



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L' AUTOMOBILE

2017 FIA Formula One World Championship

Russian Grand Prix

Thursday Press Conference Transcript

PART ONE: DRIVERS – Daniil KVIAT (Toro Rosso), Valtteri BOTTAS (Mercedes), Romain GROSJEAN (Haas)

PRESS CONFERENCE

Q: Daniil, welcome and happy birthday for yesterday. It is of course a home race for you but that means an awful lot of commitments. Were you able to even enjoy your birthday?

Q: Daniil KVIAT: Yeah, I was. Obviously you have to expect that you have a bit more things to do at your home race. I think it's a privilege for any driver to have a home race and it's a privilege for me. Of course I was in Moscow a few days earlier for a few events and here also yesterday was quite a busy working day for me to be honest, but it was still enjoyable, I was surrounded by nice people and it was all quite nice. I learned how to do curling, so now another sport on top.

Q: This is the fourth year of the Russian Grand Prix in Sochi? How do you feel the popularity of the event has grown during that time?

DK: You know, to be honest I think that since year one there has been quite full grandstands, so it's been quite good already. Not too much to add since the first year, so it's a point to maintain this. We will see this year but I am expecting to see quite a lot of people here on Sunday and the weather is nice so everyone should enjoy. Hopefully the race is going to be interesting and that's it really. I am pleased to see this.

Q: Let's talk about your on track performances: you scored points in Australia, but you haven't had much luck since then. How do you assess your season so far?

DK: First of all, it was already a privilege to finish the race in Australia, for me. It was a good start but for me it was more important to know that we have the pace to do good results. As you said, China and Bahrain were a bit not our kind of weekends. More important for us to know that we have a package to do things well. The team is operating extremely well this year from the operational side of the things – very professional, especially considering how tight the midfield is, every little thing makes a difference for us. It's actually quite interesting. Very interesting every qualifying session. You are putting yourself at the limit and the same in the races. It's very interesting to be there.

Q: Tell us a little bit more about this year's car. What are its strengths and weaknesses?

DK: Our car in particular, I would say, is quite universal. It's been a similar kind of performance in every track so far – Australia, China, Bahrain, it's always similar, fighting for points, Q3s. Like I said before, you have to put everything well together and the difference between the fourth best team and the seventh best team is very, very narrow.

Q: Thank you for that and good luck for the weekend. If we come on to Valtteri now. Valtteri, you made a step forward in qualifying last time out but to use your own words the

race was a disappointment. Given you have a record here in Sochi, are you confident that this is the place to make that final step?

Valtteri BOTTAS: Yeah, I think definitely it has been getting better in each qualifying of the year and feeling that I can definitely extract more and more out of the car and had a nice lap in Bahrain on Saturday but, yeah, it is Sunday that counts and to be honest I think the first race of the year in Melbourne, as a Sunday, was the best one for me. It was the most trouble-free race for me. Been having quite a few difficulties in China and Bahrain – technically, with different kinds of things in the race. So hoping for a good one here. We have a strong package and obviously the fight with Ferrari is extremely close and every single bit is going to count, so yeah, just hoping for a good weekend.

Q: You just referenced the technical problems you had in Bahrain. But you then went and did 143 laps in testing after the grand prix, during which you said you'd learned a few tricks. I just wondered what those tricks might be?

VB: Like I said, it's all about fine details with the fight between us and Ferrari and obviously it's very close between team-mates as well, so every single bit helps. It was quite critical in Bahrain with the tyres, in terms of keeping them in the right window and with the tyre pressure issues we had it made it even more tricky. Bahrain testing allowed me to try a bit of different things for that really – how to manage the tyres. In terms of race pace and temperatures and pressure and everything we could experience a lot of different things. We found small things as a team, but small things are going to help. It is completely different conditions here in Russia, different tarmac, different temperatures, so we are facing different challenges here.

Q: Just finally, you've now completed your first 100 days as a Mercedes driver. How would you sum it up, how's it gone?

