



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

## Press Information

### 2016 Spanish Grand Prix Thursday Press Conference Transcript

12.05.2016

**DRIVERS – Fernando ALONSO (McLaren), Lewis HAMILTON (Mercedes), Kevin Magnussen (Renault), Carlos Sainz (Toro Rosso), Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso), Max Verstappen (Red Bull Racing)**

#### PRESS CONFERENCE

**Q: Fernando, a good result last time out in Russia with sixth place. Do you believe you're closing in on the Williams-Red Bull battle? What development steps can we expect from McLaren-Honda here this weekend?**

**Fernando ALONSO: Yeah, I think the car is improving and we are getting more and more competitive in the races. I think the next grand prix will be a good one for us, so here in Barcelona, Monaco, even Canada should be a little bit better than what we did in China and in Russia in terms of layout. Yeah, we have some high hopes for us at the moment to keep this momentum and keep growing together to more competitive positions and yeah, I think we have some updates for this race in terms of aerodynamics, most of them. We'll see how the weekend goes but we are probably much more optimistic than one month ago.**

**Q: How is the enthusiasm for Formula One here in Spain at the moment – with you and all that you've done and obviously now Carlos coming through?**

**FA: I think it's still OK. Definitely it's a little bit lower than 2005-6-7 when we had a 45 minutes queue to come into the circuit. It's still quite high and I think the people are still loving the sport – but definitely there is a little bit less enthusiasm about the races because with the television not being available for everyone, just with a pay channel etcetera, probably is a little bit less viewers, a little bit less media attention. But I think we have good days and it's still quite popular.**

**Q: Lewis, second at the moment in the Drivers' Championship but in four starts in 2016 you're yet to finish the opening lap in a front-running position. It's hard to believe – so is this the weekend when we hit the reset button?**

**Lewis HAMILTON: That's the hope, of course! Who knows? We'll wait and see.**

**Q: There's still a long way to go, obviously, in terms of your challenge for a fourth drivers' title – but in the battle with Ferrari do you feel that, despite whatever upgrades they bring, you're able to keep them at arms' length. Is that the way it feels to you?**

**LH: No, I think Ferrari are constantly improving their car. I think this weekend they're obviously going to have some upgrades, as you would expect for Barcelona. I think they've been very, very close up until now. They're going to continue to strive. They want to win; they're very, very hungry – as are we. I think we do have the power as a team to continue to develop, hopefully at**

a similar, if not the same rate as they are. So, of course we can always try to keep them at arms' length but who knows how it's going to go.

**Q:** Kevin, breakthrough result in Sochi, 17<sup>th</sup> to seventh. What's that done for morale – yours and the team's?

**Kevin MAGNUSSEN:** Yeah, for sure it's made everyone happy to finally get some points on the scoreboard but we're not fooling ourselves to think that's our level. It was a little bit lucky with a lot of people having problems on the first laps and one of the Toro Rossos not finishing the race towards the end. So, as I said, we're not fooling ourselves to think that's our level. We need to improve quite a bit before that will be our level – but, as I said, it's nice to get points on the board.

**Q:** It's clear to see where your challenge lies. Both Renault's have been knocked out in Q1 at the last three races in a row. What have you got in the pipeline to address that?

**KM:** It seems qualifying is our weak point. It looks like people can turn things up for qualifying that we can't. So that's one thing to work on. It's not the only thing. We are behind on a lot of different areas and we just need to improve overall – because the situation we're in at the moment is that we have a car that hasn't been developed continuously all last year and we're picking up on everything now. We need to be patient but at the same time need to work extremely hard because we need to catch up on people who are also improving. I think this last result shows that it is possible to score points and if anything happens like a first-lap incident, we need to be there and ready to take advantage.

**Q:** Carlos, coming to you. Obviously, despite optimism that you'd have a reliable package this season with which to get consistent finishes and points, you've yet to really have a properly clean weekend. Tell us about the start to your season.

**Carlos SAINZ:** Yeah, it's been definitely a very tricky start where we definitely had the pace, we definitely had the speed but just because of one thing or another the final result hasn't come together yet – but I am optimistic that, from now on, from Barcelona we can press also a bit the reset button and start getting the results we deserve because definitely the pace, the speed is there.

