



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

## Press Information

### 2016 Austrian Grand Prix Sunday Race Press Conference Transcript

03.07.2016

#### DRIVERS

- 1 – Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes)
- 2 – Max VERSTAPPEN (Red Bull Racing)
- 3 – Kimi RAIKKONEN (Ferrari)

#### PODIUM INTERVIEWS

(Conducted by Noemi de Miguel)

##### **Congratulations Lewis, how do you feel just now?**

**Lewis HAMILTON:** What an incredible race that was. It was incredibly tough. This track is amazing. Big thank you to all the fans for coming out, because honestly I love it here in Austria. Every time I come we have like the best hotel, the food is great and apart from this generally I really love it here. We have Toto Wolff and Niki who are also from here.

##### **We have some noise around right now. Do you know why it is?**

**LH:** I don't know, but that's not my problem, it's theirs.

##### **OK, Max, Lewis says he likes a lot Austria, but it's your team house. Congratulations, what value is this second place to you? Amazing.**

**Max VERSTAPPEN:** It's an amazing day you know. To finish second with a Red Bull car at the Red Bull Ring is incredible. I enjoyed it a lot. It was an exciting race and yeah, thank you to the guys, they gave me a great car to finish second.

##### **And after the Spanish Grand Prix, again in a podium?**

**MV:** Yeah, exactly. I hope it keeps going like that.

##### **Congratulations as well, Kimi. How do you feel now? Do you consider it a surprise here for Ferrari?**

**Kimi RAIKKONEN:** I mean, not an easy day for us. I felt we didn't really get what we could have. But I did the best I could. We had a good speed in the end and maybe a chance to overtake Max but then there was a yellow flag and then, fair enough, he finished in front of me and that's how it goes

sometimes. I don't know. The car's been feeling good all weekend and we started the race well and then suddenly I found myself in sixth position, so we tried to come back and the speed was fine and obviously for the team with Seb, he had some issue, not an easy weekend but with the speed that we had I feel that we didn't really get what we deserved but that's racing. We go again next weekend and we try to do better.

### **Let's meet Lewis and ask about what happened with Nico?**

**LH:** He made a mistake into Turn One and so I had an opportunity to go down the outside into Turn Two. I left a lot of room on the inside and I guess he locked up and crashed into me. I think he had a problem with his brakes potentially.

### **Did you consider who was...**

**LH:** I am here to win. I am here to win. That's all.

## **PRESS CONFERENCE**

### **Lewis, a controversial end to the race. Tell us about the incident between you and Nico?**

**LH:** I don't feel any particular way about it. I don't feel it was controversial really. Nico made a mistake into Turn One. You know, we were racing right until the last lap. He made a mistake, clipped the inside kerb and went wide and I got a good run on him up to Turn Two. He blocked the inside, so the only place I could go was down the outside. So I was on the racing line. He was in my blind spot, so I assumed he was still there, so I went very wide, left him plenty of room and as I started to turn – I was at the edge of the track – he collided with me. My guys said that he had something up with the brakes, maybe. So I'm not quite sure exactly what happened. Then I came back onto the track as quick as I could. It was very close between us there. If he did have a brake problem it would be the reason he lifted off really early down the next straight, which we were racing on. But for me it was exciting because... I mean I don't understand exactly how I ended up being second. I was in the lead and then I guess the safety car kind of brought it into that position. But I never gave up. I pushed all the way. I knew I needed those points. I knew that I have some incredible fans here supporting. Some of them have come a long way. So I did everything I could to not give up and to push all the way.

