



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

2015 Malaysian Grand Prix Sunday Race Press Conference Transcript

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DRIVERS

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PODIUM INTERVIEWS

(Conducted by Eddie Jordan)

Sebastian, you look amazingly emotional, what's the matter with you? The last time we saw you crying you went on to win world championships.

Sebastian VETTEL: It's been a while that I haven't been on the top step. It's my first time obviously with Scuderia Ferrari. I'm speechless. Obviously a big change over the winter and the welcome the team gave me is just fantastic. The fans. I've only done two races but it's a great atmosphere. I'm very, very happy. Proud of today, we beat them fair and square. A great achievement, we have a great car. Plenty of positives and I guess that's why it is a bit emotional.

I don't need to tell you but now, having won here four times, no other driver has ever achieved that. So that's another little one in the book.

SV: It is bloody hot though! I think today is a very special day and will always remain a part of me. Thank you very much, as I said, to the whole team. Grazie. Thank you to the fans.

Lewis, first of all, Arnie says 'well done' and he's allowed me to come and talk to you today. He's coming back to see you later. So, Arnie well done last race. Lewis, that was a surprise and you weren't very happy with your car, we could hear what you were saying to your engineers. Tell us what was going on there?

Lewis HAMILTON: Well, firstly, huge congratulations to Ferrari and Sebastian, they did an amazing job. Jeez, they had some good pace today. I gave it everything I could; we did as a team. We knew coming into this weekend that they had made a step, we didn't know how big but they were too fast for us today.

Obviously you've converted so many... what, the last eight pole positions into wins. You just missed out today. Does that mean you've got to kick-start it again and start thinking about the strategy for the future?

LH: We'll just get back together as a team and try to figure out where we were losing time today. My balance wasn't great particularly, so there are definitely areas we can improve on and I'm sure we'll be fighting for the next race, which I'm really excited about.

You talked with your engineers, we were a bit confused and you were a bit confused. You didn't know whether you were going to have to stop again. What was that discussion or were you not supposed to hear that?

LH: I don't think I was supposed to hear it. In general the team did a fantastic job. I'm really grateful for the car we have. The fans have been fantastic this weekend. Thank you so much guys.

Nico, another podium. I know you teased him at the last race, you said come on Sebastian, get a bit more speed and you can come up and join us guys. You didn't think he was going to be there that quickly did you?

Nico ROSBERG: No, but all I can say now, on behalf of our team is: game on, Ferrari!

Absolutely, we saw that today. And in everyone's interest, it is the most amazing thing, because we don't want to see you run away with the championship and to see Ferrari up there fighting you, as obviously as Sebastian has said, fair and square, this was a titanic battle that everybody here absolutely enjoyed. Can I just ask you a question about tyres? You didn't need to run the softer tyres yesterday morning in the first session and you could have done with that tyre today. Was that a mistake?

NR: I don't know the exact details about the strategy because it was quite complex out there. I'm sure we did a good job and congrats, Ferrari did an awesome job today and they deserved to win and we'll be back next race.

Indeed, I don't have to remind everybody here that the first person to win in the modern era in a Mercedes was a couple of years ago, in China, which you won. Are you going to win there?

NR: Yeah, China is a great track for me, so I look forward to that and of course we're going for the win.

And you're going to beat this man here, which is obviously what everybody wants to see, we want a big fight with Lewis. Is that going to continue?

NR: Definitely yes, I'll be pushing him hard; definitely.

Am I allowed to sit down here, because it's been a very hot day and we can see... c'mon give him another round of applause. He deserves it after that. He's exhausted, all of them are, all of the drivers, each and every single one of them. So Brazil 2013, I don't have to remind you, that was your last win and you just didn't look comfortable at all last year and now we see you back in the thing, waving your finger, emotional. The transformation! Tell us what it's like?

SV: I don't know. I'm speechless. Last year was not a good year for me. I think we had a great car but I was just struggling to extract the performance. This year's car seems to suit me very well. Obviously it's a big change but the team has been phenomenal, welcoming me the first day. I remember when the gate opened in Maranello it was like a dream coming true. I remember the last time I was there was as a young kid watching Michael over the fence driving around in the Ferrari and now I'm driving that very red car. It's incredible. The day today, the race, really spot on, the whole team was there, great strategy, great pace, we beat them fair and square, so thanks to the team, thanks to all the team in Maranello, really, really great day.

Just before we sign off I have to ask you this: it was an inspired decision for Lewis, leaving McLaren to come to Mercedes, it made such a transformation to the great pace they've had in the last couple of years and it would appear it's exactly the same for you. Do you feel it's possible to win a championship in this car?

