

F1 British Grand Prix – Thursday press conference

It was a crowded press conference room as the media gathered to grill the drivers in advance of what is one of the most popular events on the Formula One calendar.

Present were Fernando Alonso (Ferrari), Paul di Resta (Force India), Romain Grosjean (Lotus), Lewis Hamilton (McLaren), Vitaly Petrov (Caterham), and Bruno Senna (Williams).



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Vitaly, your thoughts on the updates that the team brought to Valencia, where you ran very competitively, and I think you have more here as well.

Vitaly PETROV: Actually we bring not so many updates to Valencia, just front wing and, slightly, bodywork. But here, yes, we bring new back bodywork, new exhaust, some front wings and probably the rear wing, so we have quite a big update here.

Where do you think that can bring you? Do you have any idea? Can you be in the points? That, obviously, has to be the major aim.

VP: First of all we need to see how these upgrades will work. This weekend we know the weather will be not fantastic it. It's a disappointment. Also our straight-line test, we didn't do much work because of heavy rain. But you know all the 24 cars are quite close to each other and quite competitive, so if we gain something definitely we will be, maybe, more competitive than in the last race. So I hope these upgrades will give us some good feedback and we can fight with the cars in front.

Romain, first of all, congratulations on you marriage, week before last I think. In Valencia, you led the grand prix. People forget sometimes that you haven't been a front runner for long, that you haven't done that many grands prix. How exciting was that? And what did you learn from leading the race?

Romain GROSJEAN: Well, same position as Valencia, behind Fernando. It was a very good weekend, a very good grand prix. It's nice to be able to fight for the front with Lewis, Fernando with Sebastian Vettel, all the big guys. We have a car, which is very competitive, and the factory is doing a fantastic job. It's good to be here, good to be able to get a lot of experience by fighting with the big teams and the top drivers and hopefully at the next one we get a little bit more luck and I can get to first place.

Do you feel you have made a lot of progress this year? Do you feel you have matured almost?

RG: I think you progress every time you're in the car. It's difficult with no testing to improve yourself so every race weekend you learn something new, in terms of set-up, in terms of driving, in terms of tyre management or whatever, and for sure when you fight at the front you learn even more than when you are at the back.

Bruno, in a couple of weeks' time you're going to be picking up the Trofeo Bandini. What does it mean to you to have won that trophy?

Bruno SENNA: It's very special. You know that Lewis has taken it before, Seb and Nico. So there are quite a few drivers that are successful now have won this in the past, so it's very encouraging for me that they see potential in me – especially from last year as that was such a tough situation to be in. It's going to be a special event and I'm looking forward to being there.

We can see that the Williams car this year has performance. But are you happy with it? Are there any issues you have with the car?

BS: Of course we're happy with it. It's difficult for a team to make such a leap from a difficult season [last year] as Williams has done. So it's very encouraging for us to have a car that is consistently in the points. On the other hand we always want more. We always want the car to be faster and faster, so we keep pushing the team and the team keeps pushing us to improve. We are always trying to find the magic button to make the car go faster than the other ones.

Lewis, we saw in Valencia that Red Bull seem to be really quick, I don't think there's any disputing that, but have McLaren got an answer to that, because we see that they're bringing update to this race?

Lewis HAMILTON: Yeah, we definitely have some upgrades, so I'm really, really excited to see how they behave on the car and if they actually deliver what we think they're going to deliver. But whether or not... I don't know if it's as big as what they brought at the last race, but who knows. I think our car generally goes a little bit better on high-speed circuits than it does at low-speed circuits, so fingers crossed it will be a little bit stronger this weekend.

You've had so many instances where you've been so close to scoring big points this season and Valencia to some extent was the same again. Are you still changing your attitude and working towards maximising on those sorts of race?

LH: I haven't changed anything from the beginning of the season – everything's still the same. Things don't always go according to plan, but that's life. I'm excited now that we have another race and that we have so many races ahead of us and that we still have plenty of opportunities to continue fighting for this championship and that's what racing is all about.

Fernando, Spain have had a rollercoaster of various things: Nadal going out of Wimbledon, you winning in Valencia, Spain winning the European Championships – how has that affected you, or does it not affect you at all?

Fernando ALONSO: It's not affecting. You watch TV. Obviously I prefer Nadal wins and the Spain football team wins but it's not changing your preparation, so your approach for the next race. You are concentrated in your job, speaking with the team, doing some simulator work. You go to bed a little bit more happy or sad but nothing changes.

You were a winner here last year, at the British Grand Prix at Silverstone, won the last grand prix at Valencia as well – but two very different circuits I would have thought. How do you see your changes this weekend?

FA: Looking at the characteristics of the circuit, Silverstone should be a little bit better for us and suit our car characteristics a little bit better. As we saw at the beginning of the year in the high-speed corners and also as we saw in Mugello, that the car was performing quite well. Hopefully we see a good Ferrari here this weekend, with me and Felipe. And we see, I think, that it also all depends on the weather. We know that here anything can happen, or more rain than dry at times we will have, looking at the forecast, so we need to be ready for all: we need to be prepared for any track conditions at any time and try to have a smooth qualifying – and that will not be easy when the weather is changing, so you need to be in the right moment on the track to do the lap. And then the race, you know, straight to score as many points as possible – as I said, hopefully the car is performing well here.

Paul, Valencia obviously not such a good qualifying but a reasonable race, I don't know how you would have looked at that. Really, can you improve on that?

Paul di RESTA: I think Valencia was by far our strongest performance as a team. You have to be relatively confident that hopefully you can carry that into this weekend. We had the potential to be much higher up in qualifying; a mistake in Q3 by me cost that. But we set ourselves quite a risky target in the race and achieved a one-stop strategy, the only car that did that. Obviously the safety car compromised us a lot, so not ideal, but the positive side is that we picked up points. And really that's key when you're a midfield team: to capitalise on those small points that are out there to get.

When you do a one-stop strategy like that, what is it like for the driver? Are you holding yourself back all the time, is it frustrating?

DIR: I won't go into the details of it but it is certainly a different approach. It starts quite early on in the weekend with what your strategy guys come up with and obviously your setup drives you forward that way but I think our car performed well on low and high fuel in Valencia. It was just risky whether that worked. In hindsight, maybe we'd do the race a bit different if we went back – but certainly to come away with a double points finish for the team, we can be very happy. We both ended up doing different things.

Question to Romain Grosjean, you prefer heat, just like your car, what do you expect this weekend with the rain?

RG: Well, we have to see. This track puts a lot of energy into the tyres so the heat shouldn't be a problem as it was in Canada, for example, but we have to see if it's raining or if it's dry – as Fernando says, take the best chance to get on track at the right time and try to analyse the weather forecast. It shouldn't be as bad as it has been on the cold conditions.

Question for Fernando and for Lewis, you've been extremely successful, both of you, in wet races over the last few years: between you I think you've won, could be half. Just tell me why you think that is, why you think you're so successful when conditions are like that and what extra demands it brings to a driver?

FA: I don't know really. I think it's a combination of factors, one will be for sure how competitive is your car. I think either Lewis or me, we've been normally lucky to drive in our career good cars and winning cars, so in dry and wet conditions, normally it's a help, for sure. And then I think it's the experience that you have and how many wet races you do. Probably with Lewis, racing here in the early categories it rains a lot, and it rains a lot in

my region, in Spain. It normally rains a lot of the time, so same also with the experience. The first races I did in Formula One in wet conditions, ten years, eleven years ago, I make a lot of mistakes that now I try to avoid. So the more races you do, the better you feel.

LH: I don't really have anything else to add to that. I think it's just a mixture of things coming together on those races. I think we've been very fortunate, I would say, to drive for good teams and have good cars in those circumstances.

Lewis, just following on from that, one of your best memories in Formula One, of course, was winning here in 2008. What was the secret to success that day because everybody else was spinning off but you won that race by over a minute?

LH: I really still don't know until today why we were so quick that weekend and didn't really have any problems at all during the race. I think I had one moment when I went straight on at Abbey, maybe, but otherwise it was quite a smooth race, and I really still don't know, today, why it all came together, but it was obviously a combination of what I was just commenting on: the tyres, the good pit stops, the good call strategies and maximising the grip on a track which I'd learned for a few years before I'd even got to know in Formula One, where that grip was and I was able to put it into play.

I think, with the exception of Romain, all five of you have lived in the UK at some point in your career. I was just wondering if you could talk a little bit about that, what it's like for a young ambitious driver growing up in the UK?

BS: Very wet.

DIR: I think it is where home is. Obviously Lewis and I are from this country, it wasn't wet in Scotland, I don't think. I suppose there's no place like it. It's where your family is. I suppose memories: when you're a child, travelling all over the UK, taking part in many go-kart races. I wouldn't change it, I don't see why I should. It's got me to where I am at the moment.

LH: Generally, I think us Brits should be pretty good in the wet. I think a lot of my success in the wet has come down to a lot of the weather we have here. A lot of my races up in Scotland - Larkhall, Rowrah, all over the country - all the experiences I have had in karting, they have all contributed to the success that I have nowadays, so I'm quite grateful for the changeable conditions throughout my career and also grateful for good weather nowadays.

VP: I agree with what they said.

RG: Never lived here.

FA: My English is not very good, but in 2001 it was zero English. It was not an easy time. The supermarket was not easy.

Fernando, after a difficult winter for the team, you must be delighted with the season so far. How much better is the car now than it was then, and how much more improvement do you think there is to come?

FA: Yeah, we are definitely quite happy with the situation now in terms of points, at least, because in terms of performance we know that there are still a few cars quicker than our car, so we are still not completely happy but the job that the team has done over the last three or four months has been amazing, recovering the maybe 1.5s or something like that that we were off the pace in Australia. So this is good news, not only for this championship or for this moment, but also for the near future of the team, because we faced some difficult times with the wind tunnel correlation etc which was not the best, also for the next projects. Now, definitely, we are in a good direction. There is still a lot to come from the team in the next couple of races and in the next couple of months, in terms of performance in the car, so hopefully they work as they are working now.

