



## Sunday press conference

For one of the drivers in attendance, what he thought should have been a celebratory post-race press conference was the moment in which he realised the mood in the paddock was not in his favour.

Present were Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull), Nico Rosberg (Mercedes), and Valtteri Bottas (Williams).

**Q: What a race. Exciting? You loved it? What about this man here? Let's hear it for him. Daniel, if I have to say to you: you are responsible for keeping half of Australia up until this hour!**

**Daniel RICCIARDO:** Yeah, I think obviously back home there is a huge following, but this is nearly as many Australian flag as there were in Melbourne. It's impressive, a lot of Aussies or at least Aussie fans out this weekend, so thank you very much.

**Q: We saw you for the first time... because with the previous two wins you just happened to get in there in the last three or four laps. This time you led from the front. Different task, different pressure? What was it like?**

**DR:** Yeah, definitely a bit different. When you lead the race, I guess, for that long it's more about composure, just looking at your lap times, just trying to be as consistent as possible and once I heard Rosberg came in for a third stop we knew he was going to be quick at the end, I just had to try to keep the lap times up and keep it clean.

**Q: We'll be back to you, please don't go away. I've got to ask: where is the man? He's here - Nico Rosberg, ladies and gentlemen! (Responding to boos from the crowd) Hey, come on guys, steady on, steady, steady, Nico drove an unbelievably good race. Nico, I've got to ask you the all-important question: what happened up in Les Combes?**

**Nico ROSBERG:** Well, I got a good run on Lewis and tried to go around the outside and yeah, we just touched in the end, unfortunately, so that hurt both of our races. From a team point of view of course that's very disappointing. And yeah, that's the way it is.

**Q: Not that this is a question of apportioning blame but did you see blame either way or was it just a racing accident, a 50/50 situation?**

**NR:** I haven't seen it yet. It wouldn't be good of me if I would comment now. I need to look at it on TV and then I can comment afterwards.

**Q: We know that you have a lot of fans here but there are obviously a lot of Lewis fans here. I'm just thinking myself about Mercedes. The one-two was there obviously, the domination of the qualifying. Did you actually think it would be a one-two today?**

**NR:** I was pretty confident, yeah, because we had very good race speed, as you saw at the end there, but unfortunately it didn't work out for us today.

**Q: Nico, our championship leader. Ladies and gentlemen, Nico Rosberg! (Responding to more boos from the crowd) Hey, guys, come on, come on. That's not fair. You know it's not fair. He's driven his heart out, like everyone of these three guys and everyone on the grid. I think he needs and deserves a round of applause. Thank you.**

**Valtteri, you're making a bit of a habit of this aren't you. We're going to have to make a special place for you up here. Four podiums out of the last five races, what's going on?**

**Valtteri BOTTAS:** Yeah, why not? The team has done such a good job, we are definitely on the right way: another podium, the fourth one in my career and the fourth one this season. We are still chasing for the highest step but for now, for this season, if we keep like this, it's OK because it's the future that matters.

**Q: The highest step: how far do you think you're away from that, because Williams have got a really great turn of speed? Can you just get that little final extra piece?**

**VB:** I think this season it's going to be difficult. We definitely need to be lucky to achieve that. Mercedes is really strong and even on a track like this Red Bull was really, really quick, we couldn't really challenge Ricciardo, so we have still work to do but we are on the right way.

**Q: Daniel there's a lot of flags, a lot of well-wishers here for you. Your third win of the season. Just tell everybody here what was it like for those final couple of laps, just as you must have known that Nico was closing in on you. What was going through your head?**

**DR:** The first thing obviously that you hope everything holds together. You hope mechanically everything gets you to the finish line. Then it's just trying to hit your marks and keep consistent but always the last few laps the chequered flag can't come quick enough.

**Q: Daniel, you're a three-time grand prix winner now. Obviously the passes early on in the grand prix on Alonso and Vettel were fundamental in setting up the platform for the win today and from there obviously you had to cover Nico off for the rest of the race but tell me, did the boy from Perth always dream of a Spa win?**

**DR:** Yeah, I guess so. You dream of... there's definitely a few on the calendar that stand out more than others and Spa is one of them, but to be honest any win is special in Formula One. Yeah, the first part of the race: we had pretty good pace. On lap one I actually had the inside of Alonso at five but then I locked up and went off so he got me back and then we were able to get in front a few laps later. And then Seb, looked like he just dropped a wheel on the astroturf exit of Turn 10 and obviously with the rain overnight and this morning it was still a bit slippery, so I was able to get him and then I think Nico came in for a front wing change and we were able to get into the lead and then the pace was pretty good. We were happy with what we were doing and the consistency was there and we were making the tyres last. Yeah, it was just really up to me at the end to stay consistent and stay focused. Yeah, it was good fun.

**Q: Nico, obviously there is only one real talking point for you at this stage: the incident with Lewis early on in the grand prix. We've obviously seen the crowd's reaction to it. In making history and fighting for championships there are always going to be difficult moments. This is your chance to explain how you saw it.**

**NR:** To be honest I'm not in a position to comment on it at all because I haven't seen it and, in the heat of the moment... I need to see it on TV before I say an opinion or anything as such. Of course very, very disappointing from the team's perspective, for sure, because we could have done a lot better than just finish in second place, y'know, with the car that we have, because our car is really... has been very, very special this weekend.

**Q: Valtteri, your fourth podium in five grands prix, quite a streak for you. And a similar story really, a recovery for you after quite a disappointing qualifying session, I imagine, yesterday. Starting sixth on the grid and, again, some big overtakes in the story of your race today.**

**VB:** Yeah. It was, again, a really nice race, nice to be in it. Obviously yesterday the weather played a role in the qualifying and we knew that in the dry we would have better pace than in the wet, so we were really hopeful for today. I have to say that we are little bit surprised by the pace of Red Bull and Mercedes. They were quite a bit far away. Of course our race was a bit compromised after the poor start. I was quite a long time stuck behind some other cars and couldn't really go at the pace we had. But yeah, had some good overtakes. We had good pitstops and good strategy by the team and that allowed us to come up a few places and again to the podium.

**Q: (Ian Parkes – PA) Nico, Niki Lauda has made it absolutely clear that he feels you were to blame, he's gone on record saying that already. Toto Wolff has turned around and said that what happened was “totally unacceptable” – that something like that should not have happened on lap two of the race. What you did, was that deliberate? Because we've seen before that when a front wing collides into a tyre it causes a puncture. Just give us your thoughts on that please.**

**NR:** First of all, I haven't heard it myself from the people that you have mentioned but of course I respect and I will respect their opinion. I myself, I don't have an opinion yet because I haven't seen it on the TV. All I know is that I was faster and I gave it a go. The inside was blocked so I gave it a go around the outside. Of course it is very, very disappointing from a team's point of view.

**Q: (Dan Johnson – Daily Telegraph) Nico, whatever happens in a race, no-one likes to see people being booed on the podium. I just wonder how that felt from your point of view, given that, whatever happened between you and Lewis, it wasn't a blatant thing.**

**NR:** As I said, I respect the opinion of the British spectators. They definitely were not happy, so that doesn't feel good. That's very clear.

**Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action / National Speed Sport News) Dan, where do you do from here. The car wasn't supposed to be fast here but how do you see the rest of the season unfolding for you and the team?**

**DR:** I see good things, obviously good things ahead. If we can collect maximum points around here, y'know it gives us a bit more hope for the circuits that are going to come later in the season: Singapore, Suzuka, just a couple to mention. Obviously it's great. We're really motivated right now. It's been a really good day for us on a track we didn't expect to get maximum points from, so yeah, it'll keep us smiling for a while. At the same time we'll stay grounded. Monza we know will be tricky again but obviously the package we brought here was pretty racy, so, try and take something from here to Monza and then I think, as I said, Singapore and Suzuka will be pretty good for us.

**Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Valtteri, how was your fight with Kimi for the podium in the last laps? What was your feeling, was it something special?**

**VB:** I think it was a nice and fair fight. First I nearly had a go into Turn Five but wasn't really quite as close, so then I just had to wait for a couple of laps to really prepare for it, then went for it and it was nice, clean racing with him. So, yeah, really enjoyed it.

**Q: (Oana Popiou – F1 Zone) Nico, we saw the incident when something got stuck on your antenna: can you tell us something about it?**

**NR:** It was a big piece of... I don't know what it was and it just got stuck right in front of me, it was flapping in front of my eyes which made it difficult and I couldn't get rid of it either. I tried, because it was just stuck on the front but then after a while it came loose but it was really difficult to see at that time. Sometimes I couldn't even see where I was going because it was in the wrong place so that was not good.

**Q: (Sven Heidinger – Sport Woche) Daniel, did Red Bull change the philosophy of the car because usually you were very bad at those circuits and now the speed on the straight was very good?**

**DR:** Yup, we pretty much came here with a low downforce setting. We knew it would maybe affect us a bit in the second sector but we believe the car has a good base of downforce to sort of get through the second sector good enough and then what we lose naturally on the straights, running this type of wing, was something that put us back in with a fighting chance for sector one and two. Yeah, I guess on TV you could see by the images that the rear wing was pretty simple, there wasn't much to it but obviously it was a good package here and we'll see if the Monza wing can get any smaller – I don't know, otherwise we'll just run with DRS open all the time!