**Q:** There have been some significant changes of personnel obviously on the driving and the engineering side at Toro Rosso. Can you give us your perspective on that?

**CS:** Yeah, I think there have been many changes in the team but I don't get to analyse them much because it's not my job change engineers or to change drivers. I fully trust on what Toro Rosso and Red Bull have decided to do and I think it's for the best of the team, for the best of the engineers, the personnel in there and already you can see some refreshment in the faces. I'm convinced it will just go on better. To have Daniil we can probably fight now for the P5 in the championship that was the main target since the beginning of the season.

**Q:** Let's get into that then. Daniil Kvyat, one of those changes obviously involves your return to Toro Rosso, moving from Red Bull. Daniil, we've all seen the statement from Red Bull about why this move was made – but what are you telling yourself about it and where you go from here?

**Daniil KVIYAT:** Well, I think obviously the decision in a way was a bit of a shock also for myself. It is what it is at the moment and I think I've always been giving my answers on the track and I think nothing will change. I will try to give as loud an answer as possible on the track. There are 17 races remaining, I've come back to Toro Rosso, the team for which I raced in 2104, a team I really like a lot, the team that I've felt over the last few days is giving me a very warm welcome, which I'm very grateful for already, now I can feel the atmosphere is very positive in the team.

The goals are clear – for the team and for myself – and I'll be pushing absolute limits on the track and I will be giving my answers there.

**Q:** Looking back, do you feel you moved to Red Bull too soon?

**DK:** I don't think so, I really don't think so. Like I said, if we look at what happened three weeks ago, or whatever, I was standing on the podium and then suddenly there were a few decisions made around – but like I said, the bosses make them and I have nothing else but to accept them and do my best job possible now in the team I am with – and it is Toro Rosso. It should be OK – but I think I have done everything correctly until now. And nothing will change from my side.

**Q:** Let's have the other side of the story. Max Verstappen, obviously you're replacing Daniil at Red Bull. A racing driver is always going to accept a chance to race closer to the front – but how do you evaluate both the opportunity and the risks involved in this move so early in your career?

**Max VERSTAPPEN:** To be honest I'm very happy with the chance they have given me. I'm racing for a top team now, so that was always the plan what I wanted to do. And yeah, with the risk, to be honest I think it was a bigger risk to be so young in Formula One but I've handled it pretty well. From now on it's just getting used to a new car, which is not easy in the season, but already with the things I've done in the factory, already they've given me a lot of confidence. Of course, a lot of procedures to learn again but it will come race-by-race and I'm definitely going to enjoy it.

**Q:** You now have your new team-mate Daniel Ricciardo as a benchmark – but you can also learn from him. How do you see that relationship evolving?

**MV:** For sure he's a great guy. He's very fast on track and has a lot of experience in the team. I will try to learn a lot from him.

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

**Q:** (Mike Doodson – Auto Action) Max has been quoted as saying he couldn't sleep for three nights after he got the news of his promotion. My questions for the two world champions here, can they remember races in their career about which they were particularly apprehensive in the days leading up to them?

**LH:** It's hard to remember back, it's been a long time now, I'm a veteran. For sure the first race, the first race in a new team. Honestly, every season you're a bit apprehensive: you're a bit... you have that nervous buzz of a new car, a new beginning, a new opportunity, so for sure I can imagine how the feeling is for him.

**Fernando?**

**FA:** Not really. I don't think that I ever had that kind of stress. Obviously there are some more or less important races and you feel the moment – but normally in my case it would be on Sunday when you do the drivers' parade, when you jump in the car for the practice start – you know it's an important race to deliver. But the week before... no big issues.

**Q:** (Simon Lazenby – Sky Sports) Question for Max and for Dany. We've heard the statements as James is saying but what reasons were you given by management for the swap and did you both have prior indication that this might have been an option for 2016?

**MV:** I think it was pretty clear in the comments they have given to you. From now on, I'm just very happy with the chance they have given to me and I'm going to enjoy this season and from there on we'll see for the future.

