



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L' AUTOMOBILE

2017 FIA Formula One World Championship

Austrian Grand Prix

Saturday Post-Qualifying Press Conference Transcript

DRIVERS

1 – Valtteri BOTTAS (Mercedes)

2 – Sebastian VETTEL (Ferrari)

3 – Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes)

TRACKSIDE INTERVIEWS (Conducted by Davide Valsecchi)

Q: What a qualifying! Valtteri Bottas on pole position, was a spectacular lap. Valtteri please, your lap was amazing. Less than one tenth in front of Sebastian. Great job my friend.

Valtteri BOTTAS: Thank you. Yes, it feels good. You know I really enjoy driving here in front of you guys, so thanks for the support but I enjoyed it today. The car was getting better and better as the grip was coming up and a decent lap in the end – not quite perfect but it was good enough.

Q: Very well done. It was spectacular. First row, Sebastian, very well. Good improvement – all for you my friend. How was your lap?

Sebastian VETTEL: Not quick enough, but I was very happy. The car was really good, last qualifying also for the last run, but then it was a bit of anti-climax with the yellow flags but yeah, very happy. It's a great track, shame it's a bit short but really enjoyable with a lot of high speed corners and the car's been really phenomenal so looking forward to tomorrow. Should be a good race.

Q: Lewis, look, they love you, they love you, there's no way... Tell me about your last try. First corner maybe you lost the car a bit. How was the feeling on the car?

Lewis HAMILTON: Well firstly, congratulations to Valtteri. He did a fantastic job. He's been driving well all weekend and obviously Sebastian's very quick this weekend so happy to have been third. Of course I would have loved to improve my lap but yeah, just wasn't meant to be today.

Q: Guys, sorry Lewis, come here. Seb, I would like to understand; now you have a good chance. You are on the first row, maybe Lewis is a bit behind because of the penalty. Can be good for tomorrow for you, no?

SV: We will see. It's a long race so a lot of things that can happen. I think we have to look after ourselves, do our own race. It will be a tough race with Valtteri. He's been quick all weekend, also yesterday, setting a good pace, so we will see. I think it should be a good race.

Q: And Lewis, will it be the aim to catch this driver tomorrow or no? I mean the red cars, they are there...

LH: I will do the best job I can, obviously. I want to get up there and try and get a one-two with Valtteri so I will do the best job I can to get further up.

Q: Maybe also the soft tyres that you're going to start on tomorrow can be the key of your race, no?

LH: I have the supersofts for tomorrow. I think it's generally a slower tyre than what they are on but it can go maybe longer, we will see.

Q: Good luck to you. And Valtteri, please, last chat because today was amazing, I'm really happy for you. Tell me, which is the aim for tomorrow: not easy to stay in front of Sebastian but here you have a good chance. But you are outside on the start, maybe it can be...

VB: I think like Sebastian said, it should be an interesting, good fight for tomorrow but there's targets, the target is not less than winning, of course for us and I'm sure Lewis still has a good race ahead, a lot of time to come back and get good points for us as a team. I can't wait for tomorrow, honestly.

Q: Best of luck, best of luck. Please guys, I need a handshake with you both, you [Lewis] with Sebastian. Handshake. Please my friend.

LH: We've already stood together.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Q: Valtteri, you looked pretty hooked up throughout that session. How good was the car, how good was that lap?

VB: Yeah, I really enjoyed it today. Always when you enjoy, normally the result is good. Definitely got the car nice and stable for the qualifying and just was able to build up the confidence and this is a track where you really need it in those high-speed corners. Yeah, found the balance, didn't really touch the car at all during the qualifying. The laps were getting better and better and that was the result. As a team again we have done a great job over the weekend to make the car better and I felt good today.

Q: Well done. Sebastian, so close between you and Valtteri in the end. Can you pinpoint where you lost out? How good was the session for you?

SV: I think it was pretty good. I think Q3 was pretty good, I was very happy with the lap. But in all fairness, what goes around, comes around. I think I have been on the lucky side a couple of times, especially against Valtteri, with tight gaps. I think the four hundredths today is tight. The story continues between us two. Well done, obviously, to him. He said that he still had a bit of margin. I was pretty happy with my lap to be honest. Maybe there was a sniff in the last corner. It's a short track, not easy to get everything right, so overall I was pretty happy. The car was good. I think we did a good step from yesterday to today, so hopefully we can carry that into the race.

