



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L' AUTOMOBILE

## **2017 FIA Formula One World Championship**

### **Austrian Grand Prix**

#### **Thursday Press Conference Transcript**

**PART ONE: DRIVERS – Sebastian VETTEL (Ferrari), Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes), Kevin MAGNUSSEN (Haas)**

#### **PRESS CONFERENCE**

**Q: Sebastian, begin by looking back at events in Baku two weeks ago. You said in a statement on Monday that you over-reacted in the heat of the moment. Please can you just talk us through what happened in that moment.**

**Sebastian VETTEL:** I don't think that's necessary, is it? I think we've seen it many times. I've seen it, I've looked at it, so err... obviously, I had a very different view inside the car than I had with a little bit of a gap and outside the car – hence why obviously I made a statement. I had the chance to quickly talk to Lewis after the race – but I don't want to pump this up more than it is already. I think that it's my right, our right that it stays between us. I think I said everything I had to say. I think it was the wrong decision. Obviously I got a penalty in the race and, yeah, lost a potential race win. We couldn't obviously foresee that Lewis was running into a problem with his headrest but could have been a lot more points at stake. After that obviously I tried everything to recover.

**Q: Seb, you said 'it was the wrong decision.' What was the wrong decision?**

**SV:** It was the wrong move, the wrong decision. It was the wrong move to drive alongside him and hit his tyre. So, that's obviously I guess what you all want to hear but there's not much more to say. At the time I was surprised. It felt like Lewis hit the brakes and I couldn't stop running into his car – but I also said in the statement and said afterwards that I don't think there was any bad intention. So I don't think he actually brake-tested me. At the time I read it like that. I was surprised, and hence why I was obviously I was upset and over-reacted. Am I proud of the moment? No. Can I take it back? Do I regret it? Yes. So I don't think we need to drag it out any longer.

**Q: Lewis, is it the end of the matter for you as well now?**

**Lewis HAMILTON:** It is for me, yeah. Solely, really focussed on this weekend. Obviously it's an interesting press conference, as I mentioned, with so many people here. The people watching can't see how many people are behind the camera. Yeah, I mean, I said everything I felt I needed to say at the last race and just left it there. Now the job is just to focus on... still got a lot of races ahead of us and a little bit behind points-wise. So just trying to keep my head down.

**Q: Does what happened in Baku in any way change the dynamic between you and Sebastian?**

**LH:** I don't think it does. Sebastian and I, we spoke after the race and on Monday and shortly after that he messaged me, I think the day after I think it was. For me, I just said that, for me, I still have the utmost respect for him as a driver and will continue to race him hard for the rest of the season in the same way I always have. No less hard than we have been already up until now. My only point to Sebastian was that I felt that, saying I had brake-tested him, I was like, I hope you can correct that publically – because people who are watching felt that this was something I did. In the data it obviously showed that was not the case. In actual case he accelerated. I think the goal was to try and be as close as possible to me but that was an error in judgement. My own point there in reply to him was that I hope he makes that clear because I had no intentions... there was no need for me to do something like that. I was in the lead. And... yeah. I accepted his apology and moved forwards.

**Q: Sebastian, just a few words from you about the relationship with Lewis. The dynamic between you.**

**SV:** Well, I'm happy to hear that it doesn't seem to have a big impact. Obviously what I did was wrong and I apologised. I think it's totally up to Lewis. Obviously I did a mistake so I can understand he's upset but it's nice to hear that we are able to move forward. Yeah. I think the respect that we have for each other on-track, off-track helps us in this regard.

**Q: Kevin, team's best finish of the season in Baku. Haas are now up to seventh in the championship. You must be very pleased with how things are going. Do you feel you're getting the best out of the team and yourself?**

**Kevin MAGNUSSEN:** Yes. I feel like it's going well. I'm enjoying my time at the moment. We're getting good results, both me and Romain, scoring points for the team. As a team the size that we are with so little people and limited budgets, it's a good effort to be where we are. I hope to be able to keep it up. I think seventh in the championship is one position better than last year and I think our target as a team was to try to improve at least a little bit on last year – which was already a good rookie season for Haas. So, y'know, we need to keep it up and keep scoring those points when other people make mistakes and take the opportunities when they're there.

