



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

**Press Information**

**2015 Mexican Grand Prix  
Friday Press Conference Transcript  
30.10.2015**

**TEAM REPRESENTATIVES – Vijay MALLYA (Force India), Claire WILLIAMS (Williams), Maurizio ARRIVABENE (Ferrari), Toto WOLFF (Mercedes), Yasuhisa ARAI (Honda)**

**PRESS CONFERENCE**

**Q: Claire, if I can start with you. Williams won this race the last time it was here back in 1992. Did you watch that race and what are your thoughts on coming back to this circuit today?**

**Claire WILLIAMS:** I was 14 when that race was one and I don't remember watching it. I probably did; I'm sure I did. But it's great to come back here. We won the race prior to that with Riccardo Patrese as well, so Williams has a good history here. I'd love if we were able to repeat that this weekend. Obviously we haven't had some great races in the past few, so the team really needs a strong result here. But it's a great venue. I think everyone in Formula One for our return to Mexico has really enjoyed the experience so far. The promoters have done a great job with the facilities we have, so it will be a good weekend.

**Q: This time last year you were battling for position in the Constructors' Championship but you're looking pretty solid now in third for this season. It's obviously progress but are you satisfied with the season you've had?**

**CW:** This year for us was all about consolidation. If we are able to secure third this year again, that's fantastic for a team operating on the budgets we are operating on. We are operating on a budget that is half or a third of some of the bigger teams out there and I'm really proud of the job that everybody in our team has done. It's been hard work this year. We haven't had some of the podiums we would have liked to have had but we've done a job. But it's not over yet, we still go work to do but getting thirds again would be fantastic.

**Q: Thank you. Vijay, if I can move on to you. It's a huge weekend for your team, in particular Sergio of course. Are you enjoying it, are the team feeling added pressure this weekend at all?**

**Vijay MALLYA:** No, we are absolutely enjoying being here in Mexico. As you may know we launched the car in Mexico in January this year. Checo has a huge following, we have many

large Mexican sponsors and I personally love Mexico because there are many similarities with India, so this is like a home race for us as well.

**Q: We are hearing talk of a name change for the team for next season. What can you tell us about it? What does it mean for the team and how is it going to be structured?**

**VM:** We are in discussion, nothing has been finalised, we have many options and I'll be able to confirm or otherwise once I have something to say. As I've said, and as was faithfully reported by *Autosport*, I don't like to count my chickens before they hatch.

**Q: Thank you very much. Arai-san, can I ask you first what happened this morning in terms of Jenson's engine and what effect did that have on running this afternoon?**

**Yasuhisa ARAI:** Jenson's engine we had planned to change between FP1 and FP2 but we detected, by sensor, a high-voltage failure. Actually we don't know but we need time to learn. We have to change many items to go out the garage.

**Q: There is talk of Honda supplying a second team, or maybe not. What is the current situation and if you were given the choice would Honda rather supply more than one team?**

**YA:** Obviously we cannot discuss details at this moment. We have been approached by the team but discussions are ongoing and nothing has been decided. I always say this season: we are always open, so we are on discussions that are ongoing – that's it.

**Q: Toto, you were invited onto the panel in Austin to celebrate as Constructors' Champions and we're delighted to see you now as double champions this season. Tell us your thoughts on Lewis as a three-time world champion and also how he's changed over his three years with the team?**

**Toto WOLFF:** It's clear that when you win a third drivers' title you move into the 'Olymp' of drivers. There are not many who have scored three title or more and he's part of that. He's had an extraordinary season, almost without any mistakes. The car didn't let him down and this is then where he ended up. The journey he had in the team... he started the same time I joined the team. I think it's normal that as a person you develop, you grow into the team, you get to know the people, the car suits you more and this is the result of three years with Mercedes.

**Q: On the flip side, it's obviously difficult for Nico. Where does he go from here? How does he rebuild for 2016?**

**TW:** For the team it's always bittersweet and just to keep the right balance I think he had a season with so many ups but also many downs. Some very good performances, he was always there. He outqualified Lewis on some of the occasions but then he was also let down with the car in Monza, with the engine failure and this is simply where we need to improve – to provide a car that makes them capable of fighting each other, because it lifts the team. Today you could see he has a very strong pace and the combination of the two of them makes where we are. We won the Constructors' title also because Nico is such a strong contender to Lewis and this is a very beneficial situation to the team.

**Q: Thank you. Maurizio, can I ask you how important is it that Sebastian now finishes second in the Drivers' title race for Ferrari?**

**Maurizio ARRIVABENE:** The championship is not finished. At the moment he is second but I think Nico is hunting him but we will do our best to keep [Sebastian] in that position, even if Toto do not like.