Fernando, what is the value of the advantage that you have in the championship?

FA: I think that regarding the points, it's for sure not a situation that maybe we were expecting because leading the championship is good news for us, but we are also very honest with ourselves and as I said, now there are a few cars that are quicker than us at the moment and we need to close that gap in the next couple of races if we want to fight for the championship. If not, we know that sooner or later they will be in front, if we don't work better than the others. We are in race eight or nine of twenty, so at the moment championship positions or points are important but it's not our main priority. As I said, first thing is to improve the car.

Paul, what is the situation with your manager now, because I see reports about Lewis's Dad no longer working with you. Is that correct?

DIR: I think everything's been said that has to be said. I confirm that we're not working together. I think it's been reported that we're no longer working together, so that is the matter at the moment.

Romain, your first period in Formula One, a couple of years ago, didn't go too well, and only a few drivers actually get a second chance at Formula One but you did and now you're a strong candidate to become yet another winner this year. My question is: looking back, was it a mistake to come into Formula One at that time and take the risk of failing or did it help you this second time around?

RG: Let's turn it a different way: can you say no one gets a chance in Formula One. The answer is no so it was not a mistake, it was as it was and it was a good experience being with Fernando in the team, it taught me a lot and all the experience I got in 2009 is now in my pocket. I think then it was a little bit of a difficult time but I'm back today, very happy to be and very proud to be part of Lotus and everything I've learned is very important today.

Paul, I appreciate you don't want to talk about the reasons behind your split with Anthony but can you at least explain what it means to you going forward now, whether you're looking at other options: a new manager and in particular bearing in mind that this is the time of year when a driver will look towards negotiating a new contract with other teams etc? How is that going to affect you now without a manager?

DIR: At the moment I'm just fully focused on my racing. At the end of the day, it's the results that count for me and what's going to drive me forward. We've had a good year up until now. We need to continue that progress. The focus this weekend is to have a good race. It's obviously a big weekend for me to have a lot of friends and family around, a lot of support. Being one of the three Brits, I got a feeling for what it is like to have a country behind you at this venue, and the atmosphere is electric. Hopefully we can put on a good show for them and certainly encourage them to get out in their rain jackets because it looks like they're going to get wet.

Romain, what are the latest updates you and the team have received about the engine failure (in Valencia) and also how does that affect the sense of reliability, because you had a big loss, you and Vettel, you were fighting relevant things like winning a race? And also, do you already know if the car had something to do with it, other parts of the car maybe, the way the car works? What is the news on that?

RG: Well, I think the best person to explain that will be the engineer at Renault Sport F1 but no, we have been trying to analyse what has happened. There are a few ideas on things that have been changed since the last race and hopefully it was a one shot experience that we are not going to have again. But on the other hand, it's the first time that we've had a reliability issue. It was a 'stupid' issue, not a big deal, so it should be sorted out by now,

and we shouldn't have any more.

Romain, you said that you were fighting with big guys, with three World Champions. How far are you from them, what are you missing, what don't you have to be a winner?

RG: At least one World Championship. The more you race, the more you have experience. It's only my first complete season. I'm in a good team so I'm lucky to have a good car. I'm very pleased to fight at the front but in terms of results, I'm missing at least one World Championship.

Bit of a sensitive question but to anyone who would like to answer: obviously we had the accident suffered by Maria de Villota on Tuesday, I'm sure you're all aware of that. Just your thoughts on that, first of all, if anyone would like to pass on any thoughts and secondly, obviously it was a straightline aero test. I'm sure you've all probably done that at some time in the past. Is there anything that can be learned from what Maria went through, going forward in terms of safety and that kind of thing?

FA: Obviously we are very worried for this situation because we are still waiting for some more news. We only know what you all know and there are still some difficult days until the situation is completely clear. The operation has passed completely etc. Sad days, for sure, completely shock when you hear the news and how what happened is possible. Obviously we don't know all the information it's difficult to talk about the reasons etc until we know the official version but at the moment, it's so difficult to imagine how this can happen.

LH: I don't know her personally, but when I read about it I was absolutely devastated for her and for her family. I think it's very very tragic and myself and my team, we send on our warmest wishes her way and hope that she has a speedy recovery, hope that things get better.

On a lighter note, when I look through the preview press releases, a lot of the drivers spoke about the fans in the UK being very knowledgeable. I was wondering if any of you can think of any interaction you've had with a fan here that made you really step back and think 'wow, this person really knows what they're talking about'?

DIR: I think something that is quite unique here is that a lot of the Formula One teams are based around this part of the country and based in Britain, the majority of them, and obviously you get a lot of factory staff, people that are involved in the manufacturing side, smaller companies that are involved, and it's nice to see the support and see that people are as dedicated to Formula One as they can be. It's a shame that obviously they can't get a bit closer to see the design work that they do but the support is well-respected by us.

Bruno, we heard that Williams are bringing a lot of updates. Pastor was saying earlier that he feels a lot of pressure because it's Williams's home race and there are the updates, and a lot of expectation also because he has already won a Grand Prix, so I wonder how you feel about it, and also if you could explain exactly what you're bringing here, because you've been testing it since Mugello, if I'm right?

BS: I feel really happy that we're bring updates because everybody else is also moving forward. We have a few bits and pieces. We have wings and pieces of the bodywork that will be different, so it's always hard to quantify how much that will improve the car, but every little helps as we've seen in Barcelona when Pastor won. There was a bit of an update there. So, for sure, it's going to be the case of trying to maximise the package but again, as Paul said before, the weather is very changeable here and that can mean everything or it can mean nothing. But for sure, it's the team's home race, we want to do well, it would be great to finish with both cars in good points-scoring positions. I think that listening to everybody here, everybody is very optimistic about their chances on this track because everybody seems to think that their cars should be well suited to this type of track so I guess we're going to see another tough weekend, very close battles. Hopefully we can score some good points from there. There is always pressure on a driver, pressure is there every single time we're in the car.

F1 British Grand Prix – F1 report

There wasn't much to see on Friday morning at Silverstone, although the teams and drivers did their best to give the attending fans something of a show despite the heavy rain.

When the F1 world awoke to persistent drizzle over Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire it was immediately obvious that little running would be taking place today. With rain forecast for the duration of the weekend, and a limited number of sets of wet weather tyres available to each driver, strategy demands that rubber is held back for the sessions that matter – qualifying and the race.

Despite the conditions, all 24 drivers made it out of the pits to complete – at bare minimum – an installation lap. Fernando Alonso, Jules Bianchi, and Paul di Resta did not set any times in the opening practice session of the British Grand Prix weekend, but the remaining 21 did their best.

Special mention should go to Sauber's Kamui Kobayashi, who kept the fans entertained with 19 laps of the circuit, many of which involved spins and slides and all manner of close shaves but no incidents of note.

Given the conditions, the overall standard of driving was very impressive. While spins and slides are inevitable in heavy rain, all refrained from planting their cars into the walls and barriers, and from colliding with each other.

At the end of what was probably Formula One's soggiest ninety minutes of the season thus far, Romain Grosjean topped the timesheets for Lotus.

F1 times (unofficial)

1. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1:56.552s [13 laps]
2. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso) 1:56.827s [10 laps]
3. Lewis Hamilton (McLaren) 1:57.174s [6 laps]
4. Sergio Perez (Sauber) 1:57.664s [11 laps]
5. Felipe Massa (Ferrari) 1:58.119s [7 laps]
6. Mark Webber (Red Bull) 1:58.463s [7 laps]
7. Kamui Kobayashi (Sauber) 1:58.483s [19 laps]
8. Michael Schumacher (Mercedes) 1:58.493s [10 laps]
9. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1:58.942s [8 laps]

10. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1.59.076s [12 laps]
 11. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1.59.414s [11 laps]
 12. Vitaly Petrov (Caterham) 1.59.614s [9 laps]
 13. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) 1.59.733s [7 laps]
 14. Heikki Kovalainen (Caterham) 1.59.787s [10 laps]
 15. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) 2.00.125s [5 laps]
 16. Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus) 2.00.253s [6 laps]
 17. Jenson Button (McLaren) 2.01.834s [6 laps]
 18. Timo Glock (Marussia) 2.01.835s [6 laps]
 19. Pedro de la Rosa (HRT) 2.04.341s [9 laps]
 20. Dani Clos (HRT) 2.05.022s [11 laps]
 21. Charles Pic (Marussia) 2.11.760s [6 laps]
 22. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) NO TIME SET [4 laps]
 23. Paul di Resta (Force India) NO TIME SET [3 laps]
 24. Jules Bianchi (Force India) NO TIME SET [1 lap]
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F1 British Grand Prix – Friday press conference

It was an odd press conference after a rain-soaked day that saw very little track action and an awful lot of chaos on the roads surrounding Silverstone Circuit. But schedules must be adhered to, and so senior team personnel faced the media as they always do.

Present were James Allison (Lotus), Bob Fearnley (Force India), Pat Fry (Ferrari), Mark Gillan (Williams), Adrian Newey (Red Bull Racing), and Rob White (Renault Sport F1).

A question for you all first. Tell us about what sort of upgrades you've brought here? Have you been able to test them? Have you had anything conclusive from them? Are you going to carrying on using them for the rest of the weekend or have you not been able to evaluate them? Bob, if you'd like to start.

Bob FEARNLEY: Ours are just mainly small aero changes, nothing significant. We haven't been able to fully track evaluate them but we will continue to run with them.

Rob, does this apply to you or not?

Rob WHITE: We're not in upgrade mode at the moment. We're more in short-term countermeasures, following the incidents we had in Valencia, so it doesn't really apply to us.

Mark?

Mark GILLAN: Similar to Bob. Basically, with the weather conditions we've not been able to look at the updates but we will do tomorrow, weather permitting.

I was told that they weren't on Bruno's car today.

MG: No, they weren't.

How very wise. Presumably just because of the conditions?

MG: Yes, purely because of the heavy wet conditions we thought it prudent to leave them off.

Pat?