VB: Busy! Especially since January when everything was signed and announced it has been a busy time. But I have to say these 100 days, I've never in my life learned so much in that short period of time. I feel like I've been developing well. I've managed to get really into the team, I feel completely part of the team and I feel like I'm in a very good place. The team is really helping me with that. I've learned massively but that's going to continue.

Q: Thanks for that. Romain, first points of the year last time out in Bahrain. So, how confident are you of another good result here? Do you even know yet how good this year's car is?

Romain GROSJEAN: It's a shame we're not at the next press conference – I always said I was going to wait four grands prix to see what the car was capable of doing. We've had three different tracks right now and Sochi is the fourth one – very smooth tarmac and last year we had ups and down. This year it looks like the car has been strong everywhere. Only first point in Bahrain but I reckon we should have scored points in Melbourne and in China, we had a little bit of bad luck. So far, so good. Just waiting that grand prix to see how the car is going around and if we can get all we want and if we can get the tyres to work properly and so on. If that's the case then we know we should be pretty good everywhere and then it's just going to be down to development.

Q: Can I ask you about the test last week in Bahrain. You tested Carbone Industrie brakes. How did they compare with the Brembos you have been racing? Are they the solution to the braking problems you've had for pretty much the last 18 months?

RG: To be fair to Brembo, the last update in brakes we had that arrived in China were much better. It took a long time to get them. So then I was not screaming to change to Carbone Industrie but it was in the pipeline, so we tried them, and both drivers were pretty pleased with them. We felt like we had more control under braking. I'm very sensitive to my left pedal, so I really need to get good brakes to get good confidence and push the car to its maximum limit. So we are going to run them here. There is still a little bit of work we need to be doing around the mapping and finding the solution around those brakes but I think yeah, definitely it's going to help me a little bit to find the last few hundredths.

So just to clarify you are going to run the Carbone Industrie here in Russia?

RG: Yes.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Luis Vasconcelos – Formula Press) Valtteri, as you mentioned, your qualifying has been getting better and better but your race pace has not been what you expected. But it's especially in the first half of the races that you seem to be struggling more, when the car is on full tanks. Have you find out why is that and in testing in Bahrain did you find a remedy for that?

VB: Yes, so like I said, I think Australia was the only race when everything was actually working as it should in the car. There was a small mechanical issue in China which was affecting the balance of the car quite a lot and it made the race overall quite tricky. Plus, I didn't maybe do the best job with the softer compound in the beginning. And in Bahrain my race was compromised with the issue we had with the generator on the grid, meaning the tyre pressures were way too high and the first stint was very poor. We were hoping the second stint would be better, so we fitted another set of supersofts. It was better, but we didn't manage to be really in the window with the supersoft. At the same time Lewis changed to softs and that was why there was a massive difference with the pace and then we were on different strategy, different points of having the stops and to be honest it made me look really bad in the race and slow, but for sure we had some issues as well. But I feel that with a normal, trouble-free race the good results will come and we can have a strong result with both cars, definitely.

Q: (Kiril Zaytsev – 66.ru) A question for Daniil Kvyat. Dany, if Max Verstappen strikes somebody off the start, will Dr Marko replace him by you?

DK: It's a question for Dr Marko, not for me.

Q: (Simon Lazenby – Sky Sports) A question for Valtteri. Valtteri, it looks like it's going to be tight, obviously, between yourselves and Ferrari this year. With that in mind, have you had a conversation with Toto or any of the management about when one of you or Lewis might become the number one or number two driver?

VB: No, we have not had the conversation because I don't think there is any need to. This team never really has had number one or number two drivers and is not planning to. It's always trying to give an equal chance for both drivers. But what is different this year is, for the team the last three years, the gap to the second quickest team has been bigger. So maybe every single detail – letting the drivers race hard, or one being stuck behind the other at times hasn't cost anything. But I do understand the fact that this year it can cost points. If for any reason, like for me in Bahrain, the pace of the other car is not good then the team needs to think and be clever and not to lose any points. We've only had three races this year and I feel all my good results are still on the way, so at least I am not thinking about anything like that and I'm sure also for the team there's no need to.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Based on the latest information from the FIA, it appears as though the cockpit Shield has received the nod for 2018 over the Halo. What do you think about the Shield and which one would you prefer the Shield or the Halo?

