



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

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

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DRIVERS

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2 – Sebastian VETTEL (Ferrari)

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TV UNILATERAL

Nico, congratulations. How nervous were, though, after making a mistake on that final attempt, with your helmet off and strolling down the pit lane that somebody might pip you for pole position?

Nico ROSBERG: Well, to be honest, I was quite confident that the lap was good enough out there, because in quali two, Ferrari was quite far away and I knew that Lewis was not able to participate in the last part of qualifying, so I was very sure that it was going to be enough. But you never know, your know, so there's always still a remaining uncertainty and so I was glad eventually when Sebastian finally crossed the line that it was good enough.

Nico, we've seen Lewis had the same engine problem as he did in China, Sebastian has to take a five-place penalty – this championship's just coming your way naturally isn't it? Do you believe in good luck?

NR: Well I didn't know these facts, I mean, of course I knew about Sebastian but I didn't really know what Lewis had until now. I was just focused on myself out there and really going for it and feeling great about it. It was really going really well today. From Q2 onwards it just felt awesome. Of course the others have been unfortunate today, extremely unfortunate, and that makes my race a little bit easier tomorrow, but an F1 race is never easy. Of course even from where Sebastian is, where Kimi is and with Valtteri behind the opposition is still there and so still need to keep focused and get the job done as good as possible.

OK, turning to you Sebastian. How was today, obviously important to get a lot of laps in after losing a lot of time yesterday. Was it a good recovery today?

Sebastian VETTEL: I think so. Of course I would have liked the gap in the end to be a bit smaller. But yeah, I think in Q2 we saw that Nico in particular is very strong getting the lap in, so good job from his side. I think from us it was the maximum. Obviously we benefit from what happened to Lewis, which I'm not sure exactly what it was but it allowed us to go P2, which helps for tomorrow with the penalty. We are a bit closer, starting on the clean side of the track. I think we can have a good race from there. It should be quite exciting. The car feels good and yeah, I think all weekend it had been quite strong. Obviously we lost some time but obviously we made it up this morning, as you touched on, so it shouldn't be an issue.

Of course, it's second in qualifying, but with the gearbox penalty it will be seventh on the grid, ahead of any other penalties we don't know about. How frustrated, if at all, are you getting with Ferrari's unreliability?

SV: Not frustrated at all. Obviously it's not nice if these things happen, because they don't make your life easier, but equally it's part of racing, these things can happen. They didn't happen in purpose; they weren't planned. But I think we are pushing very hard trying to catch up, which I think, especially in race pace, we've proven already this year. Obviously we didn't have a properly clean race yet but maybe we'll have one tomorrow, you never know, it's a long race, a long way, especially around here, there's a lot of things that can happen. So I think we have to wait and see, but you know, now it's still April, tomorrow is May, it's a long, long way to go, so it's a long championship. At the moment I think it's important to do your best to get the maximum points every single time and the rest you'll find out anyways.

Thank you Seb. Valtteri, to you, how good does it feel not only to be third in qualifying but as it will be on the grid for the Russian Grand Prix tomorrow it will be second on the grid and nobody in front of you?

Valtteri BOTTAS: Yeah, he's a little bit in front, but yeah, very good in qualifying. Really pleased with how it all went. This weekend has been very positive. We have some new bits on the car and the car has been feeling better. It's also a good track for us. I'm glad we could maximise the qualifying today. Pleased with that but it's tomorrow that counts. So far my Sundays haven't been so great but I'm sure tomorrow we have a good chance to have a good one.

Nico a final thought from you: you've won every race there is so far this season, you're on pole again, after a few times off the front row, you must be thinking that this is your race to lose tomorrow?

NR: At the moment I'm still feeling happy with how qualifying went, because it just felt awesome out there. The car was balanced perfectly and through the weekend we just progressed so much and then to hit it in Q2 and from then on it was just going really well and that's what I'm really pleased about and I haven't thought too much about tomorrow yet. Of course starting from pole position will be great. As I say, it's never easy but the way the grid is it does help me out a lot for sure to try and get that win tomorrow.

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Nico, in China you said you had looked forward to the battle with Lewis and it didn't happen. It didn't happen here again today. That's obviously gives you a good opportunity tomorrow but how disappointing is that for you?

NR: No, I can't say I'm disappointed after today. All in all I'm really satisfied because it really felt great out there. It was awesome balance. We got my car together well for qualifying and from Q2 onwards it was just going great. So I'm really satisfied with that and that's a good sign for tomorrow's race and that's about it.

Sebastian, the gap was quite significant, were you surprised by that? What's the recovery plan for tomorrow?

