



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L' AUTOMOBILE

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

### **Monaco Grand Prix**

#### **Wednesday Drivers' Press Conference Transcript**

**PART ONE: DRIVERS – Jenson BUTTON (McLaren), Nico HULKENBERG (Renault), Esteban OCON (Force India)**

#### **PRESS CONFERENCE**

**Q: Jenson, 2009 Monaco GP winner and World Champion of course, welcome back. Unusual circumstances to say the least. What level of preparation have you done for this race and how well do you feel you know the 2017 McLaren F1 car?**

**Jenson BUTTON:** First of all it's great to be back, good to see so many faces I haven't seen for six months, apart from TV obviously. The preparation has been good; apart from [the fact that] I haven't obviously driven the car. These new regulations... so it's not perfect. The option was to do half a day in Bahrain, which I thought was absolutely useless for me to do, a completely different type of circuit. I said to the team, I think it's best if I do a few days in the simulator. Obviously as drivers we love the simulator, so I was raring to go. I spent a lot of time in the simulator getting a feel for it. Yeah, it's been interesting. You know, most of the stuff is the same, but there are a few things that are obviously different, with the difference in regulations, and there are always... it just changes year to year with new technology and what have you. A few things to learn but it's still a racing car, just got to get used to it being a bit wider.

**Q: The McLaren was competitive in Alonso's hands in Spain in qualifying and this track is now McLaren's best chance of scoring some points in the near future. And I guess you need them now after Sauber bagged some points last time out in Spain. So, although this substitute appearance was supposed to be fairly low pressure, do you actually feel there is a lot of pressure on you to score some points for the team?**

**JB:** Definitely not. I'm very relaxed. Very excited, actually. It's interesting coming back for one grand prix. It being Monaco it's very special. I've won here before, I've lived here for 17 years, and I've had some really good experiences here. It's exciting. But I don't feel any pressure – none at all. I will obviously get in the car and I will do the best job I can, that's what I'm here to do and everything I do in life is the same: you want to be competitive, you want to get the best out of yourself and you want to get the best out of the equipment and the team that you are working with. That hasn't changed. The car seemed to be working well in Barcelona in qualifying. Fernando did a good job. I think it still proves that the car itself is working well. I drove it in the simulator and I drove the upgrade, which I was misquoted on by the way, but I drove the upgrade and it was a definite improvement and there are more improvements here as well. If it's all straightforward this weekend, we should be reasonably... reasonably competitive.

**Q: Well have a great weekend, thank you very much. Nico, three consecutive points finishes and you have three time qualified in the top eight this season, so does it feel like it's all starting to come together with Renault?**

**Nico HULKENBERG:** Yeah it does, especially Barcelona; Sunday was a good race for us, although we had quite a bit of help from some colleagues. But that's racing sometimes. Overall the global situation is good, the team is very hungry and working pretty hard, little upgrades coming every weekend, which is very important in the season. I think we are putting ourselves in a position where we can just constantly battle for points which is the target and the ambition for this year. So as far as I can see looks all promising and good.

**Q: Now you qualified fifth on the grid here last year in a Force India, so what's the secret to punching above your weight around Monaco?**

**NH:** It's just nailing the lap when it counts. Obviously here it's tough to push your personal limit higher and higher and it's just building up that confidence over the weekend and then you peak really in that Q3 lap. Last year I remember it was a hell of a lap that I was very happy about and I'll try to do more of the same this year.

**Q: Esteban, five points finishes out of five and a career best fifth place in Spain, that's some start to the year. You must be absolutely delighted. Now presumably the target is to be really troubling your team-mate Sergio Pérez every weekend and getting front of him?**

**Esteban OCON:** Yeah, I'm pleased with the start of my season with Force India. The target was to be scoring points at every race, that's what we are doing at the moment and the car is constantly improving as well. On my side we could have done a little bit better. For the first three races I was still learning and if we had put all the details together a bit more was possible. But I'm pleased with that, scoring points at every race, just keep improving all the time, keep getting closer to Sergio as well, and now we are having the same lap times and the same pace so we are fighting on the same step which is really good and that's what I want to keep doing for the future.