Pat FRY: I think we, like most people, have a few little updates all over the car but with these conditions it's impossible to do any sensible evaluation of it. We need to see what we can do tomorrow, if anything, and then try to make the right choice for qualifying and the race.

Adrian, more for you after Valencia?

Adrian NEWEY: Yes, a big upgrade in Valencia, here very small stuff, but as everybody else says impossible to evaluate them in these conditions.

James?

James ALLISON: We've got two or three things that are all fitted. We didn't back-to-back them but they don't seem to be misbehaving. The only bit we were able to test sensibly was some changes to our pit stop equipment and they seemed to go OK.

Rob, we know it was an alternator problem in Valencia, can you say what the problem was? Have you managed to cure it?

RW: A bit of background if you will. The first thing to say was that there wasn't any change underway that went pear-shaped. The spec was something that has been stable for quite a long time – some years – apart from little details in the piece that actually broke. Both Sebastian's car and Romain's car stopped on the track following the alternator failure. Clearly the alternator generates all the electricity on the car. Without electric power the car stops very quickly. Some small differences in the exact sequence of events after the failure and before the cars stopped were incidental. The failure was due to overheating. Overheating from within the piece, not from outside the piece. I guess we didn't at the time know all of that. We wanted to find out if we were outside our experience. It turned out that we weren't. We wanted to find out whether there was anything unusual relative to our recommended operating conditions. The truth of the matter is that both of the teams were completely within the recommendations we had previously made. We had to look deeper. We had to challenge ourselves on whether the recommendations we made were the right ones. We were able to find places where, with hindsight, we were at risk. We found some conditions where we felt we might have pushed the piece beyond its comfort zone and that's where we've had to focus our attention for this week. A very small amount of time to react. Without any great surprise, we don't have a magic wand to wave that will make all the trouble go away, so we've had to deal with it in a fairly classic way. We tried to make the conditions less severe for the piece, so we've tried to reduce the electrical load on the car, settings on the car, on the engine. We've tried to improve the electrical generation in the most marginal conditions, which are typically at low engine speed and then we've tried to select within the population of existing pieces the ones that will give us the best chance of succeeding. Those selection criteria are based on electrical behaviour and then for the avoidance of doubt, classic quality [control] type criteria to eliminate the batch numbers we had a problem with. All of that goes in the right direction.

It would be unjust to say that I'm 100 per cent confident we have done enough. We've had great support from Red Bull and Lotus who suffered the failures and from Williams and Caterham who didn't but have identical pieces on the car. Also from all the suppliers in the supply chain. We've got what is obviously a short-term plan for this weekend and in parallel we've got a longer-term look to see if we can do a more robust job for the future.

Continuing on with that, what have the two teams been able to do to help Renault with the cooling? James?

JA: We just work with Renault Sport. Most of the action is happening in Viry. But we try to provide help and support with the tests that happen in Viry. There were certain bits of our car kit that were necessary to go to Viry to form part of that testing chain. So we all just muck in together and try to get it fixed.

Are you able to provide more cooling to that part, to that area?

JA: Yeah, you can blow air on it.

Adrian?

AN: Same really. It's a component failure that we'll work together to get on top of.

Bob, we've seen quite a change for you from Canada to Valencia. What in fact has changed for the team?

BF: Nothing has really changed. We just made a mistake in Canada really with our settings and went the wrong way, so it was an error from our side, on the engineering side. We corrected that for Valencia. We should have had the same result in Canada as we did in Valencia really.

Are you quite confident for this weekend then, in the right conditions?

BF: This is a different test. We have moved to more of an aero circuit. Hopefully, the answer is yes but until we get a bit of dry running we won't know.

Mark, you've got a good car and we're seeing it in the points quite frequently. At what stage do you stop developing it and move on to next year's car? Is there a tipping point at some stage?

MG: I think the competition this year is so fierce and everything is extremely tight, as we saw in Valencia, as a team we need to continue to push. There is a point, as you say, where you have to balance next year's car's development and obviously with an eye even further into the future with the 2014 car, which is a big departure. But we are really keen to maximise the performance of this year's car and make the most of this opportunity.

And actually you're already looking at the 2014 car?

MG: Yeah, it's a big departure and working alongside partners in terms of development of the car and obviously that's something that sits quite aside from next year's car which is really a continuation of the theme from this year.

Pat, yesterday we mentioned to Fernando Alonso, how he won here last year, how he won in Valencia. Two very different circuits. Is that how you see it from an engineering point of view?

PF: I think they are completely different circuits. Here there are more high-speed corners, more aero I guess. It will be interesting if it's dry to see how the performance is. I think we're fairly realistic. We still have a lot of work to do to catch up. We're trying to do as much as we can, as quickly as we can, exactly the same as any other team.

We've seen Felipe bounce back in the last few races. What have you done to help him, what more can you do?

PF: Certainly from Monaco onwards he's done a great job. We changed the car a little bit and we found something that suits him slightly better and that's brought the best out of him. Today he was looking pretty reasonable until the red flag.

Adrian, we saw what seemed to be a phenomenal effort with the upgrade in Valencia. Interesting that you brought it there rather than here as everybody else has. Give us some idea of the thinking behind such a big upgrade all at once and what sort of effort it took from the factory to bring that upgrade?

AN: Well, the upgrade was a new sidepod and exhaust, so I think it's been a bit exaggerated how big the change really is. It's a fairly big visual change but a less big engineering change. I would regard it as part of the routine development. In terms of the performance it brings, well because it's a big cosmetic change everybody focuses on it. You could perhaps make a small change to a diffuser or a front wing endplate that might be just as big a performance difference but nobody will spot it. Well, the teams will spot it but the press won't so much let's say. The problem is this season it's difficult to see much form, as much as we had a similar benefit or advantage in Bahrain as we had in Bahrain but then that can swing to the other way round at other circuits. It's a very difficult season to read so far.

Because the pace in Valencia was phenomenal. You were certainly going to win that race.

AN: Yes, we would have won the race for sure, but that's the ifs and buts of motor racing.

James, just going back to the alternator. How was it you had a problem with one car and not the other?

JA: I think it's probably just that the alternator was very near to the limit of what it could do. There's always a scattering components and one fell just the wrong side of the line. Rob's probably got more of an insight into that than I have but we weren't operating any differently.

Looking at Romain Grosjean: how has his performance changed so far. You've had nine races now with him so far, we're almost at mid-season. Have you seen him mature over the year?

JA: I think he's gathered confidence as the season has gone on but if you go right back to the first running in pre-season he was quite quick right from the off. He probably took a couple of long runs in pre-season to get a handle on how to look after the tyres over a stint, but he's been pretty useful right from the outset. He's just had a bit of misfortune at the starts in a few races. But that seems to be going more his way now. He's very pleased with how his season is going and we're pleased for him and with him.

I've mentioned this to one of you guys before this weekend already; at the moment the weight distribution of the cars is fixed in quite a small window. Is that something you'd like to see changed, going forward in 2013 into 2014 as well?

AN: First of all, it puts an emphasis on light drivers, which is, as long as we're in a situation where we don't have ballasted seats... for instance, with Mark Webber, we have a driver who's on the heavier end, compared to Sebastian. That means he has less freedom on weight distribution. The obvious solution to that would be that drivers have to carry ballast on the side of their seat but that's something that has been discussed and it hasn't happened

so far. It really means that if you make the wrong move, you're locked into it for a while, so I don't have a firm opinion on this. It's one less variable in a way but on the same for everybody type basis, I'm not too worried about it, one way or the other.

JA: I think the rules are the way they are because we, the teams, keep voting them that way, so we can't do much other than say 'well, that's what we asked for'. We've voted for this several years running now and each time we've done it, I think it's more or less been on the basis that Adrian just alluded to, that it's one fewer thing to worry about. You know if the weight's all in one little window that you're not going to get completely screwed by someone getting it right just by good fortune or by good judgement. So we keep voting for it, I guess, because it's a safer thing for an individual team to have.

PF: It's just one less variable, isn't it? I don't mind if we've got it or not. It's just one thing less to worry about.

MG: It's obviously a relatively small window compared to historically what we've been able to do but as James said, we all voted for it and we continue to vote for it so everybody's got the same limitations.

There was a big effort in this year's regulations to eliminate exhaust-blown diffusers, but I think it's pretty widely known that that technology has returned this year already. How big a development area is it compared to last year and are we heading for the same uncertainty as we had last year in terms of its legality or not?

AN: I don't think so. I think that the fact is that the cars have to have exhausts and they will always have an aerodynamic influence so what we are really talking about is is that a small aerodynamic influence or is it a very large one? Compared to last year, we have a fraction of the effect that we had so I think it's not an area of zero development, they still make a difference, but in terms of the gains we're able to make compared to what we had last year then it's a fraction, so I think it's a fairly sensible place to be perfectly honest.

To Bob Fernley, as team principal, today you did very little running this morning in particular, certainly nothing in anger. I would assume that's because of the limitation of wet weather tyres for the weekend; you don't know how much running you'll do. If one looks at the cost that spectators have paid plus some of them spent five hours in traffic trying to get here, is it really fair on them and is there any solution that you can think of to improve the spectacle under such circumstances?

BF: Not really, Dieter. As a team, we obviously feel very very guilty that we're not out there running for the spectators but on the other hand, we don't gain anything from it. With all due respect, even if we'd had the tyres we wouldn't have run, because the risk to reward is the wrong ratio for us, and it was more of a precautionary programme than it is by taking unnecessary risks.

On the subject of the limited running that we saw today, do you guys have any messages of sympathy and support for the fans, some of whom weren't actually able to get to the circuit before the last F1 car left it?

BF: The answer's yes, we have terrible guilt for the fans in not running, but what happened in terms of them being able to get into the circuit, obviously I'm not aware of, because I didn't even know there was a problem to be honest with you. We've just been working ourselves. If they have had problems, obviously we sympathise with them and I'm sure that's something to do with traffic management of the circuit or something like that that needs to be resolved. It's not something from the teams, the teams can only try and put the cars out on the circuit and give the spectacle and I regret today that we couldn't do that. As I say, it's more to do with our side of it in terms of the risk and the benefit and are we going to learn anything? Until the last half an hour of today, there wasn't any benefit in running.

