

## Fl Hungarian Grand Prix – Thursday press conference

After a whole four days without racing, it was time for Formula One to kick off another grand prix weekend with the traditional Thursday press conference.

Present were Fernando Alonso (Ferrari), Narain Karthikeyan (HRT), Kamui Kobayashi (Sauber), Heikki Kovalainen (Caterham), Pastor Maldonado (Williams), and Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus).

Narain, tell us how HRT has changed in the last six months. How much has it changed and developed?

Narain KARTHIKEYAN: Yeah, I think we've come a long way since Australia and the team has a permanent facility now and the factory is very impressive. Everything has come under one roof. There's a design office, we're hiring a lot of people and the car is getting slightly better. It's a positive step and hopefully this will continue throughout the season. We have some upgrades coming during the holidays and hopefully we'll start using them soon and close the gap. The car at the moment is similar to the Marussia, but we can improve still a little bit and that's what we are planning to do.

It's an unfortunate fact that you do see a lot of blue flags in your position. Tell us how difficult it is from that point of view, and how much your race is compromised by that? How much do you have to race in the first quarter of the race?

NK: Yes, that part where you don't have the blue flags in the first of the race is where you try and do what you can and push. But after that, yes, once the blue starts coming you have to go offline sometimes and you pick up lots of marbles and after that it's managing the tyres and so on. It's quite difficult for us but we try to stay out of the way of the leaders.

Kamui, your best performance in Hockenheim: in fact a fantastic performance from both Sauber cars. Have you sorted out the problems you had in the past few races?

Kamui KOBAYASHI: I think it's not really a big problem. It's basically that we had speed everywhere but unfortunately we missed some piece of the puzzle and we could not compete at the end of the weekend, in the race. We believe we had a really good car and had good performance but we just need to piece together all the puzzle. Yeah, I think otherwise we are not worried about our pace. For sure it's not the best of the car but for sure we can fight for good positions.

Is there a problem with qualifying? If you started further up perhaps you could be a winner?

KK: Definitely. In Hockenheim I had quite good confidence in the dry but unfortunately in the wet, especially on the inter tyre in that situation in Hockenheim qualifying, we struggled a lot to warm them up. I think a lot of drivers struggled but we struggled as well and that is the point – if it had been dry I think we could quite easily have found Q3 and then I think the race would have been completely different. This is what we need. Unfortunately in the last two races we had a wet qualifying and a little bit of a difficult time. In the dry we definitely have a good car. In the wet, sometimes it's good, sometimes not good. It's difficult to say what is the clear answer [to that]. We show a really good car in the dry and we definitely see in the factory many people are working so hard and we see really good performance in the car and so thanks to all the guys working on the car.

Heikki, a lot of rumours going around the paddock at the moment about where you might be going etc. What can you tell us?

Heikki KOVALAINEN: I think it's the time of the season where you hear a lot of rumours regarding a lot of drivers, and for me nothing has changed at the moment. The only focus is improving our team and our car, and making the best out of what we've got. Then at some point we'll sit down with my management and sit down with Caterham first and then see what we'll do for the future.

You're a previous winner at this circuit. What are your feelings coming into this race?

HK: Pretty similar feelings to any other grand prix. It's too long since I won here. It's just one weekend in the whole championship. Of course, as a Finn this feels a little bit like a home grand prix. We have a lot of people from Finland always turning up here. In that way it is perhaps a warmer feeling through the weekend than some of the races. But apart from that, it's business as usual.

Kimi, presumably you feel the same way about the crowd, but what about the car. Is it progressing? People were talking about it as a winner earlier this season. Is it keeping up that reputation? Is it keeping that performance?

Kimi RAIKKONEN: Well, it hasn't won any races, so it's not a winner. I mean, we have a good package but for many races we probably haven't got the best out of it in all conditions at all races but that's up to us. We are still pretty happy but of course you want to do better. We wish to win races but it hasn't happened so far, so hopefully we can win some this year. It's not easy and we know that. We keep trying to improve things and learn from the things that we do and we'll see what we can do in the second part [of the season].

Is fourth the best you can do at the moment and is qualifying an emphasis for you?

KR: We had a good speed last weekend, apart from the rain. We couldn't get anything in the rain for some reason. That really put us in a not very good position. If it's a dry weekend... the car has been good in the wet in Silverstone but for some reason not in qualifying in the last race. I think we're finding the place where I want to be with the car and the set-up and things like that and hopefully we can be a bit better here than we were last week.

Fernando, since last weekend, you and Felipe felt the moral obligation to visit earthquake victims very close to the factory at Maranello. Can you tell us of that experience: what you found, what you saw?

Fernando ALONSO: yeah, we were visiting some of the camps that still have people there and it's not clear when they will come back home,

because some of the cities are still quite damaged and most of the buildings will still need some repair. For sure, it's not an easy situation. A sad feeling a little bit. We tried to give them some support from the Ferrari factory and all the team. When the earthquake arrived everyone cares about these people and they were in the news everyday, but now after a few months or whatever, people tend to forget, so we were just visiting them to give them full support and to wish that everything will become better and better every day and that normality will arrive sooner rather than later.

You've come into this race obviously having won last weekend, you won your first race here and you'll go into the break leading the Championship. Do you see yourself as favourite to win the Championship and, if not, who is?

FA: Well, I think we are in a good position in terms of points that we achieve in the first half of the season, in the first ten races, but we are, as you said, only half. We did ten and there remain another ten important races with the same possibilities for everybody. I think the distance between the top five, top six is not a distance or a gap that is impossible to recover. You just need one good race or two good races and you are up there. So, we need to keep the concentration, try to keep maximising what we have in our hands every weekend – sometimes we know that can be a podium, sometimes maybe it's a fifth position, sometimes a seventh, but we cannot afford to make any mistakes or anything that we will regret. So, we need to keep doing good – some good consistency but in terms of the Championship it's obviously way to early to think and still McLaren, Red Bull, Lotus, Mercedes – anyone is in contention at the moment.

Pastor, obviously you won in Barcelona: what has changed, what has happened since then – you really haven't followed that up. What's happened since then.

Pastor MALDONADO: Yeah, I think after Barcelona, for whatever reason we didn't consolidate our results. I did a couple of mistakes and then I've been a bit unlucky as well at the same time. We've been working so hard in the team, trying to keep our performance. Maybe in qualifying we did a great job and as I mentioned, for whatever reason we haven't been very strong on races. Now in the second part of the Championship we are looking to recover the points we lost and to every time be strong and the strongest.

What about this circuit? You were very quick in Monaco, there are mid-speed corners just like in Barcelona as well. Is this looking a good circuit for you?

PM: Yeah, I hope so. For sure now the gaps are very close and I hope to have a great car here. It's going to be very important to understand the tyres, to understand and to prepare the car for quali and the race – which is a compromise I think here. And yeah, I love this circuit. It's very technical, very hard mentally and physically and for sure looking forward to have a great result and to be back to the points again with the team.

Fernando, in Germany you told us how much better the car was. Could you expand a bit? Just how much has it improved since Jerez testing and what race was the biggest update?

FA: Well, definitely we did improve the car a lot. I don't know how much, or I cannot quantify it in terms of lap time because it will be difficult. I think between two and three seconds maybe but obviously it's a number that cannot be very precise. I think the biggest improvement that we introduced was in Barcelona: the biggest updates were mainly the aerodynamics of the car – but we knew that in the first three or four races, when we were in China, Bahrain, the car was not doing what we were expecting. And when we arrived in Barcelona, everything became a little bit more normal for us and from that point, all the updates it was fine-tuning. But the Barcelona one was to make everything back to work.

Kimi, we have not really heard anything about the infamous power steering lately. Have you and the team taking a step forward regarding that? And before, did you have any real life situations where you felt you couldn't achieve a better result because of the power steering?

KR: There's no point to talk about it because I mean, when we say something people try to make a massive story out of it. Like I always said, it's not perfect – it's still not – it's improved a lot since we started. But still a way to go. It's OK to race, it's not like it's somehow going to make me one second faster or half a second faster if we going to get it exactly as we want. And this is... I know that I've driven better ones and there's definitely still things that we can improve. We're working for it, but it's not the easiest thing to get right. So we have to work on those and hopefully at some point we will get it exactly as we want.

Fernando, for you two questions please. In Ferrari team I heard they call you a maestro: is it true and how does it come? And managed to stay out of any trouble this year – how to you do it?

FA: In Ferrari they call me Fernando normally. But always with Ferrari as we are already repeating it was a very good reception, welcome from day one. And it's like family for me. I'm in Italy 80 per cent of my free time and I have my best friends there working also in Italy now in the factory in the road cars, so I spend free time there. Most of the time as I said I'm better in Italy even than in Spain, so this is something for sure curious. This year it has been not easy to go out of problems or troubles in the races because the grid is so tight, so in one-tenth you have four or five cars. In the races we are more or less at the same performance, it's not like last year when there were six cars and then a different group of cars and then a different group again. This year every detail counts, every pitstop counts, the starts... so I think it's a little bit more stress on the grid or between all of us, so we've been lucky in some moments of the Championship, in some manoeuvres, in some incidents and we've been finishing all the races in the points, which obviously helps for us. We obviously need to keep doing like this and hopefully have the whole season trouble-free.

Fernando, your figures keep improving: nine years ago you won here your first race and last Sunday you won your 30th. Back nine years, did you imagine you will get all this? What were your feelings then?

FA: No, no, definitely not. When you win your first grand prix it's just a lot of emotions going on. A lot of satisfaction, proudness of the team, of yourself, or family... a lot of thoughts are coming when you win your first grand prix. You cannot imagine that you will repeat that feeling or that happiness more times or very often. So when you keep winning after some years, some different teams, different regulations that have changed a lot from 2003 obviously: V10, V8... Michelin, Bridgestone, Pirelli, refuelling, no refuelling. It has been a lot of time since 2003. If I look back obviously, for sure I never imagine to have the luck and the possibility to achieve the two World Championships and now driving for Ferrari.

Kimi and Fernando: Red Bull have these new engine mapping rules for this weekend. Do you expect Red Bull to struggle a bit?