**Q: (Alexander Levit – Sovetsky Sport) Nico, do you honestly think that you can keep up the harmony inside the team after what happened today?**

**NR:** Yeah, I'm confident that we can, yes. It is always going to be an intense battle, that's clear, it was clear from the onset and there will always be difficult moments and just as we did after Hungary, we had a discussion and moved on. I'm sure again we are going to have to discuss today for sure and we'll review it and then we'll move on.

**Q: (Leigh O'Gorman – Walker Watson) Nico, the early incident with Lewis, did that dramatically change your tyre strategy today? You had to pit on lap eight or was a three stop with an early change always the plan?**

**NR:** No. My strategy was all over the place because of the various things happening so completely changed everything.

**Q: (Daniel Johnson – Daily Telegraph) Daniel, you're 35 points behind Lewis now and I think about maybe 65 behind Nico. With double points at the last race, do you consider yourself firmly in the championship hunt now?**

**DR:** If I'm within fifty coming into Abu Dhabi then yeah, but there's still a few races to go. While it's still mathematically possible, yeah, we'll keep fighting. Today was a big day for that. To come and steal some points on a circuit where let's say we weren't supposed to is nice but I think what's important, looking ahead, is to capitalise on the circuits that we should be strong on and if we can take maximum points, let's say, at a couple of those then it's never over.

**Q: (Ian Parkes – Press Association) Nico, you talked about Hungary and the meeting that was held there. I think this weekend we've seen different body language from yourself: you've clearly suggested that you weren't happy with what was expressed in the meetings that you've had with the team personnel and with Lewis. Was there any suggestion today that for once you went into this race with perhaps an uncool head, perhaps, an unclear mind?**

**NR:** I can't agree with any of your impressions that you've got this weekend. We had a very good discussion after Hungary and it was reviewed and clarified who did what, what was wrong, what was right and then we adapted our agreement to move forward. And that was really behind us. To be honest, I was very relaxed this weekend and just looking forward to it, because with this awesome car that I have at the moment, it's such a pleasure to go to a track like Spa where I know that I can be on pole on Saturday and win the race if I do a good job. I was very much with that frame of mind, not thinking about the championship either, just really this race, wanting to win here in Spa with the Silver Arrow and that was it for the weekend.

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – Universo Online) Daniel, twelve races is a representative number of races and you've won three times and your teammate not once, being a four time World Champion. What does it mean for you?**

**DR:** Yeah, obviously for me it's great, it's what I wanted to achieve, to get some race wins. To have three in twelve races I think has exceeded a few expectations. Let's say the in-team battle has gone really well. Obviously I've showed speed throughout qualifying and also races now. I've demonstrated good racecraft and good consistency so I think let's say the team has been really pleased and I've been pleased so we're in a good place. I'm enjoying it more than ever. Each race that goes on I'm having more and more fun so yeah, just having a good time.

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – Universo Online) Nico, in the discussion you had with the team after Hungary, did you predict situations like you faced today with Lewis?**

**NR:** I'm sorry, I don't want to go into more details. It's not a good idea. You asked what was agreed and things like that.

**Q: The question was did you envisage situations like today in your meetings?**

**NR:** Not in specific detail but of course the battle between us is something that we have discussed many many times, yes of course, and the guidelines

from the team... we know what they are and they're quite clear. In fact it wasn't that specific to Hungary at all, just generally, of course, it's been discussed, yeah. Especially after Bahrain, for example. That was a discussion topic.

**Q: (Silvia Arias - Parabras) Nico, you haven't seen the incident but anyway, I think maybe you can feel good because there was no FIA investigation, the incident was not under investigation, that means something. Maybe it was just because it was a racing accident.**

**NR:** I don't know. I haven't seen it. I'm sorry, I don't want to... I need to watch it on TV before I... because really, when you're in the moment, it's very difficult now, afterwards, with where I was sitting, to comment.

## Race report

Daniel Ricciardo won his third race of the 2014 season after a commanding performance in which the Red Bull driver once again made the most of his rivals' mistakes, this time capitalising on the opportunity afforded by a second lap incident between the race-leading Mercedes pair.

Nico Rosberg got an abysmal start from pole, and was passed easily by both Lewis Hamilton and Sebastian Vettel. But the pole-sitter gave good chase, and much of the first lap saw excitement as the three battled for the lead, with both Hamilton and Vettel at the head of the pack at different points that lap.

As the second lap got underway it was Hamilton who held the lead until an overtaking attempt from Rosberg led to minor contact in which the Briton suffered a puncture to his left rear while the German lost his front-wing endplate.

Hamilton's race was effectively over - despite being able to limp his way back to the pits for a new wheel, the lost downforce (a reported 40 to 50 points) from the damage caused on the way back to the pitlane made it impossible for him to repeat the stunning performances we saw in Germany and Hungary.

With Hamilton out of the running and Rosberg out of the top ten after pitting for a new front wing at the end of lap 8 there was a chance for others to shine, and it was an opportunity that Ferrari and Red Bull were not going to let slip past.

Daniel Ricciardo asserted his authority over Vettel on lap 5, slipping past his teammate for P2 when the German ran wide, while both Kimi Raikkonen and Fernando Alonso impressed from the outset, each man running as high as second before pitting for the first time.

The very opposite of processional, Sunday's race saw exciting battles from much of the pack, with Alonso and Valtteri Bottas spicing things up early on, while after the first round of stops Alonso found himself in several protracted battles with first Kevin Magnussen and - rather later - both McLaren drivers.

Having been invisible in the lower reaches of the top ten for much of the season, both Magnussen and Jenson Button starred in some of the most exciting action on offer in Spa this weekend, giving chase to Alonso, Rosberg, and Vettel at different points in the race.

But it was during the closing laps that the McLaren pair really starred, thanks to a four-way fight between themselves, Alonso, and Vettel made all the more dramatic by the fact that the foursome were lapping backmarkers as they fought each other, sometimes cornering three or four abreast.

Raikkonen managed the best result of his second Ferrari career, and for the first time this season finished ahead of his teammate. The Finn looked to be on course for a podium until, with four laps remaining, Raikkonen suffered the indignity of being passed for third place by countryman Bottas.

The last ten laps of the race saw Rosberg - who was on rubber eight laps fresher than Ricciardo - gain on the leader at around two to three seconds a lap as he attempted to convert the Australian's 20-second advantage into a win for the Silver Arrows.

Despite an impressive performance that saw the pair cross the finish line a scant 3.3 seconds apart, it was not to be, and for the fifth time this season Rosberg was unable to secure a win from pole despite having a car that is the class of the field.

### Belgian Grand Prix race result

1. Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull) 1h24m36.556s
2. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) + 3.383s
3. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) + 28.032s
4. Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari) + 36.815s
5. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) + 52.196s
6. Kevin Magnussen (McLaren) + 54.262s
7. Jenson Button (McLaren) + 54.580s
8. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) + 1m01.162s
9. Sergio Perez (Force India) + 1m04.293s
10. Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso) + 1m05.347s
11. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) + 1m05.347s
12. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) + 1m11.920s
13. Felipe Massa (Williams) + 1m15.975s
14. Adrian Sutil (Sauber) + 1m22.447s
15. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) + 1m30.825s
16. Max Chilton (Marussia) + 1 lap
17. Marcus Ericsson (Caterham) + 1 lap

Jules Bianchi (Marussia) RET  
Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) RET  
Romain Grosjean (Lotus) RET  
Pastor Maldonado (Lotus) RET  
Andre Lotterer (Caterham) RET

## Saturday press conference

After a thrilling wet-dry qualifying session at the legendary Spa-Francorchamps Circuit it was three of the usual suspects who lined up to face the media at the official FIA press conference.

Present were Nico Rosberg (Mercedes), Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes), and Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull).

**Q: Nico, many congratulations, your first Spa pole. Typical Spa conditions of course today, tell us how special the feeling is right now?**

**Nico ROSBERG:** Yeah, it's awesome definitely at this track. It's one of the most special tracks of the year, so to be in front here is great. Not quite as difficult out there as on some other occasions as the conditions were pretty much always intermediates, just varying slightly, so that made it a bit easier today. But still, it's always difficult on this track in the wet, so I'm really, really happy. The car was handling well and together with my engineers we fine-tuned it perfectly now in qualifying and really got there in the end. So, in the end I was really feeling comfortable and able to push, so fantastic. But it's only qualifying, so still a long race tomorrow but of course, very happy.

**Q: In terms of the detail, the first sector was always particularly strong for you throughout this qualifying session, why is that?**

**NR:** I'm not sure, it's Eau Rouge mainly the first sector you know. I was feeling good through there, really going for it and maybe that's where the time was done. I haven't looked.

**Q: Very well done. Coming to you Lewis, you were right in the hunt all the way through qualifying but it seemed, if anything, Q3 wasn't quite as comfortable for you from the outset as the previous sessions had been, why was that?**

**Lewis HAMILTON:** I had a glazed front-right or front-left brake, so the car was pulling to the left or to the right and there was nothing I could do on the out laps to try to get rid of that, so I was struggling under the braking. I had to bring the braking point a little bit further back and I was losing massive amounts out of particularly turn one.