JA: I think it's a shame that the fans don't see as much as they hoped to come and see but that's British weather for you. I was actually (thinking that) considering how crap the weather was today, there was actually a reasonable amount of running on the track, more than maybe we might have anticipated looking at the forecast this morning, but it would have been nicer if there had been more had the weather been better, but it wasn't.

Adrian, looking at the way that Red Bull Racing has developed over the years from a midfield-towards-the-back team to a front-running team, since the initial recruitment drive when you brought in a lot of people, how important has the continuity and the stability of the team in all areas been in both achieving the level of success and sustaining race-winning performances over the last few years and presumably, you'd hope, over the coming years?

AN: Yeah, continuity is hugely important. Really, Red Bull Racing is a team that first raced in 2005 and in truth that was a Jaguar painted blue. Then it had a steep learning curve of developing the culture; as you say, quite a lot of new people joining, some people from the Jaguar days choosing to leave, so it was a period of quite rapid change and that took time to settle down, if you like, and to develop a way of working, a culture, an ethos, to develop some of the bigger tools, be it developing the wind tunnel, developing simulation... things that you can't just go to Argos and buy. It takes some time to develop those from scratch which is what we were doing and to learn how to use them, how to work with them. Once you got to that stage, as you say, continuity becomes very important. People have learned to work with each other and it's then making that an ever tighter-knit group and trying to maintain that, as the team continues to grow - it's been flat for the last couple of years in numbers, as a result of the RRA which I think is a very good thing. But it's an evolutionary thing which, I think, took us three or four years to settle down into and really the big regulation change in 2009 was good timing for us, because that coincided with the point where we had started to gel together.

To the technical directors: I believe that there are still a lot of elements open on the 2014 regulations, particular those that appertain to the chassis. At which stage would you need to have a firm set of regulations for your 2014 cars?

PF: I think that for 2014 we need to start deciding the exact engine operating conditions or power unit or braking conditions. There's a lot of work involved there, and some of the chassis rules will have a big bearing on that. We need to have that firmed up fairly soon, really, for the engine side of things. The chassis can follow later.

Rob, what's the stage of the Renault development for 2014? How far along are you in terms of dyno testing or have you put it on the dyno yet?

RW: Clearly, the 2014 power unit is important to Renault and the project planning is well under way. The project plan was initially constructed for a 2013 arrival date, and so the kick-off point was formally way back in September 2010, with a fairly classic approach... you're trying to work out how to make the best use of available time in order to do all of the learning necessary before committing to a design and then setting about making some pieces, developing testing, so on and so forth. We had a big, obviously significant re-set when we switched to a 2014 arrival and a V6 architecture. That arrived during the course of last summer so in practical terms that meant that we had to re-set the programme planning. So what does that programme planning look like for us, and then of course we're aiming to arrive as competitively as we can possibly be, in time for the first race and the first season of racing in 2014. We have now been running development engines of various types since the latter part of last year. First of all we had single cylinder engines running. There are some extremely significant bits of learning needed in order to be ready. We also had a multi-cylinder engine for the previous architecture that was running and has run more recently. We have now run a V6 and the programme is more or less in line with our planning. It's an immensely complex power unit - it's important to understand that it's a big big change for all of us with some fundamental drivers that are very very different to powerful ones for the way in which the races will shake out is of course the fuel allowance for the race and the

fuel flow limit and the various tunes that can be played in order to make use of all of that, subject to a great deal of fairly fundamental thinking, fairly new to us R&D-type work. We've got new learning to do: everything to do with direct injection, everything to do with turbocharging in these new conditions, a substantially bigger energy recovery system design and development challenge, bigger – because the system is more complicated with two sources of energy recovery, bigger in terms of the contribution to the car performance, bigger in terms of the parts count and all that makes it a more substantial work load hence the programmes which are designed now to, hopefully, converge on a solution. Our intention is to have a race intent power unit on the bed as late as we possibly can, while still having the time to validate it in time for the first race, so our intent is to be race intent in the course of 2013 and everything that we do between when we started, over a year ago now, and now and into the future, when we have a race intent piece on the test bed, is proof of concept, development testing in order to gather the experience needed.

I'm just wondering, with the totally new engine formula, how do you set a target in terms of engine power? Do you extrapolate from the V8 that we have at the moment, or how do you pick a figure out of the air?

RW: There are obviously some elements of finger-in-the-wind but there are clearly performance objectives in order to achieve the car performance that we're aiming for, and we have to be ambitious yet realistic with the fuel flow limit that we're talking about. The answer to your question comes down to goal-setting in terms of thermal efficiency and I guess each of the engine constructors will have his own idea of where the competitive answer will be but as in any competitive arena, then the task is to get as far ahead as we can in the time we have with the resources that we have. But you're right, it's a real challenge to know where to set the internal goals in order to be competitive at the arrival.

F1 British Grand Prix – FP3 report

Hold on to your hats, race fans – the final practice session for the British Grand Prix weekend was run in the dry. Mostly. There was some light rain, and the heavens opened as the chequered flag was falling, but compared with yesterday?

Dry as a bone.

Despite the vastly improved weather conditions, or perhaps because of them, it was a session filled with incidents. Thanks to yesterday's lost running, the solitary hour of FP3 was the teams' only real opportunity to iron out any wrinkles in their car while also honing their set-ups for the racing part of the weekend.

All of those who had arrived at Silverstone with a raft of upgrades were left disappointed by their inability to test their new components on the track. Those disappointed someones comprised the bulk of the paddock with the exception of Red Bull, who brought a significant new package to Valencia.

King of the incidents was Charles Pic, who managed to bring out both the red and the yellow flags in two separate – but seemingly identical – mechanical failures in the hour-long session.

The Marussia driver brought out the red flags early on, when he slowed down and drew to a halt at the exit of Copse, where the marshals were able to recover his car and get the track reopened for business in an impressive five minutes. That incident has been reported as having been the result of a fuel system error, although Marussia say that investigations are still on-going, and have yet to confirm a cause.

Towards the end of the session Pic was back out on track when he brought his car to a halt on the Hangar Straight, this time in a position where all that was needed was waved yellows. There is no news confirming the cause of his second stop, but it looked very similar to the first.

Chapel proved to be something of a tricky spot for a number of drivers, thanks to a combination of some standing water and slippery kerbs. Kimi Raikkonen, Sergio Perez, and Kamui Kobayashi all had hair-raising moments at Chapel, but managed to escape largely unscathed.

The same could not be said for Perez at Becketts, however – the Sauber driver had something of a nasty shunt, lost his front wing, and had to limp slowly back to the pits.

Nico Rosberg spent much of the session battling hydraulics issues, hence his low position on the timesheets. Mercedes are doing all they can to ensure that his car will be ready in time for this afternoon's qualifying session.

While conditions are much improved since yesterday, the current rainfall means it is highly likely that the track will once again be green when the pitlane opens for Q1.

FP3 times (unofficial)

1. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1.32.167s [21 laps]
2. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1.32.320s [20 laps]
3. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1.32.358s [25 laps]
4. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1.32.420s [21 laps]
5. Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus) 1.32.454s [25 laps]
6. Lewis Hamilton (McLaren) 1.32.477s [20 laps]
7. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) 1.32.622s [21 laps]
8. Sergio Perez (Sauber) 1.32.940s [19 laps]
9. Kamui Kobayashi (Sauber) 1.33.046s [20 laps]
10. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) 1.33.150s [19 laps]
11. Bruno Senna (Williams) 1.33.267s [25 laps]
12. Paul di Resta (Force India) 1.33.367s [20 laps]
13. Mark Webber (Red Bull) 1.33.398s [24 laps]
14. Michael Schumacher (Mercedes) 1.33.462s [24 laps]
15. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1.33.673s [22 laps]

16. Felipe Massa (Ferrari) 1.33.674s [21 laps]
 17. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso) 1.33.707s [21 laps]
 18. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1.33.733s [15 laps]
 19. Heikki Kovalainen (Caterham) 1.34.298s [18 laps]
 20. Vitaly Petrov (Caterham) 1.34.781s [20 laps]
 21. Timo Glock (Marussia) 1.36.605s [18 laps]
 22. Charles Pic (Marussia) 1.37.060s [14 laps]
 23. Narain Karthikeyan (HRT) 1.37.269s [23 laps]
 24. Pedro de la Rosa (HRT) 1.37.429s [17 laps]
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F1 British Grand Prix – Q1 report

As the pitlane opened for business at the beginning of qualifying for the British Grand Prix, rain began to fall and a change to climatic conditions was announced. Race control took the decision to disable DRS as a safety precaution.

Kimi Raikkonen started out the session with some bad news – the Finnish driver will be running without KERS unless a series of quick-fix attempts from the steering wheel can be made to bear fruit.

The first driver to set a time was Sauber's Kamui Kobayashi, who posted a 1.50.411s. Initial runs all took place on Pirelli's intermediate compound, but the increasingly heavy rain makes it look like full wets might be the way to go in the next few laps.

The 107 percent rule could prove interesting for the first time since Australia. Given the limited running we've seen so far this weekend, any driver who falls foul of the rule in qualifying might find himself unable to argue his case successfully with the stewards – when enforced, the rule is all about safety.

And given the varying levels of driver and car confidence in the paddock, a wet qualifying session presents the greatest opportunity for a sizeable split between those at the head of the pack and those bringing up the rear.

Times at the top of the timesheets are changing even more rapidly than usual, as teams are doing their best to secure their place in Q2 as quickly as possible, in case the deteriorating weather conditions affect their ability to put in a quick flyer towards the end of the session.

With the session half run, the dropout zone is comprised of the six usual suspects plus Nico Rosberg, whose FP3 running was reduced by hydraulics problems the Mercedes mechanics spent most of the lunch break fixing.

On the edge of the dropout zone at the moment is Mark Webber, but the Red Bull driver is on a flyer that looks certain to put Bruno Senna at risk. And Webber crosses the line in 1.47.276s, which is good enough for the top ten.