**Q: You've never raced at Monaco before, despite racing in some series that have been here but Force India has a strong record here, both cars finished in the top six here last season. How have they prepared you for this race and what's your own research shown you about how the race unfolds?**

**EO:** Yeah, unfortunately I've never been racing here, I've just been here to watch the race in the previous years when I was a reserve driver. I've been spending a lot of time in the simulator. It's like I know the track already, because I have been playing it on games since I was so young, I've been around as well. A lot of days in the simulator, a lot of research on the internet for me, watching just onboard laps from Jenson, from all the guys...

**JB:** The old guys.

**EO:** The old guys, yeah! No, it has been good and I think I can't be more prepared to arrive.

**Q: Before I pass it to the floor, one quick question to Nico and Jenson on driving these wider 2017 cars around these streets. They are quite a bit wider, so from the point of view of judging the barriers and overtaking, maybe a thought on that Nico?**

**NH:** Obviously by now we have done a couple of races and spent quite a bit of time in these cars so I think we all adjusted to that. But yeah, first time tomorrow maybe we'll have to readjust a little bit but I don't think that will be too difficult or take too long.

**JB:** I haven't driven the car, so I don't know! To be fair, it's probably not a bad thing stepping in it here. It's going to be a shock to the system anyway driving the car so... I think it's going to be a little bit unusual for everyone having the car wider, but you're still sat in the middle, so you should be able to judge things pretty easily.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action and Speed Sport) Jenson, when the idea was broached to you was it an instant yes, or did you have to think about it, even for a few seconds?**

**JB:** I asked my dogs and they said "we can do without you for a week or so". My girlfriend said "you gotta do what you do" and I said yes, and it was my decision. I could have said no if I wanted to, as we all can – no one wants a racing drive who doesn't want to drive. Really excited but obviously the preparation could have been better if I had the opportunity to test the car in a proper test, but that's not the way Formula One works. You've got to be ready. I think fitness-wise that's not an issue. I'm sure the neck is going to be a bit sore after Thursday, even around Monaco. But we've got Friday off, so a little bit of rest. Mikey Muscles is back for a one-off race, my physio as well, so he's going to be rubbing me once again. So it's an exciting challenge and that's what it's all about isn't it and that's what we're here for and I'm really looking forward to it.

**Q: (Peter Farkas – Auto Motor) Jenson, obviously you have driven cars with more downforce before, before 2009 actually. Wouldn't you have done the Bahrain test even if you hadn't driven those other cars or do you think it would have been help for you?**

**JB:** Well, in hindsight it's always easier to say "no, I wouldn't have" because I would have only done 17 laps the day that I would have tested and I was only going to do half a day anyway. So, no, I think Bahrain is such a different circuit to here. I think as long as you understand the way the car is working and obviously I have every bit of information possible and I run through it for days in terms of set-up work and what helps the car in certain ways and how it reacts to certain things, those are the key things you need to understand and those things you can do in the simulator, which is what I have done. Obviously it's wider, so that's the bigger thing for me. In terms of the way the tyres work. You know they have been pretty tricky for the last few years. I know they work differently, but you work your way around it and I have a couple of days to do that. It's also warm, which helps. Over the weekend there will be things where I'm sure it will be a little bit tricky but it's about putting the time and the effort in working around those issues and hopefully coming out on top.

**Q: (Jerome Pugmire – Associated Press) A question for Nico and Esteban. Some of the drivers have described how much more physically tiring and demanding the race is this year. Can you give your feedback on that and how much more difficult you're finding that, physically?**

**EO:** I think it is a bit more difficult. To be honest I was expecting it to be more, much more than that. The main difference is you push harder in the race because the tyre lasts longer. But all in all it's not that much more difficult.

