



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

**2016 German Grand Prix
Sunday Race Press Conference Transcript**

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PODIUM INTERVIEWS

(Conducted by Kai Ebel)

Lewis, congratulations. First of all, give us inside view of your rocket start, that we all have seen there?

Lewis HAMILTON: Well, first please let me start with a big thank you to all the fans that have come out here in Germany. To see so many people here... great sportsman(ship) from the people here. I've got a lot of fans out here and I just appreciate you all coming. What a race! Obviously yesterday, second place, but what a great start. My engineers did a fantastic job. The balance was amazing. It was just about keeping it cool and looking after the engine. I'm just so happy that I can be up here for Mercedes-Benz, who I have been with since I was 13, so this is a very, very proud position for me to be in, so big thank you to the team who, as I said, did an amazing job.

I see from the expression on your face that you changed totally from yesterday to today and then you had the guys from Linkin Park here, so they brought you a lot of luck?

LH: I think to day I didn't make any mistakes, so in my heart I'm happy with what I did today. I came to do a job... yesterday wasn't perfect, but you learn from those things and today was a real show of looking at the glass half full and filling it up today.

Right behind you was a big bullfight, led by Daniel Ricciardo who smells really of champagne. So after this champagne shower, how about some German beer?

Daniel RICCIARDO: Yeah, I had a little bit yesterday at the autograph session. This is two weekends in a row now with a podium and one of the most refreshing things is seeing so many fans back in Germany. It's obviously great to have the race back here after a year off. So thanks for all the support. Thanks to Red Bull Racing. I think it's the first double podium for us in over a year. So it's awesome to close out the first part of the season. And mum and dad are here. It was my dad's birthday yesterday, so... they don't get enough recognition, so thank you guys.

Daniel, tell me just quickly, how could get by this guy [Verstappen] really quick and supported by so many Dutch guys here?

DR: That I see a few Australian flags around. There are a few more Dutch, but I appreciate the Aussie ones, so thanks guys. It was a race of strategy at first. It was really close in the first corner with myself and Max. He had a good run on the outside and then on the supersoft I was much more comfortable and we had good pace for the last half of the race. We really capitalised on a good day. We had a good car. Obviously we couldn't win but second and third isn't too bad, so thanks again.

Max, coming to you, being on the podium in front of lots of kinsmen here from the Netherlands. So, first of all, tell me about the start and why you couldn't hold it then in front of Danny?

Max VERSTAPPEN: We had a good start and from there on I think the pace was pretty good. I was enjoying it and then we chose to do two different strategies on the cars so I let Daniel by and from there on I think we played really well as a team. To get a double podium out of it was the main target and to score more points than Ferrari and that's what we definitely did today.

Third position: is it enough to make a party tonight or you're going home on the German autobahn with all those guys in the caravan?

MV: I am going home but it will be a nice homecoming that's for sure.

Thanks you so much. Coming back to you Lewis, you must feel like in heaven – four in a row now. So once you're in heaven, now we have a big break, how about some skydiving, because you love adventure holidays?

LH: I won't be going skydiving, but I'll definitely be relaxing. I'll have my dogs with me and with family and friends. I think the whole team – everyone back at the factory and everyone here – have worked so hard this first half of the season and they all need a break, so I think it's really well earned by everyone, so thank you.

Q: Lewis, just after the national anthem I saw you standing, for a long time, staring down the inside line into Turn One. Just considering it, presumably visualising it. It obviously worked.

LH: I was kind-of touched after the national anthem. The lady sang so beautifully. After that it was really just trying to stay... keeping cool, trying to see the line, because the track's actually not flat there. It's uphill from me going across to where Nico was and yeah, of course, I needed to put my car alongside him somehow. I was hoping for a great start. Those starts have been inconsistent and you never know what you're going to get. But just trying to understand the circumstances ahead of me. But first, I want to say a big thank you to this team. It's been a hard slog for everyone in the team, for the whole year and obviously with ups and downs and the difficulties that we've had, the real strength that we've shown, through and through, these last races has been inspiring for me. Seeing them coming back, week after week, the work that gets put in, inspires me to drive like I did today. So, I really owe it to them and excited now, get to go on holiday. This is the best way to go on holiday.

Q: Daniel, a Red Bull double podium as you just mentioned there and Red Bull now up into second in the Constructors' Championship, ahead of Ferrari by 14 points going into the summer break. Obviously the story of the race was the split strategies: you and Lewis both going onto the soft tyre, Max and Nico going onto the supersoft. It obviously worked out well for you today but you also looked, the way you were driving, it looked like you had a taste for it today. You were pushing very, very hard and trying to get onto the back of Lewis.

