



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

2015 Bahrain Grand Prix Sunday Race Press Conference Transcript

19.04.2015

DRIVERS

- 1 - Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes)
- 2 - Kimi RAIKKONEN (Ferrari)
- 3 - Nico ROSBERG (Mercedes)

PODIUM INTERVIEWS

(Conducted by Sir Jackie Stewart)

First of all, congratulations to Bahrain for a fantastic grand prix, the 11th grand prix here in this region. What a crowd we've had here, what a wonderful race you've had, and the winner is Lewis Hamilton.

Lewis HAMILTON: How you doing man?

Terrific.

LH: How you guys doing? What a great crowd we have tonight.

Fantastic, and what a great race. Three victories this year. There's something called three world championships, potentially, at the end of this season...

LH: Yeah, I'm gunning for it. Firstly, a big thank you to my team, they did an amazing job this weekend. The Ferraris gave us a real good run for our money and out there it was really difficult to look after the tyres in these conditions, behind backmarkers and all sorts, but fortunately I was able to keep the car together, keep the tyres as healthy as possible and pull it through. But we need to keep pushing as a team, we'll of course do [that]. Just a massive thanks to everyone and all the people who came out to support me this weekend, I really appreciate it.

What about the brake issue coming into the end there? There was something on the radio suggesting that you had to back off a little bit on the braking.

LH: Yeah, I think my brakes just got a little bit warm when I was behind a few backmarkers. When you get behind them there's just no cool air coming in the brakes, so they got a bit warm, but it wasn't really a problem.

Well, congratulations on a fantastic race, you must be very happy and it's a hell of a season you're having. Well done. Kimi - terrific. Happy?

Kimi RAIKKONEN: Obviously you're never happy when you finish second but I think after a difficult start to the year I'm a bit pleased to get some result - a bit better result. Obviously we came through in the end very quickly but we run out of the laps but I think we have to be happy after where we qualified, after we finished, but obviously we're looking for a bit better results still.

Well, it's a terrific success for Ferrari to come back as strongly as this. You must be pleased about that?

KR: Yeah, I'm very happy how the team is working and obviously after last year where we are now is a big step and everyone is working very well together. The atmosphere is good now and we have a good direction to keep pushing. It seems to be working well and things are improving, so I'm sure as a team we'll get there and to be able to be all the time fighting for wins, but it will take a little more time.

Many congratulations. Here's a man who's been on the podium an awful lot these days, but today a tough race?

Nico ROSBERG: Yeah, I mean it was OK. The overtaking was enjoyable, to overtake the red cars, I like that a lot. In the end I tried to catch Lewis, but we're pretty similar so I couldn't catch him and he even pulled away at the end a little bit, and then I lost my brakes unfortunately, two laps from the end. I just went straight on and that cost me the position to Kimi, which is very disappointing.

Well, it's been a consistent season for Mercedes-Benz. You must be happy that you've got that kind of engineering?

NR: I'm happy about our car, yeah. The team has done a great job again and I'm very thankful for that and I really look forward to all the races that are still to come.

Q: Many congratulations Lewis, your 36th career victory, two years in a row here in Bahrain and ninth win in the last 11 grands prix. Obviously all weekend a sustained, competitive challenge from Ferrari. Does it mean more to beat Ferrari in a close fight than it does to win an in-house, inter-team battle within Mercedes?

LH: I think winning is winning so it doesn't particularly matter who it's against. You're trying to beat everyone out there. Naturally it's great to be having a fight with the Ferraris. I think for us as a team, and I think still today that Mercedes are still the best and we are working as hard as we can to keep up with this momentum that we have - but they are pushing very hard to close up. A huge thank-you to all the guys back at the factory and also the guys that are here because the car was really nice to drive this weekend. In the race I was really able to manage it and... yeah... really, really happy, really proud of everyone for all the hard work they put in.