**NH:** Yeah it is a bit more physical for sure, but I think the real test will be later in the year when we go to Singapore and the really tough tracks that every year are the most difficult ones. Then it will make even a bigger difference. So far it's been OK. I think we all took it seriously in the winter and prepared for it, so that's why I think we're OK.

**Q: (Barna Zsoldis – Nemzeti Sport) Jenson, according to the official announcement in Monza you are now a key member of a very innovative three-driver line-up. If it's**

**like that, why did you hesitate to say yes or no and what is your exact position in the team now?**

**JB:** That hasn't changed. I'm still an ambassador for the team, some might say a third driver and this weekend I've got the opportunity to race the car. I was going to be here anyway and instead of sitting around drinking champagne I can actually do what I'm supposed to do and that's race cars for a living. Very lucky position and as I said it's a very exciting position to be in – a challenge, but a good one.

**Q: (Andrew Frankel – Forza) Nico, you're already a champion at Le Mans and we have Fernando this weekend at Indy. Should he do as well as we would all like him to do, would you gentleman all consider having a go at Indianapolis?**

**NH:** For me, personally, at the moment, no. There is nothing that strikes me about it or gets me excited. Le Mans was one thing, so I can see myself going back there. Indy, for the moment, no. Maybe in the future, in the next few years, that might change, I don't know – but at the moment I'm happy where I am.

**Jenson?**

**JB:** Indy's not really been something that I've thought about. Personally, I was surprised that Fernando was interested in doing it but we all like different things. We're racing drivers, we're not just F1 drivers and we like trying other sports. For me, I'd like to do Le Mans one day, I think it would be a great experience, great team atmosphere. Obviously it has to be the right opportunity, like Nico had. I would like to race in NASCAR, I think that'd be fun. Yeah, I went along to one of the races this year, Jimmie Johnson invited me and I had a great time and loved seeing 'the show' as it is. It's very different to other motorsports but equally it's a challenge. It's a massive challenge. Who knows? And then there's the other motorsports that I love like Rallycross as well. There are many things – but Indy hasn't been up there for me, for many different reasons.

**Esteban?**

**EO:** No, from myself, I don't think Indy or Le Mans actually now I want to do. I definitely want to focus on Formula One. Always been my goal to be here and I want to be successful here in Formula One. So maybe in the future but I'm even not sure I would want to do that in the future. I would be more a rally driver if I retire. I want to try that.

**Q: (Michael Schmidt – Auto Motor und Sport) Jenson, are you following what Fernando is doing at Indy and will you watch the Indy 500 on Sunday?**

**JB:** What time is it on? [6pm] Oh, yeah, I'm sure that I will. I watched when he drove the car for the first time, which is always interesting, seeing a driver's reaction. Actually, probably it was more the reaction to the media being right next to him every second that he was out of the car. That's the bit that I loved watching the most – because we all know how Fernando loves the media so seeing his reaction to that was even better than seeing his reaction to driving the car around the circuit. So yeah, it's absolutely mad, isn't it, Indy, in terms of the media and how much attention it's getting – which is fantastic for the sport. I just want to see what Fernando says when he gets back. But of course I have an interest. I've been team-mates with Fernando for a couple of years and raced against Fernando for many more years than that. It's interesting to see how he does. Very different type of motorsport. There's a lot of talent out there, talented drivers that have been doing that for so many years, so it'll be interesting to see how he gets on. Qualifying went pretty well and the race is obviously something very, very different. Wheel-to-wheel around there, it's pretty mad. I wish him the best but the most important thing is that he stays safe, which we've already talked about.

