



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

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

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DRIVERS

1 – Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes)

2 – Nico ROSBERG (Mercedes)

3 – Nico HULKENBERG (Force India)

TV UNILATERAL

Lewis, it was one of those days when I guess it was all about the timing of the switch onto the slick tyre and then actually coming across the line it must have been extremely exciting, the final few minutes of that session?

Lewis HAMILTON: Yeah, it was a really fun session. It was one of those sessions that it starts off dry, goes wet, and quite incredibly here it dries up so quickly, it's like driving through fog at some stages. I think it just added to the excitement of the whole thing. I'd never driven here in the rain before and being a new surface as well it was very, very slippery. It was drying up corner by corner and at the end it was about getting that last lap. The previous lap was a good lap as well but if I had finished that lap I would have been right behind Daniel Ricciardo, so I backed off, which was a big risk really. If I didn't finish my lap or there had been a yellow flag I wouldn't have been able to get pole, but it was the risk I took and fortunately it paid off, so very happy with it.

Well done. Turning to you, Nico, you're second but it's a bittersweet feeling I imagine, knowing that you've got to go back five places on the grid after the accident this morning and the subsequent gearbox penalty. A shame really, because your preparations for the race up to that point had been pretty ideal. Tell us about your day and your prospects from here?

Nico ROSBERG: First of all, a really unbelievable job from everybody, even Lewis' mechanics came on to my car to try to get it out in time, so that was a huge team effort. We got it out 11 minutes to go in Q1, so it was really tight and awesome, so that was great. And then a very exciting qualifying, going dry-wet-dry and it was unbelievable how quickly it dried in the

end then to get back on to slick tyres. I think Lewis just did a good job there in the very end, so that's it. Second not first, but it's OK. The five places will be quite costly... well, very costly of course for tomorrow, unfortunately. I'll make the best of it anyways and try to get a good race from there.

OK, thank you for that. Nico Hulkenberg, welcome back. Reminiscent, conditions-wise and the way you drove, of Brazil a few years ago, in the Williams days. You must be absolutely ecstatic and set yourself up now, moving up to the front row of the grid with Nico Rosberg's penalty, for a great day?

Nico HULKENBERG: Yeah, no, absolutely, it reminded me a lot about Brazil and I was feeling really good in the car and it was just a flashback to back then. I was feeling really good and to be honest, I was expecting a little bit better, so when he said third... I wasn't disappointed. A great effort from the team. Not an easy session to be out there at the right time, it's all about timings. The car performed well, we put it together, so a very solid job and a very good starting position for tomorrow.

Very well done. Lewis, coming back to you, on a serious note we saw a couple more suspension failures during that qualifying session with Kvyat and Pérez. What's the feeling among the drivers, what's the conversation going to be this evening and what's the concern there?

LH: I can't speak on behalf of all the drivers, but for me those yellow kerbs are quite dangerous. We've now seen a couple of incidents already. I don't know how many more of those it's going to take before a car ends up in the wall and perhaps someone gets hurt. I'm sure Charlie and the FIA are looking at it but that's definitely an area we can improve. The idea is good, because they definitely don't want us running wide and using the outside of the circuit but perhaps another solution is going to be needed.

Q: Lewis, one of the interesting talking points arising out of the second part of qualifying was the decision by Ferrari and Red Bull to go out and set their time on the supersoft tyre. You and Nico had both used the ultrasoft but then right at the end you went out and had a bit of a look on the supersoft just as some rain began to fall. So, your thoughts on why you went the way that you did in the first instance and what happened at the end there.

LH: I just did what I was told! I think our strategists understand that that ultrasoft was the better tyre. We had the supersoft available I think they perhaps saw – I'm guessing – I'm assuming they saw that the Ferraris had gone out and they thought we might try to go out and see if we could do a time on it, even though we think there is a time delta between the two. Naturally a hard tyre often goes further so that doesn't seem like such a bad option. They have qualified on supersofts?

Yes – they'll start on the supersofts and so will Red Bull

LH: OK, that's not a bad thing. I think the ultrasoft is not a good tyre for the race. It's going to be a struggle to get a lot of laps out of it so the strategy will be interesting tomorrow. Obviously those guys are starting behind me so I'm hoping I have a bit of an advantage at the start just from being on the softer tyre but... yeah, in practice my tyre lasted for four laps, so I think for Nico it lasted maybe eight? He says five. So it'll definitely be tricky but we'll do the best we can with it.

