



## Press Information

### 2019 Spanish Grand Prix Saturday Press Conference Transcript 11.05.2019

#### DRIVERS

1 – Valtteri BOTTAS (Mercedes)

2 – Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes)

3 – Sebastian VETTEL (Ferrari)

#### TRACK INTERVIEWS

(Conducted by Jenson Button)

**Q: Valtteri, that was a fantastic qualifying effort, outstanding. And to beat this guy around here. I know how difficult that is. The car is obviously feeling pretty awesome underneath you?**

**Valtteri BOTTAS:** Yeah, by the time of Quali 3 it was just really getting better and better. Really enjoyed that and enjoyed the adrenaline rush we get from those laps. I'm very pleased. Practice 3 was difficult obviously with the spin, but I just forgot that and moved on.

**Q: But it wasn't just that, it was a massive margin. And now that makes it three in a row. That must give you a massive boost for the race tomorrow and for the rest of the season?**

**VB:** It does, yeah. It's started well, the season, and the way I'd hoped for. I feel better and better in the car, so I look forward to tomorrow.

**Q: Good man. Lewis, watching that it looked like you really needed to get the lap in the first run in Q3. The second run, I don't know if it was the temperature or what, but you needed to get it done then, and it seemed like the last sector was a bit loose?**

**Lewis HAMILTON:** Yeah, I mean, firstly Valtteri did a fantastic job, he's been quick all weekend. I think on my side I just didn't put the laps together. The last couple of laps in Q3 particularly just weren't strong. I had to go out early, because I had come in too early and I had a low battery pack and so I had to go out first, ahead of everyone and ultimately it just wasn't a good enough job.

**Q: But the thing here, starting P2, you get that massive tow down the straight, so looking forward to a great race tomorrow?**

**LH:** Yeah, I'll be giving it everything. We've always got great weather here. It's great for the team to have this one-two. We'll try to convert that into a one-two and if I can reverse it I'll be happy.

**Q: Sebastian, I think that's probably as good as you could have expected. Looking at the last sector that seems to be a massive deficit for you guys here.**

**Sebastian VETTEL:** Yeah, it seems to be more than an Achilles' heel at the moment. I just spoke to Valtteri and they were both very happy with the car, especially last sector. For us it was a bit more tricky. I think we got everything out of the car in the first run. In the second run I had to try something different and it didn't work, but yeah, happy but not happy, if you know what I mean.

**Q: I totally know what you mean. But it's weird in the last sector, because it looks like the car is planted. It looks like the rear end is planted and you just have understeer. But maybe that's an aerodynamic deficit, so you balance the car like that. Is that the case?**

**SV:** The car doesn't feel bad, but obviously we are not quick enough. In terms of balance we got it more or less right. I had a bit more understeer; what you saw is right. Probably more than they have but I think overall in those sort of corners, you know yourself, you just need the grip and I think we might be down on that.

## **PRESS CONFERENCE**

**Q: Valtteri, congratulations, it was a stunning lap from you there in Q3. The only man to break into the 1 minute 15s all afternoon, just talk us through that final segment of qualifying in particular.**

**VB:** Yeah, thanks, it was really enjoyable and to get a nice lap like that is a nice feeling and a nice adrenaline rush. What makes it enjoyable is when the car is behaving, when the car is doing what you want it to do and what you ask it to do. I think as a team we have done an incredible job with the upgrades we brought here and with the set-up direction we've taken. But I was really building up to the qualifying after a difficult Practice 3 with the spin and each run I always knew 'OK, here I can improve' and so on and I managed to put it together for Q3.

**Q: How good was that lap in Q3 and are you surprised by the gap to Lewis?**

**VB:** For sure the gap is big. I never would expect that but I don't know how Lewis' lap was but this time I got everything pretty well right in the lap.

**Q: Mika Häkkinen has the Finnish record of six consecutive pole positions, just something for you to think about?**

**VB:** I'm not really a big fan of numbers. Obviously I respect Mika a lot, but at this point of the season there's no point counting numbers, the point is focusing on the moment.