**Q: You talk about the target for the season; what's the target for this weekend? You've never been out-qualified by a team-mate here but you haven't been in Q3 yet this season. Can you do it here?**

**KM:** Q3? I think... it's not going to be easy. It's not our natural position. We don't have the actual pace to be there but I think it's not far away. With a slight variation in people's performance and if we get a little more out of the tyres, balance, setup etc., we can get there. But for this track it's not our natural position but for sure we'll do our best.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Peter Farkas – Auto Motor) Sebastian, of course I respect what you said that you wouldn't want this topic to drag and drag – but there's one interesting question. There are some suggestions that you didn't deliberately move onto Lewis' car and it was only because you were just showing the gestures that we all know about and it was unintentional. Was it really intentional to crash into Lewis or it was only that you didn't really pay any attention to the steering?**

**SV:** It's a very confusing question. I think it's very simple: obviously, I got surprised. I got the impression at the time – which I have corrected: I was wrong – that I got, let's say, fouled and y'know I wasn't happy about it. I drove alongside him, obviously wasn't happy about it, over-reacted. I don't think I need to explain further. I think it's very clear. You all saw what happened, so... yeah. Not sure I get the question.

**Q: (Jerome Pugmire – AP) Question for Lewis. After that race you had some strong words, obviously in the heat of the moment you were very angry and you said that Sebastian, on that incident, was a disgrace to the sport. Do you regret saying that now? Do you think perhaps you were overly upset? Do you regret those words?**

**LH:** I don't feel I was particularly upset after the race. If I was upset it was for other reasons but I don't feel like I said anything I particularly would wish to take back. But I think, I still have the same opinion of what happened – but it's water under the bridge now. We move forwards. We spoke about it, we move forwards. There's no point really saying much more.

**Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Sebastian, you've admitted that you made a foul. Why did it take you so long then to actually apologise? Why did you have to wait until after you'd appeared before an FIA investigation?**

**SV:** I don't have your number. I don't want it. So, I don't feel the need to talk to... sorry... all of you for more than what I have to. So, I think the person that I had to talk to was Lewis, that was the most important. Obviously then Monday I went to Paris to see the FIA, we had the hearing, they asked me my opinion in terms of what happened, to run through the incidents, that's what I did, so yeah, I don't think, as I said, there was a need to talk to you straight after. You're not the most important people I think. As I said, the most important for me is the guy I'm racing with, is Lewis, and that's the one I decided to call first.

**Q: (Christian Menath – Motorsport Magazin) Question for Lewis, we were a bit surprised with the reaction from inside the car that you stayed so calm when Sebastian hit you. Can you explain how you managed to stay that calm? Because if something like that happens we probably expect... we ourselves would probably react differently.**

**LH:** Well, it's a little bit different perhaps to if it had happened on a football pitch and you're face-to-face with someone. I think maybe your initial reaction would be different – but we're strapped into these cars so there's not much I can do in the actual car at the time. As I said, I was more focussed on the race result and the difficult race that we had had. So, whilst that was a difficult scenario – or an unfortunate mishap during the race – that was not my main focus or goal. So, while there are questions about it, I was just thinking about the points that we had lost, how we are going to regroup as a team again to try to make sure we don't have that same issue again, and that we still have a pretty steep mountain to climb before the end of the season.

**Q: (Ralf Bach – Sport Bild) A question to Lewis. Gerhard Berger said last week, first the FIA punished Sebastian in Baku but then God himself punished you. Can you tell us something about what he could mean?**

**LH:** I don't know what he's talking about, so... [Question repeated off-mike] I guess that's an opinion of his, and... what do you think it means? I don't care what he thinks he means, he didn't say it to me, he said it to you! I don't know. I don't think it had anything to do with God.

**Q: (Natalie Pinkham – Sky Sports) You're both guys who are passionate and vocal and speak your mind – I'm thinking Seb, you with Kvyat in the cooldown room. Why didn't you just speak to him straight away after the race?**

**SV:** Well it's the same as if you ask me to try and exit through that door. There's a lot of people I have to go through first and I think it was the wrong time given how much fuss there was kicked up after the race to talk to him. So, I'm sure he was busy as well after the race. You usually have your meetings and so on. So I don't think that was the right time, straight out of the car. Too many people in between us, let's say.

