



Press Information

2019 Spanish Grand Prix Sunday Press Conference Transcript 12.05.2019

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TRACK INTERVIEWS

(Conducted by David Coulthard)

Q: Lewis Hamilton, you're the winner. It didn't look so good yesterday; it looked amazing today.

Lewis HAMILTON: Yeah, firstly I just have to put it down to this incredible team. This is history in the making to have five one-twos, so I'm very, very proud to be a part of that and very proud of everyone's hard work here at the track and back at the factory. It's definitely been a bit of a hard first four races. Naturally this is a great car but we don't always get along. So I'm grateful that in the race we managed to settle our differences and get away well. Long, long run down to Turn 1 and I'm grateful for it, really happy for the whole.

Q: Put us in the cockpit. We heard you in Baku say maybe you gave a little bit more space than you would normally do for a competitor out of respect for Valtteri. You really went for it there. He was the meat in a sandwich at one point. He had Vettel on the other side and you really managed to force yourself to take the lead.

LH: Yeah, it was obviously an interesting start. It was obviously very, very close. I saw the red car go round the back of both of us and so I had no idea whether they were further ahead – I assumed they might be. And I knew that Valtteri would be braking super deep, but it wasn't a replay of Baku at least.

Q: Just finally, you get that extra point for fastest lap. Your re-start after the Safety Car, it was a quali lap. You were almost two seconds quicker than anyone. That was in your mind to set the fastest lap at that point or was it just to break the DRS?

LH: Yeah, it was. We had obviously just done the pit stop, so I was just trying to keep the tyres warm and I knew those first couple of laps on these new tyres or fresher

tyres would be the moment that we had the chance to get that, and I've not had a fastest lap all season, so it was about time.

Q: Congratulations, great victory. Valtteri, it got oh, so close into the first corner and we saw you have a little correction on your steering to avoid contact with Lewis, to avoid contact with Sebastian. They really squeezed you into that first turn?

Valtteri BOTTAS: Yeah, it was pretty tight, but I lost it at the start. There was some strange behaviour on the clutch. It was biting, releasing, biting, releasing, which I never felt before, so I lost it there.

Q: Obviously you're not in the happy place you were yesterday after that stunning pole position, but you're still in the hunt for the championship, you're going to some tracks that you enjoy, what do you take away from this weekend apart from that second-place result?

VB: Well, as a team it's incredible. A fifth one-two in a run is really good. I got some good points. Every single point is going to count this year so that's good for sure but I'm just keen to find out why the start was so bad and why the issue happened.

Q: Max, admiring the competition. You were given Driver of the Day, you're up to third place in the championship. Pretty good. You're a bit of a fly in the ointment to the Ferrari team though.

Max VERSTAPPEN: Yeah, it was a hectic first corner, so I just backed out of it, and actually it gave me a good position out of the first three corners and then from there on, of course the Mercedes cars were too quick today but I could do my pace and we were competitive, so happy to be on the podium.

Q: Just tell us what you were looking at here? What can you learn when you look at your competition this close

MV: I don't know, just looking around to see what's different to mine.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Q: Congratulations Lewis, another wonderful race from you. Job done at the start. You didn't seem to suffer from being on the dirty side of the race track.

LH: No, I had looked at the support races and it appeared that both sides were quite equal. So when the lights went out, the initial start was good and then after that we were quite close all the way down to Turn 1 and the Ferrari might have even been alongside us again. It was a great battle and naturally a decisive moment. This is such a great circuit but it's very, very hard to follow once you get through Turn 1. I'm not really sure if they'll ever make amendments to make it a race where we would be closer. But nonetheless once we got around Turn 1 I just had to get my head down and focus on just trying to deliver each lap. But just an incredible day for the team. We brought an upgrade here obviously and everyone worked so hard to make sure they brought a decent upgrade, something that delivered on every aspect and very, very proud of everyone back at the factory for their hard work. And the guys here at the track? They're just always faultless. But still a huge thank you to them for their continued efforts. Also, we've got Dr Zetsche here. It's 'Zetsche' not 'Zeetsche', as they

said on the podium, twice. He's been a massive supporter of mine since I was 13. Ultimately, he was there in the decision-making process of whether they would take me on as a kid. When I went to McLaren he was part of the decision-making process of whether I got the Formula 1 driver in 2007, and joining this team again. And every year on from then when we had to re-sign. This is his last race with us and I just want to say a big thank you to him.