Senna then saves himself, putting Jenson Button and Felipe Massa next on the list as possible members of the dropout zone.

Rosberg nudges himself up to a provisional P17 with five minutes remaining, and Button is in the dropout zone. The McLaren driver's first effort to save himself saw no improvements, but the Briton is currently on a much faster run. Should he succeed, Rosberg will be back in the dropout zone.

With less than three minutes remaining, Button aborts the lap in question following an error and returns to the pits before heading out for another run. But the McLaren driver is unable to improve, and joins Vitaly Petrov, Heikki Kovalainen, Timo Glock, Pedro de la Rosa, Narain Karthikeyan, and Charles Pic.

Dropout zone

18. Jenson Button (McLaren)
19. Vitaly Petrov (Caterham)
20. Heikki Kovalainen (Caterham)
21. Timo Glock (Marussia)
22. Pedro de la Rosa (HRT)
23. Narain Karthikeyan (HRT)
24. Charles Pic (Marussia)*

* Pic did not set a lap within the 107 percent time of 1.53.718s, and will need to apply to the stewards for permission to race.

F1 British Grand Prix – Q2 report

With Jenson Button out in Q1, it falls to Lewis Hamilton and Paul di Resta to give the home crowd the chance of a British driver on pole at the British Grand Prix.

The rain continues to fall, and is now noticeably harder than it was in Q1. But while it might be misery for the sodden fans and drivers, those watching the action from indoors are being treated to an impressive display of cojones from the likes of Jean-Eric Vergne, who was giving it his all and then some despite the water-logged track.

Five minutes into the session, Michael Schumacher caught a wheel on the wet kerb, went spinning around Maggotts, and narrowly avoided getting

beached in the gravel. Having saved himself, the Mercedes driver then went for another long trip across the gravel at Vale.

Moments later, Fernando Alonso came within millimetres of smashing into the wall at Chapel after an aquaplane-powered spin, but managed a masterful save that garnered him a round of applause in the press room.

As the session saw spin after near miss after spin, race control red-flagged the session for inclement conditions with 6m19s remaining on the clock.

After a 92-minute delay, the track reopened for business. The pitlane had a queue of cars ready to go when the lights went green, with only six scant minutes in which to set the best possible lap time in the circumstances.

With the track still wet but safe for running, we've seen two slides from Romain Grosjean, one on his outlap and one in the first part of his flyer, although both were more like drifts than they were incidents worth worrying about.

With three minutes remaining, it doesn't look like we'll see many improvements to lap times. Sector times are comparable to those set in the first phase of Q2. Grosjean does improve, despite his drifting; the Lotus driver is currently fastest on 1.57.634s.

At the 100-second mark, Nico Rosberg slides across the grass and run-off before rejoining the track, moments before teammate Michael Schumacher goes fastest. Mark Webber then claims the top spot with one minute remaining.

Lewis Hamilton supplants Webber as the chequered flag falls, and it doesn't look like any of the drivers currently on a lap will be able to beat him. Grosjean brings out the yellows at Vale in the dying moments of the session, preventing those men still out on track from doing much in the way of improvement.

Dropout zone

11. Paul di Resta (Force India)
12. Kamui Kobayashi (Sauber)
13. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes)
14. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso)
15. Bruno Senna (Williams)
16. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso)
17. Sergio Perez (Sauber)

F1 British Grand Prix – Q3 report

Pastor Maldonado is the first man waiting to head out on track for the final part of the British Grand Prix's extended qualifying session. And seven seconds after the pit lane officially opens, the Williams driver is out on track to give it his best shot.

Romain Grosjean beached his Lotus in the gravel at the end of Q2; the Frenchman will not take part in Q3 unless the team are able to get the car back to the pits in time to reshoe it and send it back out in time to set a flying lap.

As the first man to cross the line in Q3, Maldonado briefly claimed provisional pole. But Felipe Massa and then Michael Schumacher displaced the Venezuelan, before Fernando Alonso beat them both.

Alonso set his fastest lap on the inters, prompting a call into the pits for those still out on track. And while that strategy call was being made, Massa reclaimed provisional pole before Alonso took it back from his teammate.

Kimi Raikkonen has been struggling this afternoon thanks to a lack of KERS; it seems unlikely that the Finn will qualify much higher than P8 or P9 with the disadvantage.

With nine out of ten drivers out on track, and less than thirty seconds before the chequered flag falls, times are changing all the time. Webber claims provisional pole from Alonso, but the Ferrari driver has one more chance to cross line.

And Alonso claims it back in the final moments of the session. He will be joined on the front row by Webber, who qualified ahead of teammate Sebastian Vettel in P4.

It was a difficult session for Lewis Hamilton, who was unable to get the perfect lap together despite some impressive performances earlier this afternoon. A big surprise came about thanks to Raikkonen, who was able to qualify in P6 despite being disadvantaged by the lack of KERS.

Provisional grid

1. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari)
2. Mark Webber (Red Bull)
3. Michael Schumacher (Mercedes)
4. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull)
5. Felipe Massa (Ferrari)
6. Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus)
7. Pastor Maldonado (Williams)
8. Lewis Hamilton (McLaren)
9. Romain Grosjean (Lotus)
10. Paul di Resta (Force India)

11. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes)
12. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso)
13. Bruno Senna (Williams)
14. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India)*
15. Sergio Perez (Sauber)
16. Jenson Button (McLaren)
17. Kamui Kobayashi (Sauber)**
18. Vitaly Petrov (Caterham)
19. Heikki Kovalainen (Caterham)
20. Timo Glock (Marussia)
21. Pedro de la Rosa (HRT)
22. Narain Karthikeyan (HRT)
23. Charles Pic (Marussia)***
24. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso)****

* Hulkenberg has been issued with a five-place grid penalty for a gearbox change and will start from P14 despite qualifying in P9.

** Kobayashi is carrying a five-place grid penalty into this race and will start from P17 despite qualifying in P12.

*** Pic did not set a lap within the 107 percent time of 1:53.718s, and will need to apply to the stewards for permission to race. The Marussia driver has also been issued with a five-place grid penalty for a gearbox change. If allowed to race, he will begin from P24.

**** Vergne is carrying a ten-place grid penalty into this race and will start from P24 despite qualifying in P16. However, if Pic is allowed to start, Vergne should be promoted to P23.

F1 British Grand Prix – Saturday press conference

It was a rain-soaked qualifying the likes of which we've not seen since the session-that-didn't-happen during the 2010 Japanese Grand Prix. Conditions were variable, the delay was extraordinary, and the three fastest men had to follow up their session with half an hour in front of the world's press.

Present were Fernando Alonso (Ferrari), Mark Webber (Red Bull), and Michael Schumacher (Mercedes).

Fernando first pole since 2010, very difficult to get it right today, especially with that long delay in Q2. What was the secret though at the end?

Fernando ALONSO: No secret. I think it's tricky conditions for everyone. You have to be calm in some difficult moments. In Q2, as you mentioned, we were at the red flag, in position 15 and 16, Felipe and me. It was not easy, so we went through Q2 and in Q3 difficult choice between extreme and intermediate tyres. We chose the intermediates and when we saw everyone planning on those tyres we more or less calmed down a little bit. And then we put a lap together, which is not easy. You make a little mistake here or there and to complete a lap without making a huge mistake is not easy in these conditions. Yeah, happy with pole position after nearly two years, for Ferrari that's a long time and we'll see. Tomorrow is the race and with these weather conditions the qualifying becomes one of the less important qualifying of the year because everything will mix up after a few laps tomorrow maybe, but for visibility and things like that it's always better to start at the front, so very happy.

Mark, a great duel between you and Fernando at the end there. You missed out on pole by five one hundredths of a second – it's always good to compete against this guy [Alonso] yes?

Mark WEBBER: Yeah, it was a very tight session. Ultimately, you don't know how you're going, you're completely focused on yourself, putting a lap together. As Fernando said it's very tricky in sections around the lap. Obviously, in a session like this when you've got five or 10 seconds sometimes between one session to the next session obviously it's a huge amount down to the driver to get comfortable in the conditions, also with the car. The guys did a great job. Yeah it was nip and tuck with Fernando for the pole. I think ultimately we put a pretty good lap together, our strategy in quali I was pretty happy with it, doing four laps... and race tomorrow.

Michael, another strong qualifying for you. You used to be known as the rain meister, how do you fancy your chances tomorrow in a wet British Grand Prix?

Michael SCHUMACHER: I think we look reasonably competitive in wet conditions – either on intermediate or heavy wet – so therefore rain is welcome tomorrow. It was a bit of an exciting session today, particularly Q2 where I had the wrong visor on, that didn't have anti-fog. I didn't have much visibility and found myself sideways in Becketts. That didn't help either. But we recovered well in the delay and got back in our rhythm. Yeah, very happy to be third; good for the team; good for my boys, so thanks to all of the guys.

Fernando, first of all well done, is it a surprise or did you feel it was a lottery a little bit out there in the conditions?

FA: It's always a surprise to be on pole position because you know that conditions in qualifying... it's always difficult to beat some of the guys around and we maybe feel more confident in dry conditions. We did some tests today in FP3 and the car felt quite good in the high-speed corners and we were quite happy with the balance – but in wet conditions you never know. You need to be in the right place in the right moment, with the circuit in the best conditions possible when you do the lap and that lap has to be clean with not huge mistakes because a little bit here and there you always lose or you can improve a little bit because you never know exactly the conditions of the next corner when you arrive on a day like today. It can be a little bit drier than the lap before but we saw some drops of rain on the visors so it can be a little bit wetter so it's a little bit of... gambling what would be the grip at the next corner. To put the lap together was the only thing we had to do today and when you find yourself in pole position, for sure it's a little bit surprising but, yeah, good to battle like this.

It was nearly all over in the first part of Q2, wasn't it – at one point you were facing the wall?