Q: Kimi, fourth on the grid, second at the finish, first podium since Korea 2013. Alternative strategy for you. Obviously the middle stint was the key to your grand prix. Tell us about that and the pace that you were able to maintain against everybody else on the softer tyre. But also, you questioned at the end the decision to go onto the soft tyre - how did that work out, was it the right thing to do in the end?

KR: I think we had a few different plans. How to run the race and obviously this one was one of them. It all really depended where we are after a few laps. But I think we did a very good job out of it and the medium tyres worked very well for me in the second stint and I could pretty much... quite easily keep up with them, even catch them. They were working fine so obviously I was wondering if it's the right choice to go on the soft at the end - but obviously it was the correct choice, they were much faster still. So, I was able to catch Nico and got past him. We did more or less the maximum that we could do today and obviously if you think that we were ahead of Nico earlier, he got past me on lap two or three or something, so we lost some time but I think we had a pretty good race and hopefully we can have many more.

Q: Nico, you finished where you started but obviously the story is not quite as simple as that. Obviously you were on the attack today, particularly the overtakes with Sebastian. Maybe you could tell us a bit about that and how much you enjoyed those, and also could you just drill down a bit more into the problem with the brakes at the end.

NR: So, started off on a disappointing note for me after the start with losing the position to Kimi. I just did the wrong... well, got caught out. But then immediately I felt that the car was awesome, so went full on the attack straight away and was happy to get by Kimi and Sebastian. Great fight with those, that was very exciting at that point in time. Then always dropped back again behind Sebastian after a pitstop so had to get him over and over again. After that, yeah, trying to catch Lewis but that wasn't possible. Unfortunately struggling with brakes a little bit throughout the whole race and just lost them. Two laps from the end I lost the brakes, so went straight on and had to carry the car home for the last two laps.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Kate Walker - motorsport.com) I've got a question for both Lewis and Nico. One of the more visually dramatic moments in the race was when you were leaving the pits, Lewis, and coming up behind we had Nico and Sebastian fighting. I wanted to know: could you see that in your mirrors? Was it something you were aware of. And Nico, did you have any seat of your pants moments, wondering how close it was all going to get.

LH: I definitely saw it because I wasn't expecting... I went in the pits quite far... I think I had a decent gap and then all of a sudden I was coming out of the pits and they were right there. So I think I had a fairly slow pitstop and naturally that's really why, I guess, the gap closed up. I came out of the pits, braking into Turn One and I saw them in my left mirror and I'm like : "Oh my God, this is close!" But it was so much fun. Really good fun.

Nico - you saw an opportunity there clearly because Sebastian was looking at Lewis coming out of the pits I guess?

NR: Yeah. I just went for the aggressive inside because he didn't close up the door. He left a bit of a gap and a bit of a possibility and I was hoping Lewis was far enough ahead. It wasn't obvious but I was hoping he would be out of the way by the time we got to Turn One and it worked out - but for sure it was quite hairy, especially looking from outside I suppose. Inside it was OK.

Q: (Heikki Kulta - Turun Sanomat) Kimi, after being fourth in Malaysia and China and being out of top three for 18 months, how much do you appreciate this comeback to the podium?

KR: Obviously it's much nicer than being out of it but, you know, you come second and obviously we got quite close to the Mercedes today but it's a bit disappointing after that always - but I'd rather take this one than something else. You cannot feel happy. We are happy to be second but it's still disappointing. It's not what we want to do. Big thanks to the team. I had a pretty hard time last year. This year in the beginning, just some bad luck in the races but, you know, the team has done a great job over the winter and everybody is pushing together, in the same direction and I'm sure we are only going to get stronger and better as a team and improve the car. So, it's a great place to be.

Q: (Dan Knutson - Auto Action / Speedsport magazines) Lewis, was there ever a time you were concerned the Ferraris could actually challenge you for the win? During the race?