**Lewis, your third win of the season, the 46<sup>th</sup> of your career, first as we said here in Austria. An enthralling grand prix really, a hug on the podium for the chief strategist at Mercedes, James Fowles, who essentially set up quite an interesting showdown at the end there. Gave you the undercut chance, put you on the soft tyre. Nico reacted, put on the supersoft. Your out lap was a little slower than his but it ended up with a very exciting finale. I just wonder from your point of view, from the cockpit... you've spoken about the incident, but tell us about the race itself and that whole strategy call.**

**LH:** Well, first off and most importantly, I just want to say a big thank you to the team who continue to push hard and continue to develop. You know we're trying to stay ahead of these guys who are also [improving in] leaps and bounds and getting faster and faster, so I think it's exceptional what the team have done to give us the performance we had today. So yeah, I got a fairly decent start and I was in the lead and I felt that I was doing what I needed to do but then I guess with the safety car I was a bit unfortunate with that and lucky for Nico. Behind in second and obviously I did the stop but with the soft tyre in these cooler conditions it was not so easy to start them up, so I obviously came out second behind Nico once he did his stop. After that it was just all guns blazing,

just as hard as I could. I needed those points. I can't afford to lose any points. Luckily I was as close as I could be on the lap. Nico made a mistake and I tried to capitalise on that. I don't know if it was a mistake he made in Turn Two, it may have been his brake issue, but we collided and obviously I was able to still continue to go. But I'm just really grateful. I didn't give up. I kept pushing. I thoroughly enjoyed the race, you know. This is what racing is about. It's about close battles, difficult times and challenges ahead but the most important thing is to keep going and keep your head up every time you stumble.

**OK thank you. Moving to you Max, many congratulations, the start was crucial, you got ahead of your team-mate there and then as in Spain another very long second stint – 56 laps on a set of soft tyres setting you up for this wonderful result.**

**MV:** Yeah, it was a great start and also a good first lap and straight away I could feel the pace was there in the car. So I just moved up to the front and once I cleared some guys I just started to go into my own rhythm. The Mercedes cars at the moment are still a bit too quick, but yeah, I think everything was going quite well. I did a long stint on the soft tyre and especially the last 10 laps, including with some traffic made it very hard. I could see Kimi behind me, he was catching up a lot. At the end to come home in second after what happened on the last lap is of course a bonus. Also, to finish here second, as a Red Bull driver at the Red Bull Ring, is a great feeling.

**Q : Coming to you Kimi, a great start, you were third on the opening lap – but a longer first stint on the supersoft tyre and you ended up losing track position to Max. As in Spain, chased him down in the end but couldn't get through. A frustrating afternoon for you or are you reasonably satisfied to be on the podium?**

**KR:** Not really. I mean yes it's OK to be on the podium, it's better than fourth place, obviously that was a big gift for us but we take, no complaints. We had pretty good speed in the beginning. I was saving tyres a bit and pushing and, y'know was bit catching, bit losing time to Mercedes and going like that. We were pretty close. Then, once we made a pitstop suddenly found myself in sixth position. I think was, y'know, was a bit hard after that. There were safety cars and stuff but the biggest issue was probably with the first Red Bull. Tried to get past him, we had good speed but it as so difficult to get close enough and he always, always when I close I could not find the traction to challenge him and then luckily on one lap I managed to suddenly get a jump on him. Then the speed was good and I kind of run out of the laps. Without yellow flags we could probably have had a very good go with Max – but that's how it goes. He got second, I got third. Disappointed but it's better than nothing and we got three points back on Rosberg so it all helps.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q (Peter Farkas – Auto Motor) Kimi, you have very strong pace today but you have changed tyres about six or seven laps after the Red Bulls. Was it already the plan then to go for only one stop or was it down to the Safety Car that you could do that?**

**KR:** Obviously I think the plan yesterday or this morning wasn't one stop. The first plan, but then the plans change because you never know how the conditions are and obviously conditions from yesterday or Friday has changed a lot so you have to change it. You have many different plans and whatever suits the best you will choose it. It was quite easy, my tyres were in good shape still and I was fast but unfortunately ran out of the laps and, like I said, the yellow flag didn't help in the end – but that's part of racing. I'm disappointed where we end up with a good first part of the race and then where we came out after that – but, y'know, like I said, could have been an awful lot worse.

Unfortunately for our second car for Sebastian he had some issues, I don't know what it was, obviously I saw him at the end of the main straight but it's been many weekends for us that we can get one good result and the other one not finishing so obviously we want to get as a team strong results. We have some things to work on and next race we push again.