Q: You seemed much happier with your car today than you were yesterday?

LH: Yeah, the balance yesterday was a bit of a nightmare. But race pace has generally been quite good for me, I've been really happy and comfortable generally in the races. When we went out to do the laps to grid I wasn't very happy with the balance still, so I had to make some changes. I had to alter my driving style a little bit. But it worked well in the race scenario. Going to look into detail why it doesn't work well on a single lap. That may take some time. Normally with tyres I'm pretty good but I think that's the weak area. It's not that I can't do it, I just need to discover it and that's what I'll put some effort towards.

Q: OK, well good luck with that. Well done, Lewis. Valtteri, it was won and lost at the start. You've spoken already about some problems with the clutch, was there any warning or any problem on the formation lap?

VB: No, absolutely, no. It was the first time I've felt anything like that, like a vibration in the clutch and that's why the initial getaway was very poor. It was kind of biting and releasing in a very quick frequency. So it's really annoying. All the hard work this weekend for me went down the depths but obviously I'm not blaming any individual in the team, and as we are a strong team, we are going to investigate how it happened and how we can avoid it ever happening again in the future. That's the strength of the team. But obviously for me as a person, it is annoying to have it this way but that's how it goes. But I also want to say, there could be worse days in the office and as a team we are performing at an incredible level, and also from my side hats off to every single member at the both factories and here at the race team to be performing like we are now, and also congrats to Lewis for the win here, he had good race pace and a good result for us.

Q: It wasn't your day today but the slow-corner performance of the W10 has been so impressive here in Barcelona, does that give you a lot of confidence going to Monaco in a couple of weeks' time?

VB: It is nice to see the strength we have, especially with the new bits in the car we had for this weekend. But Monaco is such a unique track. A big part of it is getting the tyres to work and it's extremely difficult. There are a lot of new parts with completely new asphalt and it's a difficult track to put a lot of energy through the tyres. It's a special track in terms of mechanical set-up – there are a lot of bumps and warps and off-cambers in the track, so for me it's completely unknown how we are going to perform there but obviously I hope very well because I myself have been living there for five years now. I live just next to the start-finish line, so it would be nice to have a good car there.

Q: Well done Valtteri. Max, second podium on the year. How confident were you of finishing on the podium today?

MV: Well, you're never sure, but I knew that we could take the fight to Ferrari. In qualifying we were already very close. I think my race was also decided in lap one, to overtake Seb around the outside in Turn 3. Yeah, that was good and from there onwards I could just do my own pace. Well, I was trying to follow the Mercedes cars but they were clearly a bit too quick. Very happy to be on the podium and also back in third in the championship, so that's pretty positive.

Q: As you say we've seen some tremendous pace from Mercedes this weekend. What can you tell us about the progress being made by Red Bull?

MV: Well, it's good, but not as good as Mercedes did. We clearly still need to work harder and bring better things to the car. But it's good to see that I think we closed the gap to Ferrari and I'm happy about that.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Scott Mitchell – Autosport) Max, the performance here and also in Baku as well, I think both you and Pierre had very good race pace there. Two things for you: do you think Ferrari is now vulnerable to you guys on most tracks, and going to Monaco, where Red Bull is usual strong, do you think you're going to be quick enough there to catch these guys?