Q: Lewis, it's been a difficult day for you, with problems in the final practice session and then having to run a different strategy during qualifying, just talk us through the session itself.

LH: It was a pretty straightforward session, no real issues. The car was good. Valtteri did a fantastic job today, so really happy for him. I just didn't hook it up when it got to Q3. Q1 and Q2 were good and then Q3 was just so-so.

Q: Was Q3 somehow compromised by having to run the supersoft tyre in Q2?

LH: I wouldn't say too much. Of course the tyres are a little bit different but generally I'm experienced enough, shouldn't be really a big problem.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Tom Slater – Soymotor) Lewis, here in Austria in 2014 you started the race P9 and you ended P2, so do you think you will be able to do this result tomorrow and if you do will you be happy with it?

LH: I'm pretty sure that back then there was a bigger difference in speed deltas between us and other cars so I think it's more unlikely than it was then, but I will give it everything I can and of course I would be happy if I could get up there.

Q: (Peter Farkas – Auto Motor) Question for the Mercedes drivers. Valtteri, congratulations for the pole position, you've always been quick at this track, there's a win to take tomorrow but I don't want to suggest any gamesmanship but obviously it would be quite an easy strategy for you to go a bit slower in the front so Lewis can keep the pace and then he would be in a strategic advantage at the second part of the race. Would you be willing to do that? And Lewis, how much longer do you think you will be able to go with the supersoft than with the ultrasoft?

VB: Well, what I've seen on the pre-race strategy notes, that kind of plan is not on those notes so, yeah, we need to focus on having a good start of the race and we need to win the race. And for sure Lewis can fight back from where he's starting. Y'know, if you start playing games like that here it's quite tricky. If the car behind gets within the DRS zones and gets a good slipstream, it only needs one mistake and you can lose the win. So not planning on that at the moment.

And Lewis, your strategic options for tomorrow?

LH: It makes no sense for Valtteri to slow down. That will not be the case. It makes sense for him to push as hard as he can to win the race.

And starting on the supersoft tyre instead of the Option?

LH: I don't think it's going to make a big difference if I'm really honest. It's a slower tyre so, I think in the first stint, it's just about length. But lots of different things could happen: safety cars, rain, who knows?

Lewis, how confident are you of winning this grand prix from P8.

LH: I couldn't say I was... Valtteri has been quickest all weekend, so it's not really on my mind at the moment.

Q: (István János Simon – Automagazin) My question is mainly to Sebastian and Lewis. The weather forecast says there's a high percentage of rain for tomorrow for the race. Do you count on that? Can you calculate with that and do you think you will be able to do a strong race if it rains when we've had all the practice sessions in dry?

SV: I think it's fair also to ask the question to Valtteri as well, he'll be racing tomorrow as well so if it rains we're all affected. But, I don't know, I think we have a different weather forecast then. I need to check with our guys – but, yeah, we'll see. We have the wet tyres, they are ready. It's always tricky if you haven't done a single session in the wet but I think we had some experience last year so if it rains, it rains, we fit wets or inters and we try to race. We'll see.

Valtteri, wet weather?

VB: Yeah, it's so difficult to predict here if it's going to be wet or not. A bit like Friday, we just need to wait and see what happens and react to that. But of course we all want to race if it's wet – but it depends on the conditions.

LH: Not really much more to add. Could be helpful being that I'm eighth or something like that. Makes it a bit more of a lottery.

Q: (Michael Schmidt – Auto Motor und Sport) Lewis, when you know already before the weekend that you're going to lose five grid positions, what is the mindset, is it still a normal race weekend or do you have different strategies during Friday and Saturday?

LH: You still approach it exactly the same. Nothing changes at all, if I'm honest. It's just really trying to get yourself as high as possible and when it comes to the race it's about damage-limitation. You try to minimise the damage. I found out on Tuesday, I think it was and, of course, you go in with a very positive mind about coming back and fighting and then of course something like that hits us. It's difficult for us all to swallow but we pull together as a team and we work as hard as we can. We've still got great performance and hopefully I can do a good job for the team tomorrow and get some good points.

Ends