**Q: (Rebecca Clancy – The Times) For Sebastian. You’ve just said now that you’re happy to hear that it’s moved on, following Lewis’ comments now. Does that mean that’s not the impression you got after you spoke on Monday? And just a very quick question to Lewis: did you accept his apology?**

**SV:** No, it’s not the impression I got. I’m just in that regard happy to hear that we, obviously... yeah... mature enough to move on. Obviously what I did was wrong and I did a mistake. I apologise but it doesn’t take it away. It’s still there. If I could literally take it back and go back in time, I would – but I can’t do that. And since I can’t do that, it’s good that we’re able to sit here and say that we’re focussed on the weekend and we go out there and race and do what we love most.

**Lewis?**

**LH:** Just on my point, the conversation we had... there wasn’t actually an apology in the conversation that we had – even though that was perhaps the intent. It was literally the next day when we were texting. I got a text from Sebastian, apologising and I did accept it.

**Q: (Ben Hunt – The Sun) A question for Sebastian. You’re laughing about it now but I would suggest that you have nine penalty points, you tell the Race Director what you did in Mexico, you swear at him, you use your car as a weapon. Would you agree that you got off quite lightly?**

**SV:** Well I got a penalty, obviously the race was potentially handed to me with the fault or the technical problem Lewis’ car had with the headrest, so you can believe me that I wasn’t happy at all after the race because I finished fourth and I could have won the race. So I didn’t need to tell you how many points difference that is. So...

**Q: (Ben Hunt – The Sun) Yet you were driving into him, using your car to ram into him...**

**SV:** Well I said also to him that I never had the intention to hurt him. It’s not like I tried to punch him...

**Q: (Ben Hunt – The Sun) But you did.**

**SV:** As I said, the intention... I over-reacted. The intention was not to hurt him, damage his car, it was at low speed but looking back it was the wrong thing to do, it was dangerous, plus it was unnecessary because it didn’t win me anything.

**Q: (Livio Orrichio – GlobeEsporte) To all drivers, when you have a stress point in a relationship, as Sebastian and Lewis now, even if it’s clarified between you, and you go to the next race, here or Silverstone for example, is it possible to leave everything in the past or unconsciously do you take it to the moment of the fight with the same driver into the track?**

**LH:** No honestly I really don’t feel that there is tension here. Obviously you guys might feel that there is. We just really distinguished that when we spoke on the phone and it remains respectful. As I said, there are two things that are most important for me, the first is that Sebastian acknowledged that I didn’t brake test him, which while he has apologized I don’t know if people still understand that. That’s important for me because people were commenting or sending messages to me saying that I was out of order. Obviously I didn’t do any of the braking. Secondly, road safety is a big issue, a campaign the FIA are constantly pushing and obviously the decisions and how they govern the sport and how it reflects to the rest of the world, they were the only two points I was focused on.

**Q: Sebastian, can you let it be or do you take it with you into the next race?**

**SV:** No, I'm quite happy to get into the car tomorrow. I think come practice, come race day you try to do your best. Obviously, you're very busy driving the car, when you fight someone, we know that overtaking is not easy, I don't think you have much time to think. Obviously you're planning an overtake, etcetera – but sitting here I think I would say it doesn't impact on the next race and who you're racing.

**Q: Kevin, do you have anything to add?**

**KM:** I have no grudges to either of those guys!

**Q: (Ysef Harding – Xiro Xone News) There's too much tension in this room right now. This question's for Lewis and Sebastian. Lewis, I know recently both of you were involved in Cars 3 doing voiceover work, and Sebastian you did a German version of it. What was it like working with the people at Pixar, and for Lewis, what was it like doing another voiceover for Cars, and Kevin, would you do any voiceover work or acting like these two?**

**Let's start with Kevin.**

**KM:** I did, actually! On the Danish Cars, as well. I'm one of the Cars, I guess. Yeah, we all did it.

**SV:** All the same car, I guess, Sat Nav.

**KM:** I'm not a Sat Nav, I'm... I can't ever remember which one it is. That's too bad!

**SV:** I'm sure they ask you again!

**Sebastian, how did you find the experience?**

**SV:** Well, I think I'm quite comfortable with voiceover... acting maybe less. It was good fun, it's a fun experience. People help you a lot. Obviously, as I said, it's quite easy because they just put your voice wherever they need to – whereas with acting I think you need to be a lot more precise. It was good fun. I did the German version and also the Italian version, which was a bit more difficult but good fun. Looking forward to hear myself when the movie comes out.