RG: Can we choose nothing. I haven't been a big fan of the Halo and I'm not a huge fan of the Shield either. I don't want to stop the safety. I think safety in Formula One has to be the number one priority but I don't want to change what I've known as Formula One since ever and the next step is to put a closed canopy on top of the helmet and I don't want to see Formula One being closed cars.

DK: I agree with Romain, you know, I think it's enough for now the way Formula One should look should remain the same. I think we have enough protection so far. Of course if there are good ideas they should be considered but so far I am quite against it to be honest, both of those options.

VB: I don't mind the Shield. I think it looks quite OK. I think it's definitely a good step compared to the Halo. That's my personal view, how it looks, so I don't mind that. I think the safety aspect is always important. It's always important to keep things improving, developing – safety always needs to be improved. So I wouldn't mind trying out the Shield, seeing how is the visibility and if

there are any other issues with that. But I think in terms of safety it would be a good step compared to what we have now.

Q: (Marco Mensurati – La Repubblica) A question for Valtteri, again about his first 100 days in Mercedes. When you signed, did you expect that it would be so hard, so difficult and which is so far in your opinion the biggest mistake you made?

VB: I can answer the second question first: spinning behind the safety car in China, I think that's the biggest mistake I've done, it could be through my career most likely...

RG: I've done it, no worries...

VB: Yeah? Hopefully the last one

Daniil, have you done it?

DK: No, but on the out lap...

Everybody's done it. Back to you Valtteri.

VB: For sure I always knew it was going to be a big challenge: a late change of team in mid-January, going up against Lewis, probably one of the quickest drivers ever, so I always knew the facts of changing team. I have to say there was quite a bit more stuff to really get good at, in terms of really learning how the team operates and how the team is setting up the cars – different kind of tools to what I'm used to, and a different way of thinking in some ways. Getting to understand that 100% there has been quite a bit of work. Obviously all kinds of other things: how the car behaves mechanically, new tyres, new cars, which is the same for everyone. So I wouldn't say I underestimated the change, but it's definitely been a challenge as I expected but like I say, I'm getting there. My goal was to be able to extract everything there is in the car in the first race, first qualifying. I don't feel like that I maybe achieved. But also allowed myself some time, not to put too much pressure. I knew that it's not going to be easy. But like I said, feeling very comfortable now, good with the car, good with the team. Overall a good feeling, just happy to continue and get some results.

Q: (Andrey Kartashov – Tas News Agency) Question to Daniil. Do you feel the pressure of racing in front of your home stands and what is a decent result here in Sochi for you?

DK: I'm racing now fourth year here at home. It's always been a busy week off the track but to be honest on the track starting on Friday it's been like any other weekend from that point of view – you go out in FP1, you start working on the car set-up with the tools you've got. Same position in FP2, FP3 and then you've got qualifying and then you've got the race. Nothing has really changed for me in those three days of sporting work. It's important to just focus on your own job and try to do your best.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – GloboEsporte.com) Question to all drivers. We have seen this year some difficulty to take the tyres to the temperature of the window and here's a circuit where you have very low tyre wear. Can it be an issue here? And, for Valtteri, can it be an advantage considering you fight with Ferrari which keeps more the tyres but has some difficulty to reach the temperature of the tyres?

VB: I think this year we've struggled a bit more with higher temperatures. I think that's been a bit of a trend and something we've been working very hard on. I think we've also managed to find some things in testing in Bahrain. So yeah, I think we prefer these kind of conditions to very hot – but it's not something we are counting on. We need to keep working on everything. It will be interesting to see how we compare. My estimate is that, again, it is going to be very, very close with Ferrari. We're talking hundredths, maximum tenths. So, it's going to be interesting.

