



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

## Press Information

### 2015 Italian Grand Prix Thursday Press Conference Transcript

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**DRIVERS – Marcus ERICSSON (Sauber), Daniel RICCIARDO (Red Bull Racing), Carlos SAINZ (Toro Rosso), Felipe MASSA (Williams), Sebastian VETTEL (Ferrari), Nico ROSBERG (Mercedes)**

#### PRESS CONFERENCE

**Nico maybe we could begin with you, congratulations, I understand you became a father. How will it change you and have you decided on a name yet?**

**Nico ROSBERG:** Yeah, for sure it's been very exciting, very intense of course. Big respect for all the mothers of this world – unbelievable. No, very emotional and super happy. Very excited.

**You'll obviously be losing a little bit of sleep then in the coming weeks but you've also been losing a few places off the start line lately, with both the old and the new rules on starts, so it's now three races in a row, making race day a bit more complicated for you. What thoughts have you and the team had on that and how you are going to address it, as particularly here in Monza it's a long run to turn one so any loss off the line would be amplified by turn one?**

**NR:** Yeah, it's true that starts have not been our strength lately, so we've been working on it a lot, making progress and then of course the rule change also came in right in the middle of, or off the back of two starts that hadn't been fantastic. So it's a work in progress and we need to improve for sure, we know that, and we're all getting into it.

**Thank you. Sebastian, when you started with Ferrari you said you were living the dream and here you are, at Monza, a Ferrari driver, in front of the tifosi. Can you put into words the sense of pride, responsibility, expectation, dare we say even emotion that comes with the job?**

**Sebastian VETTEL:** No! Well, I'm about to find out. Obviously I've heard lots of good things. I've been here before so obviously [I have seen] the passion for Ferrari, so obviously very much looking forward to becoming part of that. If we do well, which is our target, and we manage to be on the podium on Sunday I'm looking forward to not receiving booing for a long time. So, yeah, plenty of stuff to look forward to. So far we have had a great season. This is our home grand prix as a team and since I didn't have a home grand prix this year I adopt this one as well and hopefully we can make it a good one.

**Now, you made you feelings very clear to the media in Spa about Pirelli and the tyre failure. Having now seen the results of the investigation, what are your considered thoughts on the matter?**

**SV:** Well, first of all I think there was a lot of stuff explained or written that I think was not correct, the way it was expressed. I think it was very clear what I said. I think the most important point is that obviously we have been looking into the issue we had very clearly and Pirelli has been supportive and very open in the discussions, so I think that's the most important thing and we

need to make sure that we learn from that. Other than that we are in Monza now and, as I said, there is plenty of other stuff to look forward to.

**Thank you for that. Felipe, coming to you, obviously confirmed for 2016 [at Williams]. On the podium here last year, third for Williams and you're always popular here with the fans thanks to your years with Ferrari. Given Williams' chassis and engine characteristics can you dream of maybe moving to a higher step on the podium on Sunday of this weekend?**

**Felipe MASSA:** Yes, for sure. Dreaming is for free. You always dream about the best, about winning the race. Here is one of the best places to be on the podium, to see the whole people, the whole straight [full] of people, especially. Last year that everybody was also happy that I was there on the podium, screaming my name, I think it was so nice, so I'm really looking forward for another one and definitely we dream even to get a better position than third. When you go to the grid you're thinking about doing the best and thinking about the victory. That's what I'm doing every race and it's another one where I will try everything I can to be there.

**If we you look at your recent record, you out-qualified Bottas six-five this season, finished ahead of him in the last four races and moved ahead of him in the championship. What's driven this strong run of form for you?**

**FM:** I think last year I was very competitive as well with my team-mate. We were fighting the whole season I would say. The only thing is that the results of the race are a lot more consistent this year. Last year I had a lot of problems, many races where so many things happened and I couldn't finish in the position I was supposed to. I think this year the situation is a lot more consistent and I managed to score points and finish more or less where I was supposed to in most of the races. I think that's really good, but we have many races to go and you always want more.