MV: Yeah, race pace in Baku I think was pretty strong, but of course here people come here with upgrades and clearly we lost out a bit to Mercedes, but it seems that we did catch up to Ferrari. For Monaco, I think at the moment, looking at the low-speed performance in the last sector, we are clearly not the favourite and I also don't expect it to be like last year when we were super strong in Monaco.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – Globoesporte.com) Lewis, do you think you won the race at the start and Valtteri do you think you lost the race at the start?

LH: I don't even know what to say to that. I mean, you watched the race, right? You watched the race? I wouldn't say it was lost anywhere else or won anywhere else particularly. But I had good pace today. Obviously I had a 12-second gap at one point, so I had natural pace today, but I think overtaking would have been... even if Valtteri was behind me, he would struggle to have overtaken me, and vice versa, so the start was the key.

VB: Obviously the race is 66 laps and we need to focus on every single corner and with the cars nowadays, pushing to the limit, it is easy to make a mistake. It's never lost or won in the first corner, there will be always opportunities, possibly, and you have to believe in it. Today, there wasn't, really. Lewis was faultless after the start. There was safety car but there was no opportunity for me. When you look at it back, yes, I lost it at the start, but you never think that in the car.

Q: Valtteri, just talk us through the re-start after the safety car, because that might have been another opportunity?

VB: Yeah, I tried to get close to Lewis at the re-start. I think I was maybe a bit less than 50m by Turn 1 behind him, so no possibly to overtake him. Then Turn 1, 2, 3, they're extremely quick corners, it's impossible to follow that close, so you create a gap. Then I went into charging mode with the engine. I tried to charge my battery and I tried the quickest lap a couple of laps later. I maybe should have tried it one lap earlier. I think Lewis got it. But anyways, that was it.

Q: (Phil Duncan – PA) Lewis, congratulations on your victory. I think after Baku you said you were a bit too generous perhaps on the first lap. So that did you extra determination today going into Turn 1 that you were going to be the first man through that corner?

LH: Honestly, I wasn't thinking about the last race. It is a new race. I think today was really trying to redeem myself after a poor performance yesterday. Just back into a strong battle that we've had for years now. It was respectful and balanced – as we always are. The team has spoken of it, and Valtteri and I have spoken of it, and I think we have the best pairing that any team has, especially with the balance that we have in terms of how respectful we are. A lot of the drivers don't do that, they don't have that respect between themselves. I think today I was obviously well and truly on the inside. Today, I was more just super-inspired by this young kid who sent me a message, Harry. He was kind of my spirit angel today.

Q: (Jonathan McEvoy – Daily Mail) Lewis, forgive me if you've explained this before. Harry – what was the background to that and the inspiration it gave you?

LH: Well, I posted it, I don't know if you've seen it? You've got to stay up to date with social media, man. I just had a really nice message from a young kid who is suffering with an illness. We had sent him a card and a cap and I saw that today before going into the race. I was chilled but I was looking for something for inspiration, something to grab onto, so I dedicated today's race to him. You try to go out there and do something for someone and it doesn't always turn out as well as it has, but nonetheless it has, so I hope he's watching and I'll be sending him a message shortly after this, that he'll get, and we're going to try to do something special for him.

Q: (Luke Smith – Crash.net) Lewis, you mentioned the gap that you were able to build-up but then was then wiped away during the Safety Car period. Were there any concerns or frustrations when you saw the Safety Car come out? And could you talk us through your restart as well – because you built quite a big gap to Valtteri very quickly.

LH: Naturally, when you when you work upon building a nice cushion, a nice buffer... we had that quite long stint to do, I think it was... I can't remember how big it was but it was obviously nice enough, and obviously after we did the stop, it was still quite good, and then I'd realised we were going to a two-stop rather than a one-stop, which meant you could then utilise the tyres. And then the Safety Car came out. And

naturally you prefer a VSC. It was pretty drastic how slow the Safety Car was going so it was hard for all of us to keep the temperature in the tyres – but yeah, you just stay cool and focus on the restart. It's pretty straightforward here, generally, the restart, so that wasn't an issue. I think after one or two laps I was already up at five seconds, and then I backed off to cool the tyres down a little bit, then to give myself an opportunity to fight for the fastest lap. I still had time left but was grateful I had the fastest lap at the time and didn't need to push again. The team told me to turn the engine down and that both cars would do it, so it was good after that.