A: I think it's a question for Red Bull.

KR: I don't know what they're doing so we will see.

Kimi, when you look back at the two years that you were out of Formula One, do you think they have had any influence in your performance up to now? And what happened when you were leaving Hockenheim? We saw some pictures (of him tripping over a barrier he was trying to climb over)...

KR: I almost fell down. It was close! I was two years out (of Formula One). I was doing different things and I don't think that if I'd been driving two

years in Formula I would be any different really. I maybe took a few practices, a few races to know everything exactly (when I came back). Of course it's a new team, so it took a bit to get to know everybody there and to get everything exactly as I wanted, but I think we're getting there now and it hasn't been too bad really. It's been OK.

Kimi, what is the maximum to be achieved with Lotus in the Constructors' and Drivers' championships and which one is more important for you?

KR: I will tell you at the end of the year. We will try to do the maximum all the time. I don't know where we're going to end up. We're doing pretty OK now. I think they didn't probably expect us to do so well as a team at the beginning of the year, and we try to improve and hopefully we will manage to do that. We're in the fight for the top three. We're now fourth in the team championship and I'm fourth in the drivers. We go race-by-race and on my side try to score as many points as I can, and try to help the team... I guess they want to be as high as they can in the team championship. For me I want to be as high as I can from my side. Both things really influence each other so we will just try to do better and hopefully manage to do that.

Fernando, it's incredible to think that it's six years since your last drivers' title. A couple of points more in those years and you could have had four or five titles at the moment instead of two. What will it mean to you to win that third title if you do so this year, for yourself and for Ferrari? It will put you in a higher band of elite drivers, the Laudas and the Prosts.

FA: Well, I think we need to wait and see when we have real possibilities of fighting for this championship. At the moment, as we said, we are happy with the points achieved in the first half but we need to keep working hard, we need to keep consistency and we need to keep doing good results. This can change very quickly, in two or three races and then we talk about very different things. Not much point to talk about the championship now. But as I said, when we finished Brazil in 2006, it was a dream for me to (even think to) win three World Championships in my career. If it's this year, in two years' time or in six years' time, I don't know but the third one will be very important for me. To have the same as Ayrton had - three World Championships - he was idol or my reference when I was in go-karts and some big names, as you said, Lauda etc so three is a pretty good number which I always dream of, and hopefully arrive sooner rather than later.

Fernando, do you believe the new map rules could be good for Ferrari, because maybe Red Bull is slower with these new rules?

FA: As we said before, it doesn't change anything for us. We will have exactly the same car as Silverstone or Germany and for them, we have no idea. I think they are having their press conference at four, so it's more a question for them.

The Olympics are going to start tomorrow; do you like the idea of an Olympic Formula One race or is it just not realistic?

HK: I suppose you think I'm the nice man who will give you the answer. I don't think it's realistic but why not? I have nothing against it but how do you fit a race track in an Olympic Games? I don't know. But who knows? Why not?

Fernando, at the very beginning of the year, you took the role of cheering up the people in your team. Do you have to calm them down a little bit now, or does everybody know how it's going to go?

FA: People know, certainly, what is our performance, how many points we have, how we achieve these points, how many points we have in the Constructors'. Every race, when you do the analysis after each Grand Prix the numbers never lie, so we know what we have.

Fernando, it seems that this is the best season so far for you. How can you explain this? It is not only about the car, of course, but even yourself; have you changed something? Did your Malaysia victory mean that you changed something in the season?

FA: No. Well... I think so far the results have been coming good and as I said, we've been lacking at some moments some details of the weekend and we have achieved a lot of points. I think I've had a very good season, like 2008, winning two races with Renault. 2009 with a car that normally my teammate was out in Q1, I was on the podium, things like that. In 2010, when I arrived at Ferrari, you always asked me if that was my best season, recovering until I arrived in Abu Dhabi leading the championship with that car, and last year you were saying that it was my best season with ten podiums in a car that was quite far from Red Bull and McLaren. And this year, at the moment, you are asking me good things but as I said before, if I have some or three races with some poor results, you will ask me why I'm not concentrated or something like that, so I will always try to do the best I can. I'm pretty happy with my last four or five seasons in Formula One, especially this one because at the moment we are taking care of all the details that seem to be quite important in this championship, because as I said before, the grid is so tight so you need to be close to perfection, let's say, every weekend. If not you lose more positions than in the past but apart from that, it's more or less the same performance so same approach, same preparation as the last four or five seasons.

A question for all of you, except Fernando: do you think that Fernando's going to make it this year?

NK: I think Fernando is going very well, yes, he has all the support, so I think he should make it.

KK: The championship? I think Fernando is definitely the strongest this season. We can see he's really strong. I think he will do it.

HK: Fernando is definitely in the best position, but I think it's too close to call at the moment. I think it's going to be an exciting end to the season for everyone, not only for the teams, the drivers but also for the spectators.

KR: Fernando is definitely in the best position right now, but like he said himself, you have one or two bad weekends and somebody else suddenly does well in those races and it changes very quickly. There are too many races to go, still, to look into it too much but then we will see what will happen at the end of the last race.

PM: Yeah, Fernando has been really consistent and strong this year, this half season. For sure, he's in the best place. I really wish him all the best for this season. He's driving so well and all the best to him and the Ferrari team.

And again, to you all, are you going to watch the Olympics?

NK: The Olympics? No, I'm going back to India.

KK: I think I'm maybe going to see a few sports but I'm no big fan of the Olympics so I will just watch some of the results.

HK: Regarding the Olympic Games, yes, absolutely, I will watching them as much as I can. We've got a good few Finnish athletes there. Probably the most interesting for myself is the mens' javelin event. We've got a few guys who are not necessarily at the top in the rankings at the moment, but hopefully the timing of their fitness and preparation is good enough, so that they can snatch a medal. That would be great.

KR: I think it's hard to miss the Olympics even if you would like to. I will look at some on TV, but it's not really sport that I'm following. For sure, there will be some TV so I will watch it.

PM: I will just be supporting the Venezuelan team in the Olympics. I'm not that great a fan of the Olympic Games but for sure I will support the Venezuelan team.

FA: Yeah, I think I will watch as much as I can, but obviously we are on holiday and if you go to the beach, you are not running to see the sport on TV. You see the replay in the evening or whatever

Fernando, considering the streak you've been on in the past couple of weeks, we now have a month's vacation coming up; are you afraid that this is going to disrupt the way things have been going for you? Or will you be able to take it up again at the end of the month?

FA: Well, we considered the August break this year to be a little bit longer than normal and a good opportunity to catch some of the quickest cars, because more time is available for us. We think that we should find some extra performance that we are missing at the moment. So being a little bit late with the development of the car at the beginning of the season, being a little bit surprised in a bad way about the performance of the car at the beginning of the season, we need time and we need solutions to make the car faster and I think to have a longer period can only be good news for us.

Heikki, would you be tempted to rally a car like Kimi Raikkonen?

HK: You are always tempted, yes, but as we saw with Kimi, it's not so easy, especially to go straight into it at World Rally level, to the top. I think the expectations would need to be zero. It would be purely for fun, it would take a long time to achieve any level of competitive performance. At the moment, all my focus is on Formula One. I feel that since a few years now, my career is more back on track. I feel better here so at the moment, not even for a hobby am I considering rallying. Every effort is now to improve the results in Formula One. Maybe when I get grey and old I will buy an Escort Mk2 and rally at home, but that's just for fun.

---

## F1 Hungarian Grand Prix – FPI report

It would be easy to look at the free practice times set on Friday morning Hungary and conclude that McLaren have got their mojo back, and that the British team will dominate the final race weekend prior to the August break.

It would be easy, but not necessarily correct.

McLaren have a strong history of performing well on Fridays but not living up to that early promise over the course of the race weekend. Complicating matters at the Hungaroring are the heavy storms predicted for Sunday – teams will have to choose between qualifying speed and a good race set-up, and that decision will be a gamble that puts them in the capricious hands of the weather gods.

Of course, that is a decision that will be pressing on the minds of all twelve of the paddock's teams, not just McLaren, who traditionally perform well at this venue.

What was of interest in the timesheets was the massive divide between P1 and P24 – in place if the tight margins we have become used to this season, the 24 men on track were covered by a split of nearly 5.5 seconds, the biggest margin we've seen in a long time.

Even at the front of the grid the split was extreme, with one second between Lewis Hamilton in P1 and Michael Schumacher in P6.

But the split disguises the fact that we're now settling into something of an established Friday rhythm, with the usual suspects from McLaren, Ferrari, Mercedes, and Lotus performing well, and Red Bull disguising their true pace further down the pack. It might well be that the Milton Keynes racers have had their pace seriously curtailed by the FIA's engine map ruling, but because the defending world champions make a habit of running more slowly on a Friday morning, there will be no real telling until later on this weekend.

The session itself was generally quiet, although there were offs aplenty, especially at Turns 1, 4, 6, and 14. It looked as though 90 percent of the grid struggled to stay on track at one or more of those trickier corners; getting the brake balance right here is a challenge after a run of more throttle-happy circuits.

Special mention should go to Valtteri Bottas, who continues to impress in his Friday drives for Williams. The Finnish hash-tag has been blowing away Pastor Maldonado on a regular basis this season, and it will be interesting to see the two men battle for supremacy within the British team over the course of the 2013 season.

Charles Pic also impressed this morning, out-pacing Timo Glock yet again.