**Q: Sebastian drove a great race in Austin. Can you tell us what he's brought to the team and how motivating performances like that are to the team?**

**MA:** I don't want to talk about Sebastian, because every time they are asking me questions – he's a four-time world champion. He's demonstrate that he is a great driver but he also have a good team around him. He has integrated himself very well into the team and also with Kimi, I have to say, and everybody is going in the right direction. He gave us an additional push and I recognise he is a great driver. By the way, congratulations to Mercedes and to Lewis for the title, the really deserve [it].

### **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Ian Parkes – Autosport) Toto, you recently signed an agreement with Manor to supply power units for next season. They describe themselves as a team of real racers but two of those real racers, John Booth and Graeme Lowdon, have seemingly resigned form their positions. I just wondered what you make of that and if that poses any threat to the deal going forward into next year?**

**TW:** Obviously when I spoke about racers, John and Graeme was very much meant by that plus of course the rest of the team, it's a bunch of real fighters that have shown stamina in keeping the team in the sport. I've known John forever, since the Formula Renault days of Lewis and Formula 3 days. Manor means John Booth and John Booth means Manor and Graeme has made sure... was very instrumental in keeping the team alive last year, so seeing them go, from a personal standpoint and from the racing spirit, is obviously a blow. So going forward, we have signed the deal with Manor and I would say we need to give credit to everybody in the team who stays in the team but we are curious spectators from now on.

**Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Question to Maurizio. Last week in Austin I asked you what your thoughts and comments were about the possibility of another kind of engine, that was being discussed. You said that you'd rather wait until it's gone through Strategy Group etcetera before commenting – yet on Monday we heard that Ferrari had invoked a veto against such a plan. Could you please explain the difference and also whether in fact there was a veto that was invoked – and why? Thank you.**

**MA:** Concerning the veto it is quite easy. We exercised our veto in compliance with our legitimate commercial right to do business as a powertrain manufacturer. There's nothing to add.

**Q: (Kate Walker – motorsport.com) I've got a follow-up for Maurizio. Given the rude financial health of the Ferrari F1 team's finances, how do you morally justify exercising your veto?**

**MA:** I repeat it. I have to repeat again. The rules are done by the Federation and it's fine but we just exercise our commercial right as a powertrain manufacturer. This is the reason why.

**It was a question about the moral justification, given your strong financial position.**

**MA:** Why do we have to justify it more? Here we are talking about commercial right. We are not talking about budget, we are not talking about anything else. If somebody, they are asking you, they give you a specification to produce apple, OK you produce apple in line with the specification. That somebody, they're asking you, OK, we want to impose you the price of the apple', what are you going to do? This is the principle. It has nothing to do with the rest.

**Q: (Christopher Joseph – Chicane) Question for the front row [MA, TW, YA] in terms of powertrain. How important is it for you, as powertrain manufacturers, that you have gained some traction in the Mexican market – and what is the relationship between excellence in powertrain on the track and how that relates to road car technology?**

**TW:** To answer the first question, Mexico is a huge market and very important market for us. We're not only producing cars in Mexico but also it's the sheer size is very important for us. From the relevance to road car technology, there is a huge relevance – and it goes in both directions. What you are seeing on the roads is hybrid technology and fuel efficiency and this is the fastest lab in the world. We have been part of a sport that set very stringent new rules two years ago in terms of efficiency of those power units – yet those power units deploy more power than the engines before and we are almost there in terms of lap times with 100kg instead of 150-160kg – so it's very, very road relevant.

**Arai-san – how important is it to be visible to the Mexican market?**

**YA:** Here is a very, very important market for us, of course. We made a new plant in Celaya and opened that plant. Our services are very strong in Mexico. This is the 50 years anniversary for the first win for Honda in Formula One this year. It is a very special place in Mexico.

**Maurizio – how important to be visible to the Mexican market and the relevance to road cars?**

**MA:** For us of course it's important because Mexico somehow is the door of South America. It's a growing market so for a car manufacturer company it's a very, very important and this is the reason why we were very happy to have the grand prix here because it's another opportunity to enlarge the Formula One sport and the Formula One race in South America. The show I think is more completed now with Austin, USA, Mexico now and Brazil.

