

## Fl Indian Grand Prix – Thursday press conference

It wasn't the most stimulating of sessions, but the Thursday drivers' press conference in India did throw up a few laughs.

Present were Nico Hulkenberg (Force India), Narain Karthikeyan (HRT), Heikki Kovalainen (Caterham), Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus) Bruno Senna (Williams), and Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso).

Gentlemen, your thoughts on India? some of you have been here before, some of you haven't, so your thoughts on what you've experienced so far and what you've seen so far and what you think of the country and what you think of the circuit. First of all Heikki, you've been here before, you've been training in Abu Dhabi so you're used to the heat, what do you think of the weekend coming up and the country itself?

Heikki KOVALAINEN: Well, I think, like you said, last year was the first year that we raced here. I think the event itself was really successful. Especially the circuit; I think they've done a great job here with the circuit. I think the layout is one of the best in the calendar, there are really some nice corners, the surface is nice and smooth, so it's always enjoyable to drive here and we can set up the car nice and low and get them gripping quite well. So, I'm looking forward to another good event this year. It seems like the locals are picking up the Formula One more and more, so it's working quite well here. Hopefully we get a lot of people coming to see us on Sunday.

Bruno...

Bruno SENNA: Of course I agree with Heikki regarding the track; it's one of my favourites in the calendar as well and coming from last year to this year, the improvement on the facilities and everything is quite impressive. I think everything was a bit rushed last year, so everybody was a bit 'oh this isn't ready for the race,' but at the end of the day it's always the case when it's the first year of the circuit. All the rough edges have been sorted out for this year so it's a much nicer place. Of course the experience of the track is a whole different thing and I think for everyone who's not used to India it's a big cultural shock but it's a culture full of history, full of richness and I think if you learn how to appreciate that sort of stuff, you can learn to appreciate the country.

Jean-Eric, your first time here I think?

Jean-Eric VERGNE: Yes, indeed. To be honest I don't have much to say about this track except that it looks like a nice one, really smooth. The race from last year looked quite nice and I'm really looking forward to drive on it and it should be a good experience. As Bruno said, off track it's quite a different country and to be honest I haven't experienced much: I stayed in the hotel, I was quite far from everything, so didn't see much, just on the roads, which look quite messy but beside it, yeah, we'll see how the weekend goes.

Narain, obviously a very busy week so far for you so far, a very busy weekend coming up as the native from the host country.

Narain KARTHIKEYAN: Yeah, we're coming off a hugely successful race last year, so expectations are high and I hope on Sunday we see a big crowd, a strong one. What I always say, in India there is a lot of passion for Formula One and comparative to our neighbouring countries, like China, the understanding of Formula One is a lot better. It's going to be a good grand prix, I hope and for us, we have a small update, which is a rarity here for our team. Hopefully it'll work and we'll have a few more tenths. I know we need seconds but it is what it is and I'm not complaining, I'm happy to be driving here and will give it my best.

Kimi, your first time in India. What are your thoughts, your impressions?

Kimi RÄIKKÖNEN: Well, I came last night at one o'clock, so I've only seen the motorway and the hotel. The hotel, outside it, looks nice. I have no complaints so far. The circuit – I haven't gone around it. That is tomorrow. I'll tell you about it.

Are you a fan of Indian food?

KR: Yeah, actually I am, if it's the same as it is in Europe. I like it, but you know I have no experience yet of the local food.

Nico, I expect you've have a busy week?

Nico HULKENBERG: yes, we obviously we've had quite a few visits to India over the last two years. We've been here since Monday doing work with the local media and being in Delhi. I've been a few times here but I enjoy it every time I come. It's a very different culture and a special experience to come here. It's very different to all the other Asian places we go to. They're always very welcoming, very friendly. I enjoy being here. Obviously, the track is new to me, so I'll have to learn that one tomorrow. I'm generally looking forward to the weekend really. It's a special weekend for us and hopefully we can entertain the crowds.

Now, a question to all of you about your future. I don't know if you've got things signed or not. Just give us some sort of update as to what's happening next year? Heikki, would you like to start?

HK: I wouldn't actually like to start, but now that you're pushing me... Nothing's been signed for next for myself yet. Personally, my target and my focus is at each race weekend for our team it's quite important that we try to regain that 10th position back from Marussia. It's not going to be easy but I think we have to do whatever it takes to be in a position to do that if a freak race happens again. So, the main focus is on that and regarding the future with the team and with Tony, we haven't decided yet. I think Tony knows what he gets with me but then he's evaluating other options I think to see what he wants to do. And I'm waiting. In the meantime, of course, my management is also working. There's nothing really to report but the main thing I think for myself and really for our team has to be to keep pushing to get that 10th position back, it's quite crucial.

Bruno – for next year?

BS: Nothing has changed from the last time I was here and you asked me the same question but the focus is still the same: keep pushing and trying to get points for the team and then hopefully be on the grid next year.

Jean-Eric?

JEV: I haven't thought about it really. So far I have a contract with Red Bull. I think I just have to keep doing the job I'm doing and improve myself every race weekend and I'll think about this race weekend and Abu Dhabi and then think about next season, but I'm quite confident about staying with Toro Rosso and that's what I would love.

Narain?

NK: Again, I have a good relationship with HRT; it's my second year with them. They've built a good factory and everything else. On paper next year they'll look the best so realistically I'd like to stay here and that's the plan right now.

Kimi, we're told we can expect an announcement next week or so, is that the case?

KR: I don't know. I mean, we have options but nothing is decided but I guess it will be decided at some point.

Nico. There are rumours about concerning your future. Where you're going to go, when do you think you will know?

NH: I know there is lots of talk about my future but at this point I don't want to make a comment on the speculation. I'll just focus on this weekend, which is the most important thing.

Are things settled? Can you say that?

NH: Just no comment.

Kimi, how has the break from Formula One to rallying helped you, because your second stint has been turning out to be as good as the first one?

KR: It hasn't really done anything. I was pretty happy to go and do something else for a while, did some racing and I'm enjoying it again. It's the same places - OK, there are some new circuits and places to come to this year and a new team, but apart from that, Formula One hasn't changed and it's exactly the same. For me, nothing's really changed. People always talk about where I was last time, that I didn't have the motivation but I thought I drove better than I ever drove in the last year; it was just that we had a pretty bad car at that time. Nothing has really changed for me.

Narain, you have probably driven on this circuit a lot more than other drivers. The conditions in Delhi were unexpectedly cool and there was a rain shower on Wednesday. Should the temperatures become cooler than they are right now in qualifying and on Sunday, do you see any particular changes in the way the cars will handle or the outcome?

NK: I think the track is already in a lot better condition than last year; it was very dusty, and because of the landscaping that they have done, the dust has settled, there's no more construction around the circuit so we already have a higher level of grip and the circuit looks quite nice. As you know, I drove the MR Formula 2000 car a month ago; it was already very good. Temperatures won't matter, they are going to drop a few degrees from today, I think, but it's OK. The tyres are fine; compared to last year, the hard compound - we have the same allocations but it's a little bit softer so it should be fine here.

Kimi, how big a challenge were Pirelli's tyres for you, because the last time (you were in F1) you had different tyres, and now you have totally different compounds and everything?

KR: I admit that I had some thoughts about the tyres before I did one private test - OK, it wasn't the race tyres, it was some other even more worse tyres but I thought that they were fine. When you come from rallying, they have much more grip and the tyres were OK for me so after that, I already knew that I would not have any issues, because there was a lot of talk that maybe it was not good, but when I came back, I didn't really remember how it was two years earlier, so I thought that the tyres were completely fine and I still do so. OK, they wore off a bit faster than in the past in some races but it's the same for everybody and they've been doing a very good job for Formula One so I'm happy with that.

And you haven't won this year but despite that, how good a comeback has this been for you?

KR: Yes, I'm happy. If you had told me before the season that I will be in this position with this many points and stuff like that I would have taken it but of course when you do some good races you always want more and more and then you're disappointed if you're not. If you do well you want more and more. It could have been better but it could have been much more worse also.

Kimi, do you fancy your chances this year? You're third in the championship...

KR: Yeah, of course. We've had a chance. It's the difference like in 2007. We had a car that you knew that could win all the races and right now we are not the fastest car so we need more help to really win it but we will keep trying and hopefully we can achieve it. We will try until there's no chance but it's a bit different situation. But if we can improve the car in the next three races, you never know, so...

Kimi, after which race did you feel that the Lotus team didn't have the same competitiveness as it had at the start of the season?

KR: I think in Spa we had some signs but then we have seen this year that one race you can be very strong and the next not so good, it's been up and down between the teams. For some reason, after the summer break, some of the teams have been much more consistent. I think we still have a good car. We improved it in the last race again but we are not at the level that we maybe were compared to others at the beginning of the season.

Nico, you said that you mentioned that you got here on Monday. Could you just give us an idea of some of the things you've been doing since you got here?