FA: Yes. I had a spin in Turn 13. It was a lot of aquaplaning there. We changed tyres, we went for the extreme tyres and there was a red flag. It was impossible to run, to be honest it was a good decision. And then also it was a good decision waiting for the time the circuit was in condition to run again. So, sometimes we criticise the decisions when we are not happy with them and today they were doing a really good job. The first priority is safety, the track was not in condition to continue qualifying and we wait the necessary time to do it and we've been at the limit for Q3, I think P9, so it

was not easy. I had a Toro Rosso for two laps in front of me with no visibility, so the Q2 lap was a little bit like a blind lap: you do whatever time the Toro Rosso will do – more or less.

How big a moment was it on the grass when you went off in Q2? You got a round of applause in the press room for sorting it out...

FA: It was very big and you are not in control of the car. You need a bit of luck and we were lucky today. With that moment in Q2, with all the decisions that we make for the tyres that it was the right one – and lucky also that we put the lap together and lucky as well in the distance with Mark because there were some milliseconds. It can be first and second in a very easy way and today it was everything perfect for us. But the race is tomorrow, not today.

Mark, for you pole last year and you won in 2010, you've been on the podium for the last three years. A good circuit for you? You seem to have adapted very well to the British weather...

MW: It's been a good track for me since 1995 when I won my first Formula Ford race here – so it goes back quite a while – don't want to show my age too much! But yeah, it's a good track, it's challenging for the drivers and it's nice to let the car breathe a little bit in some of the quick stuff. Obviously this morning it was nice to feel the car in dry conditions, obviously we didn't get that in quali – and as Fernando's touched on, it was a very tricky session for us when the track's moving around by five, six seconds a go in terms of conditions. Each session is tricky for us. But the guys made all the right decisions. There were a few calls from the cockpit as well to pull things together and ultimately I think we got the maximum out of what we could have done today. As Fernando says, it's a long lap to put together; there are rivers, you can improve here and there but also if you try to push a bit harder you can have no corners on the car. So it's better to try to finish the lap and get yourself up there. Risk management was very important today. I'm very happy with my lap and ultimately we're in a good position to start the race tomorrow. Visibility will be important if it's wet, and go from there.

Michael, pole in 2001 of course and three wins here, how difficult was it to get going again after that hour delay? 60 minutes of delay...

MS: I guess first of all we should give applause to all the fans who remained with us in all these conditions. That's been pretty special and big applause to them. For us, in the position that some cars had been, you would probably have wished just to finish qualifying there. The ones that would have been out, Fernando and myself, we were happy to get this opportunity under drivable conditions because Q2, when it started, almost from the beginning it was already on the limit, if not slightly over the limit, and therefore thanks to the FIA to take the right decision and abort it and put it into a spot that was probably the only one – and a perfect one – that was available today. For us to get going, it's not that big a deal. It's worse hanging around and waiting. It's more tiring than driving and sitting in the car and being in action, that's pretty straightforward to me.

How difficult was the tyre choice?

MS: I think it was only initially difficult to decide but when you give it a second and watch what others do then it becomes pretty straightforward. By the end it was clear the inter was the tyre to be on. Ideally you would have had more than one lap – because it was the last lap that counted and obviously you're not allowed to make a mistake so you always somewhere leave some margin, that another lap for sure you could recover and do a much better job. Nevertheless, to then finish third was good for us. I'm pleased with this, it's a good position to start the race from. It's a good line and, depending on the condition we have tomorrow, maybe I'm on the lucky side because it might be the slightly drier line compared to the inner side that's a little bit wet. We'll find out tomorrow if that's the case or not the case – but that expedition will be very much appreciated to me.

Michael, some of your most memorable wins have been in the wet. This circuit has a reputation for holding water. It did take a very long time to drain. Do you have any criticisms either of that or of the fact that the circuit is unpredictable from place to place as you go along, perhaps less predictable where you've won in the wet before?

MS: First of all, a compliment to all the marshals, they managed to get the track in pretty good shape with all the sweeping and drying up. There was almost no standing water when we went back out again. That was a good job, so in case of heavy rain tomorrow, I hope they're going to be ready, in between the safety car or whatever they have to decide. But I think on some circuits they have that situation and they did the best from what was available today.

Fernando, you said in Spanish that this pole is dedicated to someone special, is it for Maria de Villota?

FA: Yes, obviously she's having some difficult moments, her family as well and I think all of us, this weekend, we are all racing with a little bit of sadness about the news at the beginning of the week from Marussia and from her. Anything we do this weekend hopefully will bring strength to her and her family, and we wish her a very good recovery.

Fernando, first place in qualifying in the rain; was this difficult or not very difficult for you?

FA: Yes, yes, it is very difficult, always very difficult to be on pole position, but on days like today, it's difficult for everyone. I think from pole position to 24th, we had a very difficult time in the car, because, as I said, you don't know how the grip will be in the next corner. We had a lot of rivers on the track, especially in Q2 and it's not just to find the last tenth or half a tenth of a second; just to complete the lap is difficult. Very stressful qualifying, but it's the same for everybody and today we have been lucky, as I said.

Fernando, for tomorrow, will it be difficult for you on intermediate tyres and what are you afraid of in the race?

FA: Well, I think the car should also be competitive on extreme wet tyres, but as I said, in Q2 I did a lap exactly the same as a Toro Rosso whatever the lap. I started the lap one second behind him and I finished the lap around 0.8s behind him, and I was in and he was out, for virtually nothing. So I think with normal visibility, I think we should also be competitive with the extremes. For sure ideally we would like a dry race because you maximise the pole position a little bit and you have a bit of free air, especially in the first stint if you do a good start. If it's wet or changeable conditions as we've the whole weekend, grid positions are not really important, because on lap eight it could start raining or drying up or whatever and someone at the back may have nothing to lose and could maybe change tyres or whatever and finds himself first or second. It's more difficult but let's see. I think we felt competitive on the dry, inters and wet so we will see tomorrow what we can do.

How do you prepare yourself for a race which could be very wet? Is there a way of thinking differently, or driving differently for the whole of a wet race?

MW: Obviously the concentration is a little bit different to a dry Grand Prix, so you've got to have that in mind. Some of the straights here are not very straightforward in terms of... like out of turn seven, going through there with compromised visibility, standing water, so dry Grands Prix still obviously require immense concentration and focus to put everything together but in the wet you have more balls in the air and you need to be ready for that and also be flexible and focused and I said before, controlled aggression and stay composed. You know that the grass doesn't have much grip

so best stay away from that if you can and get to the flag.

Fernando, we saw you take the P9 position in Q2 when there were yellow flags for Grosjean. Could you explain what happened at that moment, if you feel that you're safe [from a penalty]?

FA: Yes. I didn't set a green sector in that particular lap with the yellow. I backed off in the area where they were taking away the car, so I don't have any worries.

I've been asked to ask you is if any of you will be following Wimbledon after the race tomorrow?

FA: No.

MW: Absolutely. Federer for seven, honestly it's a great final. Whoever wins it's a great story. Obviously for Andy, first Grand Slam, first Wimbledon and for Roger, obviously he's a phenomenal sportsman, to match Pistol Pete [Sampras] on seven. He's a real inspiration, Federer. He would be good to watch.

MS: What time is it? I would like to watch it if I have time, but I would prefer not to have time!

Could you not imagine that if the weather conditions and track conditions were similar tomorrow to today, would you not fear a very boring race behind the safety car?

MS: In that case we're going to watch Federer and Murray!

FA: Hopefully not, not only for us, I think, but for the fans. As Michael said, they've been amazing all weekend with these weather conditions and they deserve a normal race tomorrow, so even if it's wet, not stopping the race or nothing like that, hopefully.

MW: Charlie [Whiting] has learned a lot in the last few years and has done a very good job in certain conditions, so he know what wet tyres are capable of, the extreme, also factor in the visibility so they are the two main things: standing water and visibility. If they are under control then we race, if they're not then we don't. After that, we work through the tyres and the race is OK. Tomorrow is obviously a big day for Charlie tomorrow to communicate with us like he does a good job over the last few years, no problems.

Fernando, it's very nice for you as well to get pole position after two years, as you said before. How important is it for your team as well and for your confidence and everything?

FA: Yeah, yeah, definitely very important. It's nice to be on pole position. We know that the conditions were not normal. They were very tricky so we are still aiming for pole position one day on a sunny day and no factors around which will prove the level of competitiveness that the car can have and that's what we want, but until that point arrives, today's pole position is very welcome and as I said, it's more for the history of Ferrari etc. Two years is a long time.

Michael, you were looking strong yesterday in the wet today as well. This morning, at least from the lap time it was a different picture. Is it just an impression that the Mercedes is better in the wet and if so why?

MS: The question is how much fuel was in the cars this morning, so I think it is a hypothetical situation, to judge what you have seen in qualifying with what you have seen this morning.

F1 British Grand Prix – Race report

The 2012 British Grand Prix may not have offered up quite the same level of on-track excitement as the previous race in Valencia – a heretofore unheard of statement in Formula One – but at least the sunny skies gave the patient fans a brief respite from the worst of the British summer.

Despite having three British drivers on the grid, there was no chance of a Brit on the podium for the Silverstone crowds.

It was a terrible day for McLaren, who had been banking on a wet race. Jenson Button started from a miserable 16th on the grid, and that after being promoted from P18 after two penalties had been applied. The much hoped for charge from the back never happened: the Briton was able to work his way up to an eventual P10 finish, but it was a laboured effort that showed just how far McLaren have fallen since the season-opener in Melbourne.

Lewis Hamilton had a better start to the day, beginning on the fourth row, but he was overtaken by Bruno Senna on the opening lap and was unable to break away from the middle of the pack until the first round of pitstops. The McLaren driver stayed out on the hard compound for much longer than his rivals, despite telling the team he was struggling for pace on his tyres as early as lap 6, and was leading by lap 15.

But Fernando Alonso, who had handed the lead to Hamilton with his pit stop, had opened up enough of a gap that he was able to return to the track in P2. The Ferrari driver then used his fresher rubber and a series of fast laps to close in on the McLaren ahead. Lap 19 saw a beautiful waltz between the pair over a series of corners in which Alonso passed Hamilton for the lead, the Briton neatly claimed it back, and the Spaniard then powered past and off into the distance. It was a beautiful display of the purity of racing.

