



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

2015 Australian Grand Prix Sunday Race Press Conference Transcript

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PODIUM INTERVIEWS

(Conducted by Arnold Schwarzenegger)

Congratulations.

Lewis HAMILTON: How do you doing? What an honour to meet you. Arnold Schwarzenegger, man! Wow!

It's wonderful to be here in Melbourne, to be in Australia, and I was just asked to conduct the interviews with the winners here. I'm so excited about it as just for the last two days I was interviewing the fittest, the strongest people, the most energetic people in the world at the Arnold Classic and now I'm interviewing the fastest people in the world. So, Lewis, what does it feel like having won last year's world championship and now winning the first race again.

LH: Well, it's obviously a real pleasure to be here, we have the greatest fans here today, thank you so much for all coming out. My team did an amazing job today and it's an incredible feeling to continue on from last year but also to be up here with you man? I thought you were taller! You were taller in The Terminator.

I'm not wearing my high heels! Let me just ask you how much physical training do you have to do to be in that kind of shape and to go through a race like that?

LH: We all train very hard. People don't actually realise that we are athletes. We have to train a lot. It's incredibly physical in these cars. So I'm very honoured to be up here among these great drivers and with this team that's doing such an amazing job.

Well thank you very much, congratulations. Now a question for you [Nico Rosberg]. What does it feel like being second and do you think you are going to make up [ground] and maybe beat this man this year?

Nico ROSBERG: Well, it's a nice feeling to be second today because it's an awesome start to the season for us as a team. Absolutely stunning car they've given us – unbelievable. Lewis has done a

fantastic job this weekend. He drove like a world champion all weekend, so couldn't quite beat him but for sure I was trying every single lap, all the way to the maximum, and I will do all year. I will give him a big run for his money and hopefully beat him. Also thank you very much to the organisers, you've done an amazing job this weekend, I'm sure you'll all agree it's been a fantastic weekend for everybody. And also, all of you, you've been great and put on a great atmosphere. Thank you.

How much does concentration have to do with it to win this competition, this race?

NR: Yeah, a lot of it is in the head, of course. Not only in one race but during the whole season, to keep your energy, your focus, but especially during one race. It is very demanding in the head, to not make a single mistake, and it's challenging physically too. It's tough.

Well you've done a great job, congratulations, and I'm looking forward to seeing you in the next race. [Sebastian] what does it feel like now, being with Ferrari?

Sebastian VETTEL: It feels great. It's a very, very big honour. I'm very happy. Obviously it's a great start to the season for us. We had a very good winter already; the team has worked phenomenally hard. We can very proud, I said to the guys, thank you very much, *grazie mille, abbiamo una macchina bella*, we have a great car not only in qualifying but for the race as well and it's great to join them and I'm really proud. There's a lot of work ahead of us trying to beat these two and beat Mercedes but I'm sure we will.

How much preparation goes in every day to prepare for a race like this?

SV: It's our job in the end. It's not just turning up the weekends and doing the job, but all week. As Lewis said we have to be fit, so we have to train, we have to look after each here and there. I think I can spare pizza especially this year. It's a full time job.

Congratulations and for sure I will be watching you in the next race. I know [Lewis] that you are going to say now.

LH/AS: 'I'll be back'.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Many congratulations Lewis on a fine 1-2 finish to start the season with and 34th career victory for you, your first win in Melbourne since 2008. The gap throughout the race between yourself and Nico opened and closed between a second-and-a-half and 3.5 seconds but did you feel totally in control from start to finish.

LH: Nico was very quick throughout the race and it was really trying to manage the fuel and all that, and also the tyres, not really knowing where the limit of the tyres is in terms of how far they can go. But once you've got a two-second gap you try to manage that, there's no need to eke out more. But when Nico turned up the heat I was able to react, which was good. Otherwise, it was a phenomenal race for both of us, Nico drove really well. Obviously Sebastian must have done a great job to be where he is today.

Nico, coming to you, there was a message to you to save fuel at one stage in order to attack Lewis at the end of the grand prix. The attack didn't seem to come, but how was it from your point of view and sum up you weekend?

NR: No, no, the attack was most definitely there! Maybe you didn't see it but it was there, for sure, inside the cockpit. But Lewis made no mistakes so it was just not possible to get closer than that, let

alone try some of attempt to overtake. It was just a matter of saving a little bit of fuel in the middle of the race to then be able to go full on at the end of the race but I think Lewis did a similar thing. As soon as I started to save a little bit he saved as well, so he could push, so it didn't really help me unfortunately.

Sebastian, congratulations on a podium on your Ferrari debut. You did it largely through strategy. Massa pitted first, you put the hammer down for a couple of laps and it was enough to get you in front. Tell us about the emotion, first of all, on your Ferrari debut and how you achieved it?