NH: Well, mainly a lot of media interaction. We are an Indian team so there is quite a bit of interest, so we've been around, talking to a lot of TV stations, went to some studios, did a sponsorship event with Hackett which is a team partner in clothing. It's only two days and two days pass pretty quickly.

Did you meet Vijay

NH: No, we haven't met Vijay.

Narain, since you are closely associated with this track, some changes have been made, although the changes are minor. Do you think it will make the race more interesting, faster?

NK: No, the layout remains the same, just that the kerbs are extended a little bit in turns five and six and then they put some astro turf to keep the dust down because a lot of cars were going off in that particular corner last year. Apart from that, as everyone has said, the layout is fantastic and I'm glad they haven't changed anything, it's nice to drive on, it's pretty flowing and it's fast.

To all the drivers, whoever wants to answer: the long straight is something that the DRS was really tailor-made for although we didn't see too much overtaking last year. How much overtaking do you think there is a scope for over here?

NK: We won't be doing much overtaking so I think...

HK: We have the same problem as Narain so...

BS: Normally, the overtaking is more due to the tyre difference between the cars than to long straights or DRS. Long straights always help a little bit but if you're coming from a corner like turn two, which is a long corner where you put a lot of heat into the tyres, into a hairpin, where traction is a bit more compromised so overtaking really is more due to the tyres than anything else in current Formula One. But if you're in a Toro Rosso then you have about 20kph more top speed than everyone else then you can overtake as well!

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## F1 Indian Grand Prix – F1 report

Sebastian Vettel went fastest during first practice at the Buddh International Circuit. But while that sentence may make the majority of readers – at least, those hoping for a competitive end to the championship – groan with despair, it fails to tell the full story.

At points during F1, the Red Bulls showed echoes of the dominant pace we've seen over the past two races, but every time it looked as though Newey's machines were going to define the weekend, a challenger popped up and deposed them by a series of respectable margins.

There was no real consistency to the challenges – Lewis Hamilton, Fernando Alonso, and Jenson Button all took their turns at the top of the timesheets, matching the Red Bulls on times in some attempts, besting them in others, and by a variety of margins that never exceeded half a second.

It did make for a more interesting session than is usually the case on a Friday morning, but when the chequered flag fell it was Vettel who remained on top, with three-tenths in hand.

With luck, the variety of times on offer this morning will lead to an interesting weekend in which no one team dominates. While there is little sense reading too much into the times set on a Friday, it looks as though there are five strong contenders going into this weekend.

What was interesting was the way in which the pack appears to have properly split for the first time in recent memory. While we've become accustomed to the sight of the first fourteen or sixteen drivers covered by a single second, this morning saw only the top seven covered by a second. The spread across the pack as a whole topped five seconds.

While there were a few trips across the various patches of run-off over the course of the ninety minute session, there were no incidents of note to speak of.

Special mention should be made of Esteban Gutierrez, who stepped in for Sergio Perez at the last minute when the latter was struck down with a cold. Early on in F1, Gutierrez was only half a second slower than the vastly more experienced Kamui Kobayashi, but at the end of the day the Mexican was 1.4s down.

It was a decent performance nonetheless – Gutierrez managed to keep his borrowed car safe for the duration of his debut session, which is more than can be said for a number of other F1 reserves.

### F1 times (unofficial)

1. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1.27.619s [22 laps]
2. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1.27.929s [22 laps]
3. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1.28.044s [24 laps]
4. Lewis Hamilton (McLaren) 1.28.046s [25 laps]
5. Mark Webber (Red Bull) 1.28.175s [22 laps]
6. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1.28.447s [25 laps]
7. Felipe Massa (Ferrari) 1.28.582s [24 laps]
8. Michael Schumacher (Mercedes) 1.28.993s [23 laps]
9. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso) 1.29.204s [24 laps]
10. Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus) 1.29.291s [24 laps]
11. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) 1.29.691s [26 laps]
12. Paul di Resta (Force India) 1.29.760s [23 laps]
13. Kamui Kobayashi (Sauber) 1.29.802s [18 laps]
14. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) 1.29.850s [19 laps]
15. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1.29.895s [19 laps]
16. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) 1.30.041s [26 laps]
17. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1.30.401s [23 laps]
18. Vitaly Petrov (Caterham) 1.30.630s [24 laps]
19. Giedo van der Garde (Caterham) 1.30.896s [20 laps]
20. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) 1.31.212s [29 laps]
21. Charles Pic (Marussia) 1.31.903s [22 laps]
22. Narain Karthikeyan (HRT) 1.32.125s [24 laps]
23. Timo Glock (Marussia) 1.32.369s [19 laps]
24. Pedro de la Rosa (HRT) 1.32.859s [13 laps]

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## F1 Indian Grand Prix – FP2 report

While the first practice session of the Indian race weekend passed largely without incident, the same could not be said for the afternoon's running.

Felipe Massa was the worst affected of the men on track: the Brazilian driver suffered the ignominy of spinning not once, but twice, on the very kerbs that had caused him so much trouble at last year's maiden race, and which the circuit has renamed the Massa kerbs in his honour.

Ferrari later revealed that the source of Massa's problems was an incorrect setting that destabilised the F2012 from a balance point of view, making the car a real challenge to handle. The Brazilian racer's second spin, which took place just after the session's midpoint, was severe enough that the damage to his tyres essentially brought his afternoon's running to a premature end.

While Massa was far from alone in his difficulties on the track – Paul di Resta suffered a puncture, Jenson Button was struggling with his gearbox, and Narain Karthikeyan had hydraulics issues – the real story on Friday afternoon was Red Bull's pace.

In the morning the chasing pack were able to keep the Milton Keynes racers on their toes, challenging for (and claiming) the top spot on the timesheets on occasion, FP2 showed that Red Bull have very little to worry about when it comes to tomorrow's qualifying session.

Sebastian Vettel ended the day fastest for Red Bull, six-tenths faster than P3 Fernando Alonso and nearly a second faster than the McLarens. Both teams have faith in their long run pace and in the overtaking opportunities on offer at the Buddh International Circuit, but behind the confident comments all are worried of a repeat of last year's runaway win.

FP2 times (unofficial)

1. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1.26.22s [35 laps]
2. Mark Webber (Red Bull) 1.26.33s [33 laps]
3. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1.26.82s [34 laps]
4. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1.27.02s [38 laps]
5. Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus) 1.27.03s [40 laps]
6. Lewis Hamilton (McLaren) 1.27.13s [38 laps]
7. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1.27.18s [24 laps]
8. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) 1.27.23s [37 laps]
9. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1.27.39s [36 laps]
10. Bruno Senna (Williams) 1.27.73s [36 laps]
11. Paul di Resta (Force India) 1.28.00s [32 laps]
12. Sergio Perez (Sauber) 1.28.17s [39 laps]
13. Michael Schumacher (Mercedes) 1.28.22s [37 laps]
14. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso) 1.28.23s [37 laps]
15. Felipe Massa (Ferrari) 1.28.29s [23 laps]
16. Kamui Kobayashi (Sauber) 1.28.45s [40 laps]
17. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) 1.28.59s [38 laps]
18. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1.29.16s [35 laps]
19. Heikki Kovalainen (Caterham) 1.29.32s [43 laps]
20. Vitaly Petrov (Caterham) 1.29.60s [22 laps]
21. Pedro de la Rosa (HRT) 1.30.95s [37 laps]
22. Timo Glock (Marussia) 1.31.11s [35 laps]
23. Narain Karthikeyan (HRT) 1.31.37s [20 laps]
24. Charles Pic (Marussia) 1.31.49s [31 laps]

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## F1 Indian Grand Prix – Friday press conference

What started out as an amusing press conference descended into something rather more tense as Ferrari played the evasive game.

Present were Cyril Abiteboul (Caterham), Eric Boullier (Lotus), Stefano Domenicali (Ferrari), Christian Horner (Red Bull), Monisha Kaltenborn (Sauber), and Martin Whitmarsh (McLaren).

First a question to all of you: I believe you have had several occasions to discuss your team's future in Formula One. How do you feel those discussions have gone with regard to your individual interests and concerns? Eric, would you start?

Eric BOULLIER: Obviously, as you said in your question if you look at the personal interests there are always some concerns and issues, but I think we had positive and constructive meetings all together with Bernie and the FIA and even if we are still far let's say from closing and signing any Concorde Agreement, even if I think it should not take long now, we, with a global vision for Formula One we all believe there are some positives.

Monisha, your concerns?

Monisha KALTENBORN: My concerns straight away! I agree with Eric that it was good that the teams were invited to this kind of meeting to get the status on the negotiations between the commercial rights holder and the FIA and what for us is important is that we come to a conclusion which is good for Formula One. We know that each team has its own position in Formula One – you have the bigger ones and the ones who are in the middle and further back – but we need to have something which is good for the sport, the stability of the sport.