Q: OK, the same question to you Nico. Your race, the first stint is going to be much more complicated because of where you're starting. So your thoughts on this situation going into the race tomorrow. And also, picking up on what I was asking Lewis before about the kerbs, is it just a case now of, for the rest of the weekend, staying off them – or is there more to it than that?

NR: For sure yeah, need to stay off them. I even stayed off them in qualifying now most of the time, except for when it really counted. Tyres is going to be tough tomorrow but the thing is we don't really know because the temperature is going to drop so much so who knows how the tyres are going to be? For sure in the hot it was really tough but maybe in the cold it's going to be better.

Q: Nico, coming to you, obviously your team is going through a bit of a purple patch at the moment with podiums in Monaco and Baku recently. You're still looking for your first Formula One podium personally. You must be feeling that tomorrow may well just be your day. Are you very optimistic and excited going into tomorrow's grand prix?

NH: Yes. First of all I'm happy and excited about today. Special circumstances obviously with the rain in Q3 and then the drying-up track but for sure starting second is a very good starting position. Tomorrow we'll do what we can. I'm not thinking too hard about that now. We'll do that in the next couple of hours and tonight and tomorrow but our car has made huge steps forwards since Barcelona really and ever-since we've scored a lot of points and a few podiums so yeah, we're on a good slope, we have good momentum and just try to carry it into tomorrow and make it into another good Sunday.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Angélique Belokopytov – AutoDigest) Lewis, yesterday you considered that you were not at your top level. So what did change? Did you improve since yesterday? Was it work more on your mental, or the car or maybe both?

LH: A little bit the car but mostly I just had to find time today. Nico had been performing well all weekend and it was just chipping away at improvements, constantly looking at my data, trying to figure out where I was losing the time and how I could improve. Bit by bit, corner by corner... at one point there's five corners where I'm down, then it's four corners I was down, then two, then just one corner where I was down. That's something that... then it rained and I was thinking 'Jeez, I've finally got into this position where I can perhaps battle for pole with Nico' and then it rained – but fortunately those are conditions I like as well, so it made it a little bit easier, I have to say, when it got into those conditions 'cos it's then a bit more about who takes the most risk, I guess.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – GloboEsporte.com) Hulkenberg, we received indication on the screens that you were under investigation because of the yellow flags in Q2. Are you aware of this?

NH: No, I wasn't aware that I'm under investigation. I think it was the incident where Sainz's car's engine blew up and he was parked on the right on the main straight. I did lift, I did lose time there but still with new tyres, track improvement I might have gone faster, I don't know but we will see. I'm not too concerned.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – GloboEsporte.com) Lewis, when you came in here, you stopped to watch your lap – all the lap – what was your view of it, what was your analysis of your own lap?

LH: I could have been faster! I was looking at some places where... you know, when you do a lap like that it's really difficult to... you know, the previous lap maybe I had an oversteer moment in one corner, you don't know if it's dried up and what... it probably has dried up on that next lap so you don't know just how much you can push on each corner. In hindsight... hindsight's always a great thing - there were drier patch and more grip and more potential in some corners that I did, but it doesn't matter because I'm where I need to be. That's what happens when I watch it. I'm just thinking could be a little bit more there, a little bit more there.

Q: (Silvia Arias – Parabras) Nico, I would like to know – maybe you said it before but I don't know – but when this accident happened, was it because you touched the kerb or is it because there was a mechanical problem in the car and the suspension was broken?

NR: The suspension broke. On the kerb, on the normal exit kerb, the first one, the thin one.

Q: (Peter Vamosi – Vas Nepe) To all of you: there's a possibility that next year maybe we will have a bigger version of the Austrian Grand Prix, a new track layout but of course the old one, the Osterreichring. Are you satisfied with this information? Would you like to compete with Formula One cars on this or is it OK now?

LH: Me personally? That's the best news I've probably heard in Formula One for a long time. They're going to take a track back to what it should be or what it was previously. The track is nice as it is now but I've not seen the old track but I can imagine going up into the mountains and into the woods it's going to be epic so I really hope they do that personally.

Q: Nico, your Dad raced here on the old one, any thoughts on that?

NR: I just watched the video from 1982, one of the closest finishes with my Dad finishing second and definitely it looks very exciting so yeah, if they do that, cool.

NH: I wasn't even aware. Don't know what the layout was but yeah, whatever. Fine.

Ends