



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

## Press Information

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

28.08.2016

#### DRIVERS

1 – Nico ROSBERG (Mercedes)

2 – Daniel RICCIARDO (Red Bull Racing)

3 – Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes)

#### PODIUM INTERVIEWS

(Conducted by Mark Webber)

**Ladies and gentlemen, what a weekend here in Belgium! A sell-out crowd. Maybe a driver up here that you might not have wanted but what a weekend! Nico, well done. Crazy start to the race, red flag, big shunt with Kevin Magnussen, run us through it?**

**Nico ROSBERG:** Yeah, thank you very much. No, it's been a great weekend, very, very happy with that result of course. I understand that some of you are disappointed. I understand that you wanted Verstappen to be up here. Another year, he's very young. He has many years to go. You've been amazing this weekend. So many of you have come, it's been very impressive to see, great atmosphere. Thank you to my team of course, great car they have given me. A very special day. And of course congrats to Lewis, from last place to third must have been pretty impressive.

**Thanks Nico. Daniel, up here again, Spa, great podium, you couldn't have expected much more? How was it, saving tyres, going long and splitting the two Mercedes?**

**Daniel RICCIARDO:** Firstly, thank you for doing that [Webber drank sparkling wine from Ricciardo's race boot]. I think we just made our country even more proud. It was cool, you know. Obviously it was pretty messed up at the start, a lot of virtual safety cars and then the red flag. We knew we had a bit of damage actually from the first corner but we fixed the front wing and got back out. I mean, it was a bit of a race by myself but obviously I enjoyed the pace and to keep Lewis behind was a good achievement today.

**Well done, buddy. Lewis, wow! So, Lewis that was a record comeback to a podium here in Spa. Twenty-first on the grid to third place, I imagine you couldn't really believe you could hit the steps today?**

**Lewis HAMILTON:** Firstly I've got to say a big thank you... this crowd is incredible. I know a lot of these people came out for Max, which is amazing and that's great for the sport, but I just want to say a big thank you to everyone for supporting me today. The team did an amazing job this weekend. I changed three engines. I'm actually ahead of these guys on engines, which is a good thing. Thanks to the team. Just a remarkable day: beautiful weather, great crowd and a great race.

**It was that, sensational, well done, Lewis. Nico, your 20<sup>th</sup> victory, first time winning here in Spa, you have the momentum now for Monza. How do you feel the car will perform there and you know, nibbling away, a couple point off Lewis this weekend: back end of the season, mate, how are you looking forward to that?**

**NR:** It's been great of course to get the win today on this special track, you know, it's a legendary track, but Lewis starting from the back made it a lot easier this weekend and I'm sure he's going to be back in Monza and it's going to be a big battle as always.

## PRESS CONFERENCE

**Q: Nico, many congratulations on that 20<sup>th</sup> victory. You haven't put a foot wrong all weekend: pole position, the win, did you ever feel under any pressure in that race.**

**NR:** In the race, the start, of course, is always pressure, and then after that Daniel was quite quick in the beginning of the second stint. But in general, yes, I had everything under control because I just had an awesome car out there, and Lewis wasn't there to battle it out, which made it a less-difficult weekend. But really pleased to get the win, of course.

**Q: Any nervous moments this afternoon?**

**NR:** Nervous at the start. Yeah, why not? After that, after that, it was OK. Safety Car restarts are always a bit more challenging but it all worked out fine.

**Q: Daniel, it's your third consecutive podium. Do you think you can catch the guys on your left any time soon?**

**DR:** Hopefully! As you said, three podiums in a row where... we're definitely making inroads, it's the second race that we've at least finished in front of one of them – obviously Lewis started towards the back today but I think our pace wasn't too bad. I think the real start of the race eventually was after the red flag. I was second and Lewis was fifth. I think we held our own quite well. Nico had a little bit more pace but I think generally we're making inroads, which is really positive. Monza I think will be our most challenging circuit in the second half of the season – but then we've got Singapore to look forward to – and Suzuka. So, really pleased, again thanks to the team. Obviously three good weekends, it's been fun. Yesterday, obviously I was qualified fifth but I knew we would have a good race car today and it proved right – so I'm really pleased.

**Q: Lewis, what a race by you. Last row of the grid to the podium. It's a new record here at Spa. Talk us through it.**

**LH:** What an incredible weekend it's been. It's obviously been a much different weekend to anything we have ever really experienced. First of all I'm incredibly proud of my guys in the garage and back at the factory for building these engines and changing these engines this week. I think before, even on Thursday there was an engine swap, warming one up, then warming another one up. A change after practice one, a change after practice two, so I had three new engines this weekend. So to come away with the points that we have today, I'm extremely proud of everyone. I honestly didn't know what was going to happen in the race. I was trying to keep my head down all weekend and focus on the long-run paces. It seemed to work and pay off. Congratulations to the guys next to me, this is great for Mercedes and still great for the championship. I'd have had an even better summer if I went into the summer knowing I'd come out nine points ahead still after three new engines. So I'm very grateful.

## QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

**Q: (Angelique Belokopytov – AutoDigest) Lewis, it seems that press conference has missed you. How do you feel to finish in P3 after coming from the back – and more showing to the ones who have doubts about the fact that you're back and fighting with Nico for the Championship?**

**LH:** Yeah. I really can't believe that we came up so far to be honest. I really had no... I woke up this morning knowing how difficult it would be on these tyres, y'know, lots of blistering. But you can never predict what's going to happen in the race. The great thing about motor racing is that, since I

was eight years old, every Sunday has been different. Your car's positioned in a different way, your starts a bit different, something happens up front, previous races there were no incidents, today there was. Today was really about trying to approach it with... make sure you had the right approach: not too aggressive; not too easy. I think today, collectively as a team we had just the right balance. This is the best result I could have hoped for.

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – GloboEsporte.com) Daniel, you were following the pace of Nico but at certain moments and especially in the last stint, the gap started becoming bigger. What happened exactly? Was there any difficulty in the car?**

**DR:** No, to be honest the car was pretty good. You know the only time I wasn't happy with the car was the first few laps before the red flag. The incident at turn one... some debris hit the front wing and I had some damage so up until the red flag I wasn't too happy but we changed the wing during the red flag and then the car was good. I think obviously Nico just had a bit more pace than us but in terms of balance I think we were doing all we could. So I think Nico was just controlling it but everything was fine from that point of view. I don't think we could have done too much more.

**Q: (Dan Knutson – Speed Sport/Auto Action) Lewis, yesterday you told us you might not even crack the top ten. How much did the safety car and the red flag help you get up to third?**

**LH:** Well, that was obviously a part of it but I think I was already up to fifth before the red flag or maybe not, maybe I was sixth or something like that before the incident. Of course, those things I needed in the race to help progress through. As I said, I didn't know how long these tyres would last. I think our performance today was stronger than I expected and so I think still, at the pace we were going, I think a top ten finish was still possible. But third is something that was definitely helped by the safety cars, VSC.

**Q: Lewis you were fifth at the red flag. At that point, did you think you could even challenge for the victory?**

**LH:** I didn't, simply because... naturally I was pushing to try and get there but I was obviously... I've been racing a long long time and with these tyres, knowing how difficult it is just to get past one car, so I spent a bit of time behind Hulkenberg, I think, and then there was already such a decent cushion between myself and Daniel. If the tyres were better, for example, I could have pushed and closed the gap and actually had a fight with Daniel but that's not the case and so I just had to manage them for as long as I could, but I had to stop more than these two guys in order to make that passing manoeuvre.

**Q: (Oana Popoiu – F1Zone.net) Nico, how difficult was it to win this race?**

**NR:** Well, it wasn't the toughest race ever, of course, because Lewis wasn't there. That's for sure. And the car was great in the race so of course everything still needs to come together and the start is critical and then with the red flag and everything it becomes a bit more complicated and messy. But I got ahead, I got a little bit of pressure from Daniel at the beginning of the second stint because he was on soft tyres but after that I really had good control of everything.

**Q: (Mike Doodson – Auto Action) Lewis, this business of changing engines, three engines in a weekend, is confusing for the press and even more so for the public. It happened to work out for you today and congratulations but what do you really think as opposed to what your team thinks about the principle of punishing a driver for the shortcomings in your own equipment?**

**LH:** Well, firstly, I don't say anything my team wants me to say so everything you hear from me is from me. These are the rules, the shortcomings we've experienced, there was just an opportunity for us to grow and we have. This is a team sport and we win and lose together so collectively; if I make a mistake the team's punished and if the team make a mistake we are all punished together. Bu I think today and this weekend has shown that a great group of good people in the garage worked incredibly hard to change these engines. It's not an easy process and of course, if the regulations weren't so technical, we wouldn't have to make so many changes but that's how they obviously like it. I'm pretty sure it's not cheap but I'm only looking at the positives this weekend and to get third, only lose ten points to Nico but a freebie for him today but he also did a great job and as he said, it wasn't such a difficult race for him but for me it was a good race and I'm just grateful, as I said, to be up here.

**Q: (Barna Zsoldos – Nemzeti Sport) Nico, considering your starting positions, how disappointing is it that you could only make up ten points in the championship fight against Lewis?**

**NR:** It's not disappointing, I'm happy with today. I'm happy to have won the race, it's been a great weekend for me and that's it. Fair play to Lewis, he did a good job.

Ends