**Q: (Lennart Bloemhof – de Volkskrant) First podium for Red Bull on the Red Bull Ring and in lederhosen as well. How is this going to be celebrated with the team tonight because it should be amazing?**

**MV:** Well the celebrations will be in the plane I guess because I'm going back to England. Busy schedules for next week but yes, of course, great achievement. I think the car was great all weekend. We need to keep working, that's for sure but definitely we have some happy faces in the plane.

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – GloboEsporte.com) Lewis, we could hear on the radio why Nico has supersoft and you have soft tyres. My question is: isn't it also responsibility of the drivers to take the decision what tyre they can use? Once we have less than 20 laps to the end and the supersoft would be the most reasonable choice?**

**LH:** This is the case where you have to rely on your engineers because they have better understanding. They would have seen all the other drivers run on the supersoft from the beginning and they would have seen the drivers run on the soft. I had no facts to quantify a judgement. I was not in a position to make a judgement there. When I came in I'm hoping the team will give me the best tyre. I'm expecting them to give me the best tyre. So, I had the soft, Nico didn't have a soft, so I don't believe he had a soft left, as far as I'm aware. So that would be why. That was the only choice he had. My tyre goes longer. But the performance was still good, it was just the warm-up was the issue. I guess they were concerned that the ultrasoft doesn't last that long. We didn't do a long run on the supersoft either so we didn't know if that would go far. So, no, your answer, it is not the case.

**Did you have supersofts?**

**LH:** I had supersofts, yeah.

**Q: (Peter Vamosi – Vas Nepe) Question to Lewis. Where was bigger and better the rivalry? In 2007 with Fernando or this year? And what do you think, could Ron Dennis handle this problem now with your team-mate better?**

**LH:** It's different. When I was racing with Fernando we both had pretty much the same opportunity in the sense that our cars were both reliable, we had no problems so we were battling more so on the track. This is just as intense but it's a little bit different. Nico today racing hard but we're in different... the picture's a lot different. He's in the lead with four engines and I'm fighting for the lead with one engine. So we're in different positions in that respect. So I would say it's a little more intense from my side as every point counts more than ever.

**Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Max...**

**MV:** Really?

**...Really to you. When Kimi was chasing you, did that bring any memories to you from Spain.**

**MV:** Definitely. As soon as I saw him in the mirrors I was thinking about Barcelona. Only the problem was he was catching quite a lot now compared to Barcelona. He was there all the time and catching up a lot. I just tried to make no mistakes and at the end we kept him behind which of

course is what we wanted. It was great for myself to be on the limit all the time until the end of the race.

**Q: (Zsolt Godina – Fan media Ltd) Max, you started the season with Toro Rosso but it seems that it was very easy to adapt to the Red Bull car. What do you think you can get as the maximum out of this car, is there more potential?**

**MV:** I think there is always more potential. You can always improve and you can always do better but like I said from the first race in Barcelona until now, I'm still learning. The general pace is there, it's just in qualifying, how to get the last bits, 100 percent but definitely race by race it's getting better and better.

**Q: (Don Kennedy – Hawke's Bay Today) Lewis, how disappointing is it to hear so many of the crowd booing when you've just had your first win in Austria?**

**LH:** Of course it's not great and especially with how much I love it here. It's one of the most beautiful countries I've been to. Every time I come here, the scenery... I have a motorbike here this weekend and I've been driving through the valley and just seeing how beautiful and natural it is here. And so to have that kind of feeling for a country and then have that response when you have a win, for sure it's not the greatest but I forgive them. Sometimes that's just the way it is and I don't judge them for that. They have the right to have an opinion. Not quite sure why they have done it but it doesn't really make any difference to me. I won the race, I think fair and square.