**OK, thank you for that. Daniel, coming to you, you obviously come from an Italian family that emigrated to Australia. When you come here how Italian do you feel and how have the Italians welcomed you in the last few days during all the various promotional activities you've been doing?**

**Daniel RICCIARDO:** I start talking with my hands a bit more! It's automatic: you arrive in Italy and you start using your hands. What was the question?

**Apart from how Italian you feel, how have the Italians welcomed you in the past few days in the various different things you've been up to?**

**DR:** It's always a warm welcome here, for sure. The fans are... I've always said it, they're passionate; they're full on but they're great. They love the sport, they love getting close and having their moment and stuff. It's pretty cool walking into the paddock. It creates a bit of a road block but... I think it's the craziest paddock entrance we go to all year in terms of the fans spreading their love, but it's nice. I remember the warm-up lap here last year, I think I crossed the second Lesmo and there was a flare blowing across the track... it's unique, so it's cool.

**Red Bull has yet to lead a lap in 2015 and you've spent a fair chunk of the races somewhere between P5 and P7. Tell us about how you've set targets for the remainder of the season and also about the decision on power units for you and your team-mate this weekend?**

**DR:** Looking now towards the last part of the season, the last couple of races have been our strongest, as of late, Budapest and Spa have gone well for us. I think in terms of understanding the car we're much more on top of it now than we were earlier in the season. I think the chassis is back to a really strong level. Monza's not obviously a circuit that suits us particularly. We've got the penalties as well, so you know that's obviously a strategic things as well – take the penalty here rather than in Singapore where we expect to be very competitive. Then, yeah, have some fun

here on Sunday, come through the field as far forward as we can and then Singapore, we can really fight for a podium there.

**Coming to you Marcus, 25<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrated yesterday, happy birthday. Scored points in the last two races consecutively and beaten your team-mate in the last four, do you feel it's all starting to come together?**

**Marcus ERICSSON:** Yeah, I think my form, like you say, has been strong now lately and it's nice to see. I've been working a lot with myself, trying to change my approach during a race weekend, focusing more on myself and not other people, what they are doing. It's nice to see that it's giving results on the track. I just need to continue that form, not relax but continue to work really hard to continue that way.

**New start regulations in Spa; it wasn't the smoothest start for you. What happened there and what do you generally think of the new rules?**

**ME:** I think I did quite a good start. I gained a position, so for me it was pretty good. For me, it doesn't make a big difference. It's a bit more feeling for us drivers than there has been before. It's very similar to how it was in GP2 and I was always a strong starter in GP2, so for me it's not a problem.

**Thank you. Coming to you Carlos, another birthday celebrated, 21 years old now. If we look at your performances, you've reached Q3 six times and out-qualified Verstappen 7-4, yet the results show four consecutive retirements from the races and a best result of eighth. Are you getting concerned that the performances are being overshadowed by the results and the retirements?**

**Carlos SAINZ:** No, not really. It's not my main concern at the moment, because at the end, what is under my control everything is going so far quite well. The retirements are obviously totally out of my control, but four consecutive ones is a tiny bit too much. But I'm confident that this will end soon and I'm confident that it will start playing a bit to my side now and we can have a smooth second half of the season and start finishing races and going back to where we were at the beginning of the year in terms of points and position.

**We mentioned that you've out-qualified Verstappen to this point, have you been surprised by the speed you've been able to find in qualifying?**

**CS:** Well, you never know what to expect when you come to Formula One. I just know that last year in World Series I made a very big step forward with myself in qualifying and in the race and I just brought it to Formula One this year. You never know how you are going to be, you never know how your speed is going to be in Formula One. What I am quite sure is that Saturdays this year have gone very well for me and I am performing at a very decent level. I just need to make sure now on Sundays I perform at the same level and we finish races and I'm sure we'll be in a good position.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Agris Lauznieks – Kapitals Latvia) This is last race in Europe this season. What are your thoughts about the opportunity to add extra races in Europe, especially northern Europe – to do Riga Grand Prix in Latvia. How would you feel about it?**

**NR:** I've heard great things about Riga, I've got a good friend from there also so that would be fantastic but I don't know. Races in Europe are great, wherever they are to be honest, so it's always good to have more of those.