**Dany?**

**DK:** There was no real explanation to be honest. I think if the bosses want something to happen, they just make it happen. Simple as that.

**Q:** (Livio Oricchio – [globoesporte.com](http://globoesporte.com)) Daniil, if you carry out very good work now in Toro Rosso, do you think it's realistic to believe that Marko and Horner could take you back to Red Bull? And also, if you are putting your focus on developing very good work and thinking in other teams?

**DK:** Well, obviously first things first. I think now it will be important to first make a good work. These remaining 17 races will be very important and I believe then, let's just wait and see. To be honest there would be anyway a lot of thinking I think from anyone. First good work and then we see.

**Q:** (Sacha Roos - Sky Deutschland) Question for Dany. How difficult is it for you now to look in the eyes of Dr Helmut Marko and Christian Horner – because they're blocking your career.

**D:** You know, obviously, first hours after that of course you have been thinking a lot, and then the work started and then I fly to the factory, I see Toro Rosso people, which are very motivated and very hungry. And I'm now extremely hungry, and to be honest I don't see it as blocking. You have to take the most positive moments now because actually there are a lot more positive moments now than anyone can imagine I think. I take it as a golden opportunity with Toro Rosso. And, like I said, I really like the team, I really enjoyed working with them, most of the people are still the same and I believe we can do a really good job. And then once the good job is done, there are more good opportunities to come. I think you always have an opportunity. I think you always have something to fight for.

**Q:** (Cristobal Rosaleny - Car & Driver) Carlos, after one year and almost a half with Max with more or less the same performance level, although points have not shown the same, what do you think that they have put Max and not you in Red Bull?

**CS:** I don't get to evaluate the performance of each driver so easily. That is done by my bosses at Red Bull. Now my time... I appreciate what Red Bull is going quite a lot, that is to put young talent into a Formula One team. As soon as you do a good job they show you the confidence, they give you the chance and now it's my time to fight more than ever for that. I have, as Dany said, 17 races ahead to give the maximum out of myself, to fight for my chance as much as I can. I'm sure that if I show the same speed I have now with a bit better results my chance can come.

**Q:** (Jonathan McEvoy – Daily Mail) Daniil, I was wondering what you believe is the real reason why you were dropped? Do you feel they looked for an excuse to drop you or do you feel that there was genuine reason enough to do it? What is your understanding and what explanation was given to you as to the reasons why you were dropped?

**DK:** First of all, I think the word 'dropped' still a bit heavy because I still get quite a good chance from Red Bull with Toro Rosso. So, I think it's a positive thing. Secondly, like I said, I feel like I've done everything for the team. I feel like I've been bringing the points, I've been bringing all the development work. We've been working well together. So, to be honest, I don't really think so. It's a question for other people who made the decision. I think they can give a better answer to that. I really don't see any reason. It's for them. A question for them.

**Q:** (Daniel Johnson – Daily Telegraph) Questions to Daniil and Max. Daniil, given what's happened to you, do you think that Max deserves your old seat and Max, do you think Daniil deserved to lose his seat?

**MV:** I think that's not up to me to say who deserved it or not. I'm happy with the chance they've given to me and I will try to make the best of it. We'll see where it ends up.

**DK:** Well, there's no point discussing this, especially from my side. I think now what's ahead, in front of both of us, is a lot of hard work because we've both changed the team and I think the people around us will also be able to evaluate how good a job we are both capable of doing in these circumstances. It will be interesting to see who will be able to work better and harder to bring in the results to both teams we are now with. Let's just wait and see. The season is very long.

**Q: (Giorgio Terruzzi – Il Corriere della Sera) Question for Lewis and Fernando. What do you think about the Red Bull decision to change the drivers?**

**FA:** They changed the drivers? [to Lewis] You knew it?

**LH:** No!

**FA:** I guess it's up to them. It's definitely a surprise after Race Four. They've been doing very good job promoting drivers and discovering new talents and giving the opportunity. So, it's the way they do it, and they've been doing a very good job in the past, so we'll see.