SV: I hope so. That's why I signed up! That's our goal and that's the mission – to bring the world championship back to Maranello. I think for today we have to enjoy the day. We know that these guys are incredibly strong and difficult to beat but today we did an excellent job and that's what we have to keep doing for the whole year: try to get the best and then we'll see where we're at. We know there is a long way

ahead of us but for now, to be honest, I don't care. I want to celebrate today, I want to get pissed tonight, I don't care.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Sebastian, the emotion, and I think possible the tiredness as well after a very long and hard drive, is very clear, but you're first win since 2013 and like your childhood idol you have won a grand prix for Ferrari. Just tell us how that feels and also clearly the strategy was a crucial part of that, the decision to stay out when the safety car was deployed, but you then had quite a lot to do to deliver?

SV: A phenomenal day. How does it feel? It feels incredible. To see the guys when I was on the podium, to look down, it was an incredible atmosphere. I can only recall from the victories Fernando had with Ferrari and recall especially the victories Michael celebrated with the team – I think there were one or two – it's incredible. To become part of that team is something special. It makes me very happy obviously. Last year was tough. The first win since more than a year's time now. I definitely missed not just the champagne but the top step in particular. So great to come back after a tough season last year where I think I just didn't get on top of the car. This year the balance of the car seems to suit me and has come my way, also I think Kimi's way more than last year in general. Very pleased. The strategy today was also ace. So big thanks to the guys. They pulled in obviously, which I think we were a bit surprised by, but we saw on Friday that they weren't too happy on the medium compound and Lewis was struggling in the first stint and I was able to keep up with him, which I enjoyed a lot. And then I knew I had to deliver, trying to make those tyres last and trying to go as fast as I can. Second stint he was chasing me down, which was tough, so he had a string second stint. In the end I think I was able to rebalance the car a little more and I was able to, yeah, have a solid gap the last couple of laps. But to be honest... I shouldn't say it but I don't know, I was shitting myself the last couple of laps because here and there the thought was coming to my head, I was looking at the top of the chassis and thinking "this is a red, you're about to win" and then I thought, "OK, stop thinking that, otherwise you'll miss the next apex or something". Really, really a great relief I crossed the chequered flag and saw the guys, as I said, on the podium. So a really special day and a big thanks to all the mechanics and engineers and all the team in Maranello. There are a lot of people there and a lot of potential and power going into the project. I think we have done a massive step over the winter and it's their victory today.

Q: Lewis, coming to you, you're still in the lead of the drivers' championship after this race but as Sebastian was alluding to there, clearly it was a frustrating day for you. With the way that the car was behaving, with the way that the tyres were behaving and obviously with different strategies at play, do you still believe that was a winnable race for you?

LH: Well, we have to give it to them, they did a fantastic job this weekend and big congratulations to Sebastian and Ferrari. We were not, and I was not, expecting them to be as quick as they were today. I think it's great for the fans to see. I don't really know whether, if I'd stayed out with him, whether that would have made much of a difference. They were probably just as good if not a little bit better perhaps on tyre deg. So I think it would have still been very, very close. But I think naturally after that first stop I had so much ground to catch up it was pretty much impossible.

Q: Coming to you Nico, obviously as we've been hearing, the strategy was decisive today. Talk us through, from your point of view, the decision to come in under the Safety Car and to go onto the hard tyre in that second stint.

NR: I think... it was the plan from before the race. If there's a Safety Car on that lap, then we box. I think we didn't expect so many people to stay out, probably, and also I didn't expect, of course, to lose that much time in the pitstop waiting for people to go by. Because the pitlane was so wide, so we thought we could go alongside. So, those were the problems, and then just getting through the pack afterwards was very difficult and cost a lot of tyre degradation also. So that really put me on the back foot. I tried to fight back as much as possible but couldn't quite get back to Lewis. Although I lost a lot from that pitstop phase, I'm happy that I got very close to Lewis, but not enough to attack or anything.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Haoran Zhou - LETV) Question to Sebastian. The last time the German and Italian national anthems played in this sequence was in Italia. 2008 Italian Grand Prix. And the last time in red was 2006 Shanghai. Historic moment: describe your emotions on the podium when you hear the Italian national anthem.

SV: Yeah, you're right about Monza 2008. It's true. Probably just as emotional. Look, I've been my entire life with Red Bull and celebrating that first win at Monza was unique. Then, I think winning the first time with Red Bull in China, 2009, was unique. This is just as unique. Maybe a little bit better because it means a little bit extra... I don't know. It's my dream. When I grew up, Michael was my hero and for all of us – and I speak for all of the kids at the go-kart track at the time in Germany – we were looking up to him and when he turned up every year and to look after us a little bit, it made our lives. So, that's why I think today... I probably don't understand yet how special it is. Very, very emotional. To see the guys there, and to realise at the parade lap, I really tried to soak everything in, enjoy the fans here around Malaysia and, yeah, I recognised obviously for the first time, all the Ferrari flags. So really, really happy and just proud. Especially proud to beat these guys because they have been phenomenally strong the last year and a bit, so to be the first one to beat them really fair and square, I think is an incredible achievement, so big thanks to all the guys back in Maranello.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Congratulations Sebastian, you've won already your second race with Ferrari and it took more than that for Michael. Do you think it's possible to start winning as regularly as he did?