FPI times (unofficial)

1. Lewis Hamilton (McLaren) 1.22.821s [30 laps]
2. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1.22.922s [24 laps]
3. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1.23.397s [24 laps]
4. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1.23.628s [29 laps]
5. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1.23.633s [24 laps]
6. Michael Schumacher (Mercedes) 1.23.845s [26 laps]
7. Felipe Massa (Ferrari) 1.23.904s [25 laps]
8. Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus) 1.23.983s [24 laps]
9. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) 1.24.152s [24 laps]
10. Sergio Perez (Sauber) 1.24.268s [27 laps]
11. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) 1.24.300s [23 laps]
12. Kamui Kobayashi (Sauber) 1.24.394s [19 laps]
13. Mark Webber (Red Bull) 1.24.546s [24 laps]
14. Paul di Resta (Force India) 1.24.559s [22 laps]
15. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1.24.608s [25 laps]
16. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso) 1.25.354s [25 laps]
17. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1.25.559s [27 laps]
18. Jules Bianchi (Force India) 1.25.715s [26 laps]

19. Vitaly Petrov (Caterham) 1.26.440s [27 laps]
  20. Charles Pic (Marussia) 1.26.705s [23 laps]
  21. Heikki Kovalainen (Caterham) 1.26.755s [28 laps]
  22. Timo Glock (Marussia) 1.27.015s [24 laps]
  23. Pedro de la Rosa (HRT) 1.27.101s [21 laps]
  24. Dani Clos (HRT) 1.28.176s [24 laps]
- 

## FP1 Hungarian Grand Prix – FP2 report

It's Friday, therefore it rained. It is the unwritten rule of the 2012 Formula One season, and the regulation that has been best adhered to.

As usual, the rain meant that the best laid development schemes of mice and men went awry, although it's now got to the point where the smart strategists take the rain into account on a Friday, and put together a run plan that enables them to maximise the limited decent weather window and get as much possible data out of their new components when the track is still dry.

There was around an hour's worth of dry running on offer this afternoon, thanks in no small part to the Hungaroring's impressive ability to dry out more quickly than a chamois leather – something to with the combination of hot air temperatures and fast-draining soil – but the variable track conditions did cause problems up and down the grid.

Drivers were faced with a circuit that was dry in parts, yet filled with standing water in others, a combination that often leads to expensive repair jobs after trips into the tyre wall. What impressed this afternoon was the way in which the vast majority were able to adapt to the ever-changing track conditions and keep their cars on the black stuff (if not always between the white lines).

Early on in the session, Romain Grosjean came off at Turn 7, losing his front wing in the process. But luckily for the Frenchman – and for the Lotus mechanics – it was a quick repair job and didn't result in much in the way of lost track time.

The only other incident of real note came about thanks to Regenkönig Michael Schumacher, who braved an exploratory lap on the inters only for it to all come apart in the barriers at Turn 12. Schumacher's accident occurred moments after other drivers began complaining of rivers of standing water at Turn 11, leading to aqua-planing, and it is hardly surprising that the Mercedes driver, who was on the wrong rubber for the conditions, was unable to hold it together.

The rest of the afternoon session was peppered with a number of offs as drivers ran wide into run-off, but it was only the Mercedes mechanics who were left completing a repair job.

Fastest man of the afternoon was Lewis Hamilton, who also topped the timesheets in the morning session. Lotus continue to show good pace, with Kimi Raikkonen looking visibly more confident behind the wheel of the E20 than he has for the past few weekends.

Particularly impressive was Williams' Bruno Senna. The Brazilian had no running this morning, as he had given his car over to reserve driver Valtteri Bottas. But despite the less than desirable conditions, Senna logged an impressive 34 laps, keeping out of trouble for the duration.

FP2 times (unofficial)\*

1. Lewis Hamilton (McLaren) 1.21.995s [20 laps]
2. Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus) 1.22.180s [20 laps]
3. Bruno Senna (Williams) 1.22.253s [34 laps]
4. Felipe Massa (Ferrari) 1.22.417s [29 laps]
5. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1.22.582s [22 laps]
6. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1.22.747s [17 laps]
7. Paul di Resta (Force India) 1.22.794s [23 laps]
8. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1.22.824s [18 laps]
9. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1.22.922s [12 laps]
10. Michael Schumacher (Mercedes) 1.23.160s [19 laps]
11. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1.23.164s [29 laps]
12. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) 1.23.357 [26 laps]
13. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) 1.23.713s [26 laps]
14. Mark Webber (Red Bull) 1.23.814s [17 laps]
15. Kamui Kobayashi (Sauber) 1.23.841s [28 laps]
16. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1.24.328s [25 laps]
17. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso) 1.24.345s [28 laps]
18. Sergio Perez (Sauber) 1.24.623s [23 laps]
19. Vitaly Petrov (Caterham) 1.24.823s [30 laps]
20. Heikki Kovalainen (Caterham) 1.25.220s [30 laps]
21. Timo Glock (Marussia) 1.27.104s [28 laps]
22. Pedro de la Rosa (HRT) 1.27.106s [19 laps]
23. Charles Pic (Marussia) 1.27.185s [24 laps]
24. Narain Karthikeyan (HRT) 1.27.822s [20 laps]

\*The number of laps should be read with caution, as the TVs in the Hungarian press room cut off half the numbers. #winning

---

# F1 Hungarian Grand Prix – Friday press conference

As is traditional on a Friday, it was the turn of the senior team personnel to face the media at the Hungaroring, with Toto Wolff and Remi Taffin taking part for the first time.

Present were Andrew Green (Force India), Luiz Pérez Sala (HRT), Rémi Taffin (Renault Sport F1), Martin Whitmarsh (McLaren), and Toto Wolff (Williams).

Andrew, if I can start with you. First of all, who does Force India see as its rivals and where do you hope to be at the end of the season? What position? What are your targets?

Andrew GREEN: Ultimately, everybody on the track is our rival. At the moment we would be targeting sixth position, that would be a realistic target for us. It's going to be difficult. The cars in front of us are all very, very competitive. So it's going to be a big ask and we'll have to dig deep, as we always do, and we'll be pushing like crazy right until the end. That'll be the plan and we'll see where we finishing. So far we're in a position where we're better than we were last year with respect to points and we're reasonably happy with that. If every we score more and more points then ultimately we're going to go up, so happy with that. But there are just some teams in front of us who have scored some big results and got on the podium and that's put us behind them. It's just a matter of chipping away at them and hopefully by the time we get to the end we'll be just in front. That'll be the plan.

What about developments? What sort of developments can you envisage coming through?

AG: It's a tricky time. We brought our last big development to Silverstone. We didn't really get a chance to evaluate it in the wet conditions. Beyond that it's about optimising what we have and getting to know what we have and getting it to run at its peak. Development now really is turning to next year. For a team of our size we can't afford to develop a car much beyond this point in the season. It's really a case of trying to optimise what we have.

That was going to be the next question, when does development shift to next year?

AG: It started a while ago.

So most thoughts from the design team are on that?

AG: From about this time, yes, it has switched over.

Rémi, first of all tell us about your role within Renault F1?

Rémi TAFFIN: Basically, I'm just working on the track as Head of Operations, so whatever we deal with on engines on track I'm responsible for. Basically we have four teams we supply engines to, as you know, and I will make sure through a race weekend that we've got let's say a crossover in between these teams to make sure the Renault engines are well used in any car but trying to keep the confidentiality that we must have.

Obviously the great subject here is all about mapping. Can you explain to us what that means and when you change that how big a change is that? And how it is done.

RT: We're not talking about big changes. We're talking about an ongoing process, which is obviously race after race you try to optimise your package and engine maps are part of that and that's what we've been trying to do since the beginning of the year. When you talk about engine maps it's something that is done by everyone in the pitlane. So that's not something unusual.

When we talking about it, we're talking about software... someone has referred to it as a 'gizmo'. Can we explain that?

RT: Let's take the example of the engine map we've been talking about. It's basically what the engine is able to produce as torque during the weekend, for example here. And that's where is the bulk of the part to play with in Renault engines. That's what shape... what we have got as torque in the car.

And when it comes to Red Bull – how much of a change in performance would that have been, that was caused by that change.

RT: It's very difficult to quantify, but let's have, say, a scale: we're talking about hundredths and not at all about seconds or tenths. We all know that every bit on the car we're going to be working [on it] to get the hundredth out, so that's part of the job.

Martin, obviously you've had an update recently but how much has that been affected by the weather. We've had a wet Silverstone, a wet Hockenheim and now we have we weather here. How much has development been affected?

Martin WHITMARSH: Well, it's certainly difficult now that we don't test. If you bring a whole package of upgrades to the car, on Friday morning P1 typically we have our only test session and if it's wet then it rather handicaps that test. It's been difficult. I think we've made some progress and we will continue to do so. We had a reasonably big package of upgrades in Germany and we have a few bits and pieces here as well. You'll do what you can. We've had a remarkable run of run of rain in the practice sessions so far this year. It would be nice to get some steady, dry conditions where the engineers can work more easily. But it's the same for everyone. Everyone, to varying degrees, is trying to develop and improve the car and that's part of the challenge. Sometimes you've got a great data set and you can go forward with confidence and other times you have to make a decision on a limited data set and in some ways that's more interesting. The engineers don't like it but it's more interesting when you have to take a bit of a flyer.

You must have been really pleased with the way those worked in Germany for Button particularly in the race but obviously Lewis a little bit as well and Lewis fastest in both sessions today?

MW: Yeah, you're not pleased until you're scoring maximum points. I think we've made some progress. But this year has been a very difficult to predict championship, it's been tyre dominated. Those who work the tyres... you can work very hard on your car but if you can't turn the tyres on then you're in trouble. We've seen that a few times on our car – too often – and we've seen it on a few other cars. That's a great challenge for everyone. I think it's going to be a very exciting championship. You've got to say Fernando and Ferrari have done a great job to be where they are, but there are still 430 on the board, to be taken, and I'm sure ourselves, Red Bull, all these teams here will be trying our best to pull back that advantage.

Jenson's had a bit of a difficult time recently – you must have been really pleased with the way he bounced back in Germany?

MW: Yes, of course. If you are a racing driver and a racing driver in a team like McLaren or Ferrari, you're going to come under quite a lot of scrutiny. It's very different, you can turn up as a rookie in some other teams and there's pressure because you're in Formula One but I think if you're in McLaren, whoever you are, same if you're in Ferrari, year in, year out, if you're not qualifying on the front two rows of the grid then there's quite a large enquiry afterwards and all sorts of pressure ensues. I think Jenson hasn't lost his skills, he's had one great win this year, he's very, very fit and very, very committed and I was delighted for him that he's back on form and I'm sure he'll be strong this weekend.

