to capitalise on that with Valtteri on the re-start.

Lewis, you got the driver of the day, which we would expect, but yesterday we spoke to you quickly and you spoke about coming here in 1996 with your father, the first time you really saw Formula One at this level, so run us through your emotions this weekend, how much it means to you, your 200th race, and those special memories coming here 21 years ago.

LH: Is it 21? Oh, jeez. Well, I like this Mexican wave everyone is doing. There are many kids here and probably adults that dream of doing what we're doing here today and I came here in 1996 with my dad and it was our dream. We were nobodies and it was our dream to be here one day. Hopefully this just shows to those of you who are watching that dreams do come true and you just have to keep striving for excellence, believe in yourself and never give up.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Lewis, awful lot of pressure to soak up in the final part of the grand prix after being very much in control early on. Sebastian had a new set of ultrasofts for eventualities; you didn't. You must have been pretty nervous in the build-up to that re-start. Tell us how you defended it, how you kept him at arm's length and how you feel about coming through that?

LH: Well I felt it was a bit like NASCAR, where they keep pulling out the safety cars for no reason. The wing was cleared, after we'd slowed down they could have done a VSC but I guess they wanted to see a race, so that's for sure the reason they did that, because there was hardly any debris, if at all, they cleaned it so well. Anyways, before that it was obviously close. The Ferrari has generally had the upper hand, particularly on race pace, throughout the weekend and very, very, very strong today and obviously I was towing him around everywhere so they were getting a good tow out of the straights. And on the re-start the safety car was driving so slow, it was I guess to let the other people catch up, but keeping tyre temperature, being that I was on the harder tyre, was very, very difficult. Yeah, it came to the re-start, Sebastian was obviously very, very close. The front tyres weren't switched on initially and he got a good tow. I think he was little bit close down the run out of Turn 1, so I think he probably had to lift off or otherwise he would have come by potentially before Eau Rouge, which was a good thing for me because having to lift he loses a bit of performance. But he did a great race, he was very, very consistent throughout. It was fun to be racing against, firstly another team, and Sebastian really at his best and with the car at the best, being so close. We were just battling within half a tenth every single lap and that's what racing is all about. As I said, I think

they were able to keep up and follow quite closely for a long, long time, so I think ultimately they had the better pace today but fortunately I was able to do just enough to stay ahead.

Q: Sebastian, sport is all about taking chances when they pop up. Obviously you had a new set of ultrasofts, you saw Lewis going on to the softs, you must have thought 'here we go, this is my chance'. Take us through that restart, it was very close, how did you come down the hill, how did you get through Eau Rouge? How do you feel also, just in general about being this close on a track which, after Silverstone, on paper should really have suited Mercedes far more than it suited you?

SV: That's a lot of questions. Obviously, I knew that we had a tyre advantage with the ultrasoft versus the soft, for the first couple of laps in particular. The restarts. So you could also see, exiting Turn One, was all over Lewis. It was not that hard to follow so close and maybe that was the problem. My restart in the initial part was too good. I was too close, so yeah, for sure if I had to do it again maybe I would try something different but at the time I... we know that they have very good straight line speed in their quali mode and at the start of the race I obviously felt how strong they were up the hill on the start, so I did not want to be too far either. Finding that optimum is difficult. Lewis also lifted a bit down to Eau Rouge, which I think he could afford because he knows he has a very good top end at the top of it. But yeah, I think overall it was a very good race. It was good fun. Obviously not that exciting probably to watch because we were very close but nothing happened but good fun in the car because I was waiting for him to maybe have an error he was probably waiting for me to have an error or an off but it didn't happen so the quality was very high I thought, and very consistent lap times despite the tyres, I think, dropping lap by lap. But yeah, never really had a chance. Maybe half a chance, quarter of a chance but yeah, I think the positive thing is that we had very good race pace. It was very difficult to follow in the middle sector but we stayed close and then we benefit in the first and last sector. Overall the car was very good. We didn't change too much compared to Silverstone which shows, on the one hand that Silverstone was just a bad weekend but we improved also the car so... especially in race pace, very strong. I mean we were, on average, a second off, or nearly a second off in Silverstone, so it's a big step. I'm very, very happy. I think we are on the right track and I don't think we have a circuit we should fear, going from now.

Q: Speaking of chances Daniel. Any sniff of a chance you get, you take it and end-up on the podium. You did it again today, particularly with that wonderful pass at the restart. It looked a risky tyre selection going into the weekend but having that new set of ultras paid off. You must be really delighted with the way this weekend has gone for you.