**Q: Before that it looked like you were enjoying yourself out there, though. How much can you enjoy driving in conditions like these?**

**LH:** It's more fun in the dry but it's still a huge challenge and as Nico said the conditions were quite good so...

**Q: Coming to you Sebastian, you were a winner here last year for Red Bull Racing. Your feelings on this result and what you can do from here tomorrow?**

**Sebastian VETTEL:** Well, I think it would be nice to be a bit further up but obviously the gap is quite big. I think it was the best we could do for today. I think it was a tricky qualifying, especially Q2 looked very tight for us. I tried to stay out on the same set of tyres. It started to rain heavier, so I was quite confident that the track won't get quicker and I wanted to save that extra set for Q3. It was quite tight. I got the lap in in the end because the circuit did pick up and in Q3 I was able to use both sets of tyres. It was obviously very tight behind the Mercedes. It was tricky out there, especially on low downforce, especially through Eau Rouge, so I had a couple of moments. But it was a good challenge and for sure happy with third.

**Q: Coming back to you Nico. You've never been on the podium before in Spa either. Clearly a big fight in prospect tomorrow in what promises to be, at the moment anyway, a dry race with Lewis and Sebastian. Your thoughts on tomorrow's grand prix?**

**NR:** Again, we have a great car here. We're leading the way and that's so cool to see that, definitely, that the team is doing such a great job. Just keeping it going all the time, staying ahead and keeping that gap. That's nice to see. So yeah, definitely a really good chance tomorrow. I need to get a good start and from there I'm looking forward to it.

**Q: Nico, one of the things that was noticeable from the outset of this session – obviously it was very wet, had been very wet before the start of the session – was the performance difference between the Mercedes and the rest, right from the outset of Q1. You've been quick obviously all season but was this about downforce? Was there any specific reason in your mind why you had such a big advantage all the way through?**

**NR:** I have really no idea. It was amazing to see that, how quick our car is. That was really great. Obviously then it was just Lewis I had to focus on, and that makes it a bit easier too – when there's not a whole bunch, just one guy. Yeah, but really impressive car.

**Q: Lewis, you've got to go back to Canada in June for the last time you were this far up the grid. It's been a difficult period of time for you on Saturday afternoons. So, although I'm sure you're disappointed today, nevertheless this gives you the kind of platform you've been looking for on Sunday to challenge, right?**

**LH:** I'm not disappointed today actually. If you look at the previous years, P2 is the best place to start here so I feel quite blessed that this is the case. I started on pole here last year and Sebastian flew past me down the top straight, so I think it gives you the most opportunity here at the start. And I'm just happy to be up here. I was nervous going into qualifying, not knowing if the car was going to make it through it, and grateful for all the hard work the team put in to make sure we have no problems. It's a great feeling to be back up here.

**Q: Sebastian, you mentioned driving this circuit, in these conditions, with low downforce and it did seem that Red Bull had decided to run quite low levels of downforce, obviously thinking ahead to tomorrow's grand prix. Is that the case?**

**SV:** Yep!

**Q: And how did that feel? A gamble clearly ...**

**SV:** It was very tricky in the wet. We knew it would be even trickier obviously when qualifying is wet, qualifying was wet so we can confirm it was trickier – but the reason behind it is fairly simple: we know that we are down on power, obviously Mercedes can run a lot more wing level and they have a very strong car this year, you have to admit, so they have a lot of downforce but they can still take that wing onto the straights. If we do that I think we are similar in the corners but quite a long way off on the straights and therefore vulnerable in the race. So, I think that's the reasoning behind it, and in the wet probably it hurt us a bit more, but hopefully tomorrow we'll be closer in terms of race pace and closer to them than in the last couple of races.

**Q: (Angelique Belokopytov – AutoDigest) Sebastian, you are a four time champion and this year you've never won a pole so how long can you, a champion, live with that?**

**SV:** As long as I have to, I guess. I'm trying very hard so it's not like I'm deciding consciously not to qualify on pole. Obviously these guys are doing a very good job from the drivers' point of view, their team is very strong so that is what makes them very difficult to beat. Obviously we've been on the other side for quite a while but that's the name of the game. Obviously my season wasn't the way I was hoping for but there are still some races to come. I think we did the maximum today so I'm hoping for a strong result tomorrow.

**Q: (Vladimir Rogovets – Sb Belarus) Nico, to your left is one champion, to your right is a second champion but today you have pole position. How do you feel here between two champions?**

**NR:** I feel very good but not because it's Lewis and Sebastian. To me they're competitors like all the others: great drivers. I'm just happy to be first: first is the best position for tomorrow's race.

**Q: (Paulo Ianieri – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Nico, this morning the Williams were pretty fast and many people were expecting them to be a challenge in the dry. Do you think that having a wet qualifying helped you a little bit to keep them away or you just were hiding a little bit this morning?**

**NR:** I think even in the wet we would have been strong. Maybe the others would have been a little bit closer. It's very difficult to say who exactly, I'm not too sure about that but for sure it helped us that it was wet because in the wet, clearly the gap was a lot bigger and our car was really dominant.

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – Universo OnLine) Lewis, you had a problem with your brakes today. In German qualifying you also had the same: you had a problem with the engine in other races: a lot of problems. How can you understand it, so many difficulties that you've had?**

**LH:** I don't really know. Today, this is a circuit where – as on all circuits – you need to have confidence in the brakes. You saw a couple of times in Q3

when I was just going straight on everywhere because the left brake wasn't working and then for some reason – I don't really know why – it went into glazing but yeah, I've had some good experiences and bad experiences but it's OK. Who knows, it might be a blessing in disguise.

**Q: (Sven Heidinger – Sport Woche) Lewis, do you fear that the issue with the brakes will appear again tomorrow or was it a one-off? What do you think?**

**LH:** Well, when it glazes, it's sometimes very hard to recover, especially in the wet. You have to put the brake balance forwards but whilst you're trying to clear that, you're also overheating the rears so it's really not that easy to always clear but in the evening they're able to scrub it and get rid of the glazing. I think it goes shiny and then you lose that bite so hopefully over the evening we will lose that and in the dry tomorrow it shouldn't be a problem.

## Saturday report

It was Valtteri Bottas who was able to make the most of mixed conditions and a drying track to claim the top spot on the timesheets in the final practice session before qualifying got underway for the Belgian Grand Prix.

In the hour before qualifying the heavens opened over the Spa-Francorchamps Circuit, with torrential rain and a brief hailstorm. But when the pit lane opened for qualifying the skies were dry, although more rain was expected. The damp track was a scant 10 degrees centigrade, and the first lot of drivers exited the pits shod in inters.

The Mercedes' pace was demonstrated ably by Lewis Hamilton, who went straight to the top of the timesheets by a margin of over a second despite running wide and going off at the Bus Stop Chicane. Teammate Nico Rosberg was quick to pop up in second place, just two-tenths shy of the Briton.

Mid-way through Q1 Esteban Gutierrez stopped his Sauber on the approach to Stavelot, out of the session with an apparent mechanical issue. The car was quickly dealt with and action continued unabated.

Kimi Raikkonen looked to be in danger of dropping out in Q1, with the Finn languishing in P20 for much of the session. But with less than five minutes remaining he leapfrogged Ferrari teammate Fernando Alonso on the timesheets, lapping half a second faster than the Spanish racer on a quickly improving track, albeit with more rain expected.

With less than two minutes remaining, Jules Bianchi managed a P10-worthy 2m11.051s, having already delivered a lap that saw the Marussia driver out of the dropout zone. Bianchi managed to briefly best Jenson Button, the driver who – according to legend – is the best of the current crop at pulling off great results in terrible weather.

Surprising no one, Pastor Maldonado ended Q1 with a spin. The Lotus racer was one of the Q1 dropouts, joining Nico Hulkenberg, Max Chilton, Gutierrez, Andre Lotterer, and Marcus Ericsson.

In the short break between sessions the rain returned, and inters and full wets were once again the order of the day for the 16 men left fighting for a spot in the top ten. Romain Grosjean was the first man to put a time on the boards, a tentative 2m13.974s effort. Subsequent times by Adrian Sutil and Button fell by two seconds apiece before Bottas and Alonso posted 2m08s efforts as the track began to dry.

The drying track was rather inconsistent, however, with both Hamilton and Grosjean running off track early on. With half the session remaining, Rosberg topped the timesheets with a 2m08.108s lap, three-tenths faster than Alonso in second. Hamilton's second effort changed the order at the top, posting a 2m07.089s lap in the wet, faster than he had managed in Q1's drying conditions.

With five minutes remaining, only Jean-Eric Vergne had yet to post a time, while an improved Rosberg cut the gap to Hamilton by seven-tenths, crossing the line in 2m07.494s. Behind the leading Mercedes pair were Alonso, Bottas, and Raikkonen. In the closing seconds both Mercedes drivers improved, with Hamilton posting a 2m06.609s lap before Rosberg responded with a close-and-yet-so-far 2m06.723s effort.

When Q2 came to an end it was Daniil Kvyat, Vergne, Sergio Perez, Sutil, Grosjean, and Bianchi who comprised the dropout zone.

By the time the pit lane opened for the top-ten shoot-out, there were sunny skies over much of the circuit, although inters were still the order of the day on the drying track. An early mistake from Hamilton cost the possible pole-sitter a decent banker lap; the Briton ran wide at La Source and lost valuable time. But Rosberg made his own mistake on the following lap, leveling the playing field for the inter-Mercedes fight for pole.

Hamilton's second effort saw him slot in behind Rosberg, albeit seven-tenths down. And in a fight that went right down to the wire, with the advantage changing sector by sector, the Mercedes pair secured their umpteenth front row lock-out of the season, an impressive two seconds clear of the competition and with Rosberg ahead by 0.228s.