**Q: (Ralf Bach – Auto Bild Motosport) A question to Toto. Toto, can you understand Ferrari's opinion in this engine case? The veto right and the answer.**

**TW:** This is obviously a very controversial topic and, as with many things, black and white is not the answer. There is... we were... there is a set of rules which were implemented in Formula One two years ago and we started developing those engines three, four, five years ago, based on that set of rules. As large corporations we work on long-term planning. It is part of the budget process. It is part of the R&D process. From that standpoint, part of it is a business case and you need to calculate how much you can charge for those engines, how much you can recover for those engines. Ferrari is a public company now, so it is difficult as a commercial entity to just be confronted with the situation where price is being imposed. It somehow takes away the commercial ability of refinancing. Now, you can say, for a large organisation it doesn't matter: a couple of millions don't matter – but they do. It's how we are being set up, the constant always trying to improve your result and optimise your

organisation – which is why it's a discussion I think we should have behind closed doors. I think it is very important to understand the financial constraints of some of the smaller teams and we remain committed to cost reductions. It's not like the big teams are stubborn and say "well, we don't want to hear anything of that." This is a platform that functions with all of us. We are not just running fronting it and saying we don't care what happens behind us or aside of us. You need to balance that. I think Ferrari's first reaction – and excuse me [MA] that I'm talking for you in that case – is the imposing ways are very difficult to cope for a commercially-oriented entity. I can understand Ferrari's standpoint and I can also understand it's a very controversial and difficult situation for some of the smaller teams, and of course how it's being brought forward, it doesn't look very neat – but there is a much more to it than just a sheer veto and saying "no, we don't want to have the discussion," because that's not how it was.

**MA:** In fact, what I said, my answer was only concerned to the reason we applied the veto. For the rest I totally agree with veto. It is not a position against the other team. It is a decision that is defending a commercial principle. For the rest we are open to finding any other solution. At Toto explained, you have in a public company, as we are now, but also in a company as Mercedes is, you have research and development costs that somehow you have to recover. I don't find any commercial entity all around the world that is giving their product out to the market for free – or at cost. So this is the principle.

**Q: (Ian Parkes- Autosport) The FIA recently announced plans to potentially introduce a budget engine from 2017. To Vijay and Claire, could you give us your thoughts on that, whether it's a unit which would likely appeal to you? And to the front three engine manufacturers, again your thoughts on that, bearing in mind the multi-millions of pounds that you've spent in developing the current system?**

**CW:** Everybody is aware that Williams is always in support of any cost control measures in Formula One, and we respect the work that the FIA are doing in that regard. But we also have always come out in support of the current power unit that we have, it's hugely relevant to the auto industry of today and in Formula One, this needs to be a technically innovative championship. So I think there are arguments on both sides and as Toto said, it's quite an evocative subject and one that we want to have conversations around with the FIA and directly rather than talking about it in the press at this stage.

**VM:** I received a communication from the FIA proposing the new engine concept with outline specifications. I appreciate the cost cutting initiative. I think Force India has constantly been asking for cost control measures in Formula One for good reason, I might add. But it's very early stages for us to comment on whether we would be supportive of this particularly new engine or not. Having said that, we have an excellent relationship with Mercedes. We have a fantastic power train. Sure, if the FIA feels that an engine should cost six or seven million euros, this gives me a little foot in the door to request my friend Toto for a discount. But having said, we are contractually obliged to Mercedes 'til 2020 and we respect our contract, but having said, any cost saving initiative is welcome from our point of view and should be discussed by all teams in the strategy group and those who are not in the strategy group, because they are equally relevant and hopefully we can all come to a conclusion.

I just take another minute: I heard what Maurizio said about the recent veto by Ferrari. He further states that he would be very prepared to sit down and discuss cost reduction

measures which is something that we appreciate. Unfortunately, in the past, the strategy group has been discussing cost control for the last two years and there has been no significant result. Hopefully now, going forward, we will all sit down with the seriousness that it deserves and find a solution that is satisfactory to all teams that are competing in this world championship.

**TW:** Vijay's a very shrewd businessman so nothing else was expected, same as Claire. As I said before, we cannot close our eyes to what's happening in Formula One and we need to show respect for every team – the ones that are part of the strategy group and the ones not part of the strategy group, and you need to consider that. And you have to balance that against your own commercial pressures. I think Formula One was successful with the current engines in attracting engine manufacturers. It is a period where we are having four suppliers in the sport, which I would consider as a success and I think that from our standpoint, what we need is a long term visibility of regulations and what's happening so we need to try to make our customers and partners in the smaller teams save costs as good as we can and have a serious discussion about it and maybe Jean Todt and Bernie's initiative now is going to trigger more emphasis on those discussions so I take it as a positive. We remain open to the regulations, we are not the ones who make the regulations but we have a voice and we sit there and we hope I can make that argument heard, that we need long term stability in coming up with solutions. If, going forward, we need different regulations in terms of power units we would very much discuss that, if it makes sense or not, but we shouldn't shake the system too much because that doesn't fit to the long term perspectives of large organisations like the three of us represent.