Toto, first of all, you have a new position within the Williams team, what does that involve?

Toto WOLFF: Formally, I have a new title. Actually the position is not quite new, I have been doing the same job for a couple of months already after Adam's departure. It involves basically helping Frank in the daily job running the team.

You're an investor in the team as well as holding this new position. Where do you see the team in five years' time? What's your plan to take it forward?

TW: My approach, kind of changed. I was an investor before, which is the easier part – you can criticise and stick your nose in everywhere. Now formally I'm an official employee of the company – at least I work for the company – so I have to deliver as well, I'm part of the team. Where do I see the team? When I joined in 2009 I gave myself a five year period to progress. Now this is a random period, it just sounded OK for me. We have won a race this year, which came quite early, maybe earlier than expected, but I think the team is on-track technically and on-track setting all the other commercial departments as well.

And to have this commitment, you must have a vision for the sport as a whole as well. How do you see the sport progressing?

TW: The sport, Formula One, is still the biggest or largest global sports platform in the world and it's growing, it's growing healthy and successfully. Obviously you can always try to change and optimise things but it's a fantastic platform worldwide and this was the basic concept behind getting involved in a Formula One team.

Luis, the team seems to have made some improvements – how do you see that progress?

Luis PÉREZ-SALA: We are quite happy, I am quite pleased because the start of the season was very, very difficult; to have the car ready was almost a goal. And then, from the first race where we did not qualify, we have been improving the team. We have new headquarters since April 1st in Madrid. The race team is already working on, I will say, getting used to the races and we still need to grow the team on the design and the aero side.

How is that expansion coming on from the team point of view? And also, from an economic point of view how easy is it to expand the team in that area?

LP-S: The problem is when you are short in economic... no, in the budget – we have maybe the lowest budget of any Formula One team – you need more time to grow because you cannot do whatever you want. You have to be careful – but I think we have enough to make a good team and to stay. That's why we are here. We try to improve but we have to be realistic. And it is going to take time for us.

Is recruitment fairly easy for you? Are you looking worldwide for recruitment, for engineers, for design people? How easy is it to get people to come to work in Madrid?

LP-S: It's not difficult, it's one of the advantages of the crisis I would say: you have more people on the market and we can find them. The problem is that it's not easy to find the good people to work for HRT. Sometimes it's not easy to find who are just the key persons. But we are there, we are having a lot of interviews and slowly, slowly we are growing. We are hiring people. And even if we want to keep it as a small team, I think if we optimise our research, we can improve our performance and be closer to the front rows.

Toto, we know you were a great racing driver yourself. Is there any plan for you to drive the Formula One Williams for fun, off-season or sometime?

TW: As you know, I was more ambitious than talented and there is no ambition to drive a Formula One car because it would just look ridiculous, I think.

Because Walter Wolf, who once bought the Williams team, he tried himself and it was a kind of a disaster.

Martin, we know you wanted to become an aeronautist once, a while ago. Now we have an Austrian guy, Felix Baumgartner who wants to break the (extreme sky diving) world record. Have you heard about him?

MW: Yes. Firstly, it was a long time ago that I was involved in aeronautics. I think they've moved on since the bi-plane! I think any challenge that you set yourself in sports, in technology, I think are always exciting. I think anyone who is brave enough to try and do these things are often considered nutty by many but I think that that's the sort of thing that drives humans on, that feeling of endeavour and that passion to try and do something that's not been done before.

Luis, in the previous press conference in Hockenheim, Norbert Haug and John Booth admitted that their teams hadn't yet signed any form of Concorde or commercial agreement for 2013 onwards. Where does your team stand in that regard at the moment?

LPS: We have not already signed anything.

Remi, as you said earlier on, you supply four teams with engines, yet only one was called in by the stewards last Sunday. This sort of implies that the other three were left out of the gizmo, if I can call it that. What is your customer policy regarding these sort of devices or technical developments?

RT: I think we can make this simple. We've got our engine with this map in a certain way. We've got an area in which to play which we call the ballpark and each of our four teams is able to choose between these things so they are free to play with our engine as they wish, let's say, and that's the way they do and they did, so maybe that's why we got one team that has gone to that in Hockenheim and there could have been another one one race after.

You're all movers and shakers to a certain extent in Formula One, but all of you have to answer to bosses. Can you explain how frustrating that is sometimes when you're there running racing teams and you have to answer to people who perhaps don't have as good a grasp as you do?

MW: Well, certainly my chairman has a phenomenal grasp of this sport. He's been around in it for a while. I have to report to the board from time to time but I don't find it frustrating. I think it's good. If your owners don't have any interest, initially that's fun but it becomes a bit disheartening if they don't have a passion to speak their mind and express an opinion. We don't always agree with them but that's part of the fun.

TW: Are you sure you would like me to comment? My only boss is my wife! My partner is Frank (Williams) so I can live with that situation.

LPS: For me that's very easy: I ask and they don't give! No, we are close, we are quite close. We know that it's a long term commitment and we know that we need time and they understand that, even if we sometimes only take one place - like in Hockenheim, we overtook one car. For us it makes all the team happy. Sometimes it's very easy, it's even better than for some other teams to get third position or fourth position.

Martin and Toto, in recent years it has become more and more difficult to predict driver performance on a long term basis

because of tyres, because of regulation changes and so on, yet there is a trend that driver contracts are signed more and more long term. Isn't there a contradiction in that?

MW: I think that if you don't sign long term contracts with drivers it becomes a big point of discussion and distraction for most of the season. I think the driver is still an important component fortunately in this sport and I think people like to have some stability there. I don't think there's a contradiction. I think that the drivers have to manage tyres, probably much more so than they have done for a long period of time. They've got to work in the team, they've got to work with the drivers, they've got to motivate those people around them. They make a big contribution. We don't always tell them that when we're negotiating with them but that happens to be the case.

TW: The driver is an essential part, I think, today, probably you can't really see the performance of the car because of the driver. If you look at junior formulae on equal formats there's big differences and the development we have seen in Formula One, with economics playing a larger role, we are probably having a similar situation, so it's all about developing your own drivers and trying to keep the ones who are good in your car, so it's as challenging as building a good car and getting a good engine to keep a good driver in the car, and build the best ones for the future.

Martin, there's been this Tooned cartoon happening. Has there been a measurable difference; are you deliberately going after the younger demographic with that one? I know it's Ron's baby.

MW: Again, I think McLaren has changed a little bit over the last few years and I'm sure some things are not so good and hopefully we do some other things... I think Formula One is, as Toto said... there are two great world sports: soccer and Formula One. We are investing in the future. We see that it's important to try and bring younger demographics, as you put it; I think also for McLaren to demonstrate that we're not taking ourselves so seriously. We're still very serious about motor racing, we still want to win and we do everything we can, but I think you also have to show a slightly lighter side. We've shown two episodes, as you may know, there's going to be an episode accompanying every Grand Prix this year and hopefully people enjoy it, it's a little bit of a light-hearted moment for three minutes before each Grand Prix and I think we've had a tremendously positive response to it. I think the followers, after only two episodes have exceeded our expectations. I think it's not just good for McLaren, it's good for the sport. I think it just lightens it up, makes it something that... We've got to buy more people into the sport. This sport is fundamentally a great great sport. The more you understand, the more you get involved in it, the greater it is. We've got to now try and sell that proposition to as broad an audience as we can and Tooned, the McLaren animation, is part of that process.

According to the sporting regulations, the closing date for entries to the 2013 championship was the 30th of June. Did your teams all enter? And what happened to those entries?

MW: I believe all teams entered but the FIA has re-defined the entry time at the moment, so I presume all of the teams will re-enter within the new time frame.

LPS: The same.

TW: We entered.

Toto, as soon as your position was confirmed or you got your new title at Williams, speculation started about the driver line-up because of your work with Valtteri Bottas. How do you see his situation at the moment - also because we are approaching August, so do you understand that he's ready to occupy a seat at Williams or is it not yet time. And also, do you see a conflict of interest because of your new title and the fact that you work with him as a manager?

TW: Very interesting question. It's definitely a conflict of interest; this is why, at the beginning of the year - actually last year already - I have refrained from interfering in any kind of negotiations or discussions between the team and Valtteri's management group, so my role is a pure financial investor behind Valtteri. He's managed by Didier Coton who is doing the day-to-day job and we're having - to use banking language - Chinese walls. Emotionally, of course, I saw Valtteri for the first time in Formula Renault 2000 here at the Hungaroring in 2008 so he's a boy I have followed for quite a long time and he's a friend, as is Pastor, and as is Bruno. Luckily I'm a shareholder in the team and I have a five percent commission on Valtteri's contract so I think that shows how the balance would go if it was only about the economics. So the point is that it's very clear that the team is going to take decisions on the best package of driver and hopefully it's all going in a direction that we can have the quickest in the car.

Following up on Dieter's question regarding the deadline, does that mean that the entries were rejected or what's been the formal answer from the FIA?

MW: The FIA has asked us to re-submit our entries at a later date

Toto, in your new position, obviously there's more responsibility on a day-to-day basis. Does that mean we're going to see you moving to England and going into the office every day and taking over Adam (Parr's) chair?

TW: Yeah, that has been quite an issue actually, to discuss that. We have been negotiating on how many days per week I have to spend in England, but it's very easy. I like England a lot, staying in Oxford which keeps me young, it's a student city. I must be careful now about putting myself in shit! Obviously my wife is Scottish so she enjoys being there as well. The answer is yes, I'm going to spend more days at the factory and I enjoy it, it's what I want to do now.

Toto, as Remi Taffin was explaining, there are many mapping possibilities in the Renault shop which you could take. Why didn't you take the one which Red Bull has chosen in Germany, because it looks like it's a quite interesting one?

TW: First of all, flattening out torque curves is something that every team looks at, obviously, and the reason why we have not been taking up that solution is because we didn't make it work as Red Bull have. We have no coanda exhaust and this is why it's not as beneficial for us as maybe for others.