**Sebastian, anything to add?**

**SV:** Not many things I know about Latvia. But yeah, would be, I think, a nice place to go to. I think in general it's a bit of a shame that we don't have a grand prix in northern Europe, also Scandinavia because people are quite passionate and crazy about racing. I've been to Rally Finland some years ago and I was wondering why we don't have a Formula One grand prix but I guess that, especially next year, we have quite a lot on the calendar so it looks sort-of busy now – but maybe in the future.

**Marcus, maybe you can tell us why we don't...**

**ME:** I think we should have a snow race in Sweden – that would be something! I don't know. Like Sebastian was saying, we have a lot of passionate fans in all of Scandinavia and northern Europe so it would be very nice to have a race somewhere in these countries, for sure.

**Q: (Vladimir Rogovets – Sb Belarus) My question is to Felipe Massa. Today here you are between the very young drivers and in the race you are very quick and very competitive. My question, where is your personal secret to be very young and very quick?**

**FM:** I still feel young, honestly. Definitely when you here with 21 years old, 17... it's really young, definitely. I think you just need to... I always do my best. I feel quick, I feel competitive and definitely the experience helps in so many areas. I'm happy for what I've learned with these days and, definitely also when I see you are competing with young drivers and you show good speed in the qualifying, in the race good performance is always nice – nice feeling, so we always compete for the best result you can. That is what gives you pleasure. I can say I have many pleasures in racing and by the result I finish in races – sometimes not, something yes, this is part of our feeling. I still feel good motivation and I'm not finishing the race tired or whatever, so I think that's what counts at the end.

**Q: (Andrea Cremonesi, La Gazzetta dello Sport) Question for Nico Rosberg. Nico, before you talked about the birth of your daughter. I would like to know if you can compare the happiness of that to some other things in our job, like victory and nervousness. If you can compared nervousness in that moment? And a technical question about the gap with Lewis. The gap has increased a lot in the last two races, do you think this is one of the last chances to recover? To change the direction of the championship?**

**NR:** Emotions extremely intense, more intense than any racing success or anything like that. And also, yeah, because there's factors... love and health and all these things playing a part. That's definitely more than a race victory. Then the gap to Lewis, yeah, points of course it's gone in the wrong direction but it's just over one race difference so I'm very optimistic and pushing and definitely want to try and close that back down now.

**Q: (Andrew Benson – BBC) To Sebastian, Felipe, Daniel and Nico. Are you satisfied with Pirelli's explanation for the tyre failures in Belgium – especially as a couple of you described them as unacceptable over that weekend? And to Sebastian personally and additionally, have you raised your concerns, as expressed after Spa, with Bernie, who's deciding the new tyre supplier?**

**SV:** I think in all honestly I had a bit more insight because I was obviously one of the two cars that had a failure during the weekend in Belgium – a bit more insight on what was going on after the race in terms of the analysis and so on, than probably Felipe and Daniel. I'm not sure about Nico. But yeah, from what I mentioned also before, it has been very professional, the way it was handled. It was taken very seriously. And obviously our target is to improve the situation. I think it's natural that you always try to improve your product. I think if you look at the cars, if you talk about the cars today, the cars are quick and so on, and the cars are safe. They're surely safer than they have been 30 years ago but there is still room for making them safer: we still have accidents and so on and still some things can happen. It's a one-way street: you want to make progress and

keep making progress. So I think that's more important than any sort of press release, the feeling that I got when I spoke to the engineers and spoke to Pirelli.

**Nico?**

**NR:** It's being handled with extreme precision and a lot of energy is going into it, which I'm happy to see, of course. It requires that also. I'm confident that we'll be here and driving safely.

