



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L' AUTOMOBILE

2017 FIA Formula One World Championship

Monaco Grand Prix

Saturday Post-Qualifying Press Conference Transcript

DRIVERS

- 1 – Kimi RÄIKKÖNEN (Ferrari)
- 2 – Sebastian VETTEL (Ferrari)
- 3 – Valtteri BOTTAS (Mercedes)

PRESS CONFERENCE

Q: Kimi, what a fantastic job, your second pole here in Monaco but perhaps more importantly, your first pole since France 2008, which is 128 races ago – it established a new record for the gap between pole position. Clearly there's plenty of life still within you yet. How excited are you to be starting on pole in Monaco, and where did it come from today, this performance?

KIMI RÄIKKÖNEN: Obviously it's the best place to start for tomorrow, but it doesn't guarantee anything for tomorrow. Nevertheless I'll happily take it. It's been all weekend quite OK. We've been struggling a little bit in certain places and we've been working and trying to figure it out and in qualifying it was better, by no means perfect, but it's never going to be perfect. It was good enough and I was very happy with the car in there. If you look you can always go a bit faster here and there but that's normal, it's a never-ending story like that. We had a good timing when we went out. I felt good, so I was able to push and it was quite a nice straightforward qualifying. So happy for myself, happy for the team. Obviously we have two cars in the front tomorrow so let's try to make the best out of it.

Q: Great job, well done. Sebastian, four one-hundredths of a second off pole. You've obviously got to beat Kimi in the race, but having Lewis Hamilton down in 14th, although we think he might start 12th tomorrow after some penalties have been applied to others, that's got to be a bit of a bonus for you in the championship situation?

Sebastian VETTEL: I don't really care about that; I think we are both fighting for the best spot for tomorrow. Well done to Kimi, I think he had a better end obviously. I think the car was fine. It was really nice to drive. I think I probably pushed a little bit too hard on the first lap in Q3. Went wide in Turn 5. Second attempt again, went a little bit deep, so the second sector, I was probably a bit too greedy, wanted a bit too much and lost a little bit the car. I'm sure if you ask anyone after quali, we all have the feeling that there's always more.

Bottom line: it's a great result for the team. Not as happy as I could have been but, as I said, well done to Kimi.

Q: Very well done. Coming to you Valtteri. I was going to ask why Mercedes struggled today, looking at the problems your team-mate had, but when you look closely you're only 0.045s off pole position, so it was pretty close in the end. Tell us about that and what the race holds for you?

Valtteri BOTTAS: Yeah, I think this weekend has been a bit tricky for us. We started well in practice one but then we got a little bit lost with the set-up in practice two, so we definitely lost some valuable practice time and got things more or less together in practice three and in qualifying the car was feeling its best so far this weekend. Still a bit tricky in places and it was quite difficult to get a lap together and I think Lewis also struggled with that and had some traffic in Q2. Not an easy weekend for us. I think Ferrari have in general had the upper hand. Their car is a bit more driveable. They were quicker today and well done to Kimi for the pole. But tomorrow is the race and it's one of the places where anything can happen.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Pete Farkas – Auto Motor) It was quite interesting to see that during free practices Sebastian seemed to be a bit more confident on track than Kimi, but throughout qualifying it was the other way round. Has something changed – maybe it was because of the conditions, maybe the very high track temperatures – or maybe it was nothing in particular?

KR: No, I don't think so. I think it's the very fine details that make a difference here. If you have just a little bit of an off feeling with the tyres or something like that in one place, it limits you to go fast and obviously in those low-speed corners you can lose a lot of time for basically nothing. It's tricky to put the good laps together. You try to kind of, in the practice, take it a bit easier, not to destroy the car, because then you are going to lose a lot. Then you push and hopefully you get it right. But I think it's such small differences. It's nothing to do with conditions or anything else, it's just whoever gets the best feeling and being able to push.

SV: No, I think I had clean sessions Thursday and this morning, with no traffic, so I was really able to feel the car and get the most out of it. I think Kimi had some scrappy runs with some traffic and couldn't get maybe the same rhythm. It was close. As Kimi said, it's about putting the lap together. Maybe I struggled a bit more in quali than him, but at the end of the day he was faster, so he is ahead. Simple.

Q: (Peter Farkas – Auto Motor) A question to both Kimi and Sebastian, it was quite interesting to see that, during free practices, Sebastian seemed to be a bit more confident on track than Kimi and in Q3 and throughout qualifying it was the other way around. Has something changed? Maybe it was because of the conditions, the very high track temperature – or it was nothing in particular?

KR: No, I don't think so. It's very fine details that make a difference in here. If you have a little bit of off feeling with the tyres in one place it limits you to go fast, and obviously in low-speed corners you can lose a lot of time for, basically, nothing. It's tricky to put the good laps together. You can try in practice to take it a bit easy, not to destroy the car because then you're going to lose a lot and then you push and hopefully get it right. But I think it's such a small difference it's nothing to do with conditions or anything else. It's just whoever gets the best feeling and being able to push them.

Sebastian?

SV: I think I had clear sessions Thursday and this morning, with no traffic, so I was able to feel the car and get the most out of it – I think Kimi had a bit scrappy runs with some traffic and couldn't get maybe the same rhythm. So, it was close. As Kimi said, it's about putting the lap together. Maybe I struggled a bit more in quali than him – but at the end of the day he was faster so he's ahead. Simple.

Q: (Luis Vasconcelas – Formula Press) Valtteri, while the Ferraris are able to do the quick lap right on the first lap, you seem to need a couple of laps to get into the groove and get the temperature. How much of a problem is that going to be in the race?