### Provisional grid

1. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 2m05.591s
2. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 2m05.819s
3. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 2m07.717s
4. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 2m07.786s
5. Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull) 2m07.911s
6. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) 2m08.049s
7. Kevin Magnussen (McLaren) 2m08.679s
8. Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari) 2m08.780s
9. Felipe Massa (Williams) 2m09.178s
10. Jenson Button (McLaren) 2m09.776s
  
11. Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso) 2m09.377s
12. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 2m09.805s
13. Sergio Perez (Force India) 2m10.084s
14. Adrian Sutil (Sauber) 2m10.238s
15. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 2m11.087s
16. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) 2m12.470s
  
17. Pastor Maldonado (Lotus) 2m11.261s
18. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) 2m11.267s
19. Max Chilton (Marussia) 2m12.566s

20. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) 2m13.414s  
21. Andre Lotterer (Caterham) 2m13.469s  
22. Marcus Ericsson (Caterham)

## Friday press conference

The first team personnel press conference after the summer shutdown gave the teams' technical brains a chance to face the media and talk development both current and future.

Present were James Allison (Ferrari), Andy Green (Force India), Dave Greenwood (Marussia), John Iley (Caterham), Adrian Newey (Red Bull), and Rob Smedley (Williams).

**Q: John, can I start with you? Obviously, a new driver today, tell us how did he go and where do you go from here?**

**John ILEY:** I think Andre's been... possibly he should have been in Formula One 10 years ago. I think he subsequently proved in world sportscars and Japanese single-seaters that he would have been more than vindicated in being Formula One. He's well known to the owners and the management of the team. They rely on good feedback and we're basically getting his experience and feedback on the car during this weekend and he's done a very solid job for us so far. It's important to stress though that Kamui remains part of the Caterham team and they both worked together in the simulator in the week prior to Spa and gave us good assistance for this weekend.

**Q: Obviously there have been a lot of changes and restructuring, what's it been like for you on the shop floor as it were, on the technical side of the team? Do you know, for example, what resources you have to work with going forward, that kind of thing?**

**JB:** It has been a very, very challenging time. The last six weeks, if you include shutdown, has been a transitional period for us. We were struggling a lot prior to that period. We were non stop; we were unable to do what we wanted to do. Fundamentally, the new owners have come in and it's been difficult on the human side - restructuring and various things - but you can see this weekend we're starting to add performance and do upgrades to the car that frankly we've not been able to do for a long time. We've been wanting to do them, we know what we need to do, but we haven't been able to do them. So whether it's aero, mechanical, car characteristics, even some powertrain things, you're starting to see this weekend the beginning of that process.

**Q: Thanks very much. Dave, sort of same first question to you as to John really. You had Alex Rossi in the car for F1, Max Chilton back in the car for FP2. How did you as an operations group of engineers deal with that and what happens next in your situation?**

**Dave GREENWOOD:** Well, clearly we had quite a lot going on yesterday as a team and I'm quite proud of the way we handled it and the guys in the garage have ultimately been very professional and got on with everything thrown at them during the course of yesterday and today. They've done a fantastic job. In terms of the drivers, all three have done a good job today. Alex's first run out in F1 went quite well for him. We subsequently had a few issues on the car in between the two sessions, which probably hampered him a little bit in terms of his overall performance. But he got right in touch with where the problems were and gave good feedback. From that point, overall it's been a good day and credit to all three drivers and the team for dealing with what we've been thrown at.

**Q: Jules Bianchi said here yesterday in the drivers' press conference that the target isn't to try to catch Sauber as far as he's concerned, it's to stay ahead of Caterham, but what's your objective?**

**DG:** Well, catching Sauber obviously, but that's going to be a little bit more tricky. I prefer to look forwards at all times. That's not to say that we don't respect Caterham. They occasionally get closer and we need to keep watching what they are doing as well. They've clearly got some upgrades on the car this weekend, but so have we. We've managed to come here with a few mechanical parts that actually have paid massive dividends to us today.

**Q: Thank you very much. Coming to you Rob: one of the notable features as far as Williams is concerned is that most, if not all, of the developments you've brought to the car have worked. Can you tell us a bit about what's gone on to create that situation and your part in it?**

**Robert SMEDLEY:** I think that we've had changes in process if you like, where we've looked at correlation between wind tunnel and track, how we improve the accuracy of the measurements that we take here at the track and the process of that whole thing. I think that being able to have accurate feedback from the start of the year from the track back to the tunnel, not only as to what the parts are doing in terms of correlation but also in terms of what we want from a car - not only from total downforce but from car characteristics as well, in high, medium and low speed - has ultimately paid dividends. That correlation has thankfully been very good, because even when you do all your homework you can't take it for granted that it will be. But I think that the work that has been done by the people back in Grove in the wind tunnel, by the operations group in terms of the accuracy of the aero measurements. It's an ongoing process. We're still improving it and we've still got a way to go with it, but at the minute it's working well and I think we're quite pleased with it.

**Q: A few points have gone begging along the way, but on the other side pit stop times have improved a lot. Looking at the whole picture then, how far off being at the level you want to be are you operationally?**

**RS:** Miles away! It's an ongoing process. I've said before it's an ongoing process. The team is on a bit of a journey. We've already made inroads as to where we need to get to but if the team wants to make good on its ambitions of eventually winning races and then going on to win world championships again, as it has done in the past, then we still have a way to go. But the good thing is, the encouraging thing is that there has been progress made already and the team, as a group of people, there's great synergy there. Everybody's on board with it and everybody is pushing forward with it and every new target that we set, however big or small, the team gets on with it and gets it done and that's really encouraging.

**Q: Thanks for that. Coming to Andrew Green. Your team has always been a strong performer around this Spa-Francorchamps circuit, what do your prospects look like after today do you think?**

**Andrew GREEN:** Yeah, we've always had fond memories of Spa, we've had some good results in the past. I think as a general rule we always look forward to Sunday more than we do Saturday. I think we've got a good race car and I think it will be the same here. I think come Sunday afternoon, regardless of where we are on the grid, we can score some good points and keep the pressure on the people around us. That will be the aim for this weekend.

**Q: We talked to Rob there about development steps. With your team it's not quite so clear to read as the season's gone on. What's been happening behind the scene and in your mind are we reaching an important point in that Constructors' battle with McLaren - only one point in it?**

**AG:** Yeah, it's going to be a tough with the likes of McLaren: they've got a huge amount of resource compared to us. We've obviously got next year's car to think about, which is looming. But yeah, we'll keep the fight with them as long as we can. It only needs a couple of good results and we can stay ahead of them. Like I said before, I think definitely on a Sunday afternoon we can race well. I think it's going to be difficult, no doubt about it, but we'll see what we can do.

**Q: Thank you. James, can you spell out for us what you and Marco Mattiacci have identified as the things that need to be done to make Ferrari win again?**

**James ALLISON:** I don't think Ferrari's ever lacked for resource, it's never lacked for quality of people, quality of drivers, so we have many of the key parts of being a successful team. What all of us are trying to do, and Marco is spearheading that, is to identify the areas where we are not championship-leading material and to put them right. Most of those weaknesses are organisational and a tendency to have worked a bit short-term in

the past. That's the main area where we are trying to make sure that we bring out the best from all the manifest good things that are there at Maranello.

**Q: You've worked with both the drivers that you're with at the moment quite a lot through your career. Obviously what Fernando is doing this season is fairly clear but can you spell out or put your finger on what's characterised Kimi's season so far?**

**JA:** Well, I would say that we have had a car that is not especially easy to drive – that's certainly true. Particularly in Kimi's case he doesn't much like the front end of the car and Kimi's a driver who likes to have a very strong and predictable front end to the car and then he's able to make the most of the skill he had. That isn't something he's found yet in Ferrari and we haven't yet provided for him. That's, I think, what we're looking at.

**Q: Thanks for that. And finally, Adrian: where are we now on the evolution of your new role with Red Bull Racing? For example, have you been involved in the early laying out of the 2015 car?**

**Adrian NEWEY:** Very much so. At the moment I'm still full time at Red Bull Racing and will be certainly over the coming months as we finalise the general layout of the car, so it won't be until Christmas that I start to really get into new roles let's say. So at the moment it's full concentrated.

**Q: Obviously two wins so far this season, the only team to break Mercedes' stranglehold as far as that is concerned. What do you think are the chances of adding to that tally in the remaining races? Which ones do you target as being possibilities?**

**AN:** Possibly Singapore we have a chance. Difficult to forecast. I think it goes without saying that the circuits that have the shorter straights are the ones that suit us best.

**Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) James, as Fernando and Kimi, they have different kinds of driving style. Is it possible to build a car that suits both of them next year?**

**JA:** Yeah, I think so. There's no reason why we shouldn't, put it that way. Any driver responds to more downforce, any driver responds to more horsepower, any driver responds to more mechanical grip. We're putting all of those things into next year's car and I hope that both the drivers will be satisfied with the outcome.

**Q: (Ted Kravitz – Sky Sports) Adrian, are you looking outside for somebody to take on your sort day-to-day chief technical officer responsibilities at the track – a sort of de facto technical director – or do you think you've got that talent within the team, that you can bring someone in to take over your responsibilities in terms of making those big technical calls at the track?**

**AN:** I think that at the track in Paul Monaghan, 'Rocky' [Guillaume Roquelin] and Simon [Rennie] we have three very able technical people and I see no reason why they shouldn't be able to take those decisions, no.