Q: (Giles Richards – The Guardian) Congratulations Lewis. Yesterday Toto mentioned that you and he had discussed you potentially going to Ferrari at some point in your career. After the start you've had to this season, and the start Mercedes have had, is there any reason... do you foresee ever leaving Mercedes, given how strong they are now and how dominant they are over Ferrari?

LH: I don't really remember what he's referring to. I think when you're in negotiations you always have to drop in the Ferrari name.

MV: You come out better!

LH: You come out better. No, naturally in negotiations... Toto's a very intelligent man so we have great negotiations and great conversations and naturally I've been with Mercedes since I was 13, so it's very difficult to see myself anywhere else. I have never made it a secret that I've been a Ferrari fan, particularly Ferrari cars, and that's no secret. Do I plan on going elsewhere? I haven't made any plans for my future. At the moment I'm just enjoying driving with this team. I'm enjoying continuous growing with this team and, I mean, it's incredible what we're achieving together, what we have achieved in these six years, seven years or whatever it is, and I plan on working with this team to help it become the most successful team of all time. That's my current goal and my sole focus.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Valtteri, you have now 35 podiums, as many as Juan Manuel Fangio, how does that feel?

VB: Not much feelings, honestly, from that. 35? Hopefully 36 in two weeks and one more win.

Q: (Joe van Burik – racingnews365.nl) Question to all drivers. On which tracks coming up this season do you expect Red Bull to be strong?

MV: Monaco, Singapore, Mexico... yep. They should normally be a little bit better for us.

Max, before we put that question to Lewis and Valtteri, what are the strengths of your car, do you feel?

MV: Compared to?

What are the strengths? What are the good characteristics?

MV: I think at the moment we're not really better in any corner than Mercedes, so... I don't know. It's good! It's not that it's a bad car – but at the moment Mercedes is just

a bit quicker than us everywhere. Medium speed, high speed is pretty similar I would say, but again, that depends on downforce levels you're running every single weekend so it's a bit difficult to say, but clearly on this track, they were very strong in the low-speed corners and that it normally pretty good for Monaco as well.

Lewis, when do you expect him to challenge you for a victory?

LH: Honestly, I don't know. I think this year they've made a big leap with Honda doing a great job with the engine. If you look at their laps, their speed on the straights are much, much closer to ours, if not sometimes a little bit quicker than ours at the end. It's probably the first year their focus has to be on the car. It's quite interesting in Formula One where engineers are so intelligent but they often stay with one philosophy and never want to shift the way they design a car. Even when others have shown a different direction works. I'm sure the car's going to continue to improve. As he mentioned, places like Monaco, they're always quick in Monaco, they're always quick on those street circuits particularly. The races he mentioned, I'm sure it's going to be very strong. Let's hope that there's more than they're closer because we welcome more battles throughout the year. It would be great to have a Ferrari and a Red Bull there, fighting with us in a natural race.

Anything to add Valtteri?

VB: No.

Q: A question for Lewis. Firstly congratulations for your win. In the moment that the Safety Car came to the track, we have seen problems for the drivers in general to keep the tyres on temperature. Now we are heading to Monaco, do you think the middle period of this year, are getting difficult to get it on the window to work properly. Do you think Monaco will be challenging for the temperatures of the tyres?