Two laps later, Hamilton made his first stop, and Mark Webber was up in P2, but still many seconds behind Alonso on track. While the Australian occasionally managed to close the gap, the pair remained around five seconds apart until the Red Bull driver pitted for fresh rubber and had to climb his way back up from P4. Crucially, however, Webber managed to stay ahead of teammate Sebastian Vettel.

When Alonso pitted for his final stint on Pirelli's soft compound tyre he found that he was unable to keep up the pace he'd been used to on the hards. Webber was having no such difficulties with his own rubber, and the Red Bull driver took advantage of his added pace – and the Ferrari's obvious struggle for balance – to close in on Alonso lap by lap, finally reeling in the prancing horse seven laps before the chequered flag.

As for Paul di Resta, the last of the British drivers on the grid, the Force India driver was out of the race within minutes, retiring on lap 3 as the result of rear suspension damaged incurred in a first lap incident with Romain Grosjean. Grosjean was able to recover from the collision – and the damaged front wing and additional pit stop that resulted – and finished the British Grand Prix in P6 despite having started from the back of the grid.

In the absence of any star drivers with a British passport the Silverstone fans adopted local resident Mark Webber as their hometown hero, and when the Australian took the chequered flag at the end of 52 races the crowds at the Northamptonshire airfield rose as one, cheering on the popular Red

Bull driver.

Special mention should be made of Felipe Massa, who has recently identified a number of set-up issues that have been affecting his performances this season. The Brazilian had his best qualifying result of the year, and ended Sunday's race in P5, with a useful handful of points for his paymasters at Maranello.

British Grand Prix results (unofficial)

1. Mark Webber (Red Bull) 1h25m11.288s
2. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) + 3.060s
3. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) + 4.836s
4. Felipe Massa (Ferrari) + 9.519s
5. Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus) + 10.314s
6. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) + 17.101s
7. Michael Schumacher (Mercedes) + 29.153s
8. Lewis Hamilton (McLaren) + 36.463s
9. Bruno Senna (Williams) + 43.347s
10. Jenson Button (McLaren) + 44.444s
11. Kamui Kobayashi (Sauber) + 45.370s
12. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) + 47.856s
13. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso) + 51.241s
14. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) + 53.313s
15. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) + 57.394s
16. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) + 1 lap
17. Heikki Kovalainen (Caterham) + 1 lap
18. Timo Glock (Marussia) + 1 lap
19. Charles Pic (Marussia) + 1 lap
20. Pedro de la Rosa (HRT) + 2 laps
21. Narain Karthikeyan (HRT) + 2 laps

Sergio Perez (Sauber) RET

Paul di Resta (Force India) RET

Vitaly Petrov (Caterham) RET

F1 British Grand Prix – Sunday press conference

It was something of an odd post-Silverstone press conference, in that it started with Jackie Stewart interviewing the drivers on the podium, before moving into the traditional room inside the media centre.

Present were Mark Webber (Red Bull), Fernando Alonso (Ferrari), and Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull).

Mark you must be a very happy boy?

Mark WEBBER: Yeah, thanks Jackie. I think it was a very interesting race. I thought at the start Fernando had very good pace. A bit of strategy here and there. Obviously, Fernando started on different tyres. But never gave up, kept pushing and it didn't really work out for Fernando at the end. It was very, very close for him so we were there to capitalise. It's a very, very special victory for the team, just down the road, a local team, so thanks to all the guys, it's incredible for them. And for Renault another victory for them in the UK. So I'm very proud today. Thanks to all the fans for sticking with us for the past few days, it's been incredible.

Fernando I thought you were going to win the race. I won two British Grands Prix, you've won two British Grands Prix. It was pretty hot for a while.

Fernando ALONSO: Yeah it was quite close today the victory. At the end in the last stint Mark was much quicker than us, and he deserved the win, so I congratulate him and congratulate the Red Bull team. But I'm very proud of the Ferrari recovery in the last few weeks and now we are fighting for the victory in the last three or four grands prix. So we're heading in the right direction. As Mark said, thanks to all the fans. We had not so good weather during the weekend and they were cheering all the time for us. I hope they enjoyed the show today and see you all next year.

And what about the championship? You're still leading.

FA: Yeah, still there. It's the main target obviously for us. Today I think we lost seven points with Mark but we gained some extra points on the rest of the field. So I think it was a good Sunday in terms of championship points for us.

Well done, Sebastian, a good race for you.

Sebastian VETTEL: Yeah, it was an interesting one. The start was not so good, I lost a little bit and lost a position to Felipe. I had a tough fight with him in the beginning. I nearly got past but it was really, really close. It was fun but I didn't get past. Then we brought the right strategy to come back, which turned to be the right thing but obviously later on you always have a little bit of extra on your tyres. All in all, very happy. Mark obviously deserved to win today. Very happy with the result for the team. Thanks to all the fans out there because I think it was quite horrible the last two days not just for us but especially for them but obviously the sun came out today and the British summer showed its best. So looking forward to coming back next year.

Mark, well done. Just how much satisfaction did that win give you?

MW: Oh, a lot. I've had a few now which is nice but this one is taking a little while to sink in. It didn't look like a spectacular race maybe between Fernando and I initially, but it was one. A little strategy involved as well, particularly with ourselves, pacing the stints on the tyres, working out if it's

going to be two or three stops and how the tyres would behave in the race. Fernando starting on a different tyre and I knew he would have to run a different compound towards the end of the race as we had got the harder [more difficult] tyre out of the way at the start. I thought in the first stint that Fernando had he was in very, very good shape to probably close the win out, but it came our way in the last stint and I am absolutely over the moon, absolutely rapt. For the team, it's local here, Wings for Life, all the photos on the car, great initiative, all that stuff, it's a real good story. The fans here this weekend have put up with some horrendous weather but we've had a beautiful dry British Grand Prix. There'll be some long trips home tonight but overall I'm very proud today. It was a very special victory as I say. I managed to get Fernando in the last few laps which was very nice and we got the win from there.

And the timing is right as well, with three races in four weekend before the break. That's important?

MW: Ah look, we have a lot of races this year as you know. Melbourne was important, as will Brazil be. I've got a couple of wins now and also some consistent results as well. But we know how tight it is. I see Kimi finished ten seconds behind with fourth or fifth place or whatever, so it's tight. As we saw with Seb, he lost a little bit of time in the first stint and that can be your undoing. Sometimes I've had some of that medicine and it makes it hard to come back from there. So in the end you've got to grab these ones with both hands and I was very keen to grab with both hands today. I had a single opportunity to pounce and I wasn't going to let that slip.

It seemed to be in the middle sector that you were particularly gaining on Fernando in those closing stages.

MW: I think Fernando, with the front left tyre, if you lose balance around this place, that sector the speed is very, very high, it's very hard for the driver to do something. I could see that when I arrived on Fernando, reasonably close I got to see where he was struggling with his car. It was obvious that he was pushing as hard as possible but the balance wasn't with him. That's when you've got to smell the blood and you've got to go for it.

Fernando so close but so far. When you first saw everybody else's tyres and you were pretty much on your own [on the soft] was that a worry?

FA: Not really. As Mark said before or later the cars will mix again. You have to put for the first 14 or 15 laps the soft tyres or in the last 14 or 15, so it was a similar timed race at the end over 52 laps. So I was not worried. Probably the start was the biggest worry because with the hard compound you know the start is a little bit worse. We tried to defend the position there. After that we were controlling the race more or less OK until the last stint, we were now quick enough and when Mark arrived I think he overtook very easy and there was nothing we can do. I'm happy with the second place. Now obviously, ten minutes after the race there is a strange feeling of losing victory. But it's the same 18 points you get if you are third and you overtake the guy in second on the last lap and you are so happy, so it's the same second place but different feelings in this ten minutes but I'm sure in one hour's time I will appreciate it much more.

And in particular having the pace you had in Valencia as well. That's two races in a row you've been leading the race.

FA: Yeah it was good in Valencia the car and here on a completely different track with a lot of high-speed corners the car seemed to perform very well. Also a fantastic race from Felipe, finishing fourth, so happy with the improvements in the car. I think still there is a last step to close with these guys, maybe they are a little bit quicker in some conditions on some circuits, so we need to improve those.

And an interesting battle with Lewis. It wasn't actually for position but on the road.

FA: Yeah, it was close. I was with new tyres so I had a pace advantage but you know the McLaren is quite quick on the straights, so I overtook him on the exit of the corner thanks to the tyres and then he overtook me again on the straight and it was a difficult moment of the race because if you have a little contact or something you can lose your front wing or whatever and your race is over. You need to be aggressive, you need to try to not lose too much time in those overtakings but at the same time being a little bit careful.

Sebastian, obviously for a Red Bull a great day with you first and third and also confirmation again of the pace you had in Valencia.

SV: Yeah, I think all in all it was a good day. Obviously happy for the team, the factory is just down the road. It's more or less our home grand prix and therefore definitely special and I'm sure we'll have some drinks tomorrow.

And an interesting battle with a group of four of you in the early stages.

SV: Yeah, the start was not too good to be honest, I lost a little bit too much. I had too much wheel slip and I could see the first row disappearing. It was quite tight and with Felipe he had a better start and I lost the position to him. And then I think it was down to turn four it was extremely tight. I tried to defend the position to Kimi who was right behind. I think I damaged the front wing a little bit. Not sure how bad it was. But it didn't turn out to be a massive disadvantage. So from there I got stuck a little bit. Once I got close to get past Felipe but he did a very good job, he very hard but very fair, so I enjoyed that a lot and then we did the right thing coming in a little bit earlier and used to the momentum and got past both Michael and Felipe at the same time, which was good. I was just a little bit too far away to get Fernando at the end so just a little bit off that feeling he described - you're close and you get that second place in the end. I'm sure if the race had been a little bit longer then it would have been different but that's how it is, so I'm very happy with third today.

Congratulations Mark. As you say this season will be nip and tuck but you have points every race but one, you're the second guy to win twice - it must give you confidence that you're going to be in the thick of this championship fight.