LH: Well, I was only ever... I could only really see Nico most of the time. Obviously at the beginning of the race it wasn't that easy to drop any of the guys behind - but then it got a bit better towards the end of the stint. And then later on obviously Nico was the one behind. And then I was made aware that Kimi was going long so he was going to be very quick in the last stint - but I think I had it pretty much under control. But I had a very similar situation to Nico, obviously it didn't cost me anywhere near as much, but brakes were getting quite warm, particularly in traffic. So, the last few laps I had to slow down a little bit - otherwise I don't think we would have had a problem.

Q: (Khodr Rawi - F1Zone.net) Kimi, do you think the only possibility to beat Mercedes is by trying a different strategy, trying to undercut them because beating them on track seems a bit difficult now?

KR: Well, I don't think it's the only way. Obviously on some circuits we can get closer, some not, but I think obviously the first step is to improve our package, that will happen in the future and hopefully get closer. One step is to qualify more higher up, make better starts and go from there. I think we had a pretty decent speed today but obviously if you're behind any cars and you lose any seconds, you will pay a price for it in the end. I think we just have to keep working and improving the whole package and how we do things. I'm sure we will get there and we can fight for wins every weekend after that.

Q: (Michael Schmidt - Auto, Motor und Sport) Kimi, you were flying in the second and third stints on both type of tyre but you struggled in the first stint. Have you any idea why?

KR: I wasn't struggling really. I didn't feel that it was much problem. I got passed by Nico, I passed him at the start and I got passed by him and obviously you lose quite a bit of time and

then he passed Seb and we were pretty close to each other. I felt I was faster but obviously it's pretty hard to pass. I think that we did the maximum, more or less. Yesterday we lost a place to Nico, but after that, once we got the mediums and the new set of softs at the end, the car was very good, so I could keep up good speed and everything was running smoothly, but already at that point we were a bit too far off first place.

Q: (Heikki Kulta - Turun Sanomat) Lewis, are you happy that Kimi took some points away from Nico?

LH: Are you feeling OK today? Normally... Kimi's right here, you know that, right? Normally you always ask... I wasn't expecting that question. I don't know. I think ultimately we're trying to win both championships so I guess the team won't be 100 percent happy and we're not 100 percent happy because we want to finish one-two. And so Kimi's taken some points away from us as a team which ultimately isn't the best but then on the positive side, of course, I got good points today, so we'll take it but we'll work as hard as we can to kind of rectify that and try and see if we can get some more one-twos moving forwards.

Q: (Matt Youson - Racetech) Kimi, can you tell us how this year's car is an improvement on last season's. Everybody talks about the power unit but is it just that or is there a lot more?

KR: Obviously a big chunk of it is the engine itself. It's a big improvement on horsepower plus reliability but you cannot just give all the credit to them. The car has improved a lot: much more downforce, the car is handling much better because of that, and obviously how the whole package has been done and put together. I think the big key is that all areas have improved quite a bit plus the people have been working more closely, as one team putting it together more nicely, so obviously the end result is what we have now and then as I said earlier, I'm very happy how things are going, very happy with the team and I think not many people expected after last year that we can be in this kind of position this early and now we are going in the right direction, so I'm sure we will get there but we want to start winning races more often and we just have to have some patience and do the work that we've done so far and we will get there.

Q: (Khodr Rawi - F1Zone.net) To all three of you: is the challenge of the championship against the rival teams more difficult than against your teammate, because you don't know what others have or what others are planning in terms of strategy and that sort of thing?

LH: It's all hard. It's difficult to say which one is harder. When you're fighting the guy in your team with the same car you've got the data. Sure it's more on the limit when you're fighting another team. There's pros and cons, there are advantages and disadvantages on each side. You just try to do your best job, that's what motor racing is all about, to be fighting other teams, that's what we're here to do.

NR: It's both different but both tough. It's difficult to go into the details but it's tough to battle Lewis last year and this year and it's tough now to battle the Ferraris now that they're in the mix.

KR: I think it doesn't make a lot of difference. Obviously with your teammate you more or less know what he's doing and in the race when he's going to stop but you have to beat all of them so it's really the same end result.

Ends