Cyril?

Cyril ABITEBOUL: Pretty much the same thing here as Monisha. Obviously, it looks like the last corner of a long negotiation and as always there are last-minute adjustments and last-minute compromises. Not everyone can be equally happy but you just need to make sure that not everyone is particularly unsatisfied, which is certainly not our case. We're making sure to protect our key interests, because obviously smaller teams are fragile and we need to make sure not to be unnecessarily exposed, so that's what we are making sure of but we are on a good track.

Martin.

Martin WHITMARSH: I think in the short term we've all got our own self-interests, but in the longer terms we've all the same interests and I think that's the sport is successful, that it's buoyant, it's exciting and that it's also viable. As a few of the others have said in front of me I think you've got to recognize that there's a lot of challenge for quite a lot of teams and it's important for all of us to reach for compromise, find a way forward that's going to make sure that we can sustain all those teams. The good thing is this isn't the old era, which was I think very confrontational and probably good for the media but less good for the sport. I think people here are recognising that now is not the time to have wars, now's the time to be constructive, where necessary compromise and find a way forward for the sport.

Thanks. Christian?

Christian HORNER: I think the guys have done a tremendous job of telling exactly what wasn't discussed at the meeting, which is obviously confidential between the parties. So I'll follow the party line and say, yes, it was a very constructive meeting and we're getting close to a conclusion but I think that's really all there is to say at the moment.

Stefano.

Stefano DOMENICALI: Well, the last thing I can say in this spirit is that it's clear that there was something discussed between the teams and the relevant parties – the FIA President and Bernie Ecclestone, who represented the commercial rights holder. The thing is that at the end of the meeting it was the President of the FIA that left room for discussion for future points that the teams may suggest to improve what we are discussing. But I believe it is the right thing to say that here it's important to speak about the division of the future of Formula One and I believe that we are starting from good grounds and we need to make sure that we finalise this as soon as possible.

Okay, thank you. I'm sure there will be some more questions for all on that subject. Now, some individual questions to each of you. Eric, starting with you, if I may. Obviously you've done a fair amount of development over the last couple of races, but looking back at the whole season, have you exceeded expectations this year, given that you've also lost quite a few points as well? And looking forward, do you think you can make the top three or top four?

EB: That was the target – to be top four this year. Top three would be the cherry on the top of the cake, but obviously it's tough to fight with the guys in front of us. But I'm quite happy... I should say actually very, very happy with how the team developed and worked this year. Obviously, we had a tough 2011. A lot happened last year which was not in our favour but this year we clearly pushed back and brought back the momentum for us. The team at Enstone and at the track here did an amazing job and both drivers did contribute a lot to the success this year with so many podiums. But yes, we all want more. Obviously being in the fight for the third place is nice. It's nice for the team. We obviously want to keep this momentum and keep pushing and take any opportunity. I think the session this afternoon, we had good pace on one lap and on high fuel, so I'm happy to be the headache of my colleagues.

Monisha, definitely the first lady of Formula One, and of course you've recently stepped up to be team principal of the Sauber team. Here you are at your home grand prix. How proud are you of getting that far?

MK: I think for oneself it's a bit difficult to feel proud about that, I think that's for others to say, because I was given this opportunity and I was very happy to take it up. Not much has actually changed for me because I was anyway doing more stuff, for sure. It's just this little step to this title but now you really feel the entire responsibility on your shoulders.

Cyril, a new appointment for you, what exactly is your role, what is the hierarchy now at Caterham F1?

CA: My main role is CEO of the F1 team. As you know Caterham is a large group with many different activities, so my focus is definitely on the Formula One team. As you can imagine, there's plenty to be done there. It's a position taking care of the day-to-day business, reporting to the shareholders so anything about that but no more and even my experience in the automotive industry, in the Formula One with Renault, over the past seven years had some things that is quite normal as an evolution but a great opportunity. The only thing that maybe is particular is that this is Formula One and one of the shareholders remains the team principal.

And is he the man you report to directly?

CA: Obviously, the two shareholders and the rest of the Group.

Looking at the championship Martin, you're still there with a chance – it's not over until it's over. What are your feelings, what are the feelings within the team now as we tackle these last four races?

MW: I think it's really business as usual. We have four races and we have to try to do the best job we can. We come to every grand prix seeking to win and we'll be doing nothing different in these last four races. It's an incredibly competitive season as we've had ups and downs, I think we've underperformed in the last couple of grands prix so that gives you a bit of pain but it also gives you some determination to do something better in the last four races. So, I think it's been an interesting season and there's no reason to suppose it's going to stop being one for a few races to come yet.

What's it going to be about, Christian and Stefano? Is it going to be about development of the cars? Is it going to be about the drivers themselves? Is it going to be about circuit suitability? Perhaps you can talk about your own feelings as we go into these last four races.

CH: I think all of those factors are going to play an element. It's going to be about getting the most out of the next four weekends; it's going to be about being reliable; it's going to be about being quick; it's going to be about not making mistakes; optimising the package that you have throughout a grand prix weekend. It's set to be a fascinating run-in to the championship over the next four races. I think we're set for a real spectacle over the next four events. I'm sure it will go all the way down to the wire.

Stefano?

SD: I agree with Christian. For sure at the end of the day being pragmatic it's important to do adding and summing up all of the points Christian was saying, not one point more than the other. So at the end of the day that is the situation that we have to face. And at the moment we are behind and we

need to fight believing that it is possible because that's the spirit I want to see within the team. And when I speak about the team I speak about everyone but I'm sure that is really what I feel walking around the garage and also in Maranello. We know that is a very tough job but that is part of the game. If you think where we were the first day of testing, and where we are now after a lot of months, I think that we need to be in one sense not happy but on the other hand very proud of what we did – because the first day when we shake down the car in Jerez was very worrying. So, I just recall my guys, to make sure we keep the momentum with the positive attitude up until the end and then we will see. If, in this case Sebastian – or another one, because as we always say, up to the moment where the classification is finished, we need to respect everyone – will win, they will deserve it, and we need to make sure that we will congratulate with them. But up to that moment we will make sure we will fight with every resource we have up until the end.

Question for the gentleman from Ferrari. Is it common for your team to use your car to make political statements – and if not, why did you decide to make an exception in India?

SD: Well in that respect I understand what you are saying. There was a press release that was done two days ago, so if you want any clarification of that, our press office is absolutely very pleased to answer to your question. But y'know, if you look behind in the past we've done a lot of initiatives but y'know, there's nothing that I want to do into very specifically because it's not really the place where I should do it.

Question to Monisha. Sauber have traditionally had a tendency to attract excellent talent, groom them and then pass them on to the big teams. Do you plan to change that?

MK: Well passing them on was not really our strategy, it just happened. So I wouldn't really agree on that and say that we need to change anything on that. It's true that historically we have been attracting young talent and it appears to be that we can provide them the right kind of platform that they can show their talent. Of course in the last case now we would have also liked to continue with Sergio but he's going to fantastic team, one of the more successful teams in Formula One and for us it shows that we can still provide that kind of environment to a young driver to show his talent. And how we can change? Simply by ourselves being more competitive.

Christian, it's an open secret that you're in a slightly different position to the other teams when it comes to your stance on the Resource Restriction Agreement (RRA). Could you explain to what extent that's made your negotiating or bargaining position a bit more difficult when it comes to the general discussions, the entry, the costs, the potential tax, the new working group, all of that?

CH: I think that they are two separate things. The resource restriction, the concept of the resource restriction was to – and still is to – reduce costs in Formula One, the costs to compete in Formula One, and that's something that we're not opposed to. We are fully in favour of costs being controlled in the sport, we just disagree with the mechanism, at the moment, how they are presented to control those costs and our concern is that different entities, different organisations are treated differently in what is proposed so far. It doesn't include the engine, for example, so there's freedom to spend, at the moment, on the engine, particularly the new power train in 2014. But I think that what has come out of the discussions recently – and with the formation of a new Concorde Agreement, it gives the opportunity to sit down with our colleagues and hopefully agree a strategy on what does work and what does control costs, for the larger teams as well as the smaller teams, for the future, that is sustainable, that includes all aspects of the operation of a Formula One team, because currently, as proposed, the RRA doesn't deal with so many aspects, whether it be KERS, for example, whether it be exhausts, whether it be drivers, whether it be other aspects of spend and cost drivers in Formula One. So hopefully there will be that opportunity over the coming weeks and we remain committed to ensuring that there is a workable solution that's transparent, that's fair, that's balanced for all the participants.

Do you feel isolated?

CH: I don't think we find ourselves isolated. We elected to leave FOTA just over 12 months ago so we haven't sat in FOTA meetings. We attend all the technical working groups, we attend all the sporting working groups with the parties that matter, we're present in all discussions.