SV: It's great. I'm over the moon in many ways. It's great already on the parade lap to see... I don't know, I think the Ferrari flags have been there before but I didn't pay much attention obviously. But it's great the support through the whole weekend. It's an honour to sit in the red car. Obviously when your head's down and you race and you try to push every single lap you don't realise the colour so much but certainly when the chequered flag came out it was great to see and a great feeling, a great reward for the team. I think the car is a lot better than the team had last year. I think we can be very happy as a starting point. Still we lose a lot of time to those guys but I think in the race, potentially, we are a little bit closer than in qualifying trim but overall it's great for sure. Very, very happy, very pleased and very proud of the way the team is tackling the grand prix. The atmosphere is great, the motivation is very high and everyone knows where we want to go. We want to make sure that life is not that easy for those two in the future.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Vincent Marre – All Race) My question goes to Sebastian Vettel: how will you rate this third position, emotionally inside you? Because you won a lot with Red Bull but this is a new challenge, a new team. How would you rate this one?

SV: I think this was a great race for us. Obviously the start was not ideal, I was very close, I did not succeed to pass Felipe straight away and then we had a great strategy and were able to save some tyres to, yeah, go the opposite of the usual strategy to overtake someone through the pitstop, so that worked very well. Generally it has been very calm, very professional, led by the pitwall throughout the race. Of course it's not a victory but for us today it feels like a victory. Obviously it's a great relief after a horrible season last year to know that the car in general is working. People have done a great job both on engine and chassis sides, so big compliments to Maranello obviously. I've secretly been a fan, now official I can be a fan of Ferrari and since the day I got there, there is something magic about the place. I feel very happy. I had a very good time with Red Bull and certainly was able to learn a lot, the experience I can now bring into the new project as well. So, as I said, people are fired up and we know where we want to go.

Q: (Paolo Ianieri – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Sebastian, what happened in the first turn with Kimi? Did you touch, the two cars?

SV: No... I don't know. I think he had a better start for sure, I got a little bit back under braking and then I think I was side-by-side with him. I don't think it was great for him because he lost a little bit – I saw that immediately. I couldn't make corner one as tight as I wanted to, which made him lose a couple of positions but I understand we didn't touch and I didn't feel anything so...

Q: (Ian Parkes – PA) Question to both Lewis and Nico. We've seen dominance in qualifying, dominance in the race today. Is this it for the season? A two-horse race between you two for the title or can you envisage any of your rivals making in-roads into your supremacy?

LH: I think Nico was just explaining... I didn't know, I didn't see the times or anything but I think the Ferraris have taken a huge step forward. It's clear they've made one of the biggest steps. So we definitely cannot back off because I'm sure they're going to be pushing. And I anticipate we might have a good fight with them at some stage this year...

Nico?

NR: I hope we can have a good fight. That would be awesome. I think the next couple of races we're going to be leading the way for sure, and we're going to try and keep it that way, but we know it would be good if they can come a bit closer, as long as they don't come too close...

SV: Be honest. Do you really hope so? Seriously? You finished 30 seconds ahead of us and you hope it's going to be closer? So you hope you slow down? Is that what you're saying?

NR: I hope that you can give us a challenge! Because it's important for the sport and for the fans. And I do think about the show. Half of me – or a part of me – thinks about the show because I want to give people a great time at home watching on TV or at the track. If you do come a bit closer, that would be awesome for everybody.

SV: First suggestion, if you don't mind, I think your garage becomes public for Malaysia and everyone can have a look. No? I'm joking.

NR: You can come if you want, we can invite you...

SV: OK, thank you for the invite, I'll come.

NR: Friday Malaysia, OK.

SV: Engineers' room? Debrief, I'll be there.

Q: (Michael Schmidt – Auto Motor und Sport) Nico, in the final stages you were asking your race engineer about Lewis' fuel consumption. You didn't get an answer – but for both of you how much is it a race into the dark when you don't know where the other stands with the fuel consumption – on a race where fuel consumption is really crucial.

NR: Yeah, so, I put the question because I wanted to know exactly where Lewis was but he's not allowed to tell me, so I never got the answer. I hadn't thought of that at the time – but obviously that was not good. Because I thought if I would know if he was down or something, that would be really motivating and it would be great. But I had no idea. So yeah, I don't know, not ideal in that situation, not very helpful. But anyway, all I could do is push flat-out and hope he had less. Which wasn't the case...

Q: (Paul Gover – News Ltd) So Sebastian, you, then, think it is a two horse race for the championship between these two guys

SV: Well, first of all, they don't have a horse on their car, they have a star so it's a big difference, as I learned. You have to be realistic: this weekend it was in their hands and they did a great job, not just as a team, both individually. I drove the car to the limit. Lewis, as I think Nico said, had the upper hand so well done to him. For sure, as I said, they have a great package at the moment, existing from car and drivers which will be difficult to beat, it's a big gap. Thirty-four seconds down

the road is a lot for everyone else. You can turn it around a little bit for the next Grand Prix, we can be closer but it could be even worse. I think in the first three races you really have to try and understand who is really strong and what are the gaps. So they are the favourites; they had a huge advantage last year and I think they did a good job in increasing that advantage for this year. It will be difficult but not impossible for us and the rest to catch up.