---

## FP1 Hungarian Grand Prix – FP3 report

The final practice session of the Hungarian Grand Prix weekend was a fairly quiet hour, with little of interest to note as teams worked on the end of the run plans that had been rudely interrupted by the Friday afternoon downpour.

The first half of the session saw teams concentrate on harvesting data on the medium tyre compound, which is approximately one second slower per lap than the Pirelli softs also on offer this weekend.

McLaren continued their strong run of form at the Hungaroring. Or, rather, Lewis Hamilton did – the British racer was noticeably faster on the medium compound than many of his rivals were on the soft. Teammate Jenson Button, on the other hand, struggled – again – with the balance of his car.

The early part of Button's session was defined by constant locking-up of the fronts, and the Briton was around five seconds slower than Hamilton. But the 2009 world champion was able to pick up a bit of pace as the session wore on – despite a new raft of problems with steering he described as heavy – and eventually finished the morning seven-tenths off the pace.

What was striking about the final set of times in the morning session was the way in which the sizeable spread of Friday had narrowed to the tight field we've become accustomed to this year, with the first 15 drivers covered by a single second.

Red Bull were dramatically faster this morning than they had been on Friday, and this afternoon's qualifying looks like it will be a straight fight between Mark Webber, Sebastian Vettel, and Hamilton. But to discount Fernando Alonso would be a fool's errand – the Spanish driver has been consistent all season, and he is unlikely to suffer a drop in form now.

Of particular note this morning was the relatively slow pace of the Mercedes pair: both Nico Rosberg and Michael Schumacher appeared to be doing race simulations on heavy fuel loads, although the team has not confirmed this.

While Turns 4 and 6 continued to prove problematic for drivers the length of the grid, with all and sundry running wide at one or both of the corners, there were no incidents of note, and no damage for the teams to fix in the short lunch break.

Romain Grosjean appears to be losing control of his season: despite impressive natural pace the Lotus driver is looking increasingly ragged as he looks to assert himself on track. The Frenchman is talented and quick, but after a succession of retirements he needs to perform this weekend if he is to arrive in Spa with any confidence after the summer break. That level of desperation often leads to mistakes, which is the situation Grosjean created for himself this morning.

#### FP3 times (unofficial)

1. Mark Webber (Red Bull) 1.21.550s [27 laps]
2. Lewis Hamilton (McLaren) 1.21.643s [17 laps]
3. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1.21.671s [29 laps]
4. Bruno Senna (Williams) 1.21.876s [22 laps]
5. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1.21.884s [13 laps]
6. Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus) 1.21.953s [20 laps]
7. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1.22.110s [24 laps]
8. Felipe Massa (Ferrari) 1.22.136s [15 laps]
9. Paul di Resta (Force India) 1.22.191s [20 laps]
10. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1.22.233s [24 laps]
11. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) 1.22.381 [21 laps]
12. Kamui Kobayashi (Sauber) 1.22.387s [20 laps]
13. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1.22.492s [26 laps]
14. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) 1.22.530s [25 laps]
15. Sergio Perez (Sauber) 1.22.597s [23 laps]
16. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso) 1.22.716s [24 laps]
17. Michael Schumacher (Mercedes) 1.22.868s [30 laps]
18. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1.22.931s [30 laps]
19. Heikki Kovalainen (Caterham) 1.24.036s [20 laps]
20. Vitaly Petrov (Caterham) 1.24.547 [18 laps]
21. Charles Pic (Marussia) 1.25.224s [22 laps]
22. Timo Glock (Marussia) 1.25.497s [21 laps]
23. Pedro de la Rosa (HRT) 1.26.785s [20 laps]
24. Narain Karthikeyan (HRT) 1.26.898s [26 laps]

---

## F1 Hungarian Grand Prix – Q1 report

As the pitlane opened for qualifying for the Hungarian Grand Prix it was the solitary Lotus of Romain Grosjean that took to the track for an exploratory run.

Two minutes later, the Frenchman was joined on track by the rest of the grid, all of whom were keen to test the varying grip levels offered by a circuit that had soaked up another six degrees in temperature since the end of FP3.

As the first man to cross the line, Grosjean went to the top of the timesheets with a 1.27.333s lap, nearly six seconds slower than the best of the times set this morning. Grosjean's early effort was in keeping with those times set by many of the other early drivers, but teammate Kimi Raikkonen blew him out of the water, crossing the line in a 1.23.273s.

To be fair to Grosjean, however, he did complain that his brake bias needed adjusting on his opening lap.

These early laps are all being set on the medium compound: the faster teams will not waste soft rubber to get out of Q1 unless it proves absolutely necessary. And for the moment, the ten-second split between the front and the back of the grid should see softs unnecessary for all but the slower teams.

As the session approached its mid-point, only the Caterham pair of Heikki Kovalainen and Vitaly Petrov had yet to set times. Early pace-setter Raikkonen – who had held onto the top spot with ever-improving laps even as his competition picked up speed around him – was displaced by Lewis Hamilton with a 1.22.371s.

With times on the board from all 24 drivers, no one is at risk of falling foul of the 107 percent rule: the slowest car on track has a 1.1s margin to the cut-off point.

With slightly more than five minutes to go, Sebastian Vettel took the unusual step of moving onto the soft compound to stay in the running. Red Bull traditionally hide their speed on Fridays, and shine on Saturdays, but the reliance on the option compound suggests an underlying lack of confidence from the pit wall.

Vettel's run on softs has triggered a similar move from Ferrari – Fernando Alonso was hovering on the edge of the dropout zone with his early runs on the prime tyre, but a switch to softs saw a dramatic improvement in his sector times on the outlap. And when the Spanish driver crossed the line at the end of his first timed lap on softs, he crossed the line in P2 before being displaced by Paul di Resta and Nico Rosberg.

The dropout zone has its six regular members; hovering on the edge with two minutes remaining are the Sauber pair, Daniel Ricciardo, and Pastor Maldonado, with Jenson Button also at risk. Button has spent the session continuing to struggle with the balance of his car; locking up the fronts has been a problem all weekend for the McLaren driver. But a last run on the softs saw the Briton cross the line in a temporary P3, safe from being knocked out.

Vettel and Webber are sitting in the pits and hovering on the edge of the dropout zone as the chequered flag approaches – all that sits between them and PR disaster is the risk of a strong lap from Kamui Kobayashi or one of the Caterhams.

#### Dropout zone

18. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso)
19. Heikki Kovalainen (Caterham)
20. Vitaly Petrov (Caterham)
21. Charles Pic (Marussia)
22. Timo Glock (Marussia)
23. Pedro de la Rosa (HRT)
24. Narain Karthikeyan (HRT)

---

## F1 Hungarian Grand Prix – Q2 report

While the Red Bull pair appeared to make it out of Q1 by the skin of their teeth, it is entirely possible that Adrian Newey has a few deceptive tricks up his sleeve – god only knows we've seen the team disguise pace before, only to secure the front row when it really counts at the end of Q3.

The first man to break the silence around the Hungaroring was Michael Schumacher; with the track to himself the Mercedes driver was able to get a feel for the changing levels of grip in an attempt to make a more credible claim on a place in the next round of qualifying than either he or teammate Nico Rosberg were able to display in the opening stages of Q1.

But after a bit of a slide on his first timed effort, Schumacher crossed the line in 1.30.813s, nowhere near the 1m21s laps set by the men behind him on track. Schumacher's time was matched only by teammate Nico Rosberg, who didn't have any visible struggles on his time effort, suggesting that the Mercedes pair are having difficulty this weekend.

Rosberg was able to improve dramatically with his second timed lap, but Schumacher continued to struggle – it was only on his third timed lap that he was able to match the rest of the pack.

With all runners currently on softs, lap times have yet to best that set by Lewis Hamilton on the medium compound in Q1. The McLaren driver was the only man able to beat his time by the time the session had reached its mid-point; he went purple in every sector and crossed the line in 1.21.060s, six-tenths faster than Kimi Raikkonen in P2.

Jean-Eric Vergne was the last man to put a time on the board; with five minutes remaining the Toro Rosso driver crossed the line in 1.22.380s, a creditable effort that was not good enough for a place in Q3.

The dropout zone is currently comprised of Bruno Senna, who impressed in FP2 and FP3, Paul di Resta, who was in the top three in Q1, Vergne, Rosberg, Kamui Kobayashi, Schumacher, and Pastor Maldonado.

On the edge of the dropout zone – but all on flyers – are Sebastian Vettel, Sergio Perez, and Fernando Alonso. But Alonso went purple in the second sector, and green in the first and third sectors, and crossed the line comfortably in Q3. Special mention should be made of Felipe Massa, who quietly did the business by crossing the line in 1.21.534s, good enough for temporary P2 but half a second down on Hamilton.

Vettel then saved himself with a 1.21.407s, pushing Massa into P3 but still well off the pace set by Hamilton. Perez is in the dropout zone, with Rosberg and Romain Grosjean and risk of falling in.

And falling in they do, with 30 seconds till the chequered flag – Maldonado saved himself, and Mark Webber is now at risk of failing to make it through to Q3. Webber gets knocked into the dropout zone, and stuffs up the first sector on his last-chance lap. And that's that – Webber is knocked out of qualifying.

Dropout zone

11. Mark Webber (Red Bull)
12. Paul di Resta (Force India)
13. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes)
14. Sergio Perez (Sauber)
15. Kamui Kobayashi (Sauber)
16. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso)
17. Michael Schumacher (Mercedes)

---

## F1 Hungarian Grand Prix – Q3 report

First out of the pitlane for the final round of qualifying before Formula One heads off for its summer holidays was Nico Hulkenberg.

Based on the performances we've seen thus far, the smart money should be on Lewis Hamilton for pole – the McLaren driver has been fastest in all barring one session, and his pace on the softer compound has left his rivals weeping into their fire-proof balaclavas.

But there's always the risk that Sebastian Vettel has been holding off so that he can show us just what he's talking about as the chequered flag flutters down. We've seen it before, and we'll see it again. Whether or not that again will be this weekend remains to be seen.

The pace-setting Hamilton ran wide at Turn 8 on his first timed lap, crossing the line in 1.26.781s and damaging his tyres in the process. But the 2008 world champion started Q3 with one more set of unused softs than any of his rivals, so the damage, while painful, will not have been critical.