Stefano, the Indian government has criticised the decision to put the flag (of the Italian navy) on the car. So given that that has created controversy, will you review it for Sunday's race?

SD: Honestly, as I said, I don't think this is a matter for this press conference to discuss this subject, to be honest. And as I said, if you have any questions or doubt about it, we have our press office available to you.

Stefano, question about your car: Nick Tombazis said a few things before the weekend about the wind tunnel and updates not working as they are supposed to in the last couple of races. Are you confident on today's evidence that you've got to the bottom of the problem there?

SD: Well, it's difficult to say. For sure, being a pragmatic guy, we need to make sure that with the little of what we expect, today we will analyse the data. It is difficult to see, for example, FPI; the track was changing every lap so we need to take that into the analysis that the engineers are going to do now but for sure, the elements that will make the difference really, up to now, up to the end, if we would like to bring new updates on the car, we need to make sure that they are delivering what we are expecting, saying without doing, but making sure that this will deliver the objective that theoretically we would like to bring and this is a fundamental element that also relates to the fact that we need to work very hard to make sure that the problems that we had this year, mainly at the beginning of the season, will not happen again at the beginning of next season, so it's quite long work that we are doing at home to make sure that we will improve that situation.

Stefano, about the new elements on the car: what worked and what didn't?

SD: I don't know! We will see when it counts. Today is too early to say. The people will have done a good job if the car has improved in performance relative to our main competitors. If that is not happening, of course that means we haven't done a good job. But it's too early to say.

Question for the back row, please: I understand you might not want to confirm any of your decisions regarding who you might have selected for your drivers for next year, but will you be confirming your line-ups before the end of the season or during the winter?

EB: Before the end of the season.

MK: We as well.

CA: Same thing.

To all of the teams: last year we saw that the tyre wear at the circuit was an issue. On the evidence of today do you think that has improved; whoever wants to answer that question?

SD: I believe that last year...

CH: Ladies first!

SD: Ah sorry, for sure! Last year was a completely new track, for sure the asphalt was in its first year of life so I'm sure that this year the situation with the tyres if you compare to last year is different. And looking at the runs of today, it seems that the tyres are more stable than what we saw last year, but that is my feeling after the end of the first day of practice.

Monisha, Kamui was saying yesterday that he's trying to find extra sponsorship and he's busy working hard in Japan trying to find some backing. To what extent does his financial situation and backing influence the decision on whether he stays or not?

MK: Regarding Kamui, we've always said that we know his strengths, his qualities as a driver and these kind of aspects have not played any role in it. If you look back, even when we took him up, also then people criticised us for that decision, and everyone knew that he doesn't have any sponsorship package so nothing has changed on that.

So, Monisha, does the fact that he's looking for a sponsor mean that he's leaving Sauber?

MK: I don't know. I think you have to ask him that. We've not had any talk like that and, as I said, we are generally also looking at him, talking to him and I think we know him quite well by now, to know what we have if we keep him on.

Martin and Stefano, considering that there aren't a lot of regulation changes next year, are you worried that Red Bull's recent form means that you might be chasing Red Bull again next year?

MW: The fact is that you go into every year with high expectations. I think everyone works hard to improve the car. Red Bull's a very strong team, Ferrari's a strong team, the three teams behind will all be competing next year so if you're wise you go into every year worried about the eleven other competitors. You never know what they're going to spring, you don't know how good a job they've done. Sometimes you don't know how bad a job you've done yourself, so that's the exciting thing about Formula One. Everyone goes off the radar screen. We don't get pace information for a period of time. We all work hard to develop a new car. As I say, during the winter you start to grow confident about what you've done but you've got to be mindful of the fact that there are eleven good teams working hard to beat you.

SD: Well, on my side, with regard to next year, I would say that the situation could be more or less the same as this year. While everyone is trying to catch up the target that in terms of pure performance at the moment Red Bull have set, even in previous years, in my view, 2014 will be a re-set where there is a chance, where once again the field will be split into separate sections because it's a totally new (set of) regulations, it's a totally new power train, so I'm expecting that will be a year when we can see some incredible or interesting big surprises, or we can see the risk of having to field in one group because of this technical challenge that is huge. There's not a lot of time, because of course all the teams will try to push hard in 2013 and then at a certain moment they will need to decide what to do for the year after and bear in mind that this year, I would say, most of the development that you can bring to the next year's car, for 2014, you have to forget it and make sure that you have a good project that has to start from a white sheet of paper and you have no reference with the other competitors so it will be a big question whether... I'm sure that the first day of testing in 2014 will be quite a challenge and quite interesting for all of us.

Stefano, I heard your answer earlier regarding having the Italian flag on the car but are you not courting political controversy by displaying such an emblem, bearing in mind that the FIA's statutes states no team or entity within Formula One is allowed to make political standpoint?

SD: I think that if you look at what is written in the press conference (release) it is not really what you are saying. I think that you have to refer to that, to be honest, and look what is written exactly, and the reason why we put that on. There's not any political intention or discussion in that. If you look at that, that's really what is written.

I have read it, and obviously you're making a point regarding the two sailors that are in dispute with...

SD: No, no, that's not true.

It's on the website. I've read what's on the website. You're saying that it's for the two sailors.

SD: It's not true, to be honest, what you're saying.

Just a generic question to the entire panel: what is India like in year two, compared to last year? So far, how has the weekend been?

CH: I think it's fantastic...

MW: Ladies first.

CH: No, absolutely, you're quite right, Martin.

MK: Go ahead, no go ahead. I could be slightly biased on that.

CH: I do apologise. No, it's fantastic to be back here. It's a great track, it's truly impressive what you've done here in India and I think that the race was tremendously well received last year. I think the circuit has a great blend of fast corners, slow corners, long straights, so it's a pleasure to be back here and it's great to see the evolution that's happened during the last twelve months with what's happened in and around the circuit.

SD: Absolutely. I totally agree.

MK: I fully agree with that. I think last year was really a fantastic event here and the FIA also awarded the promoter here with a special award for promoters at the end of the year. People were welcomed here with a lot of warmth. It's difficult to really top that but to keep that and still get away with all the hiccups that we had in the first year is a great achievement.

EB: Obviously I agree. I just say that when I arrived yesterday the first comment from my team was - as you will see - a lot of details and attention has been done to the track and it's much much nicer and better. That's really proved the commitment of the promoter and the country which is good.

CA: Clearly some additional work has been done between the two years. Last year it was quite challenging work to be done, to deliver on time, which was the case, it was a good race, won by a Renault engine, so a good memory there. This year, we haven't had much time to enjoy the country because we are in the middle of a battle to try and recover our tenth place. We would love to do that in India, obviously, it's going to be challenging so if we could get a little bit of help from the weather, some rain, maybe that would help us in trying to get an abnormal race. Other than that, it's great to be in a part of the world which is important for all the sponsors, all the car makers which are basically starting to appear here. It's good to be here.

MW: I think we've talked a lot about the facilities and I think the facilities are good and they've got better but I think the really important thing was that last year you really sensed that really crazy passion in its first year and it's early days in this year's race, but I think we want to retain that and build on it because clearly India's a new and very important market for Formula One and looking ahead now, we've got to build upon the passion that we saw in its first year and make sure we don't go flat, we don't lose the interest, we've got to maintain that momentum. So the facilities are good but I think that this is such an important market for anyone, we've got to build on the passion we saw.

Stefano, considering the last three races, the gap of performance of Red Bull compared to your car and the others, how much chance do you have to close this gap and try to win this title?

SD: In terms of closing the gap in performance, it's difficult to say because our main competitors but also McLaren, they are always improving, so it's difficult to say where we are relative to pace/performance but in terms of percentage with regard to the possibility of winning the championship, I think that, as we said before, there are too many elements that are on the table: strategy, race mistakes, problems that we still have - I would say - less than fifty percent because they are in front of us, but the race is full open.

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## F1 Indian Grand Prix – FP3 report

Sebastian Vettel made it three for three at the Buddh International Circuit on Saturday morning, and in somewhat terrifying fashion.

While the Red Bull driver bested Jenson Button by a mere two-tenths, adding up Vettel's best sectors gave the defending world champion an advantage of eight-tenths, a much more unassailable margin.

The Red Bulls are undoubtedly strong going into qualifying, and it would be a brave pundit who predicted anything other than a front row lock-out for the team. But McLaren definitely have more pace than the team feared earlier on in the weekend, and Kimi Raikkonen continues to be a dark horse, setting impressive lap times on a previously unknown circuit.

The real man to watch, however, is Bruno Senna. The Brazilian driver has been consistently strong in practice, despite losing out on track time in FPI to the ever-present Valtteri Bottas. Williams surprised us all in Barcelona with a win for Pastor Maldonado, and Senna appears to be on course to deliver the team with a strong qualifying position for tomorrow's race.