Dany, how about you?

DK: I think, you know, obviously Pirelli has changed a bit their approach from the last few years to this year, obviously with the big regulation change. So, it's perhaps slightly more conservative with their compounds but at the same time here of course they're bringing their softest compounds. In the past this track historically has been very interesting on the tyres. It's quite different, standing

out, and every year we have to understand how to make it work in the correct way. So I think this weekend also will be interesting, but obviously having ultrasoft here as a qualifying compound should be a bit more helpful – but we have to find out only on Friday.

Romain?

RG: Yeah, I think tyres have been easier to work than last year, to put in the window, with more downforce on the car. Warm-up was a big issue for Pirelli, or a big concern initially, but I think we haven't had too much warm-up issue. Here, of course, it's more tricky but again we'll see how it goes. We're hoping with the ultrasoft that warm-up will be good enough and then in the race with the fuel anyway it should balance out and be pretty OK.

Q: (Jon McEvoy – The Daily Mail) To Valtteri. If you were given an instruction in this race to move over for Lewis, a) would you do that? And as well as that, if they sat you down more broadly over the next few weeks and said: “look, there's only one way we can get a driver to win this year and we've got to back Lewis to do it”, would you agree to do it? Would you say “I understand why I've been brought in and that's the job I've got to do. My wages arrive through the Mercedes management and I'll do their bidding.” Or would you say “no, I'm not there to do that, I won't yield an inch to Lewis.”

VB: Your question is very hypothetical. There's a lot of 'its' and I definitely haven't thought that far about things and I don't think that is going to happen. So, I prefer not to say much to that – but, y'know, example, if I have some issues in this race, for whatever reason, we are in different strategies or Lewis is stuck behind me, or something, if the team tells me to move over, I will, because we are doing this as a team and our target is to get maximum points for the team. And, of course, as a driver I'm going to do everything I can not to be in that position and have my own race. I like personal results as well but I've always been a team player, in the long term that is going to reward you, and the team – but in terms of what's going to happen in the future between me and Lewis and team orders and so on, y'know we are not planning anything like that. I'm sure we are going to be racing very hard together on track but, like I said before, this year the team needs to be more careful and maybe more clever in terms of how we collect every single point possible in the race. And that one, I completely understand. Nothing more to say.

Valtteri, if you're quicker than Lewis, would you expect him to move over for you?

VB: Of course. If the team thinks there is a possibility to gain more points or, if we are in any way allowed to race freely, it's no different. We are being respected and handled the same way. It can all be vice versa in this race or the next one. Who knows?

Q: (Frederic Ferret – L'Equipe) Question to Romain Grosjean. With the test of the new brakes, did you have time during that day in Bahrain to test other things – new setups?

RG: Yeah. The brakes actually was not the first test item of the day. We tried different mapping in the car and then over the lunch break went to the brakes. We didn't lose a lot of time to set them as we wanted – but then had Kevin had a similar problem on the next day. We collected more information, so yeah, we had a very productive testing and hoping that everything we've done is going well and we'll see on track tomorrow.

Q: (Inaudible) Question for Daniil. Obviously a lot has changed since last year here in Sochi for you. Could you tell us a little bit about your past year. Must have been difficult, maybe, sometimes for you?

DK: How would you guess! I would say in the end it seems like just some pleasures in my memory to be honest. Now the situation is quite different and it seems like every time I get out on track with the car it all feels quite comfortable, it all feels quite under control. And, as I said, every race is an opportunity for us to do well and that's how it feels. Sometimes this feeling was very inconsistent, of course, last year, which I guess is normal – but now it seems like it's back to me. And yeah, the confidence with the car is good, the pace is there and I think we're only on race four out of 20 so it all looks encouraging for me, so prefer to look ahead rather than behind.

Q: (Darya Panova – F1 Only) Question to Daniil Kvyat. Happy belated birthday. What is the most memorable gift you got yesterday?