DR: Yeah, definitely. We obviously wanted to finish the first part of the season on a high and after Friday's long runs we knew we would probably be more competitive in the race stint than we were in Budapest. And obviously we had a little sniff at the start of the race in Budapest, so yeah, we knew that we could have something on. I was trying to make the most of it as always but knowing we probably had a better chance today, it was obviously a nice little motivation to try to make the most of it. The start initially felt quite good, obviously Nico's was quite poor so we got past him, and then I covered the inside in Turn One but then Max had a good run on the outside and it was very close with us. We obviously kept it on track, much to my disappointment he pulled off the move at Turn One. Then it was trying to keep Nico back on the first lap. It was a good little battle there for a few corners and that was quite important for my race, to then keep him behind and focus on what I needed to do. The first two stints, we went supersoft-soft. We were in the race but nothing... I wouldn't say the pace was enough to really make a massive jump on the lead, or the top two – but then once we put the supersofts on, the last two stints, that's where I really felt like I could push the car. It came alive, and that's where in the end we got the second place. We had good pace and it was nice. As Lewis said, nice to go on the summer break with a result I'm happy with. Two weekends in a row now it's a podium and, for the team, we're now second in the Constructors' so I think we can be really proud, both of us, to split the Mercedes today. It's a really good effort.

Q: Max, coming to you, obviously you were on the other side of that split strategy. You complained in the second stint that the supersoft was not the race tyre for today. Tell us a little bit about that, and why not, and also tell us in detail about your fight with Nico Rosberg for which he was given a penalty.

MV: First of all, the start was good. So I went from fourth to second so I was happy with that. I think in the first stint the pace was pretty good. I could see Lewis and he was not pulling away too much, so I was just controlling it and from there on we went onto the second set of supersofts but they felt pretty weak and easy to destroy the tyres. Yeah, just didn't feel great. I couldn't really push in that stint so I had to back-off. Once I got onto the soft tyre, yeah, it was a little bit better but of course the soft is not as strong as the supersoft tyre, so I saw Daniel behind me charging on a supersoft because Nico passed me and pushed me a bit wide, so he got a five-second penalty for that. I was still following him but then, of course, Daniel with the supersoft was charging, so I let him go by, and from there on, yeah, it was pretty OK, and once I went onto the last set of tyres, the pace was there again but once you are behind someone within two seconds, you can't really push any more. You are just understeering and you are waiting. That was it. In the end it is a good result for the team and we are in front of Ferrari now and that was the main target. I think as a team we can be happy.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Barna Zsoldos – Nemzeti Sport) Max, you mentioned that you let Daniel past to help the team. Would you have done the same if it was for the first place?

MV: I don't know, 'cos we are not driving for the first position. Difficult to answer that one.

Q: (Dominik Sharat - Motorsport Total) A question for Daniel. Daniel, we heard you saying about Esteban Gutiérrez, "he's one of my favourites, I love this guy", what was the reason for that?

DR: errr... yeah. To be honest, off the track, I have no problem at all with Esteban. I think he's actually one of the nicer guys – but just on the track just lately, it's come up the last few races that a few of us haven't been that impressed with the blue flags. We've discussed it in drivers' meetings.

I've been in the position and I know it sucks, it sucks to move out of the line and let the leaders through – but it seems particularly the last three races in a row... everyone is doing an OK job and it seems like he's doing a less good job than the others. A bit of frustration obviously. I was trying to say it as politely as possible but, yeah. I think because he's been told already, he knows that a few aren't that impressed with his blue flag handling. I thought by now the message would have gone through but for me at least today... I lost more time behind him than anyone else.

Q: (Volkskrant – Lennart Bloemhof) Question for Max. Which feeling is dominant: the joy of getting on your fourth podium in this short season or the disappointment of finishing behind Ricciardo again for the second race?

MV: I'm not really interested in the feeling at the moment. It's a good result for the team, that's what I said, that's the most important.

Q: (Jens Nagber – Bild) Question for Lewis. What happened to your starts compared to the beginning of the season, what do you do better now?

LH: It's kind of the luck of the draw. We have worked very, very hard. Obviously I have a guy that I'm working with very, very closely and it's been an up-and-down season and it's not his fault or not my fault, it's just the way these new clutch-regs are and how sensitive the clutches are. I think we've worked, and worked and worked, and just consistency and really trying to be precise with the whole procedure. And I think today the procedure, the last two races, the procedure's been spot-on, pretty much. Today was definitely the best one I would say. Yeah, it's just a work in progress.

Q: (Graeme Keilloh – Grand Prix Times) Max and Daniel, was it something that you spoke about before the race, the possibility of switching positions if strategy called for it or was it a bit of a surprise, Max, to be asked to cede your place?

MV: No, I think in general, on this track, you have a lot of possibilities so definitely we talked about it and I think we did a good job on that today.

DR: Well, firstly, top of the morning to you, Graeme. Oh! Scottish!

MV: He's had a bit too much champagne, that's the problem. I think he's drunk!