**Q: (Edd Straw – Autosport) Question for James and Adrian please. Formula One cars aren't as quick as they once were, not just looking at the very short term past but ten years ago. Is that right for Formula One? Should grand prix racing always be about ever-faster cars or is it OK that it's about the fastest car within set regulatory parameters?**

**JA:** I have to say I don't spend a lot of time worrying about where they sit in the grand scheme of things. I'm mainly concerned with how fast mine is relative to these guys'. I think it's important that Formula One cars are fast, it's important that they look dramatic on the track, that the best drivers in the world find them exciting and challenging to drive. I think all those things are true. It's easy to design a set of regulations that would allow them to be massively faster – but I think what we have at the moment is fast. I think it looks dramatic, I think it requires skill from the drivers and I think it's producing fairly good races. So I don't really see any big problems in that regard.

**Q: Adrian, do you share that view?**

**AN:** I think lap time per se is not necessarily the be-all and end-all. I think, as James says, the critical thing is the cars should look fast and, if you're sitting there watching television that it should be "wow, those guys are superheroes, I couldn't do that." If I'm honest I don't think the current cars really do that. I think if you watch MotoGP then you certainly have that feeling, that those guys are superheroes, whereas the current crop of cars, their power-to-weight is not fantastic. Going back to the 1300hp in qualifying Formula One cars that were quite a bit lighter than they are now. Then those things, you had to bolt on some fairly special appendages to drive them in qualifying. I think the fact that young drivers – no disrespect to them at all – that they can jump in and instantly be at the front, or competitive certainly, is an interesting one. I don't think there's an easy answer but I think it would be good to make the cars a bit more difficult to drive in truth. I think the extra torque of the new engines is good in that respect – although there's obviously lots of ways of producing more torque. I think the way the old regulations had gone was very much with a small capacity, high-revving normally aspirated is bound to be low on torque. That's my personal opinion.

**Q: (Rodrigo Franca – VIP Magazine) Question for James, Adrian and Rob please. Formula One technology is being used to improve performance and product innovations, not only in our road cars but also in our lifestyle and day-by-day. How important is this work in your teams? I know McLaren, for example, has McLaren Applied Technologies. I would like to know if Ferrari, Red Bull and Williams have this kind of work.**

**RS:** Obviously with Williams we have the Advanced Engineering arm of the business. There are some crossovers to electrical hybrid power there. The vision of Williams at least is that, although you've got two standalone businesses, there should be cross-pollination of that knowledge between the two and there's absolutely no reason why we shouldn't do that. As to the wider range of a car manufacturer as Ferrari are, I'll leave that up to James to answer – but certainly the vision of our business is that we grow both the Formula One team and the Advanced Engineering group together and we're able to exploit both of those businesses from a knowledge point of view.

**Q: Adrian, is that important to Red Bull, and is that what you'll be heading on to after this?**

**AN:** I think to use the technology that's developed in Formula One in other avenues, other applications is without doubt an interesting one and one which other teams have demonstrated the value of in all sorts of diverse areas. So, yes, it's something that Red Bull are certainly looking at.

**Q: James, from a Ferrari perspective.**

**JA:** From a Ferrari perspective, I'm fortunate that the F1 part of Ferrari is right next door to the road car part of Ferrari and that we have the opportunity to mix our ideas and we benefit a reasonable amount from some of the work they've done over the last few years and they certainly continue to benefit from some of our know how. It's just a relationship that works both ways and long may it continue.

**Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) There's a possibility that by 2016 Formula One will be racing on low profile tyres – be that 18, 19 or 20-inch. From your own teams' perspectives and also given the relatively short timeframe, is it the right move that F1 should be making? Possibly from 2016 onwards?**

**JB:** I think from my point of view, the aero aspects, as it's close to my heart, is one of the key areas. The simulation of tyres in the wind tunnel and CFD environments has come on an awful long way and I think that's a key aspect for us to adjust or adapt the F1 platform to that. It also begs the question, the legality areas around the much greater space within that rim and how that is managed going forwards. Going back quite a way now, it was brake duct area but it is now very much more aero performance area. So, how those regulations are drawn up and how quickly that's implemented, and how soon we know enough information to come up with a good, solid platform around that format I think would be key.

**Q: Andrew?**

**AG:** I think the key for us is just making sure we have enough time to adapt to the new regulation. It's not something that we can move forward with over a short term. It needs quite a lot of development, a lot of work. Like John said, windtunnel: mechanical systems. It's reasonable change, more than happy to go in that direction, to be honest it would suit the way that we're set up, so yeah, more than happy.

**Q: Dave?**

**DC:** Yeah, I think as engineers we'll be very interested in it from the point of view of it being the next challenge, and everybody likes to be involved in changes like that in terms of just the engineering challenge, if you like and definitely as a team, so long as it's properly managed when it's introduced and not rushed in, then I'm sure with the right timescales and delivery of certain parts of the product from the supplier – whoever that is – at the right times then I'm sure we'll all get used to it and it'll be another step forward for Formula One.

**Q: James, your thoughts, and any thoughts on appropriate timescales?**

**JA:** Well, we're halfway through 2014, we're talking about something to be introduced in 2017, so there's certainly adequate time. The tender process for deciding on the new tyre supply is something the FIA looks after and have been taking the trouble to consult among the teams for what type of consideration should be built into the timing of that so that we can manage the engineering of it. So I think there is enough time and as long as the various inputs from the teams are heeded, it will all be fine – and it will be exciting and fun for us to have a change in the geometry.

**Q: Adrian?**

**AN:** I agree with all those points. The only thing I'd add though is that I think, and maybe I'm ignorant of what's been going on, but as far as I understand, then the only reason for proposing this is to suit... to make it look more like the road tyres that that particular tyre manufacturer makes. So it's not being done for technical reasons, it's not being done for performance reasons, it's being done purely for styling and commercial reasons and I think that to me does not seem the right reason to make a technical change.

**Q: Rob?**

**RS:** I think I'd probably second what Adrian just said to be honest. We have to really question the reasons for doing that, and what does it actually bring to the sport? As an engineering exercise then all the teams are big enough to be able to just get on with it. It's not a great engineering challenge, it is an engineering challenge as most things in Formula One are – the question that Formula One has to ask itself is: what are the reasons that we're doing it for, and are they the right reasons, does it bring anything to the sport?

**Q: (Sven Heidinger - Sport Woche) Question for James. You had huge problems with the wind tunnel in the past, you revamped it. Are you happy with how it works and are you using the one in Cologne any more?**

**JA:** No, we've not been using the one in Cologne for really quite some time and all the development work we've done on this year's car, the in-season development has been done in our facility at Maranello. We've been pretty happy with the output from that. The stuff that we've been saying should be an improvement has been an improvement and that's the main thing you want from a wind tunnel.

**Q: (Nicolas Carpentiers – FL.com) We are at the stage of the season where there is a balance to find between development and preparation of next year's car. I would like to know if the reduction of the time you are allowed to spend in the wind tunnel, and CFD – so the 30:30 rule – will force you to switch on the preparation of next year's cars sooner than previous years.**

**AN:** No, I don't think so. It means you've got to be more careful in the way that you use your runs, be it CFD or wind tunnel, but I think in terms of timing, that's much more led by the manufacturing and design deadlines than it is by the aerodynamic research.

**Q: Rob, is it in any way a leveller between the bigger teams and the smaller teams?**

**RS:** I'm not sure. Possibly is the answer but I couldn't give you a definitive response. Possibly it helps the smaller and midfield teams with slightly less resource. And I think that's the whole point of it, isn't it? How effective it is, I think you've got to look at the spread of the grid over the last years with the old ratio and look at it with this one and see whether or not there's been a change.

**Q: (Silvia Arias – Parabrasas) To all of you: I would like to know how difficult you find it – or not – to explain this Formula One to a teenager of 16 or 17 years old?**

**DC:** Well, most 16- or 17-year-old teenagers I've met are pretty bright so I'm sure they know plenty about technologies and they know the resource of the internet to go and look where you can find out about it. I think definitely as a sport, what we've done this year with the power trains is complicated for sure but that's the way the future of hybrid road cars is going to go so clearly this is the technology of the future so from that point of view, then yes, we do need to make sure we explain to them but I'm not so sure we do as slightly older people. I'm sure they've already worked it out for themselves and they use the internet to find out exactly what it means.

**Q: James, you have teenage children. Do you have trouble explaining it to them?**

**JA:** I think probably the only 16-year-old people I talk to are my children so I don't have a very broad span of experience there and they've had to put up with me all their lives so they're probably better equipped than many to cope with any explanation I might give. But it's not that complicated. We fill the things up with fuel and then we race them as hard as we can and then someone finishes in front and hopefully it's fun along the way.

**AG:** I don't tend to have an issue explaining to anybody to be honest. I explained it to my parents and they understand it and I think that's harder than explaining to a 16-year-old who can probably Google most of it and understand it in a few seconds. So no, I don't think so.