DK: Thanks! We had a book presentation yesterday about my junior career so it was very nice. A very nice gift. I hope it will be interesting for the young guys from Russia to read. This was actually the idea of showing a bit the curtains from inside the house: how it works, the traditional way to Formula One – but there is not a single word about my Formula One career, of course. Also a game, backgammon, from my father was a very nice gift. So yeah... I can't think of anything else.

Q: (Jon McEvoy – The Daily Mail) To Valtteri again – you get a lot of this now you're at Mercedes – you seemed as though you've got on well with Lewis. How would you describe the nature of your relationship. Do you speak regularly? Do you see him at the racetrack, do you exchange many words? How does it work on a day-to-day basis?

VB: So far it's been very good with Lewis, being his team-mate. I feel we have a good professional team-mate relationship – something I'm very much used to with Williams, with Felipe. We don't see outside the racetrack. Every now and then we might see each other at the factory – like last Tuesday – and obviously we see each other on the race weekends, sit in the same meetings, y'know, I don't know, it's a normal team-mate relationship for me. So far it's been good: we both respect each other, which is good, and we both can work well as a team. We're both really trying to help the team because every single thing this year is going to count if we want to win the title. So we are really giving everything we can to make us stronger. So far, very good.

PART TWO: DRIVERS – Kimi RÄIKKÖNEN (Ferrari), Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull), Pascal Werhlein (Sauber)

PRESS CONFERENCE

Q: Kimi, you've been knocking on the door of a podium at every race this year – but judging by your radio messages, you're still not happy with the car. What feeling is it giving you and how does that change over the course of a grand prix?

Kimi RÄIKKÖNEN: I'm more happy now that I was probably first race. I think in the last race it was pretty good, I was very happy with it but qualifying not so, but the race itself was good. Then we had pretty average Saturday, so the starting place already was not very good. Then pretty bad first lap so was a bit off. Bad start then couldn't really get past Felipe in the beginning. Then got past him, we had very good speed but then Safety Car was a bit unfortunate after our pitstop. Then the feeling was pretty good. So, you know, you have to make the Saturday better and then obviously you can use the speed.

Q: How do you see things panning out this weekend between Ferrari and Mercedes?

KR: I don't know, you tell me. We'll see tomorrow how it goes. It's been pretty close between everybody so far, it the first three. You wouldn't expect it to be a whole lot different here – but who knows.

Q: Can you say that there are still a few things for you to iron-out with the car? But is this still the best Ferrari you have raced in Formula One?

KR: You cannot really compare from the early days but comparing the last few years, then yes. I drove a very good Ferrari when I came first time in Ferrari and, you know, it's a good car, good package but we have to improve it all the time like anybody who does it but yeah, we just need on my side to put things a bit more better where we want it to be and I'm sure we'll get the results that we want.

Q: Daniel, I want to start with a technical question. You struggled with tyre temperature in Bahrain, with track temperatures not expected to be that high here, are you worried that the issue will be the same at this grand prix?

Daniel RICCIARDO: Not worried. I think we learned a bit from that. We had the test on Tuesday after the race. We experimented with a few things, so I don't expect to be in that position again. So yeah, we'll see. We know that this track is one where you sometimes circulate for a bit and then do a push lap. The tyres maybe aren't there on that first lap for, say, qualifying but I think for the race we should be OK. We'll be alright.

Q: The team is planning to bring pretty much a new car to the Spanish Grand Prix in a couple of weeks' time. What do you expect from that car – and what are the major problems with the current car that need addressing?

DR: I expect... I'll use the word hope, not expect. I hope for a bit of a bullet: something fast. We want to be in a three-way fight with Ferrari and Mercedes. So, that's what I would hope for: something that puts us in that fight. I look back at least year and think here in qualifying we were over 1.5s off pole and then we went to Barcelona and we were about half a second off pole and we made some gains and then obviously in Monaco we were quick. It's a time of the year where we should start to see these updates take place and some performance really start to come out of the car. I'm hopeful of that. We just need a bit of everything now. We've talked a bit about downforce, feeling a bit in the rear. We've had a bit of time to look at Ferrari: they've been in front of us for a few races and can study them for a lap or two before they get too far away and yeah, they look strong. Mercedes as well: they're just carrying a bit more grip in the rear and that's where all the lap time is in these cars these days.

