



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

**Press Information**

**2016 Mexican Grand Prix  
Saturday Post Qualifying Press Conference Transcript**

**29.10.2016**

**DRIVERS**

**1 – Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes)**

**2 – Nico ROSBERG (Mercedes)**

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

**TV UNILATERAL**

**Q: Well, Lewis, a very exciting qualifying session this afternoon. How tough was that battle for pole position from your point of view?**

**Lewis HAMILTON:** It's always a tough battle. Trying to pull out the perfect laps when it counts is always a difficult thing, particularly with these tyres. Sometimes it's on the first lap and sometimes it's on the second lap that the tyres are ready. Definitely very challenging, as this track always is. But the track has got a lot better because there's more grip on the track now. Last year we were sliding around a lot more. Today it feels a lot more like a racetrack. Again, not really sure why, but we have a huge turnout here and I'm anticipating seeing a lot more Mexicans here tomorrow.

**Q: Well done Lewis. Nico, coming to you, a brilliant final lap from you in Q3 saw you get on to the front row. You made up a lot of time.**

**Nico ROSBERG:** Well, brilliant is two and a half tenths from Lewis, so Lewis' lap was brilliant, not so much mine. But no, I put it together when it counted in the end, so I'm relatively pleased with that, to definitely make sure I'm on the front row, even though it's not pole position of course. But still that gives me a great chance for tomorrow anyways.

**How have you been struggling with the car so far this weekend?**

**NR:** yeah, it just took a bit longer this weekend to find the way, just generally with tyre temperatures, them being on the cold side all weekend, so it's a bit nervous out there and just to find the way with that took a bit longer, but got there in the end, so that's OK.

**Max, coming to you, third, best of the rest if you like. Did you ever think pole position was on, because you were fastest in Q2?**

**Max VERSTAPPEN:** You have to be realistic in Q2, because some of the other guys were on soft tyres. But in general, you know, the qualifying felt good. I had a good feeling with the car, actually, all weekend. It was behaving pretty well. It was getting better and better, it was just a shame in Q3 that we couldn't really get the lap together, otherwise I think P2 was definitely possible. But we are not too far behind and we have a different strategy for tomorrow as well, so it will be interesting.

**Coming back to you Lewis, the grand prix tomorrow, there's potentially a lot riding on this race. Your team-mate can win the world championship tomorrow, what's the tactic from your point of view?**

**LH:** There is no real tactic. I turned up to do the job and I'm going to try to do the same thing as a Id last week here. So far this weekend has gone well. Yeah, looking forward to the race, the long runs seem to be good, the car feels great, so I'm just looking forward to getting out on track.

**Nico, last one, tell us about tomorrow, the race pace of your car, the situation in the championship?**

**NR:** Feeling good, generally of course optimistic. As we have seen this year pole position isn't everything on Sundays, so for sure there are still some opportunities. Just going to try to do the best I can tomorrow and try to get that win here in Mexico, that was awesome.

## **PRESS CONFERENCE**

**Q: Lewis, the practice sessions gave very little indication as to what the ultimate lap time was going to be in qualifying. Can you tell us something about how the track has changed in the two days that we've been here?**

**LH:** It's just gripped up a lot. It's cleaned up a lot, when we got here on Friday it was obviously a little bit dusty, and also being cold really struggling to get tyres into the working range, I think that's the same for everyone. Obviously with the temperatures coming up today it made it better, but yeah, otherwise, as I said before, it's much better to drive the track now with more grip as last year we were sliding round a lot.

**Q: Nico, both you and your team-mate will be starting the grand prix on the soft tyres, can you explain what sort of an advantage you expect that to give you?**

**NR:** Oh just that the supersoft, yes it's going to be OK to start the race, but then it disintegrates pretty quickly, so in terms of strategy that's definitely going to be a disadvantage and we just think our tyre is the better one, but let's see how it goes tomorrow.

**Q: Same question to you Max. You're starting on the supersoft. It seems that the Mercedes drivers think that it's not going to last very long. How have you found the supersoft tyre in a race run?**

**MV:** Well, of course there is more degradation than a soft so it's up to me, and with the car balance, to make it last as long as we can. But definitely in the start with such a long run to the first corner, if we can have a good start then we have a lot of opportunities from there onwards.

**Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action / Speed Sport) Question for Nico. You were on the podium last year. Yesterday there were 93,000 people, more today, more tomorrow. Tell us what it's like when you come into that stadium section, maybe on a cool-down lap and see all those people.**

**NR:** Yeah, this is what F1 should be like. It's just incredible. Even now on the slow-down lap I was given them a wave in the stadium and they all went nuts. It's just great to see the atmosphere, y'know? Very, very thankful that everybody's come out and even more tomorrow. It's one of the best podiums in the world here, so it's a special one to win.