MW: Absolutely, I'm not low on confidence at the moment. It's going well. I think in Barcelona we didn't help ourselves with the strategy in qualifying to put ourselves outside the Q3 by being too optimistic about the pace of the car for that Sunday afternoon. So, overall, so far so good. We will enjoy today's result, really soak it up. That's what's important. You have to remember how hard we work for these results and tomorrow morning, it's Hockenheim. That's what it has to be about. I think it's a long, long season. I'm not getting too fired up about any particular championship positions at the moment. But what is for sure is that I have a nice haul of points to keep going with. I'm not sitting on 20 points trying to start my campaign from here. So it's going well so far.

Mark, you are in second place in the championship. Now you're ahead of Sebastian Vettel by 16 points. Will you continue to attack, or let Sebastian Vettel overtake you?

MW: Yeah. I think at Hockenheim we will let Seb through! No, honestly, I will try to give your question some decent respect. Look, it's a championship for all of us. I've had a good run in the last few races. Obviously Seb had a retirement when leading Valencia so that's the way it's been. I've been there to have two very special victories so far this year, albeit in different circumstances. As I say, I would rather have the points that I have than those that some other people have. I'm not looking at who is third, fourth, fifth. I am looking at the little guy next to me and he's going well as well, so we need to keep pushing hard.

Fernando, a couple of questions: how much did being on pole influence your decision on tyre choice? I wondered whether there was an element of being conservative at the start because you were on pole. And secondly, your second stint, was the length of that defined by covering Mark? Could you have gone longer in a perfect world in that second stint and perhaps made more use of the tyre at that point?

FA: I think tyre choice was a little bit determined by the pace we saw in FP3, the little dry running that we had. We felt more confident on the hards so it was our preferred choice today. And then, if at any point of the race it had rained and we put on intermediates you didn't have to use the softs any more so it was a better combination of possibilities that the hard gave us today. And then the length of the stint? I think the second was quite close to the limit of the number of laps. Maybe we could have lasted a couple of extra laps in the first one.

Fernando, this is more or less a similar question: when you stopped on the 37th lap, you had 15 laps ahead of you on the softer tyre. You did only 12 on the harder tyre at the beginning. Did you think you could finish the race in good conditions with the tyres.

FA: No, I was confident in the tyres, to be honest, because Felipe used the soft tyre in the first stint and I think he did 14 laps, so 14 laps with maybe a heavy car in the first stint and we were 15 laps to the end with a light car. So we were quite convinced the softs were OK but they were a little bit slower, obviously a little bit too much understeer, so the balance changed and killed the performance of the car a little bit and we were a bit too slow. We knew, more or less, that the soft was a little bit slower, so we needed to open up a gap in the first two stints when we were on different tyres to Mark and we knew that that gap was for sure getting closer and closer at the end when we put on the softs, and what we opened up at the beginning was not enough

And for both Red Bull drivers, after the astonishing performance in Valencia, if it hadn't have rained here, did you expect more from the car during the race?

MW: Obviously we got some confidence with our car in Valencia. I think that before then, we'd been finding our way with the new regulations, but I think we understood a little bit more about the RB8 in Valencia, and that has been an on-going process here. Potential is an over-used word but we've got to try and get the most out of the car in all conditions. I think we've definitely improved the car from Barcelona, this is an even quicker circuit, and also what you have to keep in mind is if you're a little bit out of the balance window here – not with the tyres but I mean balance chassis-wise – aerodynamically around here you are in big big trouble, so we had to tune the car as everyone did, as the weekend went on. We learned a lot in P3, the only dry running we had, so I think we're very happy with the car around here. Probably not had the advantage that we had in... obviously Seb had a clean Grand Prix. I was in a bit of traffic but Valencia was probably a bit stronger, but here we won the race. So it turned out OK. Fernando wasn't slow, but I think the team's done a great performance with the car here.

Mark, this morning you told me that wet conditions would be better for you, given the temperature. Do you think that the temperature increase at the end affected your performance a little bit?

MW: When I saw you this morning, we only had the (dry) running from P3, which, to be honest, wasn't particularly smooth sailing for us. We had a look at what Fernando had done in that session and he looked very good on balance and his sectors were pretty strong, taking into account fuel loads or whatever, we thought Fernando looked pretty good, so we had that in mind, going into the race, obviously, how we would go. Don't forget last year as well; he gave us a hiding during the Grand Prix as well through balance and overall high speed performance and grip, if you like, so Ferrari has always been pretty strong here, and Fernando as well. So in the end, a little bit surprised that we were maybe as competitive as we were in the dry, but hey, it's a great problem to have and we put together a great Grand Prix today.

Mark, you're consistently successful at Silverstone. What do you enjoy, what do you like about racing here?

MW: Well, this morning I took the dogs for a run. The good thing about going home to them is that they don't know if I've had a shit day or a good day, they're always happy to see me. It's good to be staying at home. All of us know how much we love hotels so it's just good to be at home and even though it's my job and it's all sportsmen and women's jobs to enjoy – whether you're a golfer, tennis player, racing driver – you have to enjoy or get the most out of every venue that you race at but it's only natural that there is... like Fernando in Barcelona, there is that extra little bit that makes you a little bit more relaxed and a bit more comfortable, which you try and replicate at every single Grand Prix, but with all due respect, it's not the same at Hockenheim. I love racing everywhere but here it's extra special. As I say, I won my first race here in '96 in a Formula Ford so the love affair continues.

Sebastian, when you look at your lap times, you were OK in sector one and three, maybe even the fastest, but you were consistently lost out in sector two. What was the problem there?

SV: I don't know. I got told we lose a little bit too much in the second sector. We probably had a little bit of trouble in the fast stuff at the end of the race, so I think all in all we were quite competitive, but yes, we lost out in the second sector so we need to see why that was. Generally I felt pretty happy. In the last stint, to be honest, I wasn't so happy with the car, I picked up a lot of vibrations. I don't know why as I didn't have a lock-up or anything. We need to have a look why that was. I have one question: does anybody have a clue about the tennis? What's the score? Three all in the first set.

Mark, you said that from the outside the race was not spectacular; what is the main difficulty for you during that race? Managing the tyres, the start, overtaking Fernando?

MW: Yes, understanding the pace to do and to have the range to split the race evenly, for a two stop Grand Prix. That was the main focus, to make sure that I could get to the stop lap which the guys were trying to predict me to hit, which pit stop lap they wanted me to hit, and get there with the best combination of pace and tyre life. Ultimately that is the best way to get to the chequered flag. Obviously you put a lot of faith in the pit wall. The guys are helping you to work out what level of pace you run at, and also balancing the car at the pit stops was important, working with the guys on the front wing. We made quite a big adjustment at the first stop after my first stint and then I was much happy with the car in the second and third stints.

Fernando and Sebastian, is the second victory for Mark and second in the championship a surprise for you?

FA: No, not really. I think Mark had a difficult season last year with a little bit too big a difference than normal with Sebastian, but in 2010 he was leading the championship until Korea so he's not new in this position of fighting for the World Championships. This year, with all the tricky conditions and all the different winners we saw in this strange championship so far, I think Mark is good with those difficulties.

SV: Not much to add. Obviously I have the advantage in that he's in the same team so I can see what he's doing but I don't think it's a surprise.

Fernando, you told us about your mixed feelings: are you more worried to have lost seven points to Mark or you will maybe be more happy to have gained on Sebastian?

FA: I think at the moment, as far as I'm leading, I'm more happy than worried. If Mark was leading the championship, I would be worried about losing another seven points, but at the moment, the weekend in general has been fantastic for us, because we left Valencia with maybe an emotional win, a lot of points in our pocket, compared to our rivals in the championship and we arrived at Silverstone, a completely different circuit, we didn't know how the car was performing here. We had a very difficult qualifying for everybody yesterday and we survived that qualifying with pole position and today we also had a tricky race. We didn't know what the weather was doing and I think the car performed well, we avoided any contact, any accidents that might happen at the start or in some battles. We are again bringing home more points than we probably expected, because when we arrived on Thursday, if someone had told us that we would leave on Sunday with 18 points again, I think we would have been very happy.

Is it Federer you're going for Sebastian?

SV: Yes.

There was a message on the radio that you should use Torque Five or something like that. Was there a technical reason why you didn't have Mark's pace today, and looking to your home race in Germany, what are your thoughts on that, a race that I don't think you've won?

SV: No, we didn't have any problems. When you face your stint, you know roughly how many laps you want to do etc. and you try to manage the tyres at their best and you try to use the tools that you have in the car. Obviously you can change your front wing settings at the pit stop, but other than that, once you are out on the circuit, you haven't got that much to play with. You can play a little bit with the diff, obviously adjust your driving and adjust the mapping from the engine point of view. It's hard to bring it down to lap time, but it's just more driver comfort, what you prefer at the time. And yeah, obviously I'm looking forward to the next race, looking forward to Germany. It should be a very good one for us. I feel the car is picking up speed, so I definitely feel happier since the last race. This one... I think we struggled last year here, in particular. Ferrari had the upper hand so I think this year we had a much better balanced car in that regard. So it seems we are on the right track so let's see if I succeed this year. It's a race like every other. Sure it would be very special to win, but I don't score more points just by winning my home race.

Fernando, if there is a change in your team next year, would you like to have Mark as your teammate?

FA: I don't know. I think it's just imaginary pictures. I need to put something on my shoes to be a little bit taller. That would be the only thing if I changed teammates. For the rest, it doesn't matter. I would be happy with any teammate. I say again, I'm extremely happy with Felipe. Today, again, he showed the performance that he can do, with a normal race, trouble free etc. We will see what the team decides.

Mark, does today's result make a difference to where you might drive next year, given that you've got number two on your cap and that seemed like a number one drive?

MW: It helps my situation to stay in Formula One. At the start of the year I didn't have a contract, I'm pushing to get a contract for next year. Going reasonably well, got a few points, a couple of wins and I will work very hard to try and stay in Formula One next year. So the answer is no.