**YA:** I think that for Formula One there are three major important things. One is sustainability, as you discussed, the cost to a price. And how more attractive and keep the good fun. And also the challenge of new technology; the current regulation is a very good direction, and also the competition. Those are the three major areas which are always important and we always discuss about that.

**MA:** I think I tend to full agree with Todt because here you have two companies, they do chassis, they do engine, gearbox, everything on the car so we need to find a bit of a balance versus others because everybody looks smaller but if you compare us and what we are doing to maybe our teams, we have all the respect for them. They maybe do only the chassis. We need to find the balance in between all of us. As Vijay said, we are ready to sit down to discuss, to find a good solution which is making everybody happy and most importantly, it's helping Formula One to grow in terms of spectacularisation and so on. So, this is our point of view. We want to continue our discussion but as Toto said, you can't shake the box too much because otherwise you create further confusion. I mean if you apply the rules, the rules need to be discussed, agreed by everybody and equal for everybody, because I don't think a solution to have three, four, five different power units that they are running in Formula One is going to satisfy us and to simplify also, because most of the time, now that what we discuss in the strategy group is becoming public. I can say something in the strategy group where also we are discussing how to simplify the rules so we also need to do that and to do it we need to unify the rules, to simplify and to look further to enhance the show.

**Q: (Will Buxton – NBC SN) Toto said a few moments ago that we can't be blind to the situation in this sport any longer and yet the use of the veto by Ferrari shows that if not blind, it could possibly be argued that there's a slight blurring of vision. I would like to ask the members of the panel that don't have the right of veto for a simple yes or no answer;**

**should anybody in this sport, should any team in this sport have the right of veto over regulation?**

**CW:** I think it is what it is. I think it's like a lot of things in Formula One, that it is in the regulations that if Ferrari have that veto, it's a historical veto they've had for many years. I don't believe that they've exercised it on a regular basis but they obviously exercise it when they feel opposed to something and opposed to something that they believe that they should be opposed to because it's important to them and Maurizio has laid out the reasons why he used... Ferrari used their veto. Where I sit, Williams, we've always just abided by the rules, they are what they are, like a lot of things in Formula One and we just go along with them.

**VM:** I sit on the world motorsport council of the FIA so I'm not going to express my personal opinion. The FIA president Jean Todt has already issued a press statement surrounding this entire issue of the recommendations that were made for cost control measures, that Ferrari vetoed it, and he very clearly stated that he does not intend to contest the exercising of that veto so that's it as far as I'm concerned.

**TW:** Well, there is not a yes and no answer to this, it's much more complex than this and I think it is an historic right which is a right that was earned in participating in the sport for fifty or sixty years, God knows how many years, and having amassed this tremendous amount, the question is is the veto the right way in terms of honouring that. It's up to others to make that judgement so considering that, I think that somebody like Ferrari needs to have different right of opinion and expressing themselves than somebody who has been here ten minutes.

**Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Arai-san, major corporations move employees, they give them projects, they give them assignments etc. I'm hearing from Japan that your assignment is a three year assignment, that there were two years to set up the Honda F1 programme and one year to introduce it in the field, i.e. this year. Can you assure us categorically that you'll still head the programme next year or will somebody else take over?**

**YA:** I don't know. I can't say here.

**Q: (Christopher Joseph – Chicane) Just further to your response, Toto, you talked about the veto and in general you've all spoken about the veto being part of the historic nature, the DNA, if you will, of Formula One. Is it perhaps time that, seeing as teams like the Williams team, all the independent garagistas as they were called, should they not have a veto, are they just not equally part of this great circus?**

**TW:** If we all had a veto, it doesn't make any sense any more. No, I think this is really such a complex discussion which we shouldn't have in public. My personal opinion is that you need to respect Ferrari's position. It is the strongest brand in Formula One and it has done a lot around Formula One and has been honoured in various contracts be it the veto or be it with commercial rights. And whatever the ways of that being honoured is another question. Is veto the right thing to exercise your position or not, I don't know, but it's not a discussion we should be having here.

**MA:** I would like to add also that we are not applying the veto to every single meeting. If we do it, we think a lot about it and we do it if, in our opinion, it's necessary to do it and the last one, I remember, was applied by Jean Todt actually a couple of years ago, many years ago.

Ends