**LH:** erm... yeah... I think obviously ultimately it's a good opportunity for one and for the other very unfortunate. Red Bull has done well in bringing young talent forwards but I think they need to be aware that young drivers need time to progress. Mistakes do happen, there's so much pressure on drivers, particularly at a young age. Especially when you've not done a lot of years in the lower classes, you've come quite early in, there's so much to learn. A lot of pressure on the shoulders I think to take a driver out of a role with a team where he's comfortable and move into another one. It's a difficult position to be in. Do I agree with it? It doesn't really matter – but it's definitely not something I would particularly do.

**Q: (Alan Baldwin – Reuters) Carlos, one of the reasons Dr Marko gave for the switch between Max and Daniil was that it also sorted out the relationship in Toro Rosso between you and Max. Could you perhaps give us more details about why that relationship between you and Max wasn't working?**

**CS:** I think the personal relationship Max and I have is not a big issue honestly. I think we both always maintain the respect off the track and I think we showed it at every moment. I think it's more a matter of a team perspective of how the team was working and that's where Franz Tost and Helmut Marko take the decision. But from Max and myself there was always respect, there was always good vibes with each other. Obviously we were fighting a lot on track, we were always very very close to each other and there were always some battles going on but they stayed at the track and out there it was just a matter of engineering, of just not being a comfortable team and that's why they decided to take this decision internally.

**MV:** I think we still need to plan when we're going go-karting together.

**CS:** We were just talking – before coming in here – about that we were going to go go-karting in one week together so that shows that it really stays on track.

**Q: (Sergio Alvarez – One Magazine) Next year's rules will bring an extra bit of downforce, if it is to be believed. From a physical point of view, have you talked to your trainers about any changes in your respective regimes?**

**KM:** I haven't spoken to my trainer about it. I don't think it's going to change a huge amount – I mean the training bit. I hope the cars will be faster. From my point of view, it will be great to drive a Formula One car three seconds faster so we will see what it does to overtaking and stuff but I'm looking forward to it.

**Q: Fernando, obviously you drove the cars plenty in the days when there was much more downforce and faster, so how do you feel this is going to equate next year compared to what you had in the past, physically?**

**FA:** I don't think it's going to change too much, probably a little bit more physical to drive the cars but nowhere near what it was in the past, probably, eight or ten seconds faster. I remember we could not even go onto the podium after some races and it was tough for everyone. Now I was ready to race with two broken ribs. You can even race... whatever. Even after winter testing, preparation is not needed normally.

**LW:** It's just interesting, listening to... It's going to be more physical so you just have to train a little bit more. We're all in the same boat and unfortunately it's probably not going to make a big difference to the racing but hopefully it will, probably won't.

**MV:** I've never driven faster cars than I've driven now but for sure you always do a lot of workouts. You just have to adapt to it but I don't see big issues with that.

**Q: (Ralf Bach – Auto Bild Motorsport) Max is it right and the truth to say that after you moved to Red Bull now, you're safe in the Red Bull family and other teams have to stop talking to you?**

**MV:** Well, I've always been very happy with Red Bull and now of course they've given me the chance to be in their top team. There is also no reason to change, is there? I'm very happy with them, I think they are very happy with me and we just try to continue like that.

**Q: (Andrew Benson – BBC Sport) Daniil, one of the reasons Helmut Marko gave was that you were not handling the pressure from Ricciardo well enough. Do you think that's fair?**

**DK:** Well, the pressure, talking about pressure. I think I've been part of the Red Bull family for seven years and I don't see it as a big problem of course. I think other people around me also had pressure and I think, talking about myself, no, not really. I don't think it can be the biggest explanation to be honest.

**Q: (Andrew Benson – BBC Sport) Lewis, would it be fair to say you're worried about the gap to Nico at the moment? And if not, what's your mindset going forward?**

**LH:** It is what it is, so there's no point in being concerned, I've just got to work hard to move forward. I have less engines than Nico, less than probably a few of the drivers, so I've just got to do what I can with what I have and for sure, it's a steep mountain to climb but I love a challenge, so I'm kind of excited about it.

**Q: (Jon McEvoy – Daily Mail) To Max and Daniil: have you spoken much about the switch and if so, what sort of things did you say to each other?**

**DK:** Well, no, we've been... obviously we saw each other, I think that's enough and I think... what can we say? We both have to work hard now, as I said before. I think there's no point in wishing luck, luck never brought anything, only hard work and that's all, I think.