Q: You say you want a bullet – but the guys next to you aren't standing still. Are you confident the upgrade in Spain is going to be enough to make it a three-way fight at the front?

DR: I hope so. I'm confident it's going to be better than what we've got now and for now that's all we can ask for is an improvement. A bit like last year: we made that step and were able to just keep chipping away at it. I think to make that first step is important. I believe we will get that in Barcelona and then let's see where it puts us. If it puts us within half a second, then I think we're in striking territory soon after that.

Q: Pascal, great first race back in Bahrain. You then completed 91 laps during testing, so is it safe for us to assume you're now back to full fitness.

Pascal WERHLEIN: Yes. Really happy to be back, first of all. I think my first weekend was great, P13 in qualifying, P11 in the race, so couldn't be more happy about my first weekend. Then obviously the test after the race went well. Nearly did 100 laps and just feeling more and more confident with the car, and also with the team and all of the procedures. Just looking forward to start my season finally now.

Q: Looking back, how tough, in hindsight, was your recuperation – physically and mentally – to get yourself back to full racing fitness, how tough was it? You posted a picture of you on social media wearing a neckbrace. Was there ever a moment when you felt your career slipping away or were you confident you'd get back and have the sort of race you had in Bahrain?

PW: No, I fought, of course, very hard to come back and also with the people around me which helped me massively to come back as soon as possible and as quick as possible. We knew that it's a matter of time but obviously to break a few vertebrae it will take a bit of time and y'know, still it took me only ten weeks to come back to racing and I'm very happy about that. I think, when I posted the picture after Bahrain, people realised more which injury I had, and yeah, as I said, just really happy to be back and to start.

Q: Daniel has just been telling us about the rate of development at the front of the grid. Given that's the case, how crucial are the next few races for you, to get points? Do you see the next three as the best chance?

PW: I don't think so. Of course we have a disadvantage, especially, I think in the second half of the season with the engine because we have last year's Ferrari engine but I think we can make bigger progress with the car, then second half of the season, the engine is a disadvantage. Let's see how the season goes, I will do my best and I'm sure everyone in the team does as well and hopefully we can score a few points.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) The latest information from the FIA says that the cockpit shield has received the nod over the halo for 2018. First of all, which of the two systems do you prefer, what do you think of the shield in any event?

KR: Well, I have seen a bit of the shield, of what they showed to us. Until we try, it's very hard to say how it is. Is it better than the halo? I don't know. Look-wise, I don't think there's much difference between either of them.

DR: Yep. Like Kimi said, we got a presentation in China, I think, all us drivers, about the new shield. I think yeah, we've still got to see a bit more but yeah, first impressions seem OK and I guess we'll now try and get some development on that and then start to run it in some practices as soon as they can put it on the cars and then get some more feedback on it. It's good that they're still obviously looking for this head protection stuff so that's positive.

PW: I didn't see the shield yet as I wasn't in China so I don't know how it looks. I think it looks similar to the new idea last year, no?

DR: It's like a middle of the road look. It looks alright actually.

PW: I think the halo looked a bit strange so the version of last year of Red Bull. I liked it quite a lot, it looks like a spaceship and very futuristic. I liked it. If it looks similar, it's good. If it's more safe, it's good for us drivers.

Q: (Simon Lazenby – Sky Sports) Kimi – a similar question that I put to Valtteri – 34 points between yourself and your teammate right now. Have you had a conversation with management about your role in the team this year? Has Sebastian been identified as the number one driver?