**Felipe, what were your reflections on Spa?**

**FM:** I think maybe they know better than me. They were there, they were inside. All these problems the two cars had in Spa with the tyres. For me it's a little bit more difficult to explain. We want to be safe. What we want is to not have this problem happen – or maybe to understand 100 per cent why it happens and change whatever needs to be changed to give us the most safe tyres and the most safe opportunities to race and to risk ourselves in a safe way – which is what we want. Don't know what they changed from there to here, but for sure if they change somethings from Spa to Monza, maybe with the tyre pressure and everything. So we need to understand if really they understand what's happened or not – which is the most important thing. We always want the most safe car or tyres to race.

**Daniel?**

**DR:** That's right. It's all been covered.

**Q: (David Croft – Sky Sports) With all due respect, Daniel, I don't think it has all been covered. I'm still at a loss, guys; are you satisfied with Pirelli's explanation? They say as well, in the press release, there were 63 cuts to tyres over the course of the weekend. We know two of them, for Sebastian and Nico, did any of you other guys experience cuts on your tyres? Did your teammates experience cuts? Is this statement right? Were there that many cuts? Was the track that dirty because of all the debris?**

**DR:** There was blistering. I don't really know the difference in a way, the details: what's a blister, what's a cut? Yeah, we experienced some blistering. Certainly not the first time we've had it in Spa. It's pretty common around there. Yeah, so we did see some activity, I guess but there again, not the first time. It's probably hard to be as attached to it as Nico or Seb. Obviously I wasn't in the car but I still saw it and I feel their concerns or their disappointment with the situation. I think what Pirelli's put out has been as much as they can for now. That's all they can say really is that we're working on it. Obviously they've given us some answers so, yeah, that's just where it is for now. It's hard to predict what will happen now in the future.

**Q: Carlos, any cuts in your team?**

**CS:** No, not really. I think they've given us an explanation, the reasons. I hope they've done their job properly. I'm convinced they have because they are the first ones that don't want to put us drivers at risk so they are giving us those explanations and I'm convinced that at least it will not happen again and we can race safely here in Monza. And if it does happen again, then maybe we need some more investigation.

**Q: Marcus, did you have any cuts in the Sauber team?**

**ME:** Yes, we had some issues with some cuts on some tyres but I think they came from debris on the track. That was the explanation that we got. I didn't experience anything else, not any problems with my driving.

**Q: Felipe, Daniel just said it's quite a common problem at Spa. Could you explain to us why Spa, why it's particularly common that you pick up debris there?**

**FM:** No, I don't believe it should be common. Debris we have every race. Some races we have more debris than others. For sure, the tyres should be strong enough to accept the debris or what we have beside the track. I don't think it's common. We had cuts as well during the weekend.

**Q: (Kate Walker – motorsport.com) More about the tyres, I'm afraid. We know that you guys all have Pirelli engineers embedded in your garage, giving you advice on cambers and pressures and whatever else. To what extent, in each of your teams, is that advice listened to? Do they have real input in the strategy? How can things go wrong when you're supposed to have an expert with you, telling you what to do safely?**

**NR:** Well, sometimes there are strict things that you must follow and other times there are just suggestions on everything. I'm not sure... we handled everything accordingly in Spa and made modifications also throughout the weekend to make sure we were running the tyres as safely as possible, according to guidelines given by Pirelli. I don't know about them, what their situation was. I can just say that we did manage things, yeah.

**SV:** I think it's fairly simple. There's a lot of things that you have to stick to because it's part of the rules. Also the FIA is checking so you can decide not to listen but then obviously you risk to be disqualified, so I don't think there's any team taking that risk. And then there's other things that you talk about and use the expertise of the Pirelli engineer inside your garage and I think it would be stupid not to listen to him, for all of us, for all the teams, because obviously they have knowledge that we can't get about their tyres etc, so of course we take it very very seriously.