SV: Well, obviously Nico starts from pole, which I think he deserves; he has done a great job today in all sessions. For us obviously with the penalty we are a bit further back. It would be nice to start on the front row, but it doesn't happen. But nevertheless I think we can have a very good race. The car feels good. Obviously we know that on Saturdays we are probably a little bit still further back than we want and a bit further back than on Sundays, so high hopes for tomorrow. As I said the car feels good. I think we've done our homework, so I expect a strong race. Obviously it's never easy when you start further back – overtaking is possible but usually people don't wave you past, so we'll have to work for it but it should be good fun.

Q: Valtteri, third time here qualifying in third place, you start second. Power was obviously a significant element of today's qualifying. Did today's qualifying bring Williams back to where it should be?

VB: Well, obviously we want to be higher than this, of course. I think this season it is extremely difficult to beat Ferrari and Mercedes. Of course we're trying to really close the gap but it is nice that now, today, we're clear of Red Bull and Toro Rosso who've been really challenging us in the last few races. So I'm pleased with today, with the result, and it gives us a good position for the race tomorrow to really make some good points. We need those points so, pleased with today. It was all about team-work and bringing some updates here, so also people at the factory have been doing the right job.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Livio Oricchio – GloboSport.com) Nico, from Q1 to Q2 you did a great step in performance. Did you change the car? Did you put more power in the engine? And, also a question to Bottas: if your performance here related to the new aero front you have in the car or maybe to the characteristics of this track?

NR: Q2, that's when it really came together for me. It felt just so great out there. It was mainly the front flap. Went up on the front flap to take away some understeer – so that was good. I thought there would be some downsides but it was just positives.

Valtteri?

VB: I think it's both, to be honest. The updates we bring here, they help us a bit, and also the track suits us better than the first three races so far. So I think it is a combination of both – but I would really hope, I would like us to be better than the first three races in the coming races, so we need to keep progressing.

Q: (Vladimir Rogovets – Belarus Segodnya) My question to Nico. Your partner Lewis Hamilton has a lot of problems this year and you, from last year to today are showing very, very good stability. How long will you be staying without engine problems?

NR: I need the crystal ball now. You have one? We look together! I don't know, I can't look into the future. You're saying this year: it's only three and a half races from 21. You can't really say 'this year', it's been a couple of races and yes, it's been consistently working well for me and I'm happy about that but normally over a season – and especially over 21 races – in F1 things have always evened-out at the end of the year.

Q: (Michael Schmidt – Auto Motor und Sport) Sebastian wanted to challenge Mercedes this year but now it seems that the gap gets bigger rather than smaller. Is that a concern for you?

SV: I don't know. Bloody Germans! Always pessimistic. Show some optimism! I think it's only three and a half races. We've hah... yeah... quite a trip so far with not everything going according to plan. We could have won the first race if things go a little bit different. So overall, it's not so bad. We have shown great pace, especially on Sunday, and that's where you get the points. We know that we need to work and we are pushing very hard – but it's not so easy. Mercedes is doing a great job, those two guys driving the car are going a good job, so it's a difficult team to beat. We are not playing... it's not a kindergarten, I think it's for grown-ups and therefore the challenge is tough – but ultimately we want to be the best so we need to be ready to tackle the best and, so far, we're very optimistic we can turn it around.

Q: (Krill Zaytsev - 66.ru) Question for Sebastian. After a penalty tomorrow do you have chances to get a podium. Here in Sochi there are lots of straights and your engine works good here – so do you have any chances to get up?

SV: Yes. Obviously when you qualify second, that's where you sort-of belong. With a penalty you start further back and I think we're quicker than those cars so I think we have a good chance to make progress. Having said that, it's never easy. Yes, there are straights – but there's also a couple of corners, we know it's not so easy to follow, etcetera. So, we'll see.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – GloboSport.com) Sebastian. Once you would be penalised, did you expect your team-mate could be in the first row in order to help your team?

SV: Well, I don't know how the session went for him, obviously. Once qualifying kicks off, it's very difficult to know what happens on the other side. You're quite busy yourself/. I think Nico said the same thing before: he doesn't know what happened to Lewis. I don't know if he had an issue but we've been fairly close this weekend, so I think it would have been ideal for him to be third today and therefore starting on the front row – but equally, being third and on the clean side is not bad either. It's a long way to Turn One, so I think still as a team we are positioned probably as good as possible.

Q: (Andrea Cremonesi – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Sebastian, have you found with the new power unit some benefit today?

SV: Well, we brought it here, it was always the plan, we brought it because we believe it is better. As of now, it is doing what it should, so I'm confident that it helps us today and tomorrow.

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