On his second effort, Hamilton crossed the line in 1.21.260s, two-tenths slower than his best time from Q2, but two-tenths faster than any of his rivals have managed yet this afternoon.

With the session now half-run, there are only four times on the board – Hamilton, Jenson Button, Romain Grosjean, and Kimi Raikkonen. But the drivers have been pouring out of the pits to begin their outlaps, and it's all to play for in the last three minutes of what looks like it will be a one- or two-run qualifying attempt for the bulk of the ten contenders.

On his first run, Vettel went purple in the second sector – is this what he is talking about? No. The Red Bull driver was slower than Hamilton in the first and third sectors, and has one lap left in which to turn a provisional P2 into a secure pole.

Less than a minute remaining and the missing times start appearing on the boards.

But in the pits, Vettel climbs out of his car without attempting a second run – there is no surprise Red Bull pole on the cards, and it's likely that the defending world champion will be displaced by any one or more of the cars currently completing their first timed efforts.

Hamilton crosses the line in 1.20.953s, securing provisional pole, while Grosjean makes it P2 with a 1.21.066s, completing the front row.

Provisional grid

1. Lewis Hamilton (McLaren)
  2. Romain Grosjean (Lotus)
  3. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull)
  4. Jenson Button (McLaren)
  5. Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus)
  6. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari)
  7. Felipe Massa (Ferrari)
  8. Pastor Maldonado (Williams)
  9. Bruno Senna (Williams)
  10. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India)
  11. Mark Webber (Red Bull)
  12. Paul di Resta (Force India)
  13. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes)
  14. Sergio Perez (Sauber)
  15. Kamui Kobayashi (Sauber)
  16. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso)
  17. Michael Schumacher (Mercedes)
  18. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso)
  19. Heikki Kovalainen (Caterham)
  20. Vitaly Petrov (Caterham)
  21. Charles Pic (Marussia)
  22. Timo Glock (Marussia)
  23. Pedro de la Rosa (HRT)
  24. Narain Karthikeyan (HRT)
-

# F1 Hungarian Grand Prix – Saturday press conference

The post-qualifying press conference at the Hungaroring was – like most sessions so far this season – filled with tyre talk.

Present were Lewis Hamilton (McLaren), Romain Grosjean (Lotus), and Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull).

Lewis you looked like that was fully under control at all times, apart maybe from that first run in Q3?

Lewis HAMILTON: Yeah, it's been a really positive weekend so far. The guys have done an incredible job this weekend as always, preparing the car. To finally see the upgrades working this weekend, I've been able to put the car in places that I previously wasn't able to do. So, generally every lap has been quite good throughout practice and qualifying, apart from the first run in Q3.

Romain, obviously this is what you and the team needed, a strong qualifying performance, because you've shown in recent races that you've got a very good race car under you?

Romain GROSJEAN: Yeah, we normally have a good race pace, it's good to be back at the front. We had a difficult German Grand Prix and a difficult start here in Hungary. But the guys did a fantastic job trying to help me set up the car, trying to find out what was wrong and [we're] back to the top and it's good. I think the race tomorrow will be interesting.

Sebastian, you only did the one run in Q3 because you used up tyres before that. Tell us how difficult it was to get the tyres working today?

Sebastian VETTEL: Yeah, I think for us it more a difficulty of getting everything to work properly. I think the speed is there but yeah it seems extremely difficult once you lose the balance a little bit. So I think we were struggling a little bit with that in qualifying. Throughout qualifying I think it got better. We shot through all the tyres, more or less. I knew I only had one set in Q3. I'm not entirely happy with the lap I had. I think Grosjean, sorry, Romain, was in reach. I think Lewis was probably a bit too far away today. But I think with the progress we made this morning and through qualifying we should be in a good position tomorrow for the race.

Lewis if you look at the points you've scored in the past few races and the points scored by Fernando Alonso, the championship leader, there's obviously a massive difference. How important is a win tomorrow for you and for your championship hope?

LH: Well, thanks for reminding me! This is motor racing, you know. We're not saying we're relaxed about it but we know that we've got a lot of work to do and we're trying to make sure that we start that work from this weekend

Lewis, you seem to have hit the ground running from the road here almost – you were fastest in both sessions yesterday; fastest in all the qualifying sessions as well and you love the circuit, you must be so pleased with pole position now as well?

LH: I am, absolutely. I'm really happy with the work the guys have done. Obviously Jenson showed the pace of the car in the last race but to be able to put that to work through qualifying feels fantastic. This is a good boost to the team. Still we have a very long race tomorrow. Lots can happen and we just need to keep our cool. The weather's fantastic here, the city's beautiful and the fans, well what a great turn out for a Saturday.

Well, you've been on pole here before and you've won here twice as well, so you know how to win here. Is there a secret to tomorrow?

LH: There's no real secret, no. It's the same as everyone when they win races. You just have to keep your head cool and look after your tyres. Tyre strategy will be important tomorrow. Degradation will be interesting. I just hope for once we have a good start. That's what I hope for the beginning.

How were the long runs this morning. Obviously you weren't able to do long runs yesterday and everybody crammed in their long runs this morning.

LH: I didn't do any long runs this morning. I did mine yesterday. It was pretty good.

So you were happy with that?

LH: Yeah, I mean, the track was a little bit greener yesterday so it's difficult to compare it to today, but for us it was not such a problem. I think we know the Lotus is very, very strong on long runs and so is the Red Bull, so we just need to focus on us and really hope we can improve this weekend with those upgrade. Jenson showed in the last race that it is an improvement so hopefully I can show the same thing tomorrow.

Romain, on the front row for the first time – how much satisfaction does that give you?

RG: Pretty high, I have to say. We started the weekend coming back from the German Grand Prix which was a bit of a disaster for ourselves, and it didn't start in the best way. But then we worked hard, tried to analyse what was wrong on the car and why I couldn't get the feeling that I had at the start of the year. P3 was getting better and then the start of qualifying was very difficult, with the first one getting a nightmare. But then we found back the speed, improved the car, tried to understand what was wrong with it, and being here on the front row is something special – especially here at the Hungarian Grand Prix where we know overtaking is very difficult. We need to start from the front, we said that since a long time – so first job done. Hopefully tomorrow we keep our race pace from usually, we able to save our tyres as much as we want and be able to get some good battles with the guy at the front.

The performance of the car you've improved – do you think that's going to be OK for the race itself on full fuel tanks etc?

RG: Normally it's better on high fuel than on low fuel, so it's pretty good to be on the front row. We have been maybe working a bit more this week on qualifying because we know it's a big key for the race. So, hopefully tomorrow the car will feel pretty well with the tank fuelled and the setup we normally run for the race. Hopefully that's the case. Hopefully we manage to save our tyres as much as we want, as much as we can, and then we have good pace.

We've seen quite a few people going off the circuit at many, many corners, to turn this into a podium tomorrow, how are you going to do that?

RG: Well, the key is to stay on track, that's for sure. Let's have a good start, let's see where we are at the beginning of the race and how the car feels. Hopefully it's going to feel alright, as it did in Bahrain or Canada, and if we have this, then I think we have everything in our pocket to fight for a good result.

Sebastian, we've seen the performance, or seem to have seen the performance up and down the whole weekend – not just from

you but from your team-mate as well.

SV: Yeah, a bit difficult for us this weekend to really get the balance right. I think the car is quick – and sometimes really quick – but it's a bit difficult to get it out of the car all the time. So, I think yesterday afternoon we were quite happy, this morning we weren't that happy and in qualifying it seemed to get better again. So, we'll see. I think it should be a good race tomorrow. I think the pace with fuel in the car is probably a little bit better than without fuel, so we'll see what we can do.

You said 'room for improvement' after yesterday – but that didn't come this morning then?

SV: No, not really. I think it wasn't that bad yesterday but this morning initially it wasn't as good as it was yesterday – so we seem to have lost that little bit. But, I think just before qualifying we managed to come back and I think in qualifying I think we were able to improve session by session. Obviously we had to use a couple of sets that... or one more set than as per plan, which was not great. That's why we had only one run in Q3. But in the end we used as many tyres as everyone else. We'll see what we can do in the race. I think Lewis was out of reach today, they always seemed to be very quick. It's probably not too bad to start third here, it's on the clean side and it's a long way to Turn One.

Lewis, are you surprised? This is your 23rd pole position.

LH: Privyet. I learned that in Moscow! Surprised? I think every time I remember my first pole position and I pretty much remember every pole position that I've ever had. I'm always striving for perfection and that lap and the pressure that we're all under to get that perfect lap is intense, yet exciting. If you get it right, it's incredibly empowering. This weekend we've obviously had the pace so I knew that it was possible, it was just a case of doing it and if I didn't, I would be quite disappointed considering I've had the pace all weekend but fortunately I did it.

Romain, if you can manage to win the race tomorrow, you will be the next driver after Ayrton Senna in the history of Lotus heritage. How do you feel about this, have you got extra pressure because of that?

RG: Well, I don't think it's an extra pressure. I think Formula One is already full of pressure. If I win the race tomorrow then it would be fantastic for the guys in the team, at the factory, for everything we've been doing since the beginning of the year and what we've achieved. And if I'm the next driver after Ayrton Senna to win a race with Lotus, it would be something to add to all the processes and all the happiness that we can get in these circumstances. It would be an extra pleasure.

Two questions for Romain: your position on the grid today, what does it mean to you? Do you fully understand what was wrong with the car since Germany? And the second question is: if you had the possibility to switch positions with Sebastian, would you accept?

RG: What is wrong? I think it's a lot of things together. We have seen that this year working with the tyres can be good, can be difficult. I think we were just, in the last two races, where we had to be. We had some signs on the car that things were not going as we wanted, the car was not handling as it should and we were not working the tyres properly, so we have been working in that direction, trying to get back to a normal set-up, to try to avoid every other aspect that could influence this. I think being second today is a bit of a surprise after we struggled but we improved lap after lap and that's good and the track rubbered in and I think that helped us. And if I had to change position: no, because I was already third once in qualifying and now I'm second, and hopefully one day I can get pole position. The more ahead you are, the better it is. We know there is dirt and dust on the side, but if you look at Barcelona where there's supposed to be a good side and a bad side, the drivers in second and fourth positions happened to be first and third at the first corner and the first and third finished second and fourth so hopefully I can do the same.