**Q: (Seff Harding – Zero Zone News) Question for Nico. With the pressure of possibly winning the championship tomorrow, are you going to feel that from Max Verstappen being that you to have had some interesting runnings-in with each other this season. He's pretty much giving you a difficult time. Will you be able to deal with that pressure tomorrow?**

**NR:** For me, I'm looking forward. There's Lewis in front of me, he's in the way for me to win the race so that's what I'm going for. Just look forwards, go for it, try and win the race and that's it.

**Q: (Louis Dekker – NOS.NL) For Max, how important is it to beat Daniel today?**

**MV:** Well, that's not my only target. I'm here to try and fight for the victory. I'm just very happy to be third. It's not a very special meaning to me. We are a team.

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – Globo Esporte.com) To all drivers, concerning the difficulty you have in the weekend until now to heat the tyres, at the start and mainly in the first lap will it be an issue?**

**Lewis, let's start with you.**

**LH:** I don't think it was last year and tomorrow's supposed to be as hot as it is today I heard, so, for sure the tyres are not going to be in the window but everyone's in the same boat.

**Nico, anything to add?**

**NR:** I think it will be OK. I think as per normal it takes a bit of time but it will be fine.

**And Max**

**MV:** I had my tyres in the window in P1 with the fire! But, no, it will be hard, but it's the same for everyone so you just have to adapt to the situation.

**Q: (Jorge Mendoza – La Prensa de San Antonio) This question is for Max. Were you expecting this kind of success in Formula One in your early stages of your career?**

**MV:** That's always very difficult to judge. As a driver I think you always try to do the best possible job every single race and just every session and qualifying session. So that was always my main target – and yeah, I'm pretty happy with how it's going so far.

**Q: (Louis Dekker – NOS.NL) Question to all drivers, what is your favourite part of the circuit?**

**Again, let's start with Lewis.**

**LH:** I think the middle sector is fun. Turn Seven to 11 is really nice, fast flowing. It's the fastest part of the track.

**NR:** Does the podium count?

**Max, do you have a favourite?**

**MV:** The same, like Lewis. I think the fast corners. If you have the right momentum, you have a good balance for the car, it's a lot of fun.

**What do you classify as a 'fast' corner? Anything over 200km/h or...?**

**MV:** No, I think more up to 250km/h, something like that.

**Q: (Seff Harding – Xero Xone News) Lewis, the practice sessions looked solid, you looked so solid, the car looks solid, are there any areas where you feel tomorrow you can gain a little more time?**

**LH:** Well, the long runs were really strong and as you said, practice was really good. Q3 was actually the worst session of the whole weekend so far. But I know going into tomorrow we have hopefully the right strategy and I think the car is in a good place for the long runs. Naturally, during the race, you're constantly trying to evolve your driving style and technique to make sure the tyres go the distance etc. It's always a tough race here, particularly as these tyres they seem to go a long way.

**Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action and Speed Sport) Max, was it a close call between the soft and the super soft in Q2 or were you always going to go for the supersoft?**

**MV:** No, I don't think we even had them in the garage. No.

**Q: Same question to the Mercedes drivers. Was it a close call for you?**

**LH:** It wasn't because... before Q3 I had a lot of pace so we believed that it was possible on the soft and we also did a long run yesterday and knew that the supersoft tyre was a bit of a mess. It may not be for them but it was for us so we opted for the soft.

**NR:** Always going to be soft.

**Q: (Jorge Mendoza – La Prensa de San Antonio) How do you rate the Mexican track compared to the other ones? Do you see the Mexican track quite challenging or do you see it in the middle range?**

**MV:** Well, it's definitely challenging because it's quite slippery compared to some other tracks so to get a perfect, clean lap is more difficult than on some other tracks where we have more grip. But in another way, with all the fans around, especially in the stadium section, that makes it one of the favourites, that's for sure.

**NR:** Yeah, they've done a good job with it. It's challenging because of the fact that the tyres are cold in general so that makes it challenging here but apart from that, no, it's cool and of course they've done some really amazing things with the stadium section, as Max said, it's phenomenal.

**LH:** I'll be as honest as I can. It is very unique in the sense that because of how high we are, so the air is obviously less dense up here so there's less drag, we have maximum downforce but we actually have less downforce than at a lot of other circuits so that's a real serious challenge for us, especially getting the tyres into the window; incredibly fast on the straight so I think we must have close to Monza speeds. The track has got some very challenging

parts. Sector one - turn one, two and three - is actually not that easy, it's quite difficult through there and there are a couple of parts that are a little bit tiny, for example turn four, particularly turn five is very very slow. Again, because we're going so slowly, the grip isn't great, but it has a real good combination of all those corners. The finale, at the end, when the tyres are at the end of their life and you see that crowd in your peripherals... we don't see a stadium like that anywhere so in terms of where to put it on the list, I would say... it's not in my top three but it's definitely in the top ten, I think.

Ends