KR: No. Obviously we have our talks at the beginning of the year. We know exactly what we are supposed to do between us as drivers and that hasn't changed. If it comes to that at the end of the year when either one has no chance, purely on points, then obviously things will fall into place but apart from that, I don't see anything happening until then.

Q: (Kiril Zaytsev – 66.ru) Kimi, can you tell us more about your businesses outside of F1? Is it true that you have a karaoke bar in Helsinki? And how can your fans find it to sing some songs, maybe? And do you sing yourself?

KR: I do some other stuff than F1 in my life but I've no interest to tell what I do or where I do. Do I go in bars? Yes, lately less, no time, unfortunately. I'm involved with a few things.

Q: But Kimi, can you sing?

KR: Can I sing? Badly. But I can sing. But I don't think it's the point of that. It's more fun than actually trying to sing.

Q: (Lasse Lehtinen – Ilta Sanomat) Kimi, you've been pretty frustrated in the races during this season. What has helped you to handle these disappointments?

DR: Karaoke!

KR: No, it's the normal story I would say. Every year... in any race that you don't do as well as you hope it's never going to be fun or easy. It can look either way. I'm lucky that I haven't been in the position that I have won all the time, so that you get used to these things but on the other hand you would rather be in that position. It's worse fun. It's very normal stuff, you know. I want to do better and the fact is that if you don't do as well as I want then for myself it's never going to be fun. It's always more fun when we do have a good result. It's just go to the next race and try to do better.

Q: (Marco Mensurati - La Repubblica) Kimi, in Shanghai, Marchionne was not so fine with you. We heard him talking not so gently and I would like to know about your relationship with him and with the team? And the second one: how long do you think your career will last?

KR: As far as I've spoken to our personnel it has always been fine. I know that there's some things that have been said and written but for me, you can find so many nonsense stories in newspapers, on the web, that I trust much more how my relationship is personal with the team or with him. For me it's all fine. Like I said before, I expect a good result from myself; when I don't get them I'm unhappy with myself so if the people aren't happy that's fine because I'm not either

so it's not really a big deal for me. What comes to my future I don't know. There's always a lot of talk on that since years. I'm not going to try and I'm not going to do this and that. My first thing is that I want to do well and then we'll see what happens after this year. It's definitely not the first thing in my mind right now. My first thing in my mind is to do well and here and then the next race and whatever that brings we will see in the future. I have a good relationship with him, I know him well and it depends on many things.

Q: (Flavio Vanetti – La Corriere della Serra) Again for Kimi: can we say that Ferrari is definitely at the same level as Mercedes or is Mercedes still having something more than your team?

KR: I think there are many different ways to look at things. If you look at pure results, if you look at qualifying results. It depends what you look at but I think as a team they have done a very good job for us to bring the car to the level that we have and obviously it's up to us to make the best out of it. Seb has done good races. As a team I think we've come a long way from the last few years. Yes, there are still things that we have to improve all the time and do better but that's the same with everybody. Are we at the same level as them, Mercedes? I don't know. It's not far off, let's put it that way. In qualifying, I think they've been a bit stronger I would say but then in the race it seems to even out. That's a bit the same trend as it's been the last few years, that they seem to find something extra on one lap and then it evens out a bit in race conditions. I think it depends a bit on the circuits where we go but we have a good package and we have to make the best out of it.

Q: (Angelina Grebtsova – Nation Magazine) To you all: which is your favourite track?

DR: Favourite track? To drive on: Monaco. Yeah. It's unique. It's so tight and twisty and the whole weekend is great as a spectacle but for pure driving and as far as adrenalin goes that's a stand-out above the rest.

KR: I don't think there's one bad circuit but I enjoy maybe Spa, Monaco. I guess they're quite opposites. There's a lot of nice places but maybe those two.

PW: For me it's Macau. It was very impressive to be there in Formula Three. I think I was 16 or 17 and driving with a Formula Three car at 280kph on a street circuit was something very impressive and the track is also very nice.

Q: And Pascal, a Formula One track as well?

PW: Maybe it's becoming a Formula One track in the future. No. I love street circuits so maybe Singapore.