**Lewis, how did you find it?**

**LH:** It was the second time I've done it and I had a lot of fun with it. I'm appreciative of the opportunity.

**Q: (Peter Vamosi – Vas Népe) Question is to Lewis and Sebastian. Fernando Alonso's management is right now in talks with Ferrari and Mercedes – at least the rumours are about this. How do you like the idea having him as team-mate?**

**Lewis, why don't we start with you? You've had him as a team-mate before.**

**LH:** I'm pretty happy with the team-mate I have, so it's not even a thought in my thought process right now.

**And Sebastian?**

**SV:** Well, I'm not responsible to sign the drivers but if I had a say, I'd say I prefer Kimi.

**Q: (Tom Slater – Soymotor) A question for Kevin. I wanted to know your vision about the Baku incident because these last days a lot of people were saying the FIA wasn't hard enough with the penalty. If it had been different drivers do you think the penalty, the FIA would have acted the same?**

**KM:** I have no idea.

**Q: (Petr Hlawiczka – F1news . cz) Sebastian, do you have each other's phone number now and the other questions regarding latest technical directive about burning oil, do you think Ferrari is most suffer by this latest technical directive?**

**SV:** I'll start with the second question. I don't think so. I think it's better for you to ask somebody who understands a lot more about the engine. For me it's important that the engine is running, that it's working. Then, I'm not sure I understood the first question. I said we spoke on the phone. To call somebody... I don't know where you are from but to every place I have been to you need the number of the other person! Maybe you have a good phone, you just say the name and it dials the number.

**Q: (Peter Farkas – Auto Motor) This is also for Lewis and Sebastian, but about the racing at last. There are now two races where Mercedes seem to be much stronger than Ferrari. Lewis, are you now confident that you are on top of the tyre problems you had before and Sebastian how concerning is it? Obviously the race in Baku was hard to judge because it was chaotic but especially in qualifying the gap was really big and how optimistic are you that you will be able to get close to Mercedes again?**

**LH:** I think we're constantly learning about these tyres, so I think we definitely made a big step, I think it was going into Montreal and from there we are continuing to learned weekend-in, weekend-out. Of course we're coming to other circuits. Each time it's a little bit different – different abrasiveness, different challenges – but I think we do understand obviously what the issue has been and that it can occur at any point but I think we have the better tools and understanding now to be able to tackle whatever issue we do.

**SV:** I know what was going on in the last two races. They were very different. The tracks are different. But if you take Canada: we actually had good pace in the race. The car was damaged and obviously my race looked very different to Lewis', he could control the race from the front. Then in Baku in qualifying, we just didn't get it together. The gap was artificially big. I'm not sitting here thinking that we are 1.1s behind in quali here. Came Sunday I think the pace was very similar. Overall it's probably fair to say that Mercedes had the upper hand Saturday and Sunday but the difference was small. I think you are constantly trying to push all the areas, trying to improve the car, understanding the tyres, these kind of things. But I think for here we should be all set and we should be ready to race. Hopefully we have a calmer race and we should have more, let's say, consistent conditions, then you are able to read much more how close we are.

**Q: (Louis Dekker - NOS) Kevin, do you think the next world champion is on your right or on your left?**

**KM:** I have no idea. I can't see into the future. Let's see.

**Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Mark Webber has recently suggested that drivers shouldn't be penalised for technical issues with grid penalties etc. How do you feel about that – can one separate a driver from a team and vice versa?**

**SV:** I think it's a difficult one. I think we understand as drivers what Mark meant and he's probably right about it but on the other hand you have to get the rules straight and set some rules so that the teams comply with it. Since everyone is always really competitive in Formula One, you are always trying to look for something maybe the other guy hasn't, so you might develop a pattern of I don't know, changing your gearbox every race because of whatever advantage it brings to you, so I don't know... yeah, that's a tricky one.

**LH:** I understand his point. I've only just heard it, so I haven't had much time to think about it. But I imagine it's difficult to really implement that. You're a team. If a driver makes a mistake, the team loses points and if teams, ultimately if it's a team, collective mistake

when something or when reliability hits, it hits you all together... and then also you know, if you have an engine issue and you get a brand new one and you don't take a penalty you gain an advantage on power quite often. I don't know. Perhaps there's a way they could do it.