Ferrari appeared to spend the morning struggling for pace, but it was interesting to note that Fernando Alonso and Felipe Massa spent FP3 practicing giving each other tows along the kilometre-long main straight, a tactic that - if used effectively - could boost both men's qualifying performances this afternoon.

Lower down the pack, Paul di Resta continues to struggle in India, while neither Sauber driver was able to deliver the sort of pace we've become accustomed to seeing from the team in warm weather.

That being said, it is worth noting that the broad spread of times on offer yesterday has tightened up again, with the eleven fastest men split by less than a second.

FP3 times (unofficial)

1. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1.25.842s [20 laps]
  2. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1.26.034s [17 laps]
  3. Mark Webber (Red Bull) 1.26.108s [18 laps]
  4. Lewis Hamilton (McLaren) 1.26.151s [21 laps]
  5. Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus) 1.26.209s [22 laps]
  6. Bruno Senna (Williams) 1.26.214s [24 laps]
  7. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1.26.521s [15 laps]
  8. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) 1.26.531s [21 laps]
  9. Michael Schumacher (Mercedes) 1.26.652s [21 laps]
  10. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1.26.664s [21 laps]
  11. Felipe Massa (Ferrari) 1.26.691s [13 laps]
  12. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) 1.27.140s [18 laps]
  13. Sergio Perez (Sauber) 1.27.162s [21 laps]
  14. Paul di Resta (Force India) 1.27.193s [22 laps]
  15. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1.27.229s [21 laps]
  16. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso) 1.27.374s [21 laps]
  17. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1.27.711s [20 laps]
  18. Kamui Kobayashi (Sauber) 1.27.983s [19 laps]
  19. Heikki Kovalainen (Caterham) 1.29.035s [20 laps]
  20. Vitaly Petrov (Caterham) 1.29.237s [20 laps]
  21. Timo Glock (Marussia) 1.29.617s [20 laps]
  22. Charles Pic (Marussia) 1.30.298s [20 laps]
  23. Narain Karthikeyan (HRT) 1.30.824s [22 laps]
  24. Pedro de la Rosa (HRT) 1.30.873s [22 laps]
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## F1 Indian Grand Prix – Q1 report

Paul di Resta was the first man out on track for qualifying at the Buddh International Circuit - this is one race where Force India are guaranteed a lot of screen time, and team principal Vijay Mallya is keen to promote his beleaguered brands to a home audience.

As predicted in my FP3 report, the Ferrari drivers once again practiced towing each other along the main straight - this is a tactic we can expect to see a lot more of as the sessions progress and times get more competitive.

By the time the session reached its midpoint, all drivers barring Sebastian Vettel, Mark Webber, Jenson Button, and Lewis Hamilton had set times. The



final four were all out on track at the same time, and most were affected by the two-lap tyre warm-up problem that appears to have beset the majority of the grid this afternoon.

Vettel, however, went fastest on his first timed lap, surprising no one.

Shortly after all 24 times went on the board for the first time Felipe Massa – who had been strong earlier in the session – had something of a dramatic tyre-munching spin.

Hamilton's second attempt at a timed lap started well, with the McLaren driver besting Vettel's first sector time, but the second sector proved problematic once again, with the Briton losing two seconds thanks to some flat-spotted tyres. Another attempt saw Hamilton in provisional P2 with a 1.26.554s.

But the worst of the expected front-runners was Webber, whose first timed lap saw the Australian in P24. The next effort was something of a dramatic improvement – Webber shot up into P3 with a 1.26.771s.

As the session drew to a close, with enough time remaining for only two more laps for those in trouble, the dropout zone was comprised of the six usual suspects plus Jean-Eric Vergne. Next in line was Vergne's Toro Rosso teammate Daniel Ricciardo, while Kamui Kobayashi and Paul di Resta were also at risk of dropping out should the Faenza pair find extra pace on their last-dash runs.

With the chequered flag fluttering gently in the background, Heikki Kovalainen had a moment at Turn 11, and ended up beaching his Caterham in the substantial pile of kitty litter. At the other end of the grid, Pastor Maldonado went fastest with a 1.26.048s.

Dropout zone

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

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## F1 Indian Grand Prix – Q2 report

Red Bull have done it again. Scant minutes into Q2 and Sebastian Vettel blew the competition out of the water with a 1.25.435s lap, half a second faster than any of the times set by their rivals.

In its opening minutes, Q2 looked as though it had the potential to be a close-fought session; with the few times set all within reach of each other. But when Red Bull find that magic button of theirs, all the laws of physics are suspended and pace appears to come out of nowhere.

The McLarens are slow in the final sector, and Lewis Hamilton can't string together a decent second sector despite going purple in sector one. It's not looking good for fans of the Woking team this afternoon, with Jenson Button three-tenths slower than his departing teammate.

Over at Hamilton's new team, Nico Rosberg is one of two drivers able to get even remotely close to Vettel, but that remotely includes a gap of more than half a second.

But the times keep changing, and Hamilton appears to have found some extra pace in sector two, setting a personal best time three seconds better than his previous efforts. The McLaren driver is still four-tenths shy of Vettel, and the odds of any sort of challenge for pole are smaller than an airborne microbe.

Down towards the middle of the pack, Nico Hulkenberg, Kimi Raikkonen, Daniel Ricciardo, Paul di Resta, Kamui Kobayashi, and Pastor Maldonado are all in the dropout zone, while Felipe Massa and Sergio Perez are hovering on the edge.

Romain Grosjean is in a decent position for a chance at Q3 despite a very long and bumpy trip across the grass early on in the session – tyre management it most certainly wasn't.

Back in the dropout zone, and Raikkonen saved himself but remains on the edge. Maldonado and Hulkenberg saved their skin, knocking Senna into the dropout zone, while Grosjean's previous position of safety has come to nought.

With the session over, the dropout zone was comprised of Grosjean, Hulkenberg, Senna, Schumacher, Ricciardo, di Resta, and Kobayashi. Not the ideal performance for Force India at their "home" grand prix...

Dropout zone

11. Romain Grosjean (Lotus)
12. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India)
13. Bruno Senna (Williams)
14. Michael Schumacher (Mercedes)
15. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso)
16. Paul di Resta (Force India)

## F1 Indian Grand Prix – Q3 report

Red Bull front row lockout. If anything else comes of the next ten minutes, the press room at the Indian Grand Prix will suffer a collective heart attack.

Lewis Hamilton was the first man out on track, burning through rubber in an attempt to slow down Red Bull's charge for the front. But on his first timed lap – as has been the case all weekend – Hamilton struggled to get the tyres in their ideal operating window, and he was unable to show much pace, even in his preferred first sector.

By the time he reached the third sector, however, when his tyres were warmer, Hamilton was able to set a purple sector.

Fernando Alonso was the next man out, and his first effort was far more impressive. The F2012 likes the warmer track temperatures on offer this afternoon, and the Ferrari driver claimed provisional pole with a 1.25.773s lap.

Sebastian Vettel's first attempt had something of a desperate sheen to it; the Red Bull driver made what might well have been his first mistake of the weekend, running very wide across Turn 7 and aborting the lap.

Mark Webber ably carried the can for Red Bull, claiming the top slot on the timesheets with a 1.25.327s lap that gave him four-tenths on Alonso. Jenson Button then bumped the Ferrari driver further down the grid with a 1.25.763s lap that gave him provisional P2.

Not that anyone's provisional positions meant anything once Vettel crossed the line in a dominant 1.25.283s following an incident-free lap.

Pastor Maldonado and Felipe Massa both went out on track, but their first times were so slow that neither would have qualified for the race had they been set in Q1. At least they made the effort, however – Nico Rosberg spent Q3 sitting pretty in the Mercedes garage.

Both Massa and Maldonado improved on their final runs, with the Brazilian in P5 and the Venezuelan in P9.

As predicted by anyone who's ever seen a race, Red Bull managed a front row lock-out. The second row belonged to McLaren and the third row to Ferrari.

### Dropout zone

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

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## F1 Indian Grand Prix – Saturday press conference

After Red Bull dominated free practice, with Sebastian Vettel driving around the circuit like he owned the place – pwned the place – it was hardly surprising that the Milton Keynes racers managed a front row lock-out.

Present were Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull), Mark Webber (Red Bull), and Lewis Hamilton (McLaren).

Sebastian, you've had a fantastic weekend so far: fastest in all three practice sessions and now on pole position: it couldn't be a better start to your championship bid could it?

Sebastian VETTEL: Ah, well, first of all it was a tight session. I think especially in the end. My first run, I did a mistake in Turn Four and had to abort the lap, so that was not as per plan. Before that obviously we had, yeah, quite a good qualifying session, so we decided to go obviously for another run and had only one set of tyres left. Fortunately I get the lap together and was very happy with the lap itself. Here and there potentially could have been a bit faster, especially around Turn Four because this time I made sure I'm not locking up the fronts but yeah, all in all, it was a great weekend so far, no problems with the car. I think the boys have been pushing extremely hard. We had lots of feedback from the factory as well which was very helpful from yesterday to today, so thanks as well to those guys there. We have to keep pushing obviously. I think we have a lot of races to go, important races, but the best chance of doing well is to focus on every single step. Today was qualifying, I think we got a very good result and now we look forward to the race.