**MV:** Yeah, I think there is not much to say about that to be honest. Now it's just up to us, we have to work hard, we have to deliver on the track. Not much more to add, to be honest. It's all pretty clear.

**Q: (Jon McEvoy – Daily Mail) Did you speak to each other?**

**MV:** I saw him at lunch, yeah.

**DK:** And I saw him now.

**MV:** Sitting next to each other.

**Q: (Ben Hunt – The Sun) Daniil, who told you about the demotion, if you like? Who was it who actually broke the news and where were you when you found out?**

**DK:** I was in Moscow, I was lying on the sofa, I was watching a TV series and then the phone call comes. It was "hallo, well, we have some news for you" and I think there was a 20 minute talk about... I wanted and I think I deserved an explanation. I got to know many interesting details, I must say, which I think I will keep to myself for now.

**Q: (Ben Hunt – The Sun) Who made the phone call?**

**DK:** Dr Marko called, he made the phone call. We finished the talk and I went back to finish my TV series, that's all.

**Q: (Jon McEvoy – Daily Mail) What was it?**

**DK:** TV series? Game of Thrones.

**Q: (Ben Hunt – The Sun) And Lewis, just to ask you about your engineers, new mechanics. Have you spoke to the team about getting the ones that worked on your car last year back on your car for this year?**

**LH:** No, I have no intention or any wish to move around, there's nothing to do... the issues we've had have had nothing to do with the mechanics. They've been doing a fantastic job both for Nico and I over the last three and a half years. That is not a concern and that's not something... I've got a hundred percent belief in this team and in those guys. This is really just hoping that I've had a bad share of luck, I guess, with the failures, but hoping that will move forward and you will get to see the results of their hard work, because they have worked so hard to integrate with me and vice versa on my side of the garage and we have a huge amount of respect for each other. I'm looking forward to trying to deliver something spectacular for them.

**Q: (Li Chun – LeTV) To the three gentlemen in the front row, if the three of you were to fight it out for the World Championship tomorrow, who do you think would have the better chance to come out on top?**

**CS:** Well, it's a bit of a... It doesn't make much sense. I think if you ask every driver on the Formula One grid or every professional sportsman, they think they are the best. I think I am the best and I'm sure if you ask these two gentlemen or these three behind me, they will say the same.

**DK:** Well, I think tomorrow is a good day to start of course, but yeah, let's see. It's not going to happen this year, I think, so we will have to wait and see. Driver development is something that happens all the time and there are so many circumstances, so many details that first of all have to happen, that you get to Formula One and then to win the championship is another thing of course. Every person, like Carlos said, every driver is a very confident personality usually and has a strong self-belief and of course I know that to get everything right and the best out of it, I don't have any doubts really.

**MV:** One thing, we are not fighting for the World Championship now but the positive thing is that I'm still very young so I have a lot of years ahead of me.

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – GloboEsporte.com) Coming back to the subject that Lewis mentioned, that drivers need time to develop themselves, so many things to learn in a top team, do you think you will have time or will it be like Daniil that you don't have this time properly?**

**MV:** Well, to be honest, I think so far that Red Bull has guided me in a very good way and I've felt very comfortable and I think that if you are very comfortable you can perform and if you are very happy you perform even better so a happy person and a comfortable person is always performing better and at the moment I'm like that and I hope to keep it that way. I think at the end, it's not up to raw speed, it's more the experience around it, but that's just by doing every Grand Prix, step by step and that's getting better all the time.