**KM:** I think it's frustrating for the driver but it is also for the team. It's true that if you make a mistake as a driver it goes to the team as well. But if there is an engine failure it's more on the team's side of the blame, if you want. I think it could be looked at a solution to take a constructor point or something like that instead of penalizing the start position for the race. But it's not something I think too much about.

**Q: (Flavio Vanetti – Corriere Della Sera ) A question for Sebastian. Today we heard that in the team there's a change, the [person] responsible for the engine is not any longer in his role. Do you think it could affect the second part of the season?**

**SV:** I don't know. I don't know what you're referring to, but again I think these kind of things it's better you ask a little bit higher up.

**Q: (Giles Richards – The Guardian) Lewis, after the race you said you were concerned about the example the incident set for children. Are you happy with the message being sent from the hearing on Monday after what happened to Sebastian?**

**LH:** I don't think anything changes. My opinion stays the same. With all due respect, Jean [Todt] should be sitting next to us to be honest to answer some questions perhaps because they didn't change anything on the Monday, so the message that was sent still remains the same.

**Q: (Nathalie Pinkham – Sky Sports) Seb, in the heat of the moment, you do seem to lose your cool a bit. Do you think you have a problem with your temperament? Lewis, do you think that judging by the size of this crowd this kind of jeopardy and rivalry is good for the sport?**

**SV:** To answer your question, I don't think so. I could see why you might believe it's not, but I think I have faced a lot of situations that are quite hot and I don't think so.

**LH:** I think an intense battle is always a good thing for any sport, so I don't disagree with that but of course we are used as a platform, we are supposed to be role models, we are supposed to give a certain message. We are only human beings, so we don't always get things right. However, collectively we are supposed to inspire and send the right message to young kids. There are so many people who want to be in our position. We are in a position of power and how we utilise that is very important.

**PART TWO: Carlos SAINZ (Toro Rosso), Max VERSTAPPEN (Red Bull Racing), Felipe MASSA (Williams)**

**Q: Felipe, if we start with you. Looking back two weeks to Baku. How much have you agonized about might have been in that race?**

**Felipe MASSA:** Yeah, me and Max actually. What can you do? I think you need to think in a positive way. It was a great race, I was driving well and unfortunately these things can happen in our races. I had a mechanical issue in the car, in the middle of an amazing opportunity, when the victory was totally in the fight. These things can happen and unfortunately we lost the opportunity to win the race or maybe even having a podium with both cars of the team. It would have been amazing, definitely. But we need to think positive, think forward for this weekend and for the next races. I'm happy with the way I'm driving the car. I really enjoy, I understand the car in the right way, you know. That's what

counts and I really hope things come back and we can achieve what we should achieve in the next races.

**Q: About the Vettel and Hamilton incident. We've just heard from them about what happened in Baku. As someone who had been around for a few years and seen it all, I would love to get your thoughts on how hard it is to keep a cool head in the heat of the moment?**

**FM:** I mean just give my opinion, so definitely I really think he maybe passed a little bit over the limit, what's happened in the last race. I was behind, but I couldn't really see well from the car. So I think Seb just passed a little bit over the limit and he lost the opportunity to maybe complain that Lewis maybe slowed down a little bit too much. Maybe Lewis could have been penalised if everything goes in the normal way in the race. We cannot decide for what the stewards will decide so you need to keep your head cool, calm. I think if you just put the car on the side and push into another car is something... you will just lose by doing. I think he didn't lose a lot. He was a bit lucky for what has happened – he scored even more points than Lewis in the race. For the driver he is. He is amazing driver. He won so many championships, have had an amazing experience already in Formula One, he's a nice guy outside of the car. You just lose by doing that. So I'm sure maybe he's learned a little bit for what's happened this week and everything. Everybody wants to see fighting completely, fire around the championship but maybe not really in this way.

**Q: Max, as Felipe has just said, a frustrating race for you as well, but in general your lack of reliability has been an issue for you this year. How do you clear your head when you have such a disappointing end to a race such as in Baku?**

**Max VERSTAPPEN:** That's actually pretty simple. You call some friends and you have some fun. And then you re-start again the next race and you try to have a good race. It's really disappointing but what can I do about it. I just have to try to do my best every single weekend and try to finish the race.