**MV:** You have to be careful that you don't get knocked off your bike when you drive home.

**Q: (Michael Schmidt – Auto Motor und Sport) Lewis, you stayed out much longer than Nico in the first stint, presumably to do a one-stop race. Have you been surprised to be pulled in for a second stop and what do you think about it, seeing Ferrari and Red Bull obviously being able to do a one-stop race?**

**LH:** Yeah, for me the plan to be on a one-stop and I hit my one-stop target and then I was on that second tyre and when I was asked to pit it felt fine. I knew Nico was on – I think – eleven or twelve lap older tyres than me so they said that he would have to stop again but I didn't think I would have to and I was very... I had a split decision as well as to whether I was going to come in or not. They asked me to come in and I followed their direction but obviously they showed that the tyre could have gone the distance. I don't know whether – at the pace that we were going – that they would have lasted as long as their's - who knows - but in hindsight I would have probably tried to stay out but if I had stayed out maybe Nico would have stayed out so it would have been a similar situation.

**Q: (Barna Zsoldis – Nemzeti Sport) Max, back to the similarities with Barcelona, did it cross your mind that with another Mercedes crash you could win this one as well?**

**MV:** Yeah, of course then the chance is bigger. Today one crashed, of course we take the opportunity but, well, normally it's not like that.

**Q: (Dan Knutson – Speedsport Magazine) Kimi, you said the car was fast at times today. Looking ahead to next weekend, how will it go at Silverstone?**

**KR:** We'll see next weekend, obviously. I start guessing something... I think, like I said, the car felt pretty good in the race but it was hard to get past people. Once we got close it was pretty difficult to get past them, more than I expected, which is not ideal but once we were on our own, after passing Ricciardo, the speed was very good but obviously I ran out of laps. Silverstone is a lot different as a circuit. Conditions might be similar to today but who knows. The car was pretty good

everywhere, we will see. A lot of work goes on through the weekend to make the car good and make the set-up right so let's see how we do that.

**Q: (Sandor Meszarnos – Autosport Formula) Lewis, I think many of us want to be a fly on the wall at the Mercedes post-race briefing. Can you please tell us what kind of conversation you expect with Nico, with team managers?**

**LH:** It's going to be pretty straightforward. We just do our de-brief. I don't think anything will really be said. I honestly don't have a great picture of what went on. I knew where I was on the track. I can't make a comment or a judgement until I've seen the replay. If it was a mistake of his or it was an issue, who knows? We'll find out but there is no problem, we were racing hard and sometimes these things happen.

**Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Kimi, in Baku you were fourth and very disappointed. Now you are third and seem to be disappointed. Is there any difference in your satisfaction after the race?**

**KR:** No, I mean I'm not here to try to finish third or fourth or second. We are here, as Ferrari, to try to win and obviously it doesn't give you a lot when you're third or second. But that's how life is. We keep trying and keep pushing forward, then improving things and I'm sure we can get where we want to be. It will take some time and some hard work but that's the idea why we are here. Like I said, I'm sure me plus a lot of our fans plus the team would be much happier if we could be a few places higher. But that's how it ended up today.

**Q: (Jens Nagler – Bild Zeitung) Lewis, do you expect the rivalry between you and Nico to become even more intense, the closer the racing between the two of you becomes and the closer you get to the end of the season?**

**LH:** I could anticipate it will stay the same as it is now. We are battling. Today obviously was slightly unfortunate with the safety car otherwise I would have been in the lead and I think I had more pace today, so it would have been easier. But well absolutely, we're racing to win and we're fighting for the championship and we will see. I'm not the furthest away now, so at least I'm within a good distance from him points-wise. I don't know how many points I am behind, so that's definitely better than what I came with and I'll take that.

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – GloboEsporte.com) Max, when you did your pit stop on lap 15, did you plan to go until the end of the race on that set of tyres or did the safety car afterwards help you to understand that it could be possible, because Sebastian, on lap 26, with supersofts, had a tyre blow-out?**

**MV:** Of course the safety car helped but I was just going on to see how the tyre lasted. I was telling the team it's all fine, it's all fine, just keep going. If I felt it was not going on any more, for sure I would have pitted but it was all going fine. The cars in front of me were pulling away, they were just quicker, but I was pulling away from the cars behind, so there was no reason to stop.

Ends