Obviously pole position last year and you won last year, as I say you've had an extraordinary weekend so far and you're three places ahead of your main championship rival Fernando Alonso.

SV: You know the races these days: you know that a lot of things can happen so I don't think that means a lot. Obviously I'm very happy to be on pole: it's the best possible position to start and I think if you ask those two [MW and LH] they would like to start in that position, so yeah, I'm very happy with that but there's a hard race coming up tomorrow. I think we had a bit of a surprise on Friday in terms of long runs; everyone was quite competitive and tyres seemed to last reasonably well so we'll see what that means for strategy tomorrow.

Mark, fourth time you've been second on the grid so far this season. Could you have been on pole?

Mark WEBBER: As Seb said, it wasn't the smoothest session for him and I think also the same for me. The lap itself wasn't too bad, last corner got onto the Astroturf a bit on the exit, so for sure didn't have the cleanest run to the start/finish line so that was disappointing. But I'm driving the car. I did my best, it was close, as you say a pretty tight run thing between both Seb and I and then I didn't get to do my last attempt. Obviously the McLarens doing very slow outlaps to get their tyres ready for the lap which is different to us and I had no grip in the first sector, so the build lap was... I didn't get to do my second attempt, which would have been nice but anyway I was surprised to end up second, to be honest, but I'll take that and we can have a good race from there tomorrow.

Obviously a good one-two for Red Bull Racing.

MW: Yeah, very good. As Seb touched on, I think the way the factory has helped us this weekend has been incredible. Milton Keynes has really been pushing hard, even though they're not here they are with us in terms of work ethic and also for the team and the guys on the floor here. Obviously it's not the easiest environment to work in, not in terms of temperature but in terms of other challenges and everyone's getting through that pretty well. So far, so good, and today's job's done, tomorrow we'll wake up with a new day.

Lewis, only your second time third on the grid so far this season. Are you happy with that third?

Lewis HAMILTON: Yeah, absolutely. The team have done a great job this weekend in just trying to dial the setup in the car. To have us on the second row, I mean we're not quick enough to be ahead of these guys, but we can definitely challenge them in the race. I think our race pace was just as good as theirs through practice, so excited about that.

Sebastian, it was interesting to see the number of mistakes that have been made by all sorts of drivers, admittedly you had your own little error, up until then it seemed to be completely mistake free but it seems to be very difficult on that circuit.

SV: First of all we started the weekend much better than last year, the circuit was in much better shape, I think they did a very good job in trying to clean the circuit so I think it was ready from practice one so that was very positive. Still around here there's a lot of track improvements so in every session it just seems to get faster. Obviously when everyone puts on new tyres in qualifying then it gets even more quicker. Up to the point of Q3 we were very happy with the car and as you said had no mistakes. The first lap in Q3 wasn't perfect: I locked my front right into Turn Four, I think I was just a bit too greedy under braking and it didn't come back, so it didn't stop locking and I went a bit straight, so I had to abort the lap because I'd lost too much time. And yeah, focus on the second attempt, which fortunately was fine. I was very happy, this time braking a bit too early for Turn Four but all in all it was a very good session for us, the car was fantastic. As we touched on earlier, the support we had from the factory, from Milton Keynes, was incredible, so big thank you to the guys there. I think we improved the car from yesterday. We had a couple of new bits, so seemed to be able to make another step forward so yeah, we have to keep pushing. Today is obviously a good result from us, first and second on the grid, one and two, but tomorrow is the main exercise with the race. I think the McLarens are very quick, went very quick in the long run yesterday, as well as the Ferraris. So, I think it will be a close race, also in terms of strategy it could be a surprise. We'll see what happens.

Pirelli have said there's a possibility of someone running a one-stop strategy. Can you see that Mark, not necessarily for yourselves?

MW: Well I don't know how accurate they've been in the past but we can listen to them but we know come Sundays things can change, so we don't get too wound-up with what Pirelli might say to be honest, because it's changing on Sunday, even amongst all the teams. So we're going to focus on what we think is the best on the day. Of course we take their advice but it's not a bible. So, let's see how the strategy goes. I think the car is working pretty well on Sunday conditions as well. Obviously today was a very, very strong performance from the whole team, to get the front row again for both of us was very good.

Do you have a specific role in the championship now, would you say?

MW: No. My job is the same as it always has been: push to the limit and get the most out of what I have.

Lewis, you said you weren't quite on the same pace as the Red Bulls but you must be pleased to be ahead of the Ferraris and third on the grid.

LH: Third is a great position to start from so excited for tomorrow's race, especially as our long-run pace seemed to be relatively good compared to the others. I think Ferrari potentially have slightly faster pace overall. Over all of us maybe but we don't know what fuel they're on. Otherwise we're all very, very similar. Hopefully, if we can get a good start and have a good right with these guys in front, hopefully it'll be a better race than the last one we did.

The last couple of races have been quite difficult haven't they?

LH: Yes, I'm just looking forward to a race where we don't have any issues and can just fight for position and try and get some good points.

Question to the Red Bull drivers: how do you explain such domination for the last three races? And how happy are you to have the two McLarens between you and Fernando?

SV: I will start with the second question: tomorrow is the race, today was qualifying, no points are scored today. Surely it's better to have him behind than in front. But I think we've seen a lot of different races this year: some races pretty boring, nothing happened; other races, pretty spectacular from the first to the last lap. I think tomorrow is going to be a long race, what sort of race we're going to find out but that's usually the exciting bit and that's why we are looking forward to the race as well. As I said, I'm very happy to be in the position that we are in but that's it. We go from there tomorrow.

And how do you explain the domination?

MW: The drivers!

SV: Yeah.

Sebastian, can we now safely call this your de facto home Grand Prix?

SV: It's a bit far away from my home country but I think I've liked this circuit from the first practice last year. Obviously last year was pretty special, to be the first winner here in India and to do it again this year is obviously the target. Let's see what happens tomorrow, but as I said, I like the circuit, I think it suits our car as well, it's pretty different in its characteristics, quite a slow sector to start with, with a long straight and then nice fast flowing corners towards the end of the lap. I think there are opportunities to overtake - hopefully we don't have to seize them tomorrow. As I said, let's see what happens.

Sebastian, in Japan, when you won the race, we saw you patting the car like a horse. It's like a horse rider, after he finishes riding, he pats the back of the horse. This passion seems to be body and soul to you; is this passion the secret of your success?

SV: First of all, the car is not a horse, so sometimes you might lose oil or fuel but I think the smell is nicer than what a horse drops! Obviously, you work together with your car. When we are out in qualifying on the circuit, in particular in qualifying or the race, we are obviously by ourselves. Sure we have contact with the team on the radio but it's between you and your car... There is obviously a special relationship because when you're out on track, you can't come in and make a change whatsoever, it's between you and the car. You're very happy when you cross the line in a very good position after you've done a good race and say thanks to the car but also the car is what connects you to your crew. Obviously I'm working with the car on the track, the crew is working with the car in the garage. We all share a passion and obviously try to achieve a common goal. Maybe it's just a nice gesture to say thanks.

Seb, to have two McLarens behind you tomorrow may not be too comfortable for you, but for Fernando, it could be more difficult. Is this an advantage for you, to have this cushion, this pillow?

SV: If, could, would, should? We have to focus on the start tomorrow, focus on ourselves. We cannot influence what the others are doing. Fernando could have been a second quicker today than everyone and there's nothing we could have done, apart from trying to mind our own business and trying to get the fastest lap we can, which I guess is everyone's exercise in qualifying. It's a long race tomorrow, a lot of things can happen and sure, if we are ahead, it's better than being behind.

Lewis, it seems that corners five and six were the problem today. You had a nice slide there. I think Sebastian went off in the same place: is there anything in particular or special with that corner today?

LH: No, not really. I think this track is incredibly challenging for all of us. The more and more we drive it, the more and more we realise that, and that's what makes it a great circuit. Not everyone's able to get the first lap... it takes a lot of focus and it takes a lot to get a whole perfect lap together. That's a corner where you're pulling a lot of yaw, a lot of G and putting a lot of load on the tyres and it's very easy to... if you just touch the kerb or something like that you have an oversteer moment. You're always trying to gain time through there because it's quite an important part of the circuit, where you can gain time.

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## F1 Indian Grand Prix - Race report

With his commanding victory at the Buddh International Circuit on Sunday afternoon, Sebastian Vettel extended his lead over Fernando Alonso in the drivers' championship to 13 points with three races remaining.