**Q: (Leigh Diffey – NBC Sports) Jenson, if you haven't already noticed, as the weekend goes on you'll see how much the paddock is enjoying you being back...**

**JB:** Thank you Sweetie!

**...but for you, what's it like being away from the paddock?**

**JB:** It's been amazing! Nothing against the paddock because it is great to be back and it's great to see you guys. This has been my world, it's been my life for so many years. You're never going to just walk away and forget about it. It's a very special feeling for me being back here, seeing so many friends and colleagues and what have you. It's nice – but my life away from Formula One has been pretty cool. So... very different. I've been spending a lot of time in one place rather than traveling around the world and flying three times a week and I'm in a very lucky position where I can do that. To be fair, I've been busier than ever because I've been training really hard for my passion, which is triathlons. I'm flat out with training, and picking up dog poop, so it's been busy, yeah.

**EO:** It's good training for the biceps...

**JB:** It is very good! And I've seen on social media all winter, these guys training so hard. I saw Daniel Ricciardo standing on a Swiss Ball with something in his hands. Don't know what use that is to a Formula One driver – but it looked so cool. These guys flat out in the gym. Amazing. It's really good to see. The only thing I'm worried about is my neck but apart from that it should be alright.

**Q: (Joe Van Burik – De Telegraaf) Question to Nico. How would you rate the power unit development process is going at Renault at the moment?**

**NH:** I think that's OK. The power unit took a big step forwards last year to this year. I didn't know it last year but that's the feedback I have from Renault and from talking to some of the drivers. I think there is still more work to be done to close the gap to the Mercedes and Ferrari power units. We get an upgrade in the next few races, so I think it's pretty much on target.

**Q: (Louis Dekker – NOS) For all drivers. This special circuit, what's your favourite corner – and Esteban, it can be a simulation corner.**

**JB:** Favourite corner... it's a tricky one around Monaco because it's not just about one, it's difficult to pick one corner out. Tabac is pretty crazy. Most of the corner here it's easy-enough to pick out the apex and the exit but Tabac is quick: very difficult to pick the apex and the exit. It's very tough with the barriers. If they were different colours maybe it would help. Yeah, that's the toughest. Also, from what I've heard with the cars this year, Tabac and the Swimming Pool are the corners that are really going to be a step above last year – and the entry to Casino. Slow-speed, maybe not so much – but high speed is going to be pretty awesome.

**NH:** Yeah, Like Jenson says, it's going to be difficult to name one corner. I think it's more about a few sequences. I really like down from Mirabeau, through Loews corner and then the two right-handers into the tunnel. That's cool. And then, yeah Tabac and the Swimming Pool because it's so fast and it's really... yeah pretty spectacular from inside the car. It's always a challenge every lap, so that's fun too.

**Esteban, which one are you looking forwards to?**

**EO:** I think they said it: Swimming Pool and then the other right to left just after that. I don't know the names of the corners because I'm quite new – but those four in combination. I like chicanes and those look really demanding and challenging.

**Q: (Phil Duncan – PA) Jenson, could I just ask your thoughts on the terror attack in Manchester early this week and whether as a British driver you plan to run any sort of tribute on your helmet or car his weekend.**

**JB:** Obviously, it's horrific. It's amazing how often it seems to be happening all around the world and more and more in Great Britain. So, yeah, there aren't many words for it really apart from my thoughts are with everyone that's been affected. The most heart-breaking thing... I mean every life is important but with mostly kids going to the concert that's what I think hurts the most for everyone. I'm not a parent, but I know a lot of people who are and I think that's what hits home the most, how heartless certain people can be. But it's also been a pretty bad week for people we know and respect in motorsport as well, and the cycling world, well the triathlon world for me. So, it's been tough with Nicky losing his fight over the last the last few days – it just shows you how precious it is. You've got to enjoy every moment. That's it really.

**Q: (Peter Farkas – Auto Motor) Nico, you have scored points in Barcelona again but in terms of raw pace it wasn't a really good weekend for Renault. Have you identified the problems and also, in the slower corners the car seemed to be a bit better than the fast ones. Does it bode well for Monaco for you?**

**NH:** I thought it was the opposite: fast ones are better for us than slow. Anyway, I think it depends sometimes on the track, on the tyre. The pace on the medium wasn't great but we had track position and when you have that you hang on to it. It's just a matter of sometimes if you don't hit the tyre in the sweet spot, in the right temperature window you lose out on performance. I think to some extent that's what happened in Barcelona on the medium compound. And then, during the harder compounds we seemed to be suffering a bit more on those relative to softer compounds – so quite good that we have softer ones here this weekend.