VB: Yeah, that seems to be a bit of a problem this weekend. We can't combine both of the axles, front and rear, to be on the optimal window with the temperatures at the same time – so it takes two, three laps to build temperature up to all of the tyres and then to get the balance right and get the feel for the car and the confidence. That's been a bit of an issue. Plus, we had some set-up problems in practice too – so not the easiest weekend. Definitely they would be more in the window with everything and their car seems very driveable and stable. It was, anyway, very close today. And tomorrow, it's Monaco, anything can happen. So, you know, of course it would be nice to start on the front row but I'm starting third. Still, anything is possible.

Q: (Louis Dekker – nos.nl) For all the drivers, can you say if the circuit, with these new cars, is easier or more difficult?

KR: I don't think it's any easier. We end up going faster but then the same difficulties are there to go fast. It's always tricky here, like it is in any place, especially here because you have to get very close to the kerbs and the walls and everything and there's no chance to make mistakes. I think the resurface has improved a lot the circuit. It's less bumpy, so it makes it a bit more nicer – but I don't feel it's any easier because the cars are faster and how more downforce. Everything happens a bit faster.

Sebastian?

SV: Not much to add. If you go faster it's more fun. So, yeah, I think it's always been tough to go to the limit, especially around here with little room for error – but I think this year is a bit more fun.

Valtteri, more satisfaction?

VB: Yeah, I think it's good fun. All the corners, they are a bit quicker, especially the higher medium-speed corners, so I very much enjoyed it. For sure it's not easier now.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – GloboEsporte.com) To Kimi. Kimi in spite of being the sixth round of the Championship there is an important difference in points between you and Sebastian. In the case you and Sebastian are fighting the first bend after the start, how will you react?

KR: No different to any other point this year, last year. We know what we are doing, we are racing for the team and y'know, we have certain rules and respect against each other. We are allowed to fight but obviously, we have to do it as clean as we can and not take each other out.

Q: (Ottavio Daviddi – Tuttosport) To the Ferrari drivers. You are in the first row, I think that the first corner will be very important. I would like to know if it is necessary to discuss about Ste. Devote between you with doors closed tonight, or not?

I think Kimi's half-answered this already...

SV: I think we have done enough races so we know what to do normally in the first corner. We're here to race, we're here to race each other. The start is important here, the first corner is important, the race is important! The start is the beginning of the race, but not the end so we'll see. We know that pole is important in Monaco, so we'll see what happens.

And Kimi, you will presumably have a briefing before the race in which it will...

KR:... I don't know why people expect that it is something different tomorrow than it's been the last two years. Nothing has changed. Just try to make a stupid story out of nothing.

Q: (Peter Farkas – Auto Motor) If conditions stay the same, which presumably they will with more than 50 degrees track temperature, will it be a problem to make the ultrasofts last or are they so durable that they would last all the race even in these conditions?

SV: well, we've seen historically that at Monaco the tyres are not under a lot of stress, simply because of the nature of the track, not having a lot of high speed corners, they don't put a lot of energy in the tyres. Tomorrow's going to be – if it's like today, I don't know the weather forecast but if it's dry and like today then I think it won't be easy but I think they should be fine.

VB: They don't need to last the whole race. We all have tyres left and there's not much people and teams can do with the strategy to be honest, because they are quite durable here. It's a bit too hard, the compound for here, so it's going to be a case of safety cars and stuff like that and when you stop and no matter where you stop, you're going to go to the end so we'll see tomorrow.

Q: (Luigi Perna – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Kimi, this pole position, during the last nine years, it's important for you to have done it in such a selective track as Monte Carlo?

KR: No, I would have happily taken any other place also but it just happens. We've been close a few times lately but it's something we haven't really got in the last race. But if you take any circuit, here it's the most important to be in front but it doesn't automatically give you a win or a good result. There are so many things that can happen in a race that are nothing to do with you. You might be doing and the team might be doing a perfect job but actually there are absolutely other things which might destroy the whole race so it's going to be a long difficult race but we have two cars in the best possible positions so that's the main thing.

Q: (Luis Vasconcelos – Formula Press) To Sebastian and the Valtteri, it's difficult to gain positions at the start but what's going to be the more important, to try and attack and gain positions or to make sure you stay out of trouble and collect as many points as possible?

SV: Well, I think we're all here to race. We all want to do the best race we can, I think the priority for tomorrow. For the start, I don't know, you do your start and then you see what the others are doing and then you see where you find yourself so. It's very simply. You try to do your best and then you see. As we know, it's not a long way to turn one but after that we have a very long race here so there are a lot of things that can happen.

VB: Yeah, I think it's a very short run into turn one so you really need a mega start if you want to gain a position but if there's any opportunity, for sure that's one of the best places to gain positions in this race, so for sure, we as the team will try to gain anything we can and use every opportunity we get tomorrow so hopefully something at the start but we'll see.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – GloboEsporte.com) If, after the safety car leaves the circuit, coming back to this subject of tyres, do you think it will be an issue to get temperature after the safety car, and to Valtteri, do you feel that you have pace to follow both Ferrari drivers in race conditions?

VB: I think, here, it's going to be tricky behind the safety car to keep the temperatures but that's going to be the same for everyone so just where we're starting it's going to be tricky but take a couple of laps but then it's OK. I think we should be able to fight with them. Normally always here at some points there's a safety car and things happening that will create opportunities so hopefully we can follow and that way it will create some opportunities.

SV: Who knows if we will have a safety car but if you know already then maybe you can tell me afterwards which lap.

Q: (Jerome Pugmire – AP) Valtteri, it's been a very frustrating weekend for you and Lewis, what's Lewis's mood been like over the last couple of days?

VB: It's been OK. We definitely have been struggling this weekend especially in practice two. That session was a bit of a one-off, then we've been more or less there. Maybe not as competitive as other weekends. Ferrari has just been strong. Your question about Lewis, he's been OK.

Ends