



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

## Press Information

### 2016 Grand Prix of Europe Saturday Post Qualifying Press Conference Transcript

18.06.2016

#### DRIVERS

1 – Nico ROSBERG (Mercedes)

2 – Sergio PÉREZ (Force India)

3 – Daniel RICCIARDO (Red Bull Racing)

#### TV UNILATERAL

Nico, that was an emphatic performance by you and Mercedes, just how good was qualifying for you?

**Nico ROSBERG:** Yeah, it was great. It was one of the more challenging sessions out there, but everything worked out well. There was a bit of reorganizing because for example in Quali 3 Lewis had an off in front of me, so I had to abort that lap and then I just had one more attempt at the end, but that worked out fine. No, I'm very, very happy. It was great.

**How was the car technically for you, because we saw Hamilton obviously have a few problems in that session?**

**NR:** Yeah, I'm really pleased with that, because all weekend we've been building towards it and in qualifying it was really optimum, so it felt good.

**Congratulations to you. Sergio, if I can come to you: second on the grid, but does that feel like pole position for you?**

**Sergio PÉREZ:** Yeah, it does. To be honest it does. The effort the whole team has done... especially all my boys today to put my car together, first of all to make the qualifying. Obviously I'm still a bit angry, no, from the mistake of this morning. But very happy, I think it's a mix of feelings today. I think the lap that we put together in Q3 was very, very strong. It was a very difficult session for me, because obviously there is not a lot of time. After a crash you obviously lose some confidence. To get it back, to get in the rhythm again was great. Very pleased with that and hopefully tomorrow we can do a lot of progress and aim for a very strong position. I think definitely the team deserved. Obviously, with the penalty I'm

starting seventh. I think the team deserves more than and hopefully tomorrow we can put together a strong race.

**Has the pace of the car surpassed your expectations?**

**SP:** Yes, definitely. I think we were expecting ourselves to be strong around here but not that good. To come away with P2 in this track... it's so easy to mistake, so easy to clip the wall and just damage your car. Unfortunately it happened to me in the worst possible time in P3 and yeah, so I think we have to look forward to tomorrow and do a strong race.

**Well done. Daniel, if I could come on to you. You set exactly the same time as Sebastian Vettel at the end of Q3 there. Just give us a word on what it was like to get the job done when there was only two minutes of the session remaining?**

**Daniel RICCIARDO:** It was hectic; it was intense. Yeah, thanks to the guys, the team, for getting me out at the front and giving me that clear track to obviously make sure that I got a lap in. My first run in Q3 was pretty average to say the least. I made a few mistakes. Then obviously I thought I had one more chance but then the red flag came out. I thought that was looking like that was it. They got me out in front and then I put in the lap, so it was good. I knew not everyone would get a lap, so I was just trying to think "do a good enough lap to at least jump up from seventh", but in the end it was third. I think Seb... I maybe gave Seb a little bit of a tow, I don't know how close he was to me, but it was good, very close and I'm really happy to bounce back with top three.

**Well done to you. Nico, if I can just come back to you and get some thoughts ahead of tomorrow's race. It's the first grand prix here in Baku, what do you think are going to be the main flashpoints in the grand prix?**

**NR:** Well, I think they've done a great job up to now, with the track especially. We've seen one of the most exciting qualifying sessions for a long time. Of course I understand that the gap was pretty big in front but there was a lot going on all over the place, and that's down to the track. Also, the race I'm sure is going to be very exciting. It's one of the easiest tracks to overtake, so there's going to be a lot of changing places I think, probably a lot of safety cars as well, exciting re-starts and everything, so it should be a good show.

**Who do you think are going to be challengers?**

**NR:** Of course it's going to be Daniel... [Ricciardo raises his hand behind Rosberg]. What's so funny about that? Of course it's going to be Daniel, Sebastian, Kimi and then Lewis. Never forget him. He can always come back from tenths as he's shown very often this year.

**PRESS CONFERENCE**

**Q: Nico, you didn't even do a second run in Q3, how much more time was there in your car?**

**NR:** It wasn't planned to do a second run. We'd planned one run and just hit it two times: lap two and lap four. Lap two was looking good but Lewis went off in front of me so I had to back out of that one, and then went again on lap four so it worked out well.

**Q: And Checo, was there any more to come from your car?**

**SP:** Not on that lap, definitely not. I think that lap was quite strong, hitting every single braking point, getting the exits as close as possible to the wall. I struggle to think that lap could have been better but definitely I think there was some track improvement towards the end but obviously with the track position that I had – obviously I had the Williams and the Red Bull ahead, and we were tight on time as well. I had to warm up the tyres but at the same time I had to go very quick to be able to make it. It was just a disaster. We were all racing the last lap, so it wasn't a proper chance but I think the lap that I did was pretty special.

**Q: Daniel, the other two guys have been there or thereabouts all weekend. We've seen the Red Bull performance fluctuate a little during practice. Is the car now where you want it?**

**DR:** We definitely improved today. We took a step in the right direction. Already this morning we were looking like we were in a better... more in the competition. Yesterday we struggled and it didn't help with me losing a bit of track time with the crash in P1. So, yeah, qualifying was good, we were able to chip away at it. Q3 wasn't very clean. The first lap was... yeah, made a few mistakes and didn't put it together and then yeah, obviously the red flag made the second run... just go out and try to set a time. Obviously I put in a time which was good enough to be here so I'm happy with that. I think we recovered well. Did I think we'd be here yesterday? No. Did I think we'd be starting on the front row? Not really – but thanks to Pérez and a few circumstances I think we've put ourselves in a really good position.

#### **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Ralf Bach – Auto Bild Motorsport) A question for Nico. How sad are you that there is only one Mercedes in the front row?**

**NR:** It's always divided, you know? On the one side I'm sad for all my team colleagues because they want to have a one-two – and it's still possible tomorrow but it's going to be more difficult now, for sure, but you know that Lewis has shown very often that from tenth place he can come back strong, and where he finished easy second in Russia, y'know, so for sure still need to reckon with him.

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – globoesporte.com) Daniel, we had the impression you crossed the line of the pit entrance in your last lap. What is the agreement yesterday in the briefing with Charlie Whiting when it happens?**

**DR:** Yeah, so I think it was originally... well I thought you couldn't cross anything, and then the notes from last night said if you put all four wheels inside the pit entry line then you have to commit to pitting but otherwise you can straddle... you can split the line, as long as you keep two wheels on the track, let's say, it wasn't a problem. I'm pretty sure that's what I did.

**Q: (Michael Schmidt – Auto Motor und Sport) Question to Nico. You always did two warm-up laps to set your fast time. Does that mean if tomorrow there are some restarts after the start we will see again the scenario we saw the last two races with the Mercedes, that you have a warm-up problem?**

**NR:** Let's see. It's not been our strength recently but we've worked on it and today everybody needed two laps, not just us. It was the optimum for everybody – so I think it will be OK.