**Q: (Jerome Pugmire – AP) Question for Esteban, the start you've had this season, how does that make you feel about your potential in Formula One, do you think you can get a podium this season? What is your view following your start this season?**

**EO:** Yeah, it is my personal target to get a podium at some point and I want to have it as soon as possible. It makes me confident to have a great start like this, this season, progressing all the time, feeling very well into the team. The team welcomed me so well, working with them a lot at the factory as well. I think we can achieve great things, y'know? All together. I look forward to many more successful races like this and hopefully we can get a podium this year.

**Q: (inaudible) Jenson, you qualified for the triathlon World Championships. What are your expectations regarding your triathlon career?**

**JB:** I'm old! I think that's my comments on that. I will always be amateur, never a professional at a sport like that. There's a lot of big talent that's British, which is great. The Brownlee brothers, Holly Lawrence, which is great – but for me it is more about just pushing myself. I enjoy it a lot and obviously I'm going to the World Championship – and if you're going you might as well aim to win it – and that's my aim, as an age-grouper though, not as a professional. That's what all the hard work's for this year. Looking forward to that. It's in Chattanooga, Tennessee, as well so it should be fun.

**PART TWO: DRIVERS – Felipe Massa (Williams), Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull), Pascal Wehrlein (Sauber)**

**PRESS CONFERENCE**

**Q: Felipe, let's start with you. Another driver, along with Jenson Button who we've just been hearing from, who thought he'd done his last Monaco Grand Prix at the end of last year. How special is it to have another chance to race on the streets of Monaco again? Was it one that, when you announced your retirement, you thought 'actually, I'm really going to miss that race'.**

**Felipe MASSA:** Ha, yeah. First of all, it's always a big challenge to race here in Monaco. For sure I was thinking last year, maybe I will miss that challenge – but it's always a different challenge, to get Monaco. You're always learning things, every year. The way of driving, corner, so many different corners, is quite tricky. A big challenge for everybody, all of the years that you are racing here. I think this year will be even a bigger challenge. Tyres are wider. Big tyres. The car is bigger and the track is still quite narrow. It always has been: it will be even more for how big is the cars now. I remember when Nelson Piquet was saying in the past that racing in Monaco is the same as taking your bike and driving in the kitchen. It will be more or less similar this year.

**DR:** We're racing cars, not bikes...

**FM:** It was Nelson Piquet, not me...

**DR:** Same thing. Brazilian.

**FM:** Then, it's so nice to have Jenson back. Everybody likes him. I just saw him down below. Really nice to have him back racing back with us. Hoping the best for him. Being behind me – but hoping the best for him. He can enjoy maybe the only race that he's back. Nice to have him back.

**Q: Now the story of your season so far this year is an interesting one; you're the only driver apart from the Ferraris and Mercedes who have started every single race in the top ten on the grid, and you've also finished every race but you've only scored 18 points, so what's been happening on the Sunday? Is it strategy, is it bad luck, is it tyre management? Where can you find that bit that's missing?**

**FM:** Well, not strategy, I would say. I had sixth position pretty much in my pocket in Russia and I had this puncture in the tyres, I had to stop. Then in the last race I was starting... the most important thing for me was to have a good start. I managed to pass Perez, Alonso at the start and then Fernando was on the outside of corner two and he was also... these two guys running, that they crashed, running outside of the... running into us so I had to go a little bit right and I had no idea Fernando was trying to go right. We touched slightly and my tyre was blown, so I was in front of them, I definitely had the pace to finish in front of them so what is that? Bad luck? Racing? It happens? So I don't know but it was a shame because I know that if I had these two results that I was supposed to have in the last two races everybody would say things a little bit different than now.