**Q: Congratulations. Well, Lewis, coming to you, Valtteri made the point 'how was Lewis' lap', well how was Lewis' lap?**

**LH:** It was OK; it could have been better for sure. Valtteri did a fantastic job particularly once he got to Q3. It was a bit of a tacky Q3 for me, which is kind of rare for me, but it happens. Otherwise, I'm just really happy and proud of the team for the upgrades we were able to

bring this weekend to eke the gap to the Ferraris. It is an amazing track to drive, especially as we come from Barcelona testing, it's transformed so much since then, so really proud of everyone.

**Q: Surprising gap between you and Valtteri. What do you put that down to? It looked like a very aggressive lap from you that first lap in Q3.**

**LH:** They just weren't very good laps. Simple as that, and Valtteri was just quicker today and rightly deserved the pole.

**Q: Sebastian, coming on to you, looks like it was quite a tough afternoon for you – but it's been a hard weekend for Ferrari, as well, relative to the performance of the Mercedes. Just talk us through the handling of your car.**

**SV:** Well, it's been a busy weekend, obviously. Happy to be in P3. I think it gives us a good chance for tomorrow and we look forward to the race. I think we brought some new bits, a new engine, everything seems to work but clearly we are not yet where we want to be but I think in terms of team effort, everybody was doing their utmost. We tried a lot of stuff yesterday, and again today. Different directions. I think we ended up getting the best out of the car for today, which, as I say, wasn't enough and we're certainly not satisfied – but I'm very happy with the approach, with the chance that we took, in terms of trying something daring, something I think ultimately will pay off. Not yet – not today at least! But hopefully it helps us in terms of pace tomorrow. Hopefully sets of the right direction for the next couple of weeks.

**Q: Happy with the approach of the team – but were you surprised by the gap to Mercedes?**

**SV:** I think yes. Of course. Coming here we did not expect... but also we seemed to lose a quite big amount of time in the last sector. I think it's quite clear we seem to be faster down the straights, so probably carrying a little bit less wing than them, but then obviously in the last sector there are no straights and yeah, struggling a little bit to bring it together, so it's not a very long sector but they're quite some corners, and mostly lower speed, and that's where we seem to be losing the most time. So, definitely some homework. We know this track very well, everybody does, but the conditions today, etcetera, we were not able to match them.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Valtteri, your first-ever hat-trick of poles. Is the speed in qualifying your strongest weapon in this World Championship fight right now?**

**VB:** Well, for sure, in terms of qualifying performance, it has been so far my best start of the year in Formula One – but it's not only about Saturdays. For sure, it's super-important and, depending on the track, but also the race performance, start performance. I think it's going to be key – one of the key things for sure.

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – Globoesporte.com) To Sebastian. You said the last sector was very slow. 1500m – eight-tenths. Can you describe for us if you lose when you brake, the speed in the middle of the corner, the traction? Because it's really a lot in a very short space.**

**SV:** Yes, it's a lot of time – but as I said, obviously we gain down the straights and we lose in the corners. Obviously the first in the first two sectors we have straights to compensate, so

maybe you don't see the loses in the corners but, I think it's pretty transparent: I think you have access as much as we have to the GPS data. We lose time in the last sector in the corners in pretty much every corner. So, from 10 to 15 there's not one corner that stands out. Obviously eight-tenths sounds a lot but if you then divide it by the amount of corners, it's a bit less – but it's still a lot. In the end of the day, it doesn't change anything. For us, it's a lot of homework. The car, I think, certainly didn't feel perfect, so there's something we can improve but overall, obviously, yeah, overall we seem to be a bit down in terms of grip and not being able to carry as much speed through the corner, not go on throttle as easy as them, so it's a loss not necessarily in braking, I think it's more the speed carried around the corner. It's not the first time. Obviously here it bites you in the last sector because there are many corners and no straights – but that's what it is. For tomorrow, we'll see what we can do. Certainly the straight-line speed will help us to put pressure on the first straight and then go from there.