Q: (Angelique Belokopytov – Autodigest) Daniel, your lack of performance, if I can call it that, is it all on your car or is there something missing in the driver and if yes, what is it?

DR: No, nothing's missing in the driver. I haven't forgotten anything. I think just with the car – we know that we can do better, I guess. I think we'll see that in Barcelona. I think the team's learned a lot from the past, from testing but also the past few races and also with our feedback, myself and Max's feedback, I think we've been targeting the same things and I think now the team has really understood the point on the car to work on, to focus on and that's why now they're bringing this update for Barcelona and that's as soon as it can come. That's pretty much that, so for everyone asking why isn't it here for this weekend... it takes time to build the parts, basically, and then to put them on the car. They test them and then it takes time for the development and all the process but from Barcelona we should be good. From a driving point of view I feel good, very good.

Q: (Darya Panova - F1 Only) What is the main feature of Sochi for you?

KR: I think it's a nice place to come. The circuit is quite good. It's been a bit tricky over the last three years. It's just been very slippery – at least for us – but it's a nice place to come. Everything is new, everything is well done and I enjoy coming here. It's a beautiful place.

PW: I like the track so I'm looking forward to driving turn three, hopefully flat this year. It wasn't possible last year in the Manor. I think there are some nice corners also, the one after the back straight, hard braking into a left hander. It's very easy to lock up the tyres. There are a few nice

places as a street circuit but with a bit more space so you can lock up, you can go a bit wide sometimes so it's a good track.

DR: Yeah, I think the low grip makes it quite tricky, quite unique and a lot of the corners are flat so there's not really any camber, any positive banking to kind of pull you round the corners so when it's slippery and you have like a flat corner then it's a lot more easy to slide and it's harder to sometimes find the grip so that's a challenge but quite a fun one. There's not many tracks we go to now with that feature and yeah, as Pascal said, I guess it's turn 13 I believe, after the back straight, braking for there is quite tricky. That's a good one, it can be a passing opportunity as well. If you can pull off a move there it's normally a nice one.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – GloboEsporte.com) Kimi, we saw in the tests in Barcelona, bends number nine, ten that you could brake on the entry, you didn't have a lot of understeer, and this year you have complained on the radio – we have heard that – that you suffer with understeer. Maybe it's one of the reasons for a lack of performance between you and Sebastian. What has happened from the winter test to now? And to Daniel, you said about the development of the car; what about the power unit? Is there a development from Renault, from Australia to now?

KR: I think people always look at the lap times in testing and obviously if you're the fastest they think everything is perfect but I think the problem is also that you do testing in one place, one circuit and any other circuit is usually a chance to set up and we've been not far off but off enough to not be 100 percent happy and like I said, last race already we were a lot happy so let's hope that this weekend we are even better off and go from there. So just small things but they all make a difference.

DR: Yup, power unit - we've had a little bit since Australia, so it hasn't been an upgrade but we've been able to squeeze a tenth out of it since then, I would say, and I think around Montreal we're looking for let's say that power unit upgrade where we should hopefully find a couple of tenths or something like that. Yeah, we're obviously still trying to get chassis and power unit stronger but yeah, the big upgrade has not come yet.

Q: (Andrea Cremonesi – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Kimi, last week or two weeks ago you were in Holland to see the motocross World Championship because you have a team there. Could it be possible to see you there, managing the team when you finish Formula One? You are 37-years old, you said before you are focused on the season to improve yourself but you are in your mind drawing that line to say OK, now that's enough for me, I want to change my life?

KR: I don't want to change my life. I'm happy with my life. I've had the World Championship team for many years. I enjoy going there when I have time. Unfortunately I'm quite busy with a lot of stuff so not enough time to go often but it's good fun, it's different to here so I enjoy it also on that side but like I said, we will see what happens in the future. I've been in the same position for many years. People always question me on many things but I'm not in a hurry to decide anything and whatever the future brings is what I want also and we will see.

Ends