



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Press Information

**2015 Japanese Grand Prix
Saturday Post Qualifying Press Conference Transcript**

26.09.2015

DRIVERS

1 – Nico ROSBERG (Mercedes)

2 – Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes)

3 – Valtteri BOTTAS (Willams)

TV UNILATERAL

Congratulations Nico, once again on pole here. One must wonder what might have happened if you had all had a second run, but earlier in the week you suggested that you might have found a little something in your rivalry with Lewis Hamilton, how much of an influence did that have?

Nico ROSBERG: Yeah, first of all very happy, great day today and a good comeback also for the team. It's fantastic after such a difficult weekend in Singapore to be back to back to our usual strength today, a strong performance today from the team – great car, so very thankful for that. Really turned things around; optimized everything for this track. And for me, pretty much nailed my laps today, so really pleased with the way it went and a great position to be in for tomorrow.

Lewis, there did seem to be a couple of little mistakes on the one lap you had. What might have happened on the second lap?

Lewis HAMILTON: Well, it doesn't really matter, but the second lap was looking good. On the first lap I lost a bit of time in, I think it was Turn 11, and I think it was the last corner. No, Nico is driving well this weekend. I definitely felt pretty good on that last lap but I'm glad that... I don't know if it's Ricciardo or Kvyat, but I'm glad they're safe.

Yes, Daniil Kvyat is OK. He got out of the car OK.

LH: Good.

And Valtteri, how much of a surprise [is it] to win the Williams versus Ferrari versus Red Bull battle?

Valtteri BOTTAS: Well, it's very good for us obviously. It's a very different track to Singapore and we always knew it's going to be better for our car. I think we came in for this weekend, for the dry, with a good set-up already, so we didn't really have that much work to do from practice to qualifying and today was one the most difficult Saturdays we've had, because there was rain on Friday and here qualifying is very important, so good surprise.

Thank you. Nico, all the teams are in the same boat, they've had just one hour of dry running to prepare for tomorrow's race, rather than the usual four hours. So, how prepared, how good is the car for race set-up?

NR: Well, I'm confident that the car is going to be good but, as for everybody, we didn't have the perfect preparation, so there might be a few surprises tomorrow. I'm confident I found a good balance. I did do some high-fuel running this morning and the balance was good, so it should be fine.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Q: Nico, you were on pole position here last year, eventually finished second, how can you change that?

NR: Well, for one, hopefully it's going to be a dry race tomorrow, that would help, for sure. And that's going to be the big one. Beyond that, I'm really comfortable with the way the car was handling this morning in the dry, good long run, quick, so it should be all good.

Q: Lewis, is it a great relief that Mercedes are back on top again after last weekend?

LH: Well, the guys are working incredibly hard to try and understand last weekend. It's definitely great to be back up here and it's very strange, obviously, to see some of the pace of different people behind but definitely the car feels like normal this weekend, which is great to see.

Q: For both of you, one's always talking about a perfect car, you're looking for the perfect car, everything's got to be absolutely right, so how well has it gone so far this weekend?

NR: At times today I had the perfect car, for sure, and that's why it was a great pleasure to drive it. Suzuka is the ultimate track and to have a good car here is just awesome.

LH: I think the great thing about this sport is that there's never a perfect car. It's always evolving, it's always improving, there are always areas you can improve on, collectively with the drivers. My engineers did a fantastic job working hard to get the set-up in a nice place. It was exciting, qualifying was exciting. I was enjoying the battle with Nico. It was a shame we didn't get to finish the last lap.

Q: And Valtteri, excellent grid position here again. As I mentioned, perhaps a bit of a surprise considering Red Bull and Ferrari are very good around here and Williams haven't necessarily been thought of as being good around this sort of circuit.

VB: Well, we always knew it was going to be better than the last race in Singapore and we had some new bits for the race in Singapore which produced some more downforce and that's helping here in the high speed corners where you need stability from the car and today I felt really comfortable with it. And from practice onwards, everything was run very

smoothly. I think as a group we did a very good job today but it's tomorrow when we need to do the perfect job.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Frederic Ferret – L'Equipe) Nico, last year you struggled in the rain. If it rains tomorrow, do you have the answers to your problems last year against Lewis?

NR: I didn't struggle in the rain, I just struggled on the inter tyre and on the inter tyre yesterday I was feeling great so I'm confident about that. So even if it rains, that's fine.

Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action and Speed Sport magazines) Nico, how much did the track evolve, it was obviously so green at the beginning, from that first lap to the last lap?

NR: Yeah, well, not much at all because on the prime I did a 1m 33 whatever, I don't know, very close to the option time so I don't think it was evolving much, and also the soft tyre somehow underperformed a little bit. We were expecting a bit more from that. It didn't feel that great out there as well.

Q: (Michael Schmidt – Auto Motor und Sport) Is that maybe the reason why you couldn't beat last year's pole position time? I think it was almost equal.

NR: Yeah, I'm sure the track was surely not as good, because there's just not as much rubber down there. And beyond that, I'm not sure what the reasons are.

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