It was the fourth consecutive victory for the Red Bull driver, who has rediscovered the 2011 winning streak that had eluded him for much of the early part of the season. And Vettel's performance on Sunday was shades of 2011 all over again, with the German racer making a clean start off the line, powering off to a 1.2s lead by the end of the first lap, and commanding the pack for the duration of the sixty laps that make up the Indian Grand Prix.

While it was smooth running from lights to flag for the defending world champion, the same cannot be said for his teammate. Mark Webber made the better start of the Red Bull pair, but the short run down to Turn 1 didn't afford the Australian with the opportunity to pass his teammate. Settling down into P2, Webber then found himself plagued by an on-again, off-again KERS issue that started around lap 19 or 20 and continued unabated until the end of the race.

"It was due to KERS that I started to lose the rhythm and the tempo," Webber explained after the race. "Obviously when the KERS is coming on and off, we need to also screw around with the brake balance and lots of other things. The guys have got a huge amount of plate-spinning to try to feed that into the cockpit for me. The last thing you want in a one-stop strategy race is starting to have front locking. Because we need to do long, long stints. So obviously this is a pain in the arse and we had to manage it as best we can.

"It's so demoralising, that [kilometre-long main] straight with no KERS," Webber continued. "I think I was very lucky that Lewis made a mistake in Turn Three, I think on lap 57. ... And that was important because I think he was starting to get a bit of momentum and I was very keen to keep him off the DRS as long as possible because once he got that I was toast. I think another two laps and he would have got me."

Were it not for Webber's KERS problems, Red Bull would have had little trouble turning their 1-2 start into a 1-2 finish. But with Fernando Alonso driving as though his life - and not his championship chances - depended on it, the ailing Webber fell victim to the Ferrari driver's seemingly faultless performance before narrowly avoiding being overtaken by a charging Lewis Hamilton in the closing laps.

It was a difficult day for the Woking racers, who failed to display their predicted race pace. Hamilton was overtaken by Alonso and teammate Jensen

Button off the start, and while he was able to reclaim the position lost to Button very early on in the race, Alonso was an entirely different kettle of fish. By lap 15 it was clear to anyone watching that neither Button nor Hamilton were in with a hope of making much of an impact on the Red Bulls or Alonso.

“I don’t yet understand why I got such a poor start – it lost me ground and then I fell under attack from the guys behind,” Hamilton admitted after the race. “During the first lap, I was primarily focusing on not colliding with Jenson, then I saw Fernando in my right mirror. He was towing me from very far back. Even if I’d had a better start than I did, the guys in front were still maybe a bit too fast, particularly in the first stint.”

The Spanish racer was on a charge from beginning to end, lapping faster than the Red Bulls in the opening phase of the Indian Grand Prix, and taking advantage of the ailing Webber to claim a second place with a ballsy manoeuvre into Turn 4 with 12 laps remaining, and doing his best to cut down Vettel’s unassailable lead.

While Alonso was on fire in India, the same cannot be said for Felipe Massa. The Brazilian driver put in a commendable performance that kept him in the points for the duration of the race, but he was in fuel-saving mode for the final phase of the race, and was forced to pull over mere metres after crossing the finish line, lest he run out of fuel on the cooling down lap.

Another driver to suffer fuel problems was Mercedes’ Nico Rosberg, who was told by his team to enter fuel-saving mode before the first round of pit stops had got underway. Rosberg’s problem was not his to suffer alone – the German racer spent the Indian Grand Prix leading the sort of train Jarno Trulli would have been proud of in his Toyota days, with the turbulent air generated by the Mercedes’ rear wing making him a very challenging man to pass.

It was a tough race overall for Mercedes – Michael Schumacher incurred a puncture on the opening lap, thanks to minor contact with Jean-Eric Vergne. Having limped to the pits, the German racer found himself in P24 on lap 2, and lapped by race leader Vettel by lap 10. The ignominy of an endless stream of waved blue flags didn’t bother the seven-time world champion, however, as he appeared to be utterly unable to see or process them, resulting in an investigation by the stewards that eventually led to nought.

In the end, the boys from Brackley decided that their goose was pretty well cooked, and the pit wall called Schumacher into the pits to retire with what team principal Ross Brawn later attributed to gearbox issues. The sense in the paddock was that Mercedes were relying on that old chestnut to afford them the opportunity to give the elder German a brand new – and penalty-free – gearbox for next weekend’s race in Abu Dhabi. The other theory doing the rounds was that Schumacher’s retirement was a deliberate attempt to avoid a grid penalty at Yas Marina.

Schumacher was not the only man to retire from Sunday’s race, although he was the only driver to retire tactically. Sergio Perez retired in the pits on lap 20 after a lap 19 incident left the Sauber driver with a puncture. The Mexican racer was in the process of overtaking the Toro Rosso of Daniel Ricciardo when he clipped the Australian’s front wing with his right rear tyre, causing a puncture. By the time Perez had made it round to the pits for a replacement, he had caused enough damage to his rear bodywork that there was no sense in continuing.

The only other man to retire was HRT’s Pedro de la Rosa. The Spanish racer suffered a sudden and dramatic brake failure with fifteen laps remaining, and ended up parked in the tyre barriers at Turn 4. HRT had been experiencing problems with brake overheating from the beginning of the race, but until de la Rosa’s crash it looked as though the team had the issue largely under control.

But in the end, the Indian Grand Prix was less about what did happen in the sixty laps between lights out and chequered flag than what didn’t: anything of real interest. One of the highlights of the afternoon for the TV audience was Hamilton’s pit stop, which saw the McLaren crew change five wheels (including the steering wheel, which was suffering issues with downshift) in just over three seconds. It was a mark of just how undramatic the race really was – a quick steering wheel change has no place in a highlights reel.

“I’ve never had to change a steering wheel during a race before,” Hamilton said. “We’ve done it in Barcelona testing before, but never in a race. ... I took the wheel off before I’d even stopped the car, and threw it out of the car. The team then fitted a new one, I clicked it into first gear, and I was away – all in just a bit over three seconds flat.”

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## FI Indian Grand Prix – Sunday press conference

The post-race press conference came to an abrupt end when Webber stalked out in a fit of pique, annoyed that none of the attendant journalists had any questions for him.

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

Sebastian, did you help design this race track or something? You seem so at home here, as a driver and with your car.

Sebastian VETTEL: I think it’s been an incredible two years for us, both times to come here and win the race, get the pole on Saturday and win the race on Sunday is fantastic. There’s always a very nice trophy so I’m very, very happy to pick up another nice one this year, so a very special grand prix. I don’t know what is it about this circuit but I really like the flow of it. Sector One is a bit slow with long straights but Sector Two and Three are really nice and I think we all enjoy it. Big thanks to the team, as I said on the radio, every single one is pushing very hard and I think there’s not one thing that stands out and makes the difference: not today’ not yesterday; not this weekend. I think it’s all of us working hand in hand together. If we’re here on the track or back in Milton Keynes, everyone is pushing hard and I think that’s what makes the difference. I’m very, very happy, I’m glad to be part of that and just enjoying the moment.

You’ve led every race, every lap for three consecutive races now. The last man to do that was the great Ayrton Senna in 1989, you’re in great company and you’re clearly on great form.

SV: Don’t say things like that! It’s very, very special. I think we all will remember Ayrton forever, not just because he was successful and he had these kinds of numbers speaking for him but he was a great person. So very, very happy.

Fernando, do you ever, ever give up? You're relentless.

Fernando ALONSO. No, obviously, it's not easy at the moment to fight with Red Bull but we will never give up. I think we are happy today, we have to congratulate them, they were fantastic this weekend so well done Red Bull, well done Sebastian – but yeah, we want to be happy and we want to enjoy Brazil, not only here so I'm sure we will do it.

Bittersweet for you? You split the Red Bulls but you still lost points in the World Championship.

FA: Yeah, we lost points but I think this was more or less the plan this weekend: we were not fast enough to compete against them, so we lost the minimum points, which is finishing second, so as I said, better races will come.

How fast was your car in a straight line. Take us down to Turn Four at the start, it was incredible.

FA: Yeah, we were quite fast in a straight line but we are still missing a little bit of grip in the corners that hopefully will come in the next races. Today we have to thank the team for this fantastic straight-line speed that give us some good overtaking manoeuvres and some good action.

Mark, you had to work hard to be up on this podium today.

Mark WEBBER: Yes. First of all thanks to the crowd, they are fantastic today. I enjoyed the fight today; it was a difficult race, very difficult for me to get into a rhythm, we had a few issues we needed to manage on the car but fair play to the other guys it was a good, tough grand prix. Lewis and Fernando were very strong on the hard tyre and with our KERS it was very difficult. I was happy with how I drove and we'll come back for Abu Dhabi.

So when he breezed past you down the straight, you were missing your KERS at that time and just helpless? There's nothing you could do?