Romain, you told us on Thursday that you need to be on the front row in order to fight for a win. Now you're second, do you feel that the time has come to score your first win?

RG: Good question. I think the time has come since you're racing for winning. As we say, qualifying is a good exercise as you're looking for the perfect lap, and if you just manage your car to do whatever you want with it, it's quite a good feeling when you manage that and then in the race, the idea is to win a race. If one of us told you that he arrives on a race weekend not thinking about a win he wouldn't be saying the truth, so for sure tomorrow we will think about it but before winning the race we need to get everything in order so qualifying is job done, now we need to have a good start as we are now doing it, take off our tyres, have good pit stops and a good pace in the race.

Romain, considering the bad experiences you have had in previous races on the first lap, will you use this experience to avoid anything different again?

RG: I use all the experience I get in Formula One to improve myself, lap after lap, race after race.

A question to all three of you: the last corner has been re-surfaced for this year. How do you feel about it, is it a clear improvement compared to before and where is the track now worse regarding the track surface at the moment?

LH: The track is fantastic in the last corner. It's much, much better. They did a really great job and now the track, altogether, is just very consistent, grip-wise.

RG: The last corner is easier than in GP2.

Romain, did you have a perfect lap in qualifying, because Sebastian Vettel said that his lap could have been better and maybe he could have attacked your position, so what do you say?

RG: To be 100 percent honest, it was not the perfect lap. You have few times in your career when you just finish the lap and say how was it from the car? I think we could have improved in a few small areas. I think it's quite hard here to get the perfect lap and to get the car all together for the lap, so it was not the best ever. I think if I compared to Kimi, then I'm sure I lost a bit of time into turn one but then the rest was pretty OK.

Seb, to get the move out of the tyres, not only here but over the whole season, is it more a question of bringing upgrades to the car or maybe just adjusting your driving style?

SV: To get the best out of the tyres? Well, I think we've seen... it's a complicated question. At least I could give you a complicated answer but I think we've seen this year that everyone seems to struggle more than in the past to not bring updates but to improve the car through the upgrades. That's for Lotus; I think in China they had an upgrade which they then decided to go back. McLaren, I think had upgrades and decided to go back. For us, we had some stuff and decided to go back. Why is that? Because you realise that it's not quicker. I think it's quite complex this year to understand the cars. Obviously in combination with the tyres, I think one thing you need to know is that everyone has less downforce this year. Generally if you have more downforce it also helps to switch on the tyres, to work with the tyres more consistently but as everyone has less downforce this year, I think the window is extremely narrow and it's very difficult to get it right every time, so that's why I think we probably see a little bit more inconsistency this year.

For all three of you: we're about to head into the summer shutdown in what is the longest season in F1 history. Is it a welcome opportunity for you to relax and re-charge your batteries or are you concerned that you will lose momentum going into Spa?

RG: Personally I think it's time for a honeymoon.

SV: Yes, that's not the case for us. It's a long season. If you compare it to a lot of other sports, it's one of the longest seasons we have. I think it's important, even if sometimes you would like to carry on, I think you need the break, so it's important to make use of it.

LH: It's most important for the team. The team is travelling non-stop and they work incredibly long hours so the guys back in the factory... Time with your family is most important and they are away from their families all that time so it's an important time for them to go away and relax and refresh and get ready for the second half of the season which is going to be the most intense.

Sebastian, maybe this question could be boring for you again, but again, I would like to know if this lack of performance from your car could be because of this famous change of engine mapping?

SV: No, I don't think it really affected us as much as people think. As I said, we were struggling a little bit generally to find a balance throughout the weekend and qualifying but it has nothing to do with the mapping.

Romain, simple question: do you believe in second chances?

RG: I think yes, to have the chance to have this second chance. As I say, I'm happy to be in Formula One again, even if it's more difficult. When you lose something that you really like, you realise how much it counts to you and today I'm proud to be back, proud to be part of the Lotus F1 team. I think we are growing up together, so far having a very good season so I'm very happy to be here and fitting in well to the Formula One world.

As far as I understand, there could be some rain tomorrow. Did you take that into consideration in terms of set-up?

SV: No. I think the impact in terms of set-up that we see these days is way less than compared to the past, so something like a real rain set-up doesn't exist any more these days.

Considering the difficulty of overtaking here, the number of laps you are able to do with these supersoft tyres in the first stint will maybe be the key to victory or a good finishing position?

RG: We haven't got supersofts so you may mean with the soft. I think the key is part of the strategy. I think if you they can go longer than the others then you may stop earlier, if you think that you may be in difficulty at the end of the race as we have seen some cars then you don't have them. It will be a good question for the guys doing the strategy and then we try to make the target happening as good as we can.

---

## F1 Hungarian Grand Prix – Race report

The promised rains never fell, and much of the expected tension failed to materialise, but the Hungarian Grand Prix picked up in the closing stages as the varying tyre strategies and rates of degradation began to make their effects felt.

As the cars were waiting for the lights to go out, signalling the start of the race, it transpired that there was trouble on the grid – Michael Schumacher had put his Mercedes into the wrong grid slot at the end of the formation lap, and race director Charlie Whiting delayed the race start, sending the drivers out for a second formation lap.

But Schumacher, who was unaware of his grid error, turned off his engine when the lights began to flash, and as a result had to be wheeled into the pitlane by his crew, from where he was forced to start what turned out to be an embarrassing race perhaps best described as a tragedy of errors.

When the race eventually began, Lewis Hamilton got a good start and was able to hold the lead going into the first corner. Behind the McLaren driver, Romain Grosjean silenced those critics who had been nervous of a first-lap crash by ably fending off the approaching Red Bull of Sebastian Vettel. Vettel's dice with Grosjean enabled Jenson Button to slip up into P3, pushing the Red Bull driver down into the P4 slot in which he was destined to spend much of the afternoon.

Mark Webber had one of the best starts of the day, springing himself from a P11 grid slot to P7 by the end of the first lap; the Red Bull driver wasn't able to climb much further despite a ballsy tyre strategy, but this was not a race that saw much on-track overtaking.

Instead we had a return to the pre-DRS days in which the majority of moves up and down the pack happened as a consequence of the best and worst efforts of the assorted pit crews – stops were everything and strategy was the key.

Simply having a good strategy was not enough this afternoon. Teams were forced to be flexible, with McLaren moving race leader Hamilton from a two-stop to a three-stop before they realised that their driver was managing his rubber far better than predicted. It was the late decision to revert Hamilton back to his original two-stop strategy that sewed up the win for the British racer, although he spent the closing stages of the race under serious pressure from the closing Lotus pair.

It was thanks to Lotus that the previously predictable procession became tense in the final stint. Not only did Kimi Raikkonen and teammate Grosjean have an incredibly close call as the Finnish driver emerged from his final pitstop millimetres away from the Frenchman, but the E20's impressive ability to hold on to the Pirelli rubber for far longer than any other car on the field meant that both Raikkonen and Grosjean were – theoretically – in with a chance of pipping Hamilton to the chequered flag at the last minute.

Raikkonen spent most of the last 25 laps around a second behind Hamilton, with the gap opening and closing like a squeezed accordion. But Hamilton did an excellent job to manage the speed of the closing Lotus, deftly ensuring that Raikkonen was always outside the dreaded one-second margin as the two cars entered the DRS detection zone.

While Hamilton benefitted from his team's flexible approach to strategy, Jenson Button suffered. The Briton may have finished the Hungarian Grand Prix in a respectable P6, but he was on course for a podium before the team moved him to a three-stop strategy that left him stuck behind the vastly slower Williams of Bruno Senna for much of the race, scuppering his chances of an extended battle with Vettel.

Schumacher's terrible day went from bad to worse after his embarrassments on the grid. The Mercedes driver picked up a drive-through penalty and a puncture in quick succession, and spent the bulk of the afternoon limping around towards the back of the pack before retiring thanks to what the team called 'unusual' telemetry.

Narain Karthikeyan was the next retiree; the HRT driver parked up at the side of the track on lap 64 thanks to a broken front left suspension arm. The final man to retire was Sauber's Kamui Kobayashi, whose race ended with a hydraulics leak that only the team appeared to take note of.

The only moment of real controversy came about thanks to Williams' Pastor Maldonado, who was issued with a drive-through penalty for causing a collision with Paul di Resta. The Venezuelan was angered by the perceived injustice of receiving a penalty for what he thought was a racing incident, but after a season peppered with such incidents – all of which had been his fault – it was about time that the FIA reminded him of driver safety standards with a slap on the wrist of some sort.

Hungarian Grand Prix results (unofficial)

1. Lewis Hamilton (McLaren) 1h41m05.503
2. Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus) + 1.032s
3. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) + 10.518s
4. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) + 11.614s
5. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) + 26.653s
6. Jenson Button (McLaren) + 30.243s
7. Bruno Senna (Williams) + 33.899s
8. Mark Webber (Red Bull) + 34.458s
9. Felipe Massa (Ferrari) + 38.350s
10. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) + 51.234s
11. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) + 57.283s
12. Paul di Resta (Force India) + 1m02.887s
13. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) + 1m03.606s
14. Sergio Perez (Sauber) + 1m04.494s
15. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso) + 1 lap
16. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) + 1 lap
17. Heikki Kovalainen (Caterham) + 1 lap
18. Kamui Kobayashi (Sauber) + 2 laps
19. Vitaly Petrov (Caterham) + 2 laps
20. Charles Pic (Marussia) + 2 laps
21. Timo Glock (Marussia) + 3 laps
22. Pedro de la Rosa (HRT) + 3 laps

Narain Karthikeyan (HRT) RET

Michael Schumacher (Mercedes) RET

---

## F1 Hungarian Grand Prix – Sunday press conference

And that was that. At the final press conference before the F1 circus packs up for its summer holidays, the drivers were in a relaxed and jovial mood, their thoughts already turning to the break.