LH: It's the mixture of champagne and his foot juices.

MV: Sweat and champagne is a bad mix, I think.

DR: I wanted you to ask me a question all weekend and I was waiting to say that and I just blew it! Alright. Sorry. Viva Scotland. Yeah, it wasn't really the intention to do a three stop at the start of the race. We knew there was a possibility but it was to try and do two and then it looked, as the race was going, that it was more and more likely a three. I think how it worked – because both myself and Max were in front of Nico at the time, we'd split the Mercedes, one of us was trying to cover what Nico did and that then allowed me to try something else and that was I think the reason why we split the tyres. As I said, the supersoft worked a lot better, I was happier with that tyre the last two stints. That was how I guess I got the second place. I think that was all it was and obviously once I caught Max, I think it was in the second last stint, I had the DRS but he made life easy for me so that was, let's say, a good little bit of teamwork for us and obviously the team was happy that we played nice and got maximum points today.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – GloboEsporte.com) Daniel and Max, OK you said in Hungary that you expect better performance than in Hungary. What do you expect in Spa which will probably suit your car?

DR: For us... to be honest, I haven't thought that far ahead yet but I think our performances this year are much more representative of 2014 and 2014 Spa was very good, for me, particularly. This year, I think we've surprised ourselves on some circuits. Coming in to this weekend, after Friday we saw our long run pace and it looked good but before Friday we didn't really expect to have two Red Bulls on the podium here. Let's see what happens in Spa. I think we will have a pretty good car around there. I think for now our target is keep being at least second best. Obviously we want to win but if we can keep staying ahead of Ferrari then that's good for us for now. As you say, I think we were within ten seconds of the lead today and that's obviously a nice start so hopefully Spa can be a bit closer again and keep chipping away.

Q: Max, I guess judging by the crowd today, one of the things you can expect is a lot of support, right?

MV: Yeah, I think so. Already here, my feeling was that I saw more Dutch flags than German flags. It was very nice to see and the track is just great to drive and hopefully the car will work again. We didn't expect to be that competitive here and normally Spa should be more competitive so let's see. I think this was a very good weekend and hopefully we can have a good weekend again in Spa.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – GloboEsporte.com) Lewis, at the end of the race, these guys were only six or seven seconds behind you; what do you see for Spa-Francorchamps which looks like a good circuit for them?

Q: Is Spa potentially a place where you might take your engine penalty?

LH: It depends. Today I saved my engine a lot which is why they closed up as much as they did. I only needed a six second gap really, they wanted me to keep six seconds. It went from eleven to seven quite quickly and then I had to get back on it, but generally I was looking after the engine up front and never felt like I was under threat. Without a doubt, they were fantastically quick this weekend. I think naturally it wasn't a problem for me but obviously I assume Nico struggled behind them so it's still... it looks like it's going to be close. I think Spa... hopefully I've saved enough of my engine today hoping that I would be able to use it at the next race. It will either be the next race or Monza, because I'm going to run out of engines soon.

Q: (Silvia Arias – Parabrisas) Lewis, I would love to know if in this race it didn't matter about pole position. It's important but anyway you went in front. I want to know for Spa, do you have the same feeling, even if you are in second place (on the grid) if it's possible to overtake, what are the possibilities in Spa?

LH: Every track is different for the start in terms of what follows from the actual start. Spa is a very very short stint down to turn one. I've been in first before and then you get towed massively up to turn three or whatever it is. Les Combes? I don't know the names of all the corners. It's a difficult one. Sometimes if you're in second and you think you're going to tow someone and then you get perfectly alongside... I think for us it's still the best position for us to be in. But the last two races have showed that pole is not everything and obviously the starts can really make a difference, so I will continue to work on the starts as I have been and try to continue to hopefully improve them.

Q: (Michael Schmidt – Auto, Motor und Sport) Max, going back to the battle with Nico in the hairpin, when did you realise that he was going to overshoot the braking point and have you been sure right away that it had to be a penalty for him?

MV: Well, I think pretty sure that he was quite far, so he braked really late and at one point I thought he was going to run into me so I opened up and then he didn't turn in, he was just driving straight so I had to go off the track otherwise we would have crashed. That's not very handy. Lewis

knows. That happened and he got a five second penalty, so for me it was just trying to stay within these five seconds to get him back after the pit stop.

Q: (Joe Van Burik – De Telegraaf) Max, can you explain why the supersoft tyre did not work for you as the race tyre?

MV: I don't know, it's a bit tricky to say but I think when you are on high fuel and you go on a very soft tyre it's always a bit harder on that tyre and I maybe didn't have the right wing offset. Yeah, it made it a lot harder so I think that's why... maybe with the track quite hard on the tyres it just didn't work out well, and then of course, when you go to the end of the race, a softer tyre works pretty well because then the car's a bit lighter and it doesn't push that much on the tyre.

Ends