**FM:** Yeah, I think the same, not really more to add.

**ME:** Same, same stuff, yeah.

**Q: (Daniel Johnson – The Telegraph) Seb, sorry to labour the point slightly. After the race in Spa, among many other things you said was that the current situation was unacceptable. If I can put it this way, is the situation now acceptable to you and any of the drivers who want to chip in?**

**SV:** Well, I think it is not acceptable to have a blow-out at that sort of speed, out of the blue and I think that's what I said also after the race, so there's nothing really to add. But, as I said before, I think the investigations that have been going on, the stuff that obviously has been analysed and talked about, explains some of it, maybe not all of it yet but it's still ongoing and obviously, as I said, the most important thing is that we make sure that we make progress. At the moment, from Pirelli's side, it looks very very professional, they handle it with extreme care, and I think things are going the right way.

**Q: (Daniel Johnson – The Telegraph) So has enough changed from Spa to here? Is the situation more acceptable?**

**SV:** Well, I think there are some short term changes, as I learned, if we talk about tyre pressures, for example. We obviously see how it feels but if that's a short term reaction within those couple of days or weeks that we've had, that's one thing. Then obviously long term I think we need to understand properly what happened. I think it's very clear that everybody is trying to do their best. I think we had a situation a couple of years ago which wasn't acceptable and there was immediate change and we didn't have problems afterwards so you can see that the professional approach does work and usually leads to the right result.

**Q: (Silvia Arias – Parabrisas) Felipe, I would like to know if something has changed in the team after the mistake they made with Bottas's car when they put on the wrong compound, please?**

**FM:** Well, it should, definitely. We always work for trying to do everything in the correct way, in the best way we can. Sometimes mistakes can happen in our working but for sure mistakes happen which we cannot repeat, so definitely we are always trying to improve things when we see they are not working in the way we want, so we want to be perfect, we want to do everything correctly. This is part of the working we are doing from race to race, the changes we are doing from race to race and whichever mistakes or things that can happen we are always working not to repeat and that's what we're doing as a team.

**Q: (Peter Farkas – Auto Motor) Daniel, you've mentioned that you are starting to understand the car better, and it was obviously in Spa, the efficiency is there, you were very quick in the**

**second sector in spite of running a very skinny rear wing but the top speed was not there. Do you think that Red Bull again has one of the best cars on the grid and again, is it obvious that now the engine is the biggest hindrance for you?**

**DR:** I think we're now back at a level we were at last year. We knew the chassis was strong, we felt most of our deficit was the power and then yeah, I think earlier this season it looked like we obviously had issues on both sides, the chassis... obviously I had experience from last year and I didn't feel like it was where it was last year so I thought we had similar deficiencies on both sides but yeah, we've had quite a few updates since. All year we have updates but I'd say since Silverstone it's really come on strong and we seem to be in the window a lot easier now with getting the car there so I'm definitely a lot happier with where the chassis is now. I feel it's like we were last year and then yeah, the power we know, we're trying to make up what we can but we know we started too far back and it's... I don't like the word impossible but it nearly is impossible to make all that gap back in one season so I think that's what it is for now. We're always going to be somewhat down for the rest of the season, that's why we look at Singapore and some of these circuits which are obviously a lot less power-dependent, a lot more chassis and we look at those as potential podiums for us.

**Q: (Louis Dekker – NOS.NL) Sebastian, can you take us back to a couple of years ago, your first victory here and also explain why it is harder this year to win here for Ferrari than back then for Toro Rosso?**

**SV:** I don't know yet. I don't know if it's harder yet. Obviously it was a miracle that was happening in 2008 so only positive memories of the whole weekend really. But yeah, some years later, obviously another highlight and I'm looking forward to it and obviously can't promise anything but for sure I can promise that we will give our maximum, trying to have a very very successful home race. I think that I know a lot more than I knew in 2008 so in this regard it should be easier but obviously it's never easier. If you look on paper, it looks like a simple track with low downforce but still it's also very technical so for us drivers it feels that the car is moving a lot, it feels very light under braking so it's still a big challenge around here. You need to get the braking points right etc so it's not that straightforward and obviously I'm sure that people expect a lot from us, but I think the one thing that we can promise now is that we will give everything we have.

Ends