LH: Something I haven't thought of but, I mean, the tyres are very hard this year. Harder than it was last year. Probably a smaller working window so I do anticipate it's probably going to be... I think it was already hard last year to get the temperature in the tyres. I think it was something that Red Bull were really good at last year, so that probably be the same this year going to Monaco. It'll be really interesting to see. We don't have the hyper this year, I don't think, do we? It's like the supersoft but harder again. So in my opinion we need to have more pitstops; we need a tyre that doesn't overheat. That's a complaint that we've had for many, many years. We had a meeting in Brazil last year and we weren't aware of that – do you remember – and everyone had been saying it for years and years and years. Hopefully that should be the target for the future. We want a tyre that we can really push to the limit and stay up with someone without it overcooking itself and you having to back-off, because that enables racing. Monaco should be interesting – but again, it's not a race where you can particularly follow. You can't follow that well, and it's not a race you can particularly overtake in. Particularly with the cars being bigger: now it's even harder. But the tyre restart would be interesting on Safety Cars and those kind of things.

Q: (Luis Vasconcelos – Formula Press) Two questions for Valtteri. Up to Lap 15 you were sort-of within striking distance of Lewis, through a maximum of 3-3.5 seconds. Then you lost a lot of time over the next ten laps. Was that some tyre issue or had

you accepted that you were not going to get him? And, did you have any concerns with your power unit after the oil leak you had on Friday.

VB: Yeah, in the beginning of the stint I was pretty close to Lewis all the time. Obviously just waiting if there would be an opportunity. On this type of track you only need to be within four seconds and you're sliding quite a bit around. So, I've been ahead and I know the difference, how much it makes when you can really focus on saving the tyres where you want to and, in the free air, it's quite a bit better. So why the gap became bigger? I had to go through some of the slower cars and, at the same time, my tyres started to drop off. With less surface on the tyre I lost a bit of temperature. So yeah, my tyres were finished much earlier than Lewis'. That's why the gap became better. So, probably I was sliding the car more during the first stint and he made a gap there. From my side, from the team's side, there was no concerns after the oil leak. It was nothing to do with the engine itself. It was just a simple thing like a pipe and one bolt came loose, or something like this. So, no concerns.

Q: (Gunnar Leheste – Eesti Päevaleht) Question to Max. There were three Red Bull Juniors driving this weekend in Formula Three. Did you get the chance to see the races and what are your impressions of the guys?

MV: I did see a bit of the racing, it was pretty good but it can be better – but they just start, so I think Helmut will have a call with them after every race weekend, so yeah, they will work hard for it. It's good.

Q: (Arjan Schouten – AD Sportswereld) Question for Max, some more about the race, what was key in the first part, in the first corner, stay out of chaos and profit in the corners after that? And what were your thoughts about the Safety Car?

MV: They were going three wide into the corner and I don't think four cars fit! Yeah, just taking it easy and that was good, because in the end I was in the right position for Turn Three. So, that definitely gave me a better opportunity, of course, to be on the podium. And with the Safety Car, I think it was right to call out the Safety Car because there were a lot of stones on the track and two cars, but I think we could have raced one or two laps earlier. That would have helped with tyre temperatures as well.

Q: (Pilar Celebrovsky – Paddock Magazine) Question for Lewis and Valtteri. Lewis, you have mentioned that it is good to have Red Bull also in the fight – but is it a relief for you to not have Ferrari right behind you, breathing down your neck? Does that make you guys feel a little bit more relaxed, thinking about the Championship, of course?

LH: Honestly it doesn't, you know? We're still very, very focussed on trying to make sure we deliver each weekend. We don't come to the race knowing that we're going to have a gap, like today. And also, we're aware of... we only have a small amount of engines through the year, reliability could be an issue, anything could happen at any point, so you're super-focussed on trying to make sure you deliver. My personal feeling is that I prefer it when they are in the mix with us. I prefer the races, where, for example Bahrain where they were on the front row. I love that. That's... especially when we're intertwined, where there's a Ferrari and a Mercedes, or a Mercedes and a Ferrari, The last couple of years, that's what we've had, and from a drivers' point of view and a team's point of view, it's much better when you're competing with another

team. When it becomes more internal, it's less exciting, I would say – but it's still massively challenging for the drivers. We still have to deliver. It's not a case of just rocking up and going out. We still have to work very, very hard to extract everything from the car, just as every other driver is extracting everything from their car.

[Ends]