Q: (Paolo Ianieri – La Gazzetta dello Sport) To all three of you: before the race started five drivers were already out of the race: Bottas injured, two Manor and then Magnussen and Kvyat, so a quarter of the drivers were not on the grid. Don't you think that Formula One is risking to lose some appeal when we have so few cars racing?

LH: I don't know what the circumstances are for the drivers that couldn't start. I think two didn't have a car but the others... All I know that in MotoGP, those guys are pretty hardcore. They drive with collarbones broken, ankles and all those kind of things. I would still hopefully drive if I had something damaged. I don't know how it is for the spectators but of course we should have more cars. When we drive up to the back of the grid, before the formation lap, it's a real long way from the last corner to the back of the grid. It used to be a little bit shorter run when there's more cars. It would be great if we could get some more cars.

NR: The fans looked like they had an awesome time today so that's great to see. They were going crazy on the start/finish line under the podium, so that was nice. Great to have Arnold (Schwarzenegger) on the podium, that was very very cool. Other than that, yeah, of course, we need to keep on re-inventing the sport and keep moving forward and keep adapting. But the process is in place, it's a normal thing. There's ups and downs, we just need to ride the wave and push on to keep improving the show as things change in the world.

SV: Well, first of all I hope that Valtteri is OK. I don't know the circumstances that led to the fact that he couldn't race today but we hope that he's back on the grid in Malaysia because that's where he belongs. So all the best for his recovery. For the other cars, obviously it was strange to see people struggling to do the laps to the grid but I think it's difficult. I think it shows how complex it really is, how difficult it is to master the challenge of making the car reliable for a Grand Prix and for the entire season so that's why you really have to say *chapeau* to these guys and everyone who is able to extract clean races but also it's great to see that this year we have a new competitor in the game with Honda. I think they have been very brave to face that challenge, even though now the price they're paying is very high, but I'm sure they will come back. I think everyone has, more or less, been through that process with the exception of those guys (Mercedes) last year, so it seems to be part of the game but for sure it's not great for the people. They want to see the cars and if the cars break before even starting the race that's not right but what can I say? It's a difficult challenge, it is complicated, maybe got a bit too complicated but for now it is what it is. The people still enjoy it so we need to do the best to keep it up.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Sebastian, Kimi had problems in both pit stops with his tyre changes; did that put any extra pressure on your stops?

SV: I don't know what happened. Obviously in the end he didn't finish, I don't even know what kind of problem he suffered, which is a shame because 50% of the team didn't finish today; that's not our target, I think it could have been a great race even if Kimi had a bit of a bad first corner. Still, I think he could have had a great recovery because the speed was there and as far as I understand he was on the way back. Regarding the pit stops, as I said, I didn't see his pit stops. My pit stop was OK. Next time, though, I'm sure that he wants to have cleaner pit stops if that was the case.

Q: (Vincent Marre – All Race Motorsport) Sebastian, among the races to come, which one do you feel will be the one that is easier for you, for Ferrari to catch up to the Mercedes? I think Malaysia will be difficult but what about Bahrain or Shanghai?

SV: Easy, for us? I think if you look at the gap, nowhere is going to be easy. I think we have to focus on ourselves, make sure that what we learned this weekend we're able to take into the next races. The most important thing now is that if we finish – we did finish right behind Mercedes today. We need to confirm that in the next race, that's the priority number one, so we need to make sure that I was not just a one-off. We improve reliability. As I said, Kimi didn't finish, which is a shame. We could have scored a lot more points today.

NR: ... that you find it a shame that your teammate didn't finish?

SV: Yes. I don't know how much you like each other but Kimi and myself we get along, so I think it is a shame.

NR: I though as a racing driver you might like it that you have a couple of points advantage over him now. I don't want to get you off the foot there, sorry. Oops. Look at him, look at him go...

SV: I can see your point. No, no. I can see that at the moment, where we are, we want to make sure we catch you guys and to do that we both need to score. Yes, I honestly think so and I honestly didn't want to see the second car not finishing today.

NR: Because I'm ready for it now, you caught me a bit off guard before but now I'm ready for it!

Q: (Chris Medland – F1i.com) Seb, obviously you're very relaxed, very happy after this result. You look very comfortable at Ferrari already. Can you just compare the emotions for yourself compared to 12 months ago, going into a tough season with Red Bull and this is like a real fresh start for you?

SV: To be completely honest with you, 12 months ago I was already at the airport by now. Different story, obviously, I'm much happier to be here now, finishing the race, seeing the chequered flag. It's a great Grand Prix so I think we all like coming here for a start but then, as I said, you cannot really compare, it's a completely different situation. Last year, we had a very tough pre-season and on my side, a very tough first race so this year, as I said, changed teams, there's a lot of new things, lot of things that I need to learn. I'm not yet on top of which will have to improve in the next couple of races but for now I'm very happy.

Ends