**JE:** I think there might be an opportunity to look at how Formula One's portrayed maybe in your areas more, going forward, whether we're attracting the youth market as much as we could be in an ever increasing market place for attention and opportunity for them to be looking at other things but so long as I think we provide a good show and something really interesting and exciting for them to watch, and I think that's something going back to an earlier point, I think Formula One in any format needs to be exciting as well as being fast. MotoGP was mentioned and I think the racing and overtaking in MotoGP is probably one of the big attractions so I think giving entertainment and something that they want to watch in the right places where they want to watch it is probably key.

**AN:** I think that in terms of complication then I think it's not a problem, in fact I think it makes it more interesting for the people who start to get into it. If you look at something like American football then despite having lived in America for a few years, I still have no clue how that works but a lot of people take the trouble to learn that and to become very involved in it and I think it's a similar thing that very often the sports that are most rewarding to spectate are the ones where you take the trouble to understand the complications of how it works.

**RS:** Yeah, I personally don't see the technology that we have at the minute with the power units as being particularly complicated to understand anyway, and especially not for 16/17-year-olds. I think that they are more apt and more equipped than anyone to understand that level of technology. Again, what you have to question is what does it bring to Formula One? What does it bring to the man who's sat at home, not the 16/17-year-old but all age ranges, when they sit at home on a Sunday afternoon and they watch it, does it make it more exciting, does it bring a bigger audience, does it create a bigger interest? And if it does all of that then it's good for the sport, because that's what we have to do because they are, at the end of the day, the people who keep the sport alive.

**AN:** Just to interrupt, I think possibly we're all talking in slightly different ways because in truth, when you watch it, then you've got all sorts of aspects: you've got the tyres, DRS, how the power units are used, etc, etc and if you really want to get into it, you've got break down which bits do you think are involving to understand and which bits, as Rob said, are probably actually in truth not relevant to the satisfaction of watching the show and I think clearly the tyres are working well this year, in terms of the degradation and the opportunities that offers with different strategies and so forth. So many other bits – how the K is used around a lap, is that really important or not? – I think that's more debatable.

**Q: (Angelique Belokopytov – AutoDigest) Adrian, as far as I know, you will leave Red Bull but in doing so, will you accept that Mercedes is stronger?**

**AN:** Well, I'm not leaving Red Bull the family. I will be spending much less time – much less involvement in the Formula One team. I think our cars have been competitive in certain aspects this year, as we showed in Hungary. But to chose when you step away from something, based purely on where you are at the time, is a dangerous game. I made this decision some time ago. Yes, of course it would be nice if we were about to win the championship this year but that's not going to happen but that's the nature of timing. I'm looking forward to what I'm going to be doing next, not worrying about even where I am at the moment, if you like. It's the future that's the exciting bit.



**Q: (Oana Popiou – FI Zone) Adrian, will this weekend just be an exercise in damage limitation for Red Bull?**

**AN:** Unfortunately, probably yes is the answer. I think it's unlikely that it will be... certainly unless weather plays a part in the race and we manage to get that right or unless we are plain lucky, then given a sort of normal dry race, it seems very unlikely that we will be battling for the win, so as you put it, at that point it becomes damage limitation.

**Q: (Ziv Knoll – F1.com) Adrian, we've been talking about 16-year-olds: what are your thoughts about having a 16-year-old in the Red Bull stable?**

**AN:** I don't think age per se is particularly important. Over the years we've seen a huge spread in driver ages: Fernando is still one of the very top drivers but has been in it for many seasons. I think Nigel Mansell was 40 years old when he won. So Formula One as a sport - where actually drivers, providing their motivation, if you like, remains, can have a very long career so you could argue that when they enter is not that important. I think what is a much more concerning question personally is the effect on education that happens for these drivers to get there at that age. A lot of the drivers in karting and in junior formulas frankly just aren't going to school. They don't go to school at all. The parents then hide behind that by saying that they have private tutors but I think in many cases - not all, I'm sure, but in many cases - that's actually a complete sham and I think if you asked a lot of those kids to sit their baccalaureat or GCSEs or whatever it might be that the results would tell a fairly depressing story which means that the few kids that do get through, fantastic. Being at a motor race and so forth, the kids do learn in a different way - not an academic way but they learn in other ways - but I think for many of those children that don't quite make the grade, they have spent all that time not going to school, not having a proper tuition and then what happens to them afterwards is altogether another question. It's something which motor racing as an industry urgently needs to look at, because personally I think we're being irresponsible allowing that.

**Q: (Alberto Antonini – Autosprint) James, as you're probably aware, there were some remarks in the press from a former member of the team, saying that the power unit had to be compromised to accommodate the taper of the rear end and there is no adequate tail-off in terms of aero downforce. What is your comment on this?**

**JA:** Well, I wasn't actually at Ferrari during any of that period and I would prefer not to comment on that. What I would rather do is to look forward to what we're trying to do at the moment which is to make sure that we're getting absolutely the best possible result out of our vehicle, taking our power unit and our chassis development and trying to bind the two together in a way that gives us a good result. There are any number of compromises that need to be made when you're making these cars and my focus is on trying to make the right ones together with our team for 2015.

**Q: (Craig Scarborough – Scarbs F1) Adrian and James: looking at the development path between now and going into next year, you've got relatively stable aero regulations but you've all got the potential to reappraise your power unit layout. What opportunities have you got in apportioning your resource development between this year and looking into next year?**

**AN:** Well in our case, well obviously we have an engine partner in Renault and therefore the division is very clear. We make requests in terms of what we'd like from the engine architecture point of view and how that would best install in the chassis. Renault are able to accommodate some of those requests - some of them. Others they say no they can't do that in the time available or they don't believe it's the right thing to do anyway.

**JA:** Well, the aero regs are stable but they are also still young, relatively young. I would guess that there's as much to be had out of - in the time between the '14 and '15 cars - there's as much to be had out of making the aero better as there is out of making the power unit better and we're throwing as much weight as we can behind both those things.

## Friday report

It was Nico Rosberg who topped the timesheets for Mercedes when Formula One ended its summer break with F1 at the Belgian Grand Prix, with teammate Lewis Hamilton 0.097s behind. The afternoon saw a continuation of Mercedes' dominance, with Hamilton claiming the top spot at the end of FP2, 0.604s ahead of Rosberg.

The Friday morning session saw drivers exercise unusual caution on their exploratory laps of the Spa-Francorchamps Circuit, as the loss of rear downforce in the 2014 cars prompted much discussion on Thursday of the renewed challenge that Eau Rouge would present. But it wasn't long before the Mercedes-powered cars were taking the corner flat out, while Fernando Alonso was also exploring the limits of his F14 T's capabilities on the classic track.

An early quick lap from Alonso in F1 put the Spanish driver second on the timesheets for much of the session, but with teammate Kimi Raikkonen 2.3s behind - the Finn ended the session one second adrift of Alonso - hopes that Ferrari had made a massive step forward in performance terms since the last race in Hungary appeared unfounded, with the low-downforce aero package brought this weekend less effective than the team desired. Instead, the combination of Alonso's prodigious talent and his team's tendency to showboat on Fridays flatters the car to deceive.

In what was a largely straightforward morning's running, Rosberg and Hamilton fought for the top slot on the timesheets for much of the final half hour, while both Alexander Rossi and Andre Lotterer were competent but unimpressive in machines unable to deliver much in the way of performance.

The afternoon was far more dramatic, with two red flags courtesy of Pastor Maldonado and Esteban Gutierrez. The Sauber driver had an as yet undiagnosed technical problem that caused him to spin at Blanchimont, and his car was soon recovered. Maldonado's incident - which the Venezuelan attempted to attribute to wheelspin leaving Malmédy - saw the Lotus driver swerve onto the grass on the approach to Pouhon, hitting the barriers on both sides and ripping the right rear wheel from his car.

There were also issues for Raikkonen and Sebastian Vettel, with the Red Bull driver unable to take part in FP2 following a power unit change resulting from F1's electrical problem. Raikkonen did make it out onto the circuit, but spent much of the afternoon in the garage as the team attempted to rectify an early misfiring problem.

### F1 times (unofficial)

1. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1m51.577s [25 laps]
2. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1m51.674s [24 laps]
3. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1m51.805s [16 laps]
4. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1m52.404s [21 laps]
5. Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari) 1m52.818s [17 laps]
6. Sergio Perez (Force India) 1m52.903s [24 laps]
7. Kevin Magnussen (McLaren) 1m52.922s [23 laps]
8. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) 1m52.937s [22 laps]
9. Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull) 1m52.972 [19 laps]
10. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) 1m53.172s [20 laps]
11. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1m53.369s [11 laps]
12. Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso) 1m53.594s [21 laps]
13. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1m53.597s [20 laps]

14. Adrian Sutil (Sauber) 1m53.703s [14 laps]
15. Felipe Massa (Williams) 1m53.968s [20 laps]
16. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1m54.189s [20 laps]
17. Giedo van der Garde (Sauber) 1m54.335s [16 laps]
18. Pastor Maldonado (Lotus) 1m55.336s [21 laps]
19. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) 1m55.782s [19 laps]
20. Alexander Rossi (Marussia) 1m57.232s [20 laps]
21. Andre Lotterer (Caterham) 1m57.886s [24 laps]
22. Marcus Ericsson (Caterham) 1m57.977s [24 laps]

#### **FP2 times (unofficial)**

1. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1m49.189s [26 laps]
2. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1m49.793s [28 laps]
3. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1m49.930s [19 laps]
4. Felipe Massa (Williams) 1m50.327s [24 laps]
5. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1m50.659s [31 laps]
6. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) 1m50.677s [26 laps]
7. Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso) 1m50.725s [25 laps]
8. Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull) 1m50.977s [16 laps]
9. Kevin Magnussen (McLaren) 1m51.074s [31 laps]
10. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) 1m51.077s [26 laps]
11. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1m51.383s [26 laps]
12. Adrian Sutil (Sauber) 1m51.540s [29 laps]
13. Sergio Perez (Force India) 1m51.573s [28 laps]
14. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1m52.196s [25 laps]
15. Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari) 1m52.234s [18 laps]
16. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) 1m52.776s [23 laps]
17. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) 1m53.955s [7 laps]
18. Max Chilton (Marussia) 1m54.040s [18 laps]
19. Marcus Ericsson (Caterham) 1m54.050s [30 laps]
20. Andre Lotterer (Caterham) 1m54.904s [24 laps]
21. Pastor Maldonado (Lotus) NO TIME SET [2 laps]
22. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) NO TIME SET [0 laps]

## **Thursday press conference**

Formula One returned from its summer break aflutter with the news that 2015 would see the arrival of the grid's latest youngest driver in F1 history. At the Thursday press conference, the attendant drivers gave their views.