**Q: Looking on the bright side, are you pleased with the pace of the car at the minute. Do you feel you're closing the gap to Mercedes and Ferrari?**

**MV:** We still need to be faster but we are catching up, which is positive. But yeah, we definitely need to make another step because still in Baku it was a second. Maybe it shouldn't have been a second with all the issues I also had in qualifying but the second sector, where all the corners are, we were second fastest, so I can be a bit positive about that but we are not there yet, so we still need to definitely work hard.

**Q: Home race for the team here in Austria. How do you think things will go?**

**MV:** Honestly I have no clue. After my last few races... I don't know. We'll find out on Sunday. I prepared myself on Wednesday on the simulator to have the best possible balance to start the weekend and then we work from and hopefully we score some points.

**Q: Carlos, another crazy race for you in Baku as well, but you have now had six points finishes in eight races. Is that proof that you are getting the most from the car and yourself?**

**Carlos SAINZ:** Yeah I think I have got to a point where I'm very confident with the team and with the car and I think the season is going very positively until now. Every time we finished we have actually been in the points. We have 11 points than last season and all these facts are obviously very positive. Now it's time to keep working, no? Williams overtook us in the championship last race so we really need to push hard to bring a bit more performance, to score points with both cars and get back into P5 in the championship.



**Q: The driver silly season is beginning to wake up now and you have been linked to several other teams for 2018. Given that this is your third season with Toro Rosso, when is crunch time for you on deciding whether to stay with the team or move elsewhere?**

**CS:** Yeah I think it's still a very long season ahead. Obviously these rumours are always going to come at this stage. As you all know my target number one is to be with Red Bull next year and start fighting for podiums or wins or whatever they are fighting for next year and I'm going to keep pushing for this. If that doesn't happen obviously a fourth year at Toro Rosso is unlikely so I'm not going to close the door to any opportunity.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Mark Webber has recently suggested that drivers shouldn't be penalised for technical issues with grid penalties etc. How do you feel about that – can one separate a driver from a team and vice versa?**

**MV:** I don't know, maybe we should get fines in place but then maybe the team would be bankrupt. I don't know. In one way that's how you can win a championship, on reliability, and that's good for manufacturers, to show who has the best reliability. I don't know.

**FM:** I think you need to... otherwise the team would be changing engine all the time, so it's not really right. If you have the rule that you can use four engines during the year, so the teams need to fight for that or otherwise you pay a little bit by using more. Definitely in some cases it's a little bit too much. What's happened to McLaren is a little bit too much because they are really struggling a lot, more than what they are supposed to be, but anyway those are the rules.

**CS:** I think Mark has a point there, definitely. Something to look into, it's just very difficult to find the right compromise, as Max said, between giving the advantage to the teams that have good reliability versus those who don't. But Mark has a point. I just don't know how people are going to come up with a solution for it, come up a good compromise but he definitely has a point.

**Q: (Jerome Pugmire – AP) Max, there's been suggestions since Baku that Sebastian Vettel has a problem with this temperament – controlling his temper. You had some incidents with him last season, would you say that he does have a problem controlling his temper**

**MV:** I don't think so. I don't know. I think Sebastian thought he (Hamilton) brake tested him. That's a different thing. Otherwise he would never have done it, I guess. I don't think he has a real problem, because when you talk to him it's always good. You can feel somebody has issues with that... We are emotional as well. Yes, sometimes you can hear it on the radio, sometimes you can actually see it but I think that's how a human being is, otherwise it would be boring, wouldn't it? Otherwise you would have nothing to write about!

**Q: (Peter Vamosi – Vas Népe) To all drivers: Robert Kubica is talking now about the opportunity that maybe he can make a comeback to Formula One, 80-90 per cent, he thinks. What do you think about his opportunities to make a comeback to Formula One and what do you think of his performance, what he did in Valencia in the private Renault test?**

**FM:** Well, he's a great driver. He shows the talent he has, he shows that he's maybe supposed to be in a big team now, fight for victories or even championships, you know? For sure it's very difficult to answer because we don't know exactly how he is and how is his arm, how strong it is, he needs to accept the full season. I have seen Robert maybe two times in the last months, since he had his accident, so for me it's very difficult to say. It

would be fantastic for Formula One to have him back but I really hope he's really in the position to be back on the right way and strong enough to accept the whole season.

**MV:** Absolutely. He was a great driver and I think he still is, even though the injury he's had. And I think he's also a very nice personality as well so like Felipe said, he could have had a great career if he didn't have the injury. It would always be good to have him back, absolutely.