**Q: (Christian Menath – Motorsportmagazin.com) Two questions for Seb: did you feel that problem during the winter tests as well, the problem in the slow corners and secondly, you always said the potential is there; did you have this feeling this weekend as well?**

**SV:** Well, I think, starting with the second question, I think we didn't start off well in Australia, we certainly weren't extracting the maximum from the car. I think we probably, with hindsight, didn't carry the best set-up but from then onwards we gradually improved, we certainly were not where we wanted to be. To return to your first question, I think winter testing is now quite a while ago and I think the cars have progressed quite a lot – our car as much as other cars. Obviously conditions were different and so on. We had a very good feeling the first week. The second week things were a lot closer but obviously there was a lot of – how can I say? – positivity after the first week which we carried over and we sort of wanted to carry into the season but so far we haven't managed to extract that. I think overall the car is good, we have the performance, we need to put it together, we know we can do better so we need to dig deep. Obviously now is not the first time we're losing out and not the second time and not the third time, so there's a consistent trend that we seem to lose in some places, independent of conditions: sunshine, clouds, tyres, compounds and so on. Yeah, a bit more fast to understand but if we had the solution surely it would be on the car already.

**Q: (Scott Mitchell – Autosport) To the two Mercedes drivers: are you surprised by the gap? I know you've brought upgrades this weekend but are you surprised by the gap that you've got over Ferrari? I know the cars have changed from last year, the aero rules are different but how much better does this car feel to 2018?**

**LH:** Well, we didn't expect to have the gap, for sure and in terms of whether it's better than last year, for sure it's better. I don't really know what else to say.

**VB:** I have to say that when I saw the times, definitely we expected Ferrari to be closer. Everything based on winter testing, this seemed to be a track that really suits them and since the practice, we saw yesterday that we were in good form. Obviously we have been doing a good job as a team with the direction we've been taking the car in, in terms of where to find the performance and how and so on, so we've done a really good job on that and I think we're all impressed. Obviously race pace is going to be important tomorrow and for sure the car feels better. With the new aero regs, everyone thought it's going to be a bit slower

but with the technology nowadays that the team has it's incredible how (inaudible) can still improve. The amount of downforce the amount of stability the cars have now is enjoyable.

**Q: (Luis Vasconcelos – Formula Press) Also for Valtteri and Lewis: you had a very clean and exciting fight in the first few corners in Baku but there you can overtake later in the race. Here, given how difficult it is to pass, how crucial are those first six, seven hundred meters going to be and how are you planning to play it?**

**VB:** For sure it's going to be important. It's one of the longer runs into turn one from the start so definitely the start performance is important and there's also a bit of a tow effect for the cars behind so on track, it's difficult to overtake, for sure the start is going to be important and turn one but yeah, it's pretty normal and (I shall) look forward to the fight.

**LH:** Yeah, pretty much the same. Just approach it as we always do.

**Q: (Laurence Edmonson – ESPN) To both Mercedes drivers: there's obviously a few changes to the car this weekend. Valtteri, do you feel that's brought it a little more closer to what you were looking for and has that helped you? And Lewis, has it upset your balance and where you have the car?**

**VB:** I think we've just been able to improve the general stability and provide a bit more grip from the aero of the car. There's no different kind of behaviour from the car than any races before, I feel. It does feel a bit different from winter testing though, in a big way, but if it really suits me or not – I really can't say but definitely the car feels better and that's always – when you have the grip – it's always a good feeling.

**LH:** The upgrades always feel good so sometimes they're transparent – this one's quite transparent for me and obviously I was not able to utilise the performance of the car or extract the performance of the car so I will just continue to work on that.

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – GloboEsporte.com) Lewis, we always used to see you in the middle (in the press conference) with the phenomenal numbers you have but now for the third time in a row you are on the left side. Is this a sign of something? Do you start to re-think your approach to Q3, to analyse more, because you have lost out to your teammate with the same car for the last three times?**

**LH:** I don't think it's about Q3, I think it's about the whole weekend and it's the feel that I have in the car, I just need to work on it so I don't think it's really about my approach in qualifying particularly. But of course I'm looking at all solutions and I'll get there eventually.

**Ends**