SV: You're asking a lot! Probably you're right, I guess you know the statistics – but I don't think his car in '96 was as good as our car this year and I think if we could get anywhere close to – and I'm speaking for the whole team, I'm speaking for both drivers – if we could get anywhere close to the victories he had with Ferrari then we'd be in a very, very good place. Yeah, very, very large footsteps – but the target is not to fill those, the target is ideally to leave some new ones.

Q: (Cesare Manucci – Autosprint) Question for Nico. Can you describe the start when Vettel squeezed you against the wall?

NR: Well, he left enough space, so it's OK. I closed my eyes and went for it. It was exactly the same last year, so I expected him to leave the space again, just like last year – but all I can do is pray: 'please leave some space' and he did. It was enough, so it's OK. But a centimetre more would not have been OK anymore. It's OK. It was a good battle in Turn One also. Squeezed me again onto the inside so I had to sort of avoid a little bit or we would have touched but yeah, fair play.

Do you want to comment on that Sebastian?

SV: Well, I was surprised to see him again. Just like last year, yesterday, Déjà vu, a tenth behind Lewis in qualifying and then side-by-side with Nico into Turn One. I really wanted to get that tow off Lewis' car, so I was trying not to be squeezed too much to the left but I had to give him room and then in Turn One obviously I tried to stay ahead – was crucial for our race – as you said it was hard but, well I hope, I just gave him enough room.

Q: (Andrea Cremonese – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Question for Sebastian and one for Lewis. Sebastian, what did you think when you passed Red Bull and if today you reply to all the guys who think you won because you have the strongest car in the past at Red Bull? And for Lewis, if it was not a mistake at the end, don't try to bring a set of medium used to try to attack?

SV: Well, I saw that we overtook them – but I know the team inside-out and they are very strong and obviously now they are in a difficult time but I'm sure they will come back and be a strong competitor. I've been with them for a long time, I know their strengths and one of their strengths is to come back. The second part of the question: I don't know. I don't really care. I don't think I have anything to prove. The person who puts the most pressure on myself is probably me. So, I expect just the best from myself and if I

don't succeed them I'm not happy. Last year I didn't have much reason to be happy. This year I've been reasonably happy with what I've achieved so far. Everything else... everyone is free to have whatever sort of opinion they want to have.

Lewis?

LH: I think it's impossible to do a fourth stop. I was already trying to chase down a 13s, or maybe a 16s gap I think it was. It would have been close to a 40s, or 30s gap if I'd done another stop which would have been impossible to close.

Q: (Peter Windsor – F1 Racing) Sebastian said earlier that he could see you were struggling in that first stint. I just wondered if you agreed with that and indeed if that was going on. And just to expand on that previous question, the impression I got was whether he was asking whether maybe you should have run a set of used softs or mediums in that last stint instead of...

LH: ...the hards. Sorry, I thought you were talking about another stop.

Q: (Peter Windsor – F1 Racing) I think you questioned that on the radio as well, whether you could have been on mediums instead of... The first question was were you really struggling early on or just holding...?

LH: Yes, I was. I was, definitely. Just generally, all day today, I was struggling with the balance, very very uncomfortable with the car, a lot of understeer in the low which inevitably snaps into oversteer everywhere, so I couldn't really look after my tyres and I was doing everything with my controls but it really wasn't... I couldn't really find a good balance. When I went to the option tyre, the car was good or better so I was able to be a little bit more consistent and then closed down the gap. I hadn't been told but I thought we would be going onto that tyre again at the end but we went onto the other one which wasn't good for me as I'd experienced before, but I did the best job I could with it. I think ultimately the team made the best choices we could today and we'll try to analyse and improve for next time.

Q: (Luigi Perna – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Sebastian, everyone was expecting you and Ferrari to be struggling much more in this part of the season; what is the secret of this transformation compared to last year: ideas, man, money? And did you expect to be able to win so early?