**CS:** I have nothing to add really to what they both said. I think he's a great talent and it was a big shame what happened to him and if he manages to come back in good form it could only be good news for Formula One.

**Q: (Petr Hlawiczka – F1News . cz ) Max, do you think Red Bull is now on the Ferrari or Mercedes level in terms of chassis, after sorting out some correlation issues and the latest upgrades?**

**MV:** I think it's always difficult to say. I think Mercedes is still ahead, that's one thing. With Ferrari, it's a bit complicated to judge that because in Baku I think we were definitely ahead but we have to wait and see again here. I think we need a few races to see where we are. The teams are not standing still so it's a development process and I think we definitely did a good job on that but we still need to improve, we still need to work harder than the others to definitely catch up to Mercedes.

**Q: (Louis Dekker – NOS) Max, a bit about the last question; is realistically P5 or P6 where the team is on Saturday, Sunday, or are you getting a little higher already, more chances?**

**MV:** On Sunday. No, even on Saturday I think we should be around that position. Like I said, we are getting closer but we are not in the fight yet to really beat them. I think in Baku we... well, I was stuck behind Perez but I think we were faster than the Ferraris but the Mercedes are still at another level.

**Q: (Raphaelle Peltier – AFP) For all three: we've heard from Esteban Ocon and Lance Stroll that even though they might not have raced the tracks, they know them already because they played on video games. Do you think it makes a difference to how fast the younger drivers become efficient on the tracks?**

**CS:** I don't know video games. I don't really believe so much in video games. I believe in a proper simulator like we have in Red Bull, this definitely helps. A video game? Not so sure but a good simulator like Red Bull has... for me in my first year in Formula One in 2015 it definitely helped to get to know the tracks. I arrived on Friday for FP1 with a bit more information.

**MV:** It's good fun and it's actually getting a lot better the last few years, but once you have a simulator like Red Bull has it cannot (be beaten by) a video game, which is quite logical, I guess. But I think for all the people out there to at least have a little bit of a glimpse of it, I think a video game is actually (a good thing) to buy because the tracks, they are mainly laser scanned, so I think that's good. But for us, the most important thing is still with the team and like Carlos said, especially in 2015 it was good for us because some tracks were new to us and it helps us a bit to start in FP1 but now, after three years, it's just mainly to set up the car because you know the track.

**Q: Felipe, did you rely on video games back in the day when you started out?**

**FM:** No, for sure...

**MV:** Were they there?

**FM:** I'm not so old as you think! I saw so many things: I saw drivers learning on the Playstation... on even simulators and getting there, not really understanding the track in the right way. I saw drivers not doing anything, getting there, learning the track really quickly. To be honest, I never drove the Red Bull simulator but all the simulators I drove, if you don't know the track, it helps a little bit, just to know more or less where to go. To be like reality, it would take for sure a lot more time to be exactly like we feel in reality.

**Q: (Ysef Harding – Xiro Xone News) To follow up on that question, Max, I know you recently shot a promo for F1 2017 by Codemasters and it's coming out this fall. What are your impressions of this year's game, given the hard work that they put into it to really try to bring that experience to gamers out there?**

**MV:** Well, I'm not sure if I'm supposed to talk about it, because otherwise... It looks good, it's an improvement again from last year's game and I think it's cool that they're bringing some classic cars into it as well. Any other things, I don't think I can speak about. But it will be good.

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – GloboEsporte) Max, you've had reliability problems in Canada and in Baku, while it's also true your teammate had three podium finishes and won the last one. Is it possible to establish any relationship between your style and the problems you have, or in Formula One today is that not possible any more?**

**MV:** No, I don't think so. I don't know what I'm doing wrong, so no. It's always pretty clear what's happening, there's always an explanation what the issue is, why I stop on track, so I don't think so.

**Q: (Jerome Pugmire – Associated Press) Carlos, you mentioned next season, if you don't get a seat at Red Bull, where do you situate your ambitions and how confident are you that you can race at the very highest level?**

**CS:** I think it's a bit too early now to talk about it. I think we have a very long season ahead...

**FM:** Mercedes, huh? Mercedes.

**CS:** In a Renault! But seriously speaking, you never know what can happen in such a long season. We are still on race eight or nine, I don't know, but I'm definitely ready to take a step forward in my career. I'm looking forward to it, I'm ready so as I said before, not closing any doors and we will see what happens.