**Q: Daniel Ricciardo, 2016 Monaco Grand Prix pole-sitter of course; the expression 'unfinished business' was invented to describe situations like yours this weekend, after what happened to you last year, is the car going to be suited again this year? What's going through your head?**

**Daniel RICCIARDO:** We'll wait and see. Certainly, yeah, looking back on last year, a bit of unfinished business but I will do what I can. I definitely come here with still good feelings, good vibes. The level of confidence is still high, I guess. We've got some new parts on the car. We had them in Barcelona, we saw it gave us bits and pieces but not as much as we obviously still desire. We've got more this weekend and probably more Monaco-specific as well, so hopefully that will give us more than it did a couple of weeks ago and give us a chance to start leaning on the front guys a bit more.

**Q: It's clearly surprising to everyone that the Red Bull hasn't been able to compete for wins and poles this year so far, even after that raft of upgrades but are the front two teams still catchable, looking to the next few races ahead, into the summer?**

**DR:** I'll hope so. It's hard to predict. I think it was in Bahrain, we seemed relatively strong in qualifying without too much of an answer and then we bring the update and we're kind of still there, with that same gap. I think this weekend is a chance. If you put everything together in qualifying round here it can give you a good chunk of lap times. It's just having that level of confidence around here which helps and then we'll see, see what happens after this weekend. This one's fun, yeah, looking forward to it.

**Q: Pascal, great result last time out, career-best eighth position in Spain, one stop strategy, perfect execution by you. What did that mean to you and the team?**

**Pascal WEHRLEIN:** I think it was great for everyone. It gave us big motivation. Of course the start of the season was difficult for me and also for the team so in my third race, to already score a few points is great and everyone is happy and everyone is pushing really hard. As I said, it's giving us big motivation. We have some new parts on the car this weekend so hopefully in the future we can see results like this more often.

**Q: Well the four points have put you ahead of McLaren and this is clearly an important race for them to score points, so how intensely will you be focusing on racing and covering them this weekend?**

**PW:** I think not at all. We are focusing on what we can do, on our maximum. You know it's still very early in the season so we just try to extract the maximum from the car and we will see where we finish but I think it's too early now to say we are covering McLaren.

#### **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Louis Dekker – NOS) Daniel, your qualifying lap last year; was it perfect or near perfect and how much quicker do you think the new car will be?**

**DR:** I think from my side, I thought it was all I could do. I was really happy with the lap with the tools I was given but I felt like we could have had a better car in some areas of the lap, so I felt a bit limited. I remember through Casino Square there was still quite a bit of understeer, so yeah, it didn't feel like the front tyres were probably still where they needed to be but yeah, I was pretty happy with the rest. And then yeah, this year it's hard to predict the lap times. We've seen on some tracks we're three or four seconds quicker and others just maybe one and a half or two. But yeah, 13.6s... if we get below 1m 12s we're going pretty quick around here. I would expect below 1m 12s, yeah. We'll see.

**Q: (Leigh Diffey – NBC Sports) Mate, in regard to what went down last year which denied you the victory, did anything change internally within the team as far as in-garage procedure or protocol to ensure that that would never happen again?**

**DR:** Yeah, they went to some old-school spanking techniques with a big wooden... cricket bats, pretty much, as we call it! And beyond that, the physical pain there was certainly some... there was no physical pain for the record! Not that I know of. But there were certainly some things which were already in place for Canada, some systems stuff within the garage, as opposed to just radio communications, let's say. There were actually displays that were put up around the garage which were clear for more people and they kind of knew what was happening as opposed to just verbal communication which can sometimes be more confusing, obviously in the heat of the moment. Yeah, that was solved immediately which was obviously nice.