Present were Jules Bianchi (Marussia), Romain Grosjean (Lotus), Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso), Felipe Massa (Williams), Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull), and Nico Rosberg (Mercedes).

**Q: Can I start with a question to all of you? We had news this week that next season there will be a 17-year-old driver on the grid. Can I have your reaction from a driver's point of view? And maybe we'll start with Felipe.**

**Felipe MASSA:** Definitely, he's a very quick driver. He shows talent in a go-kart, in Formula 3, winning many races: I think he's second in the championship. It's his opportunity. First of all, I think it's great that teams are still interested in the talent of the driver and not the money and I think that's really positive, it's good for the sport in general. I'm happy for that. Seventeen is a little bit young! For sure, we need to wait and see how he's going to perform in his first year. I think the most important thing is that he has the talent: I mean he's quick. I hope he can be clever as well, to learn everything from Formula One. There's a lot that he will learn and I hope he's quick enough to learn and to be consistent in Formula One and that he can stay, not just staying for one or two years and not doing what he's supposed to do. Until now he shows great talent and I hope he can show the same in Formula One, so I'm happy.

**Q: Nico, your thoughts?**

**Nico ROSBERG:** The same as Felipe said. All the journalists are always asking 'is it only with money that you can get to the sport?' and things like that. It's great to see that if you have the talent and you really deserve it... there have been many examples recently that have made it into F1. That's important, that's good. Of course, it's very young but I think we'll be OK.

**Q: Daniel, your thoughts on this?**

**Daniel RICCIARDO:** Not much more to add. It makes me feel a bit old! Definitely the Red Bull Junior Team and the programme for me worked a treat: helped me get to where I am. Obviously it's good they're now helping out Max. Obviously the age is the question mark but the talent, as Felipe said, is there. It's going to be interesting but, yeah, it's good.

**Q: Romain, what about you? Like the three guys before you, you all started in your 20s, what about starting so young in Formula One?**

**Romain GROSJEAN:** It's a wonderful opportunity that he has and it's something quite special to come to Formula One. As everyone says, he has shown great talent early in his career but he will have a lot of homework to do to learn everything about racing in higher categories - tyre deg, speed, a lot of things. But it's good to see fresh blood, but a bit sad for JEV.

**Q: Jules?**

**Jules BIANCHI:** Obviously as everyone says it's a great opportunity for him and it's great that some teams still invest in young drivers like that. I'm sure he will be doing well. He's really quick; we saw that in Formula 3. He won everything in go-karts. I'm also sad for JEV, I hope he will find something else but this is how it is now.

**Q: And Daniil, you'll be driving alongside him next year, you started at 19 this year, what are your thoughts?**

**Daniil KVYAT:** Yeah well, I think we will see how it is going to be. I think we're going to be team-mates. I think it's not as complicated as it looks to all of you. For the rest you just come and see what you can achieve. For every driver it's the same. It's not my job to analyse all the things deeply and so we will just wait and see.

**Q: What's not as complicated as it looks?**

**DK:** I think any driver can come to Formula One, can adapt, can get up to speed. I think everybody is coming to Formula One for some reason - because he has talent, because he has been successful somewhere: there is always a reason why someone comes to Formula One but then there are

many different things that make the difference, so it's as simple as that.

**Q: Jules coming to you. Two classic tracks coming up: Spa and Monza the next two races. One of your relatives is in a photograph over here, driving a Ferrari from the past. But what are your feelings on racing here and the prospects for you and the team and are they pushing hard do you feel?**

**JB:** It's special for me to be in Belgium and here in Spa because of my family; my great uncle won here in GT cars and I feel a bit like being at home again, so I'm good here, I'm happy. We're trying to push hard with the team, trying to stay ahead of Caterham. This is still our target, so we'll try to achieve that. For sure, it won't be easy because they are pushing hard as well. They are not giving up. That's why we will keep fighting. We will have to see how it will be in Spa. Monza will be another challenge but at the moment I'm focused on this race.

**Q: Romain, you said you're reviewing you options for 2015. Obviously Lotus have secured Mercedes engines for next year. What are the next steps for you and the team?**

**RG:** I think we still have to understand and analyse a bit more this difficult season. There were many reasons why we started on the back foot but I'm sure we can still learn a lot. The idea is to prepare the future as good as it can be for Lotus. They have been designing wonderful cars in the last two to four years and I don't see reason that it's not the case again in the future. Hopefully things get better but so far we still need to do our job, understand things and what we can learn from that difficult season.

**Q: Daniil, coming to you. As this Daniel was saying, just picking up on his points from earlier on, you know with the Toro Rosso programme you've got around about two years to prove yourself and obviously in Jean-Eric's he moves on. Tell us, when you're in that situation, does it feel reassuring to know that you've got those two years, you've got that time to prove yourself or does it add to the pressure?**

**DK:** It all depends on how you take it. Obviously you can take it from two sides. Obviously you have to think that you've been given the chance and you just try to use it as good as you can. You cannot really be thinking too much about there is some limited time about it, but yeah, so I've been given a chance and I'm just doing my best all of the time, trying to make the best out of it. There's no special trick.

**Q: Felipe, on paper this race and the next one should be two of your strongest tracks this season. What are you and Williams hoping to take out of these two races, particularly coming off the back of the strong result you had last time out? What's your minimum expectation?**

**FM:** Well, I hope it can be more than just on the paper. I hope we can show good performance on the track in this race and in Monza. But I would say maybe most of the races we can be competitive. Maybe Singapore will be the most difficult one but I would say that at most of the tracks we can be there, we can be competitive. I hope that we can show that and I hope that we can be... still growing, still improving, like we did from the first race until now. It would be great to have a very competitive car and very good race here and Monza but also in the second part of the season. We're still fighting. We know how important is the points. We're going to fight; we're going to do everything we can to be competitive.

**Q: Daniel coming to you. The first win obviously is always special. The second one, four races later, suggests it's becoming something of a habit. Tell us about your confidence level at the moment and how you see the second half of the season for yourself and Red Bull in terms of opportunities and objectives?**

**DR:** Yeah, just keep building on the first half of the year we had. It was really nice to get a couple of wins in the first 11 races, so yeah, for confidence, for motivation, for myself and the team it's obviously really high. Spa and Monza are circuits which on paper aren't circuits that are going to suit us the most but we're coming in with a bit of momentum so we'll try to pull off a good result here and in Monza and then we've got a few tracks that will really come to us after that. So not much changes, just to keep building as always, keep learning and keep enjoying it. That's important: that's what I'm doing this year, I really am loving it, and just let that continue.

**Q: Nico, a number of talking points coming after the Hungary race, going into this one, one of them the team saying they're not going to bother giving calls to either driver to let the other one through, even if there are strategy considerations. What were your own learnings from Hungary and what were you taking on from here?**

**NR:** I gather it was a bit of a mess afterwards, after Hungary, so it's best I don't add too much I think and I continue to not give too many details. In general of course we discussed it after the race – just because it's important to review a situation like that and know how to move forward. Now we're moving forward but of course, I have also learned various things from that race which I will try to adapt for the future.

**Q: (Mike Doodson – GPWeek) To follow up the first question you were asked today. All six of you were racing as teenagers – one of you actually in Formula One – but a couple of you had to take a holiday from Formula One for a while. My question is, to all six of you, do you think each of you would have been ready for Formula One at the age of 17?**

**Q: Nico – didn't you test an F1 car at 17 or 18?**

**NR:** Yeah, I tested an F1 car at 17. Driving-wise I would have been ready, I feel, but the limitation at the time was physically. That was a big limitation because at the time it was still V10, big downforce – I'm not sure if more downforce than now but the tyre grip was higher, y'know? That was the big limitation at the time for me as, a 17-year-old. But nowadays it is a little bit easier physically, definitely, so that will help.

**Q: Dan, I think you were 21 when you came in – would you have been ready at 17?**

**DR:** Let's say ... no. I think I was still racing karts at 16 and then, yeah, I hadn't driven many formula cars when I was 17, I think it was maybe my first season, so then I didn't feel ready, no. Obviously my path was probably a bit different as well. I grew up a bit later.