DR: It certainly ended well. It's always a funny one here. We come in not so optimistic and even qualifying... I think even the year I won I don't think I qualified too well but we seem to find some extra pace on Sunday and we put ourselves in a position or we take advantage of something and capitalise, so yeah, I'm really happy, y'know? Another podium's always good. The start, the first few laps with the ultrasoft actually, we were struggling quite a bit. We could see blistering and problems we always have at this circuit, with this nature of circuit, the high speed but struggling to really move or make much progress in the first stint. But then we put the supersoft on and we found a good rhythm. I think we were able to keep a similar lap-time to the leaders. Although they were on the soft, I felt, y'know, respectively we were finding a good rhythm and pace and then we got the Safety Car. For sure Lewis didn't like it too much – and fair enough – but for me obviously it opened up an opportunity on the restart with Valtteri and capitalised on that. He was on the soft, I was on the ultra and I knew if we were going to have a podium, it was happening on the restart. Once his tyres got up to temperature it would have been hard to do something, so, yeah, pretty happy. Good momentum now for the second half of the season.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Ysef Harding – Xiro Xone News) Lewis, what a way to start the second half of the season off. Looks like you were in control there, you felt a little pressure from Seb, did you feel you had the whole race in control and, y’know, with this historical pole position that you did yesterday, does this set you up for momentum going into Monza on his home track for Ferrari?

LH: I think... obviously it’s an amazing feeling to come back into the season and start off on the right foot, being that the Ferraris obviously finished on the right foot going into the break but they’ve really put in a fantastic fight today. The speed and pace they had was very strong. There was not a point at which I would say that I could be comfortable. I think for both of us it was pushing every single lap, which is more like a sprint race, which was fun. That’s really how racing should be: no room for error; no room for any mistakes – because if I’d had the smallest mistake, he would have picked up on it. And there were clearly strengths and weaknesses from both sides: strengths on our car and strengths on their car. We were constantly exchanging times. But this is definitely a good start going into the next race. Clearly we have not a bad car on the straights. I think, again, I imagine it’s going to be very, very close in the next race. I would think more heavily towards places like Singapore, where it’s high downforce circuits, where I think Ferrari seemed to have really picked up some pace. Places obviously like the last race. Otherwise I’ve got to say a big thank you to my team. It’s been a long period of time with Mercedes-Benz, and obviously with this team as well, so I wouldn’t have been able to have won any of these grands prix without them, so very, very grateful for all the hard work that they put in, and yeah, it just feels... everyone worked so hard so then when you match them and put in the same effort together and achieve what you set out to achieve, it’s such a great feeling.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – globoesporte.com) Lewis, Friday you were very fast on the soft tyres and today, after the pitstop, it looks like you suffer a little. Sebastian was very close to you, could even use the DRS. And also, you had 14 laps to the end when you did the second pitstop and you used again the soft tyre, not the ultrasoft. Were you satisfied with the decision?

LH: It was a very, very late decision. It was made literally just before the last corner, so I wasn’t expecting it. I was expecting to collect the Safety Car – which is why I allowed Sebastian to get close, because I didn’t... it’s not like the VSC where you have to keep to the delta, there’s no point because I’d be catching the Safety Car. Obviously that didn’t work out that way and came into the pitlane with Sebastian right up my tail, so very, very fortunate the team did a great pitstop and able to get back out ahead. After that, yeah, the pace I think I was struggling because the tyre temperatures were so low. I just couldn’t keep... from the slow pace, the safety car was going extremely slow and I knew it would be... firstly he’s on the better tyre and yeah, knowing that I thought the start was going to be very difficult. And it clearly was. I got into Turn One struggling with the front end of the car. But fortunately got a relatively decent exit but I mean he was on the gas before I was. I could hear him. So he was in a much more comfortable position but fortunately, once he pulled out of my slipstream we were both going against the same wind and fortunately I think maybe we have a little bit less downforce and that worked in that scenario.

Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action and Speedsport) Daniel, tell us more about that restart? You came out, there’s three cars abreast going up that hill and you come out in third place.

DR: Obviously I was focused on Valtteri but I was aware Kimi was... I was getting a good tow from Valtteri but we know the Ferrari has a bit more straightline speed than us so I was using Valtteri's pace but also knew that Kimi was probably going to get a double tow. All I could do... I saw Valtteri cover the inside so I went to the outside but then I was thinking 'I don't know if he's seen Kimi, maybe Kimi's going to get to the inside' so did Kimi go to the inside in the end? Yeah. I don't know but all I could do was focus on Valtteri and to be honest, in the braking zone it was still blind. I knew I was maybe in front but you get to a point you can't really see so I gave enough room in case he was still there, and you just kind of hold on and hope for no one to come in the side of you and then by the time you get to turning left for turn six I knew I had done it and I saw Kimi in the mirror. Yeah, I figured it probably felt nice on TV; it felt good. It puts me back up here so I'm happy.