**Q: (Jerome Pugmire – Associated Press) Felipe and Daniel; you're both vastly experienced drivers, I just want to hear your perspective on Esteban Ocon's form**



**this year and what qualities you think define him as a driver, from what you can see?**

**FM:** Well, I think he's doing a good job. I think he's learning, race by race. I think he's starting to get quite competitive with Perez, race by race. They managed to do a good job in Barcelona. Unfortunately. I could have been in this fight. I think he's showing good performance so he's growing, learning and yeah, I'm sure the team is happy with what he's doing.

**DR:** He's obviously quick, he proved that in junior categories. I think it was with him and Max in Formula Three, from memory, who were in the title hunt. You know Esteban got that, so he's obviously talented. Max has already proved himself. These days it's a lightweight sport as well and Esteban probably weighs 48 kilos dripping wet so that certainly helps.

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – GloboEsporte.com) Considering what you have been seeing from the tyres this year, is it realistic that with the case of a safety car at the start, for example, most of the drivers pit and then go through with the same set of tyres to the chequered flag?**

**FM:** Yeah, maybe. Maybe, yes, especially on this track. If you have the opportunity with the safety car, not to even gain... maybe staying in a good position, so maybe people will try. It would be a little bit of a shame for this race, one stop is definitely not great. I remember we were even talking in the last [drivers'] meeting with Charlie and even some drivers were asking maybe it is supposed to be two stops, it needs to be two stops for everybody and then the race will be nicer, it will be more fun, it will maybe... something's going to happen for the strategies, that it can work better for the show also.

**DR:** Yeah, certainly you could get through the race on the same set of tyres. We talked about ideally... OK, we go softer with compounds but maybe we even have a Monaco tyre, that would be fun. Then obviously it needs testing and all that so then it.. whether it's easier said than done, I don't know but a Monaco-specific tyre would be cool, like something super super supersoft and then yeah, you would probably... inevitably going to have to make more than one pit stop.

**PW:** I think in terms of wear it's really - as Daniel said - it would be an easy one-stop. It's just about keeping the temperature in the tyres, so I think that's the most important thing this year. Our one stop in Barcelona, for example, only worked because we could keep the temperature in the tyres. We are not limited by wear, we are limited by the temperature and I think that's the most important thing this year, also for Silverstone, we discussed that the hard tyre is way too hard, it was way too hard for Barcelona. We as drivers want to go a bit softer.

**Q: (Louis Dekker – NOS) With the new cars, especially the bigger tyres, might this be a big problem on lap one because there's not much space in turn one and other places?**

**DR:** Ideally I repeat last year and don't worry about that but generally, yeah, it's always tight around this track, even now, I think, because what have we got, I think 200mm, 20 centimeters wider. It doesn't sound like much but then when you put all the cars together and on a tight circuit like this you see it and you notice it straight away, I'm sure. Qualify well, that's going to help.

**PW:** Yeah, so obviously Saturday's the most important day but then some corners are very tight and especially when you are in the midfield it's quite exciting, yeah.

**FM:** Yeah, as I said, it will be quite tight this year. I remember sometimes you're just kissing the guardrail a little bit and maybe we will have a lot more kisses this year and maybe it can

be a little bit more than a kiss! Maybe a punch in the face if you kiss too hard. As I said, it will be a little bit an extra challenge for all of us and I really hope that we can have a good weekend.

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – GloboEsporte.com) Felipe, high downforce circuits are not the best for your car. It was in the past, it looks like it continues this season despite the change of regulations. So is it realistic to believe that you can be strong here or do you think Force India can beat you?**

**FM:** Well, actually in the last three years, this was the worst race for us, it was terrible, the feeling that you have here on this track, definitely was not the right track for our car in the last three years, but you need to keep in mind this time it's different rules, different challenge for so many different reasons. The only thing I can say and I can be a little more optimistic is that in the last sector in Barcelona we were not so bad this time. We were terrible in the last three years on that sector, so I would say that maybe it can give you a little bit extra... making you a little bit more optimistic, that something can work in a little bit different way and the car can be a little bit more competitive than how it was in the last three years.

**Ends**