**Q: Romain, similar story for you?**

**RG:** 17 I was competing in my first races in single-seater. It was a Formula Renault L61 and no, I wasn't ready.

**Q: Daniil?**

**DK:** It's an interesting question. I think I was racing in [FR] 2.0 at 17 and, if I have to come back again and do some pole laps that I did that year, maybe I couldn't even do them again. In terms of pure performance, pure driving it's a very similar driver: me now and me back at 17. But, many factors, of course from mental side and physical side. But, like I said, everybody's different, so we just have to wait and see.

**Q: Jules, you have a similar kart background to Max but you put a few years in, in the junior categories. What do you think, where would you have been at 17?**

**JB:** I was not ready at 17. It was my first year in Formula Renault 2.0, so I cannot say I was ready, for sure. I was doing mistakes there. So, if you still do mistakes in the previous categories, you cannot be ready for Formula One.

**Q: Felipe, you were 20, I think, when you made your Formula One debut.**

**FM:** Yeah, I think when I started, when I drove first time the race car, I was 15. It was a Formula Chevrolet in Brazil. I think it was never a problem to be quick, it was a problem to understand – especially in Formula One. I was 20, I think it was a little bit too early for me. I really agree with what Nico says. Physically, at that time, it was a lot more difficult than now. Now I would say the race is very easy from the physical point of view, which is easier for a young driver to learn and understand – but at that time it was a lot more difficult from the physical point of view.

**Q: (Paolo Ianieri – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Coming to what Felipe and Nico just said, also Lewis said in last few days that he feels this F1 is too easy for him, he would like to come out of the car exhausted, pushed to the limits. With these new cars it's not the same any more. Would you also like it to be more difficult, more challenging, this Formula One?**

**NR:** In the first instance we're here for the fans, yeah? So we need to do great racing. At the moment we're seeing great racing, so that's a big positive.

That's the first and most important thing – and then we need to work on the sound, which seems to be quite important to the fans, which I can understand. So those are the sort of things that are important. Then, from a driver's point of view, yes, in an ideal world... I mean it's great as it is, that's a fact, but maybe it was a little bit better if I could do quali laps every lap with the tyres lasting forever, just proper qualifying every single lap in the race and harder physically. All of that would make it slightly better, yes, but I don't really think about that because it is the way it is now, and that's great, the way it is now.

**Q: Daniel, do you agree with Lewis' point of view?**

**DR:** Yeah, I think not much more to say. The racing is the first thing that needs to be good and it is. And maybe we should sweat a little bit more than we are. We'll see.

**Q: Felipe, you come from an era when you did sweat quite a lot. What are your thoughts?**

**FM:** I agree 100 per cent with what Nico said but the physical, to be harder or easier is related first of all to the refuelling. This is the first point. And on that time we had a lot more grip on the tyres as well. I think that's the two things that make it more difficult to drive the car. To have more grip, and when we had the refuelling to have maximum 60kg in the car, 55kg all the time. It was a lot quicker, most of the laps. That's why it was a lot more difficult from a physical point of view.

**Q: Jules, this is the only F1 you've known. What are your thoughts? Would you like it to be a little bit more physically challenging?**

**JB:** Yeah, it would be good. I have no problem with that, for sure we are not like completely dead at the end of a race. We still have energy. So maybe it would be better for the people outside to see that when we get out of the car, we fall down, I don't know what they like but, for sure, it's not like this at the moment, so if we can improve this, yeah, let's do it.

**Q: Your perspective, Daniil?**

**DK:** Well, I testing last year's car so I can rely on that a little bit. For me it wouldn't be a problem, to be honest, to drive last year's car in terms of the physical point and speed-wise as well. But in the end I don't think the cars of this year are easier to drive than last year's cars in terms of just driving because we lost some downforce, we have to fight. I'm pretty sure this Eau Rouge corner here is going to be quite interesting and challenging again. It's been so easy flat the last few years. I don't think it's going to be so easy now. It's always some negative and some positive sides everywhere. Everybody has a different opinion in the end, so it's hard to make everyone happy.

**Q: Romain, your view?**

**RG:** Yeah, well I think the first point is that the last few races have been really cool. I could watch, unfortunately, a bit of these grands prix. But on the other hand, don't get us wrong, the cars are not easy to drive. They're still performing very well. And yes, physically they are easy, but there are other challenges. I think it's still a tough job. I remember my time in 2009, and already then the cars were physically harder to drive. I would like more: the quicker it goes the more we enjoy it. We are racing drivers. If you give us 200 more horsepower and more grip, we will take it – but what we want is to really have good races.

**Q: (Ian Parkes – Press Association) Nico, you mentioned earlier about the talks that followed the Hungarian Grand Prix regarding the team orders situation. First of all, were those talks resolved to your satisfaction? Secondly, you also mentioned about learning things but you didn't really expand. Are you able to expand at all on what you did learn, going forward now for the rest of the season in your battle with Lewis?**

**NR:** Yeah, sorry, I don't really want to go into much more detail than that. As I said, we sat down, discussed it all. That is important after such an occasion, such a situation, and then review, if we need to change something for the future and that's what we've done.

**Q: (Thomas Bastin – La Dernière Heure) To the most experienced – probably Felipe and Nico – we are now in the second part of the season with the new cars. Do you think that for the fans they are more spectacular to see and are they also more difficult to drive?**

**FM:** Well, I think it is definitely very nice for the fans. They see a lot of overtaking but maybe it's the noise. The noise is really something that makes it more spectacular, like we had in the past. But the fights, they can see. Every race there are always big fights between the cars. I think it's really interesting for the people. The noise is definitely something that we're missing.

**Q: And your thoughts, Nico, particularly picking up on the point that Daniil made a moment ago, that with much less rear end downforce this year, corners like Eau Rouge can be much more of a challenge, right?**

**NR:** No, it's that we have a little bit less grip in some places, but it's not really... It depends on which car, of course. I think to watch from the outside it's still awesome to watch these cars. They're still the fastest cars that there are in terms of corner speed and things like that and just the sound... I understand that we need to keep on working on that and hopefully we can find a solution. Maybe we just put some big loudspeakers on the car. That's the direction of electric cars in the future anyways.

**Q: (Paulo Ianieri – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Nico, I've see that you've been pretty active the last few weeks, hunting for pizza in Napoli, having parties in Ischia or Capri. How badly did you need this break for you in such a hard and tense season, fighting every second weekend for victory?**

**NR:** Needed, not really. After Hungary I wanted the next race to be the next day and just continue like that so it's not like I needed a holiday but of course it was there and it was great. We had a great time with friends and family. I find it quite good that there's the two weeks where everything is shut down because otherwise, even on a day off, there's still e-mails with the team and this and that coming through and like that there is nothing. In those two weeks there's really nothing happening and it's quite a good thing for everybody.

**Q: (Angelique Belokopytov – AutoDigest) To all of you: you know every driver has his beliefs to have luck during a race, someone wears white shirts, another doesn't shave, so what about you? What will you do or not do before a race?**

**JB:** Well, there's one that I won't tell you, there's one that I can tell you: that I always get into the car from the right side. That's it.

**DK:** There's no luck, I think.

**RG:** I used to have superstitions when I was younger and once I forgot things that I used as superstitions and I won the race, so I thought that was useless but there are certainly routines: I always put on my suit the same way, I always jump in the car from the right hand side and with the seatbelts always the same way. It's just the fact that you get ready to race.

**DR:** It's an excuse for something to go wrong! It's nonsense.

**NR:** I keep my underwear from qualifying if I'm on pole for the race! And they're not allowed to be washed either.

**FM:** Yeah, me too! Not to be on pole, you know, because otherwise I have just one this time. If I start the weekend in a good way and I use the same on Saturday and Sunday. I also go inside the car from the left side, to put my right foot first in the car. So many things that don't change anything but you just feel well.

**Q: (Oana Popoiu – F1 Zone) Daniil, your team will have the youngest line-up next season: could that be a bit of a disadvantage when it comes to developing the car?**

**DK:** To be honest, this season is still going on for me and there are eight races to go and I'm still not thinking about that. I think, as I said, getting up to speed is not such a big problem so then there are many many different details and factors that decide what's going to happen for the future of the driver, whoever he is, so I think obviously it's good, getting as young as possible to Formula One because then you have plenty of time but it's all up to how you can develop. At the moment, I really don't know how to say. I don't think it's going to be a big problem. We will develop OK.

**Q: (Daniel Johnson – The Daily Telegraph) Nico, you said at the beginning, when James asked you, that there was a bit of a mess after the last race,**

given what happened with the team orders. Is that why you seem fairly reluctant to elaborate – which is fair enough – but is that why you're reluctant to explain more about it?

**NR:** No, sorry, let me make that more precise. I gathered that there was a bit of a mess in the media and so it wouldn't be useful for me to give another extra bit to that at the moment, it's better to let it all calm down. That's what I meant.

**FM:** You fight, after the race, with...?

**Q: (Silvia Arias – Parabrisas) For Jules Bianchi: there are a lot of people saying that you deserve a better car than the Marussia. What are your expectations for next year? Do you feel the same?**

**JB:** Well, I'm trying to do my best now while I'm with Marussia because it's the same I'm with at the moment and I'm happy to be with Marussia, for sure. They gave me the chance to get a Formula One drive so I can't complain. Obviously my manager and Ferrari has to work out what I will do next year, it's still not sure yet so we'll have to wait and see but for me, at the moment, I just want to finish the championship well. I will try to do as we started, stay in front of Caterham and then we will see.

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