**Q: (Daniel Johnson – The Telegraph) Daniil, you suggested earlier that you didn't really feel that you got much of an explanation for why the swap had been made with Max. I wonder what you inside think the real reasons are for why you and Max were swapped round?**

**DK:** Obviously, you know, it's really hard to say, exactly. Like I said, it's not really a question for me because it wasn't my decision, first of all. To me I was working, I was giving my best ever race. Yeah, we had another very difficult start of the season. I didn't even manage to start the Australian race again, two years in a row. There were strange things going on in Bahrain. Well, I believe that since China, really, I picked up a good pace, that it was coming, that it was a little bit similar to last

year but it was getting better and better, race to race and qualifying in Sochi was already very competitive and the race pace was also getting better, so to be honest, we know that Formula One is a very general sport, sometimes hard work, sometimes what you do on track is also not enough, so let's wait and see. Like I said, I learned quite a lot in the last few days, last few weeks and it's made me very strong and I feel very strong now and I'm looking forward to showing with Toro Rosso now, with a team that supports me and with a team that I feel that we have a lot of unfinished business together and I think we should finish it together.

**Q: (Angelique Belokopytov – Autodigest) So Lewis, you were saying a few minutes ago that young drivers have to take time to have some practice. But you started in a big team, a few others started their careers in smaller teams. So I'm asking for your opinion, for a young driver, which is the best way to start? Small or big?**

**LH:** I don't think there's a clear answer to that. For me it worked perfectly to go into a big team but I did a lot more years in lower categories than some of the others have, I probably have a few more years than the two ahead of me have but I'm just meaning that it's really important not to hold a young driver back. They're going to grow in their own time and some take longer than others. Some are really quick at learning and some take longer, they need to make more mistakes. I remember my first days in the car and I crashed my first day of driving. It was really really difficult, those first processes but of course the team can make a big difference in how they help but I do really just hope for Daniil. We've got two fantastic drivers here, I just hope that in this manoeuvre it doesn't hinder either of their... I hope it doesn't hinder either of their careers because they've got bright futures ahead of them and too much pressure, too much stress, too much expectation too early on can lead the wrong way and that's what I want to say.

**Q: It might be interesting to get a perspective from Fernando on this because obviously you did have that time, didn't you, you started with a smaller team and then you had a development year with Renault before racing? What's your thoughts on that?**

**FA:** I didn't expect any questions. I probably agree with Lewis's comments. It's difficult, I don't think there is a mathematical formula to know exactly what is the best way. You need to benefit from both scenarios. I think if you start in a small team, you can grow up a little bit in a more relaxed environment and try to learn a little bit with less stress and less pressure. If you start with a big opportunity, it's also good for yourself because you can show your talent immediately and you can make a big impact on the sport and have a better future after that so... the important thing for both of them is today's topic that both of them race many many years in Formula One because they have the potential talent to be Formula One World Champions one day and I really hope the best for both of them.

**Q: (Barna Zsoldos – Nemzeti Sport) Daniil, in Sochi, in the middle of the race, Sebastian went to Christian Horner complaining about you in front of all the TV cameras. What do you think about this spectacular gesture? Do you take it personally and would you act the same, vice versa?**

**DK:** What happened in Sochi has already happened. Of course it was a messy lap one. I spoke with all the people involved and we've all had our points of view on that. It's left behind, between me and Sebastian, there are no problems at all, after that. To be honest, I don't know how is their relationship so if he went to complain or whatever, I don't know and to be honest, I'm not too interested in what he said and I think everyone has the right to go and say what he thinks, especially if you know someone quite well enough to talk about it, so I don't have any strong opinions on that episode really.

**Q: (Valenti Fradera – El 9 Esportiu de Catalunya) Having seen the performance of the medium tyre at this track during private testing, do you think we will get to see the hard tyre at all on Sunday?**



**KM:** Don't now, we will see. I don't think it's the most likely tyre to be raced on but we will see in P2 most likely.

**LH:** As far as I know... I mean I don't even know what tyres I have to be honest. I doubt it, it's not the best tyre here, it's going to be the mediums...

**Q: You've got one set of hards.**

**LH:** Yeah, it's not the best tyre for this race. I don't think anyone's going to use it.

**MV:** It's a very nice colour, isn't it, the orange, so probably maybe we will have a run on them. I like the colour.

**Q: Incidentally, you inherit each other's tyres, right? That's the way it works. So you (Max) inherit the tyres that he (Daniil) selected.**

**MV:** But that's fine.

**DK:** I think it's the team's choice, no? So the team is choosing the tyres, so I get now what he had and I have what he had, but I get to keep the points. I like to keep my points. And the podium.

Ends