Q: (Bas Holtkamp – Race Express) First of all, congrats for your third place on behalf of all the disappointed Dutchies. Max has had a lot of material problems this year, while you seem to have a lot of luck or are you just more gentle on your car? Is that maybe the reason why?

DR: Yeah, I certainly... I do a lot of things with my driving style which is very nice to the car. I actually talk to it a lot during the race. I massage it. I wouldn't call it foreplay but it's something like that and Max is young, he's aggressive, he goes straight in! I know you're shaking your head but I feel like you knew the answer would be something silly like that. In all seriousness, I don't have an answer for it. I've honestly... I have asked before. I've even asked all the guys in the team, the mechanical and also from the power unit side and I've said is there something you see Max is doing which I should maybe avoid and they said no, there's nothing he's doing. He's not over-revving it or anything silly. It's unfortunate. I commented on the podium that... I think it was Austria as well he had a big big following there and all the fans still stayed, the whole weekend. Obviously they all want him to do well but I think they're racing enthusiasts so really nice that they stay around for the rest of the race and support us all. Yeah, I know he gets bigger cheers from them but I still feel like they are a good crowd, there's no aggression, it's all love.

Q: (Flavio Vanetti – Corriera della Sera) Sebastian, you had a good chance with the start but what about the scenario with the safety car? Have you imagined what could have happened?

SV: Well, we had the safety car so no, I didn't imagine much. I was following Lewis, I think we had more or less the same pace. Obviously it was difficult to follow super close and get in range and really try and create something so – I don't know, the gap to the car behind with Valtteri was around five/six seconds, growing, especially at the end of the stints where I think Lewis and myself had better pace than the rest. I don't know, it was fairly healthy, there were 14 laps to go, something like that, 15 laps to go so probably would have finished the race like that. It wouldn't have made a difference, at least to us but for sure with the safety car then, yeah, I smelled a chance. Unfortunately it didn't turn out to be a great chance and as I said, not entirely happy with the way I executed but that's how it went. Nevertheless, as I said before... it's normal, as I said before, as a racer you always look at what you could have done better but you also need to appreciate the fact that it was a very very good weekend for us, all the way. Both cars very quick, competitive and closer than I think one could expect before the race.

Q: (Mike Doodson – GP Plus) Lewis, there were moments during the race where you were clearly a bit nervous over the radio, things like the speed of the safety car and the other nervousness seemed to come from the fact that you had to go on the yellow tyre at the end. Was that because there was only a supply of yellow tyres? Do you know why you didn't get the same ultrasofts that Seb was able to use?

LH: In Q2, Ferrari only ran once, we ran twice, so we used the spare ultrasoft whereas they saved it. I doubted if they were planning on doing a two stop as a two stop was slower but just by sheer luck there was a safety car which again, I commented, which I don't think was necessary but anyways it worked out OK, so yes, we had to put on a fresh tyre. If we had put on a used ultrasoft we would probably have been in more trouble so I think it was the right decision at the end of the day, but potentially in the future, maybe we will take precautions to make sure we also have a new tyre available just in case. But otherwise... I think everyone was in the same boat with the safety car being slow but yeah, I guess for me, being on that harder tyre, it was already hard for Sebastian on the ultrasofts to keep temperature in the tyres but being on the harder tyre again, it makes it even harder. But anyways, it was what it was and I did the best I could with it and fortunately was able to defend, just about.

Q: (Ysef Harding – Xiro Xone News) Daniel, you always seem to be there man, right, when it's right about time to get what you need to get done and take care of business. You describe your driving style; would you approach it like a fighter approaches way being patient, waiting for those openings?

DR: I always want to... when I was younger, a lot of the time I would leave a weekend, leave a race on a Sunday and have questions or doubts in mind head, like if tried that or I should have done this or... There wasn't often enough where I felt like I was leaving everything on the table or taking advantage of a situation. I wanted to make a point, particularly when I got the opportunity with Red Bull Racing and coming into a top team, you know, I don't want that feeling, I don't want to fly home on a Sunday with the race replaying in my head and thinking ah, if only I tried this move and then the race would have been different. It's something I felt I always had in me but in particular the last few years, I've been able to show it and get it out of myself. Yes, the simple term is leaving with no regrets and then just trying to capitalise on the moment and I think for that you need to be present in the moment. I enjoy... I love what I do. Fridays, practice. Yeah. Saturday qualifying, it's pretty good, but Sunday is most certainly what I love and I think it's easier to capitalise when you're having a good time.

Ends