**Q: (Arjan Schouten – A.D.) Max, can you take us one more time back to Baku. Right after you went out of the race, you went straight to the hotel room. Was it the best decision not to talk with the media then and what happened in that hotel room, is everything still in place?**

**MV:** Yeah. I was alone!

**CS:** You called your friend.

**MV:** I was on my phone but that's it. No. I was very disappointed. It took me ten minutes to find the F1 channel to follow the race. I was very disappointed and I know myself and when I'm very disappointed I know it's better not to speak so that's why I decided not to talk to the media because then I will say things which I think later on I will regret and then a lot of stories will get in the media which is not necessary so that's why I went back.

**Q: (Louis Dekker – NOS) Sorry Max, one more question: what will you do, then, on Sunday – we don't hope that there's a problem – but if there's a problem at the end, will you go to the camera crews or go to the hotel?**

**MV:** First I will do the Dap and then... I have to change my ones... I mean I'm jumping around and I'm slowly getting out. I don't know. It depends on the situation but normally I will try to speak.

**Q: (Carlos Miguel – Auto Motor Sport) Carlos, how many teams have knocked on your door or the Red Bull door for 2018?**

**MV:** Well, there are the two Red Bull teams, so that leaves eight.

**CS:** How many teams are there in Formula One?

**MV:** Eight other teams.

**CS:** Something like that, yeah. No, seriously, again, with Max's joke, let's put it like this: it's still very early. I don't really know what is going to happen next year. There is obviously rumours going around the paddock now, I heard, which obviously... silly season, as you all know and it's good fun but for me the good fun is actually on track, not to... to keep performing as I'm performing up until now, which has been a really good season. I will see. I leave that to other people in my team to judge and to see; for me I have a job that is to drive a car and do it as fast as possible.

**Q: (Peter Vamosi – Vas Népe) Max, how can you read now Harrison Newey's performance in European Formula Three championship. Adrian is forcing you to (give) a little bit help or you are doing only your own job?**

**MV:** About his son? Ah. We do speak a bit about it a few times but times change, so what maybe worked back in the day now they find better solutions. If he has questions, I'm always there because he's racing for the same team as I did so I think I know the guys quite well, but it's not really to advise or anything, just to share my expressions of back in the day, you know, what I was doing with the team.

**Q: (Jerome Pugmire – Associated Press) Felipe, how impressed were you with Lance Stroll's performance in Baku and do you think that he's answered a few – perhaps – unfair critics?**

**FM:** I know the media, I know that he was struggling a little bit at the beginning of the season and especially you guys were also talking a lot about him. I think he did a really good job in the last race, the whole weekend, so he was competitive a lot. He didn't make a single mistake and even in Canada he was struggling until the qualifying but then suddenly on Sunday he did a much better race and then in Baku he just kept improving and understanding. For sure, he's young, he has a lot to learn but he proved that he's growing, he proved that he shows much better performance than you guys were expecting. I'm also happy that maybe now he can start thinking about scoring points with both cars every race which is quite important for the team, and he's a lot more confident. As I said before, I met him when he was seven or eight years old so I really have no problem to pass everything I can on to help him and really to see him improving, growing and I do it with pleasure, and it's nice to see that from now on he can be in a much more strong way and competitive which will definitely be better for the team.

**Q: (Arjan Schouten – A.D.) Max, some weather predictions say that there might be some rain on Sunday, any opinion about that? What do you hope?**

**MV:** It's nice. Yeah, it would maybe help but the first priority is to finish the race.

**Q: (Marika Laselva – News F1) Max and Carlos: you were teammates in your first year at Toro Rosso and the goal for Carlos is to get to Red Bull. So what would it feel for you both to be teammates again, because you pushed each other a lot when**

**you were teammates? It was because it was your first year and you were younger, or do you think that maybe you were able to push each other as drivers?**

**CS:** It was good fun, definitely. I wouldn't mind repeating it.

**MV:** Sure, but maybe we should ask for three cars.

**Q: Max, would you welcome Carlos back as a teammate?**

**MV:** Well, we had good competition, absolutely, and I like competition but I don't know how it's with the other contracts and stuff so we need to wait and see. I'm pretty sure, sooner or later, I think... anyway we are both racing in competitive cars together. I don't know which team...

**Ends**