Present were Lewis Hamilton (McLaren), Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus), and Romain Grosjean (Lotus).

Lewis, a fantastic race for you, absolutely fantastic, under pressure all the time it seemed.

Lewis HAMILTON: Yeah, these are the kind of grands prix, the races you win like this, where you're under intense pressure from great drivers like Romain and Kimi – for me it's a great reminder of the old days with Kimi – and this is the kind of day when you have to have your mind 100 per cent and I feel great because the team didn't flinch and neither did I.

Great pitstops as well.

LH: The first one wasn't spectacular but the last one was very, very quick. We had a problem in the first pit stop, I think with the left rear, but otherwise we didn't lose too much time there. But the second pit stop was fantastic.

Was there any temptation to go for a third stop?

LH: The team were talking about it. The plan was to do a two-stop but, you know, I had my target laps and the team weren't confident that I was going to make it to those laps but I knew I would. In my second stint I could have gone longer but they wanted to cover the guys behind which was probably the right thing to do. So, as we did that, then it was just trying to make those tyres last a long time while keeping this guy [Raikkonen] behind. Which as you know, they are absolutely rapid, these guys. So, you know, if we were on another track where overtaking was much easier I think perhaps the result would have been different.

They seemed to catch and then drop back. How close was anyone ever coming to overtaking?

LH: He was never really close enough. I purposely allowed him to close up in certain corners, so that he may have problems with his tyres eventually – but it didn't look like it was going to happen. But I had to make sure I saved my speed for the last sector and made sure I drew a big enough gap in the last three corners and I did that every lap. I could see it was very difficult for them to follow, particularly through those areas, so it was important to make sure you maximise, especially with the DRS.

Did you have a chance Kimi, with the DRS?

Kimi RÄIKKÖNEN: Ah, no. It was not so bad to follow through the last corner but you're, I don't know, one second later on the power every time so they just pull too far away and the straight is not long enough and the others are too fast. So it didn't really give you any chance. My only chance was that they would run out of the tyres and then you will have a chance – but that never happened, so we probably should have had 20 more laps – and then it would have happened.

So, are you happy with second place or did you feel you could have won it?

KR: I didn't, so there's no point to worry about it. I had an OK start but then we had an issue with the KERS and I only could use 50 per cent and I lost one position to Fernando, so the first few laps were not really good because we were trying to get the KERS working. After that it was OK but the same situation with Alonso, I was stuck behind him and just tried to save my tyres and push once we got the clear circuit. It seemed to work both times and we gained a lot of time on those few laps.

And what about the time you came out of the pits and found yourself alongside Romain?

KR: Yeah. The team told me it's going to be very close and I made a mistake with the pit lane speed limiter so it meant maybe five metres after the line I was still on it, so I thought that I really didn't do a very good job out of there – but luckily it was enough gap and we were side-by-side in the first corner, but I could keep my position quite easily at that point. But it was one of those things: we had a lot of speed but just couldn't use it in all the race.

How was that moment for you Romain?

Romain GROSJEAN: It just happens. Unfortunately, I got stuck behind another car, which had been [blue] flagged but didn't let me past in this lap. I lost 1.5 seconds. I wasn't very happy at that stage to be honest because I had been fighting for the win the whole race with Lewis and suddenly you get stopped by something you cannot really manage. Basically it was close with Kimi. He did what he had to do to not let me pass. I went a little bit on the outside and got the marbles on the tyres and then I struggled to recover. It is what it is.

And it was pretty close with Sebastian in the first corner of the first lap as well?

RG: Yeah, it was the same story as with Kimi. Kimi was inside of my [car] and I was inside of Sebastian. So it was all right.

How close were you? The gap seemed to go out and come back when you were behind Lewis.

RG: It's really difficult to follow another car here, to be close and not do any mistakes. When I was following Lewis sometimes I was losing a little bit the grip of my tyres. Then I had to recover a little bit. Our first pit stop was a disaster. The second one was OK. We didn't get the chance to jump in on the pit stop strategy. I think that was the only key today because overtaking is really too difficult. You can feel that you're sliding tyres, losing the grip, sliding more and it gets worse and worse. So it's very difficult to follow.

So a little bit disappointed with third place?

RG: Yeah a little bit today I think. We were really close to fighting for the win. But as I said I got stuck behind another car under blue flags that didn't really respect it.

Kimi, you have been second three times when Lewis has won here. Have you ever been close to overtake him?

KR: I don't know. It was a long time ago to remember the past. Today it wasn't - it was many years. It makes no difference if you don't get past. We were second best today and third. I think it was good for the team but of course we will keep trying to win and hopefully it will come soon.

Lewis how frustrating is it for you, going into the long summer break now that it seems that your car has picked up pace and both you and Jenson seem to be fighting for the win again?

LH: It's not frustrating at all. It's quite nice to go into the break knowing that we had a win. Every year that we've done that it's been a great feeling. I think it's very very very important how we manage the summer break, mentally and physically, but we've clearly still got a lot of work to do. We should obviously take from this a pat on the back for a great job from everyone but we must know that we still have a lot of work to do. These guys were absolutely rapid in the race. If we're going to stay ahead of these... if they were to have qualified at the front, it would have been impossible to have got past them. So we need to remain focused and of course enjoy the break. This will carry on and the guys will carry this for the next week or so, I'm sure, back at the factory. Guys were wearing their team tops and hopefully we still have good pace and hopefully even more when we come back.

Kimi, it is your fourth second place this year, I think. Aren't you getting a bit annoyed about this? Spa is coming up, are you confident that you can break it?

KR: I think I've only been second twice, not three times, I don't know. Anyhow, we always try to win; some days you get close to it and it's a bit disappointing that we cannot and we know the reason: we have not been so strong in qualifying and we keep making it very hard for ourselves on Sundays but it's not annoying. We still keep putting ourselves in a good position to at least have a chance to win and get good results, good points for the team. Yeah, you would rather win than come second or third but it's a long season and I think we're improving all the time. If it comes it's great, if not, we keep trying. I've been in the business long enough that I don't really worry about things too much. We improved our position, our situation in the championship for myself and for the team. Maybe we are one place behind right now but we are closer to the front. As long as we keep doing that and hopefully the wins will come, then we will give myself and the team a good chance.

Lewis, each win is important of course, but is this more important after all this stuff about your private life, when you said I'm in the best moment so let's party to enjoy this?

LH: I definitely think it's always good when you come away with a win. There always seems to be a lot of talk about me and my private life. Hopefully this will answer lots of the things that have been said. I am 100 percent focused this year, regardless of what people think. I've been on it all year, I've never been so committed but of course, I'm still in my twenties, I do want to enjoy my last bit of my twenties, because I've heard it's downhill from then on. I've got to strike a nice balance and I think I am.

Kimi, on the podium, did you hear the tremendous following you have here in Hungary, a lot of fans. Does that give you some kind of moral boost for the next races, let's say?

KR: Yes, it was great to hear all the people shouting and cheering. It's good for us, but unfortunately it doesn't make us any faster. I was pushing as hard as I could in this race so we keep trying to do the same in the next race again, but it's always been great here with a lot of Finnish flags and a lot of fans here so it's a great place to come.

It's Alonso's birthday today, what are your messages to him?

RG: Happy Birthday. Fernando is a good friend so I wish him all the best for this year and hopefully we can keep fighting with him in the championship.

LH: I've already tweeted happy birthday to him.

KR: We spoke before already.

LH: Romain says he wants to sing it.

RG: No, no. I don't want it to rain straight away!

Kimi, there have been some rumours today in the press about a possible comeback to Ferrari for you. Rumours apart, would you consider coming back to Ferrari?

KR: I always said that I didn't have bad feelings against them. I had a good time with the team. I won my championship there but things probably could have gone a nicer way in the end. Life goes on and you never know what happens in the future but I'm happy where I am now and things are going pretty nicely. Like I said, you never know what can happen in the future but I'm happy where I am. I don't come up with the rumours, so perhaps you have to ask the people who write them.

Lewis, as an Englishman, how does it feel to win this so-called Grand Prix of Finland every year from Kimi?

LH: Grand Prix of Finland?

There are so many Finns.

LH: There are a lot of Finns here but you know what? For me it's great to see Kimi up here with me. I think he's done... you know I've got a huge amount of respect for him. I remember racing... I remember watching him on TV before I even got to Formula One and you know, when I used to play the computer games I would always play as him. It wasn't Juan Pablo, unfortunately, and to think that we've had some great races in the past together and now another great race. Hopefully in the future we will have lots more races but Hungary has been good to me, really has been good to me. I really really love the fans here, I love the city. We always have such a great turn-out here but the track is awesome. I don't know how the other drivers feel but it's such a classic, so I really can't wait to come back here again next year and hope to repeat it.

Lewis, you took good points from Alonso. You are both to the lead of the championship. What does this victory mean in terms of fighting for the title?

LH: This weekend shows that it's all to play for still, not enough points taken from Fernando as he still got ten points but bit by bit, if we can continue with this kind of performance then we can slowly catch him but we know we need consistency and we need to improve the car still in many areas, and that, I'm sure, we will do. The team is doing a fantastic job. We've now got the quickest pit stops or usually the quickest pit stops. Today I got the best start I've had all year, I was really surprised by it. This is a really good stepping stone for us, especially after the difficult races we've had over the last three tough races, it's great to come and end the summer on this high.

Lewis, it's been a momentous weekend back home with the Olympic Games starting. I was just wondering if, as a British driver with a British team, winning here must feel extra special? I saw you had the circles on your helmet.

LH: Yeah, it does feel extra special because obviously with the Olympic ceremony and the Olympics starting and obviously wishing all the teams the best, I can't wait to at least watch it on TV, but to be able to have it back in the UK I think is great for Great Britain. Yeah, I carried the flag on top of the helmet today. I hope that it was visible. I feel that I've done my part, even though we're not in the Olympics. I feel like I've done my little bit today, this weekend, as has the team for the Olympics.

---