SV: Of course not. I think for all of us we didn't know, when we started in Melbourne, where we were, where the journey was going to start but I think the most important thing is that for both Kimi and myself, we had a very good feeling since the first test. We were happy with how the car feels and we were able to build onto that. We had some issues to solve which I think that just in time we got on top of so great job from the guys. So far, reliability has been very strong and I think today the key was to look after our tyres. That's, I think, where we were able to close the gap a lot compared to Australia, compared to Mercedes. What it is, I think as I said, first of all, the guys have worked over the winter, tidied up a lot of things. Obviously I wasn't around last year and I don't know how last year's car was but I was told that this year's car is a lot better. I'm very happy with how the car feels, with the balance. It allows me to play and to work which I think is always crucial as a driver and then I think there's a fresh wind, there's a lot of new people. Some people have changed their position and so far I think the atmosphere is great, people are happy just to be there and do their job. They're very passionate and I think that's the most important thing. Everything else, of course, at this stage, is a bit of a surprise for us but of course we take it. The most important thing again, just like after Australia, we need to confirm that in the next races and then gradually try to catch these guys.

Q: (Wei An Mao – Titan Media) Seb, in two weeks you are travelling to Shanghai. A lot of Chinese fans have a special passion for Ferrari. Will that be extra motivation?

SV: I think it will be special. Obviously I've always felt that there are a lot of fans, especially for Ferrari and especially for Kimi in China. I think if they wave the Ferrari flag then I feel they also wave it a little bit for me so I'm looking forward to that and obviously there's always a great fan base for all of us, for the drivers and therefore China is a unique event. It's a crazy track and crazy conditions, and anything can happen there but for sure, we will be very happy to go there after the great success this weekend.

Q: (Wei An Mao – Titan Media) Lewis, in two weeks you are travelling to Shanghai; you have the most victories there. You've got three wins there, are you looking for the fourth one?

LH: For me, going to China is one of my favourite races, simply because of the fans. Every time I... I don't know how they know but from the moment we land at the airport they know we're there. The weirdest thing is that I go to a restaurant... I leave the hotel and go to a restaurant and they beat me, even though they're standing waving to me at the hotel, they beat me to the restaurant, so I don't know how they do that. And then I leave the restaurant and they're waving bye to me and they beat me back to the hotel. I don't even know how they do it. There's only one way! It's amazing the support we get there and of course I've had some good races there. I think ultimately my assumption is that this weekend the heat got to us with the tyres and it will be a lot cooler at the next race, so I hope that we pick up our pace a bit more.

Q: (Elmar Dreher – German Press Agency DPA) Sebastian, do you see Ferrari now on the level of Mercedes? How big is the gap still?

SV: I think, as Lewis touched on, they probably struggled a little bit more with the heat today than they expected. Equally, I think we didn't struggle with the heat as much as we probably expected, so both things put together made us very competitive today and able to beat them fair and square. For the next race, I think again, a completely different type of track China is a unique track in many ways, supposed to be a lot cooler. I think Mercedes were struggling with the hot conditions at this stage of the season, so we expect them to be very very strong, and they are the ones that usually set the pace. Today we could capitalise on their weakness a little bit and for the next race, we just try to race as hard as we can and see where it takes us.

Q: (Chris Medland – F1i.com) Nico, you said that at the same stage back in Melbourne that you wanted Ferrari to get closer but obviously they're more than closer now; what's your feeling after the race? Is it good that you've got a competitor that's from another team or is it a bit of fear that they've made such a big step in such a short time?

NR: Big difference between get closer and beat us because they are faster, massive difference there. Happy? No, not at all. Definitely the opposite of happy. But for sure, on behalf of our team, as I said on the podium, bring it on. We're going to fight back big time.

Q: (Chris Lines – AP) Nico, at that first stop behind the safety car, you had to be stacked behind Lewis and that cost you several places. Was there any debate from you with the team about that or was that just a pre-arranged thing?

NR: That was to be expected and everything, I knew that was coming, but I think we underestimated, afterwards, not being able to pull out into the pit lane because of other people coming somehow. Even that we had planned and we were planning to release me just alongside the others but maybe they judged it to be too risky and too bigger risk. I think it was also a Red Bull who was stacking with the other Red Bull and he was waiting and that meant that I couldn't go or something like that so we need to look into that. And that definitely cost me a huge amount of time, so tried to fight back as much as possible, to get back at Lewis at the end of the race but I just lost too much in that phase.

Q: (Nicola Pohl – Bild) Sebastian, is there anybody you dedicate this win to?

SV: Well, I think it would be the team. As soon as the gates opened at Maranello I was amazed by the manpower, amazed by the size of the factory, the amount of people working in the race team and I think it's a unique constellation on the grid that the team has, so probably dedicate it to all the teams there, to all the people there. Having been there a couple of times now, many times, and also been in the place where the whole company grabs lunch, to see the amount of people all sharing that passion, I think that since they've been waiting for that win for so long, I think it's really dedicating it to them because they've done a hell of a job over the winter to get us in that position.

Ends