MW: Yes, that right. It was very difficult to defend there because you need the KERS to get you on that type of corner.

Sebastian, we see some amazing names up here, champions including Fernando alongside you and you're on there twice. Surely you must feel now that you've got one hand on that World Championship trophy for 2012.

SV: The other one is probably Fernando and there are other ones as well. So I think if we speak about the World Championship, obviously this was another good step for us but still a long way to go and we have seen this year how quickly things can change. As I said earlier, it feels fantastic to be up here and have a race like that where everything works the way you want it to. Yeah, very, very proud, very, very happy and enjoying it. That was today. Now we are focusing on Abu Dhabi next week. There's a lot more to come and we'll try to take things step by step.

Sebastian well done: your fourth win in succession, which is amazing. And your thoughts on that.

SV: As you said, it's pretty amazing obviously. It's very hard to target those kind of things. I think they either happen or they don't happen. I think the secret, if there is any, is that we didn't approach the first of those four races thinking we can win four. We focussed on the first one, then on the second one, then on the third one, then on the fourth one. So, really step by step. I think, as I said on the radio and earlier, I think the whole team is working together fantastically well. I don't think there is one thing that stands out to make a difference. We can see that in every kind of area. We don't have any problems on Friday, we get through our programme, we get more or less the answers we want, we are able to improve the car from Friday to Saturday with support here on the track but also in the factory. Guys helping us to improve the car. We get the most out of it in qualifying. We had a fantastic race today. Great pitstops as well, obviously those things are easy to forget and easy to remember when they go wrong but I think the pitstops were fantastic – at least the one I had. It takes a lot of discipline, focus in the right moment, to be there, to be sharp and I think we were in the moment. Not thinking about yesterday or last week or last race and not thinking about the end of the race or next week. So, really tried to focus on the moment, which I think is the best thing we can do to maximise the result today. As I said, I'm very happy, I enjoyed the race a lot. I think it was crucial to open a gap in the first stint to break the DRS early to Mark, who had a very good start I think, and it was quite close in Turn One. But I was able to brake a little bit late and have quite a good exit out of Turn Three, which was important for the remainder of the race, and then was able to open a gap, not just to Mark but also to the cars behind and obviously control the race from there. I think we were very competitive on the soft tyres; on the hard tyres I think McLarens and Ferrari were pretty competitive. Unfortunately Mark lost KERS but as I said, I think we were probably not as competitive on the primes as on the soft tyres but all in all a fantastic race. And again a fantastic trophy this year in India. Just very, very happy.

A pretty amazing 33 laps on used soft tyres.

SV: To be honest it's difficult to know when you start the race how long you can go – but I think we felt after a couple of laps that the tyres were holding up reasonably well and then when you cross around 15/16 to 20 laps with still something in the tyres left, you obviously know it goes more to the direction of one stop. I think it was anyway always going to be one or two stops. On Friday the tyres seemed to last fairly well and again they did today. So yeah, it's not always happening like that, sometimes we have a surprise on Sunday, so I think we prepared as much as we could but by that stage it was obviously clear to not split the 27 remaining laps in two bits: so to go with the prime stint and do the same as everyone else did. I think we all came the pits within five to ten laps.

Were you actually being pushed in by Mark at the end there, back into the pits? Had you ran out of fuel?

SV: Ah yes! I switched off the car. I was told to park the car under the podium but I didn't know how far away it was. I didn't remember that from last year. I think it's the only big mistake that happened to us this weekend. But it didn't really matter and Mark gave me a push. He's quite popular for those sort of things. I think he gave Fernando a lift last year in Nürburgring when he had to stop on track. Yeah, gave me a little bit of a push to make it to Park Ferme to stop the car. Thank You.

Fernando, as Martin was saying on the podium, we had a fairly good illustration of how good your DRS is on the straight. Two extraordinary overtaking manoeuvres, particularly at the start for example with the McLarens and then later with Mark.

FA: The first lap we cannot use DRS anyway, it was just the slipstream and I was a nice run out of Turn Three and I could overtake both the McLarens. They were fighting but forgot I was there in Turn Four so they keep the fight by their own selves. We nearly touch each other but I was lucky to exit Turn Four without any damage and overtake one of them. Jenson was defending into Turn Six quite a lot so unfortunately we could overtake only one at the start. One after a few laps because I think we had a little bit more pace than Jenson and then with Mark it was a combination of KERS and DRS because I think Mark was running without KERS so that make a huge difference in terms of top speed and the overtaking was relatively easy.

You must be pretty encouraged by this second place today. To be so close to Sebastian today.

FA: Yes, I think it's good news for us, seeing that we could fight Red Bull in the race. More or less we knew this. In qualifying we are not close enough to fight for pole position but in the race normally things improve for us. Today was another example but it was perfect for the strategy from the team:

very good start, very good top speed and tyre management. Everything set up for the race, everything was fine and I push 120 per cent every lap so the combination was this second place.

So when you look at Abu Dhabi, what are your hopes there?

FA: I think we need to bring some new parts to Abu Dhabi, hopefully improve a little bit more than competitiveness of the car, try to be a little bit closer to Red Bulls on Saturday and hopefully on Sunday as well. Obviously three races remaining; championship is the main target so we need to recover some points and will be nice to finish in front of Sebastian in Abu Dhabi, whatever the position it is. And if we can win the race it will be even better – but for that we need to make a step forward. At the moment we are not able to win.

Mark, a good start off the line.

MW: It was good – just a shame it wasn't a long Barcelona or Malaysia: it would have been a bit nicer but I had the run, obviously, but then the radius into Turn One on the inside... I mean we were together but it's very, very tricky down in there and also I saw Fernando last year obviously if you brake on the limit it's very easy to go a bit too far. So, Seb come across, which is fair enough and then I was worried about the other guys obviously having a very good exit on not just me but both of us. Turn Three: was very important to get to there in good shape. So, the start was good, exit at Turn Three wasn't too bad. Obviously it's tricky for all of use to get off there on the first lap. I got off there not too bad, got a little bit of a tow off Seb and then settled into the race from there.

And then that first pitstop – you must have been longing to make that first pitstop and knowing you couldn't – because you were losing time obviously just before the end of the stint.

MW: No, I was pretty happy with where the stop is. It's nice to go a little bit longer. We had to react to Fernando. We would have gone even longer. Obviously it wasn't due to tyres, it was due to KERS that I started to lose the rhythm and the tempo: obviously when the KERS is coming on and off, we need to also screw around with the brake balance and lots of other things. The guys have got a huge amount of plate-spinning to try to feed that into the cockpit for me. The last thing you want in a one-stop strategy race is starting to have front locking. Because we need to do long, long stints. So obviously this is a pain in the arse and we had to manage it as best we can. The stop was really because of when Fernando pitted, so we had to react to that. Stop was alright and then the prime was a little bit more high-maintenance: a little bit trickier actually, I think for both Seb and I. I managed to break the DRS, managed to get away from Fernando. I then got myself together. KERS was there or thereabouts, on and off, and then I caught... I mean the blue flags didn't do nothing for the backmarkers, that's the problem: the guys don't know how much time they kill us in the fast corners. So, when you catch some of those guys in those corners, you lose a second and a half in one sector, or a second. Which happened twice. But, that's the way it was. And those guys can't do that when you've got guys... when you're racing with Fernando, the three of us on the limit, Fernando's going to be all over that stuff. So, it was back on again, and then when I had no KERS, I mean it's not really a battle on the back straight. I went across to the inside but Fernando come past. They've got a very good top gear as well, big top speed. That was it. Then I pushed like... as strong as possible to get to the end of the race. So third, I'm pretty happy with how I drove, I think I drove a pretty good race but in the end it wasn't enough. We could have got more points today for sure. Well done to Seb on the win.

How much pressure from Lewis at the end?

MW: Certainly needed to keep the focus and y'know, it's so demoralising, that straight with no KERS. I think I was very lucky that Lewis made a mistake in Turn Three, I think on lap 57. I saw it in the mirrors, it was either 57 or 58. And that was important because I think he was starting to get a bit of momentum and I was very keen to keep him off the DRS as long as possible because once he got that I was toast. I think another two laps and he would have got me.

When did you have the problem with KERS? When did you lose it first?

MW: Around about lap 19, 20. Maybe a bit earlier. It was on and off and then completely off and then off. It was a moving target really.

Fernando, yesterday you were quoted as saying that you were 100 percent certain that you will be this year's World Champion. Do you still feel that way after this race?

FA: Of course. We know that there were still 100 points yesterday and now 75 points (available). We are 13 behind. We know that we need to improve. We are not fast enough, especially on Saturdays, as I said, but hopefully we can improve the situation in Abu Dhabi or in USA. The races are long, and as we saw today with Mark, a KERS problem can happen to anyone, it can happen to Seb, it can happen to me and it can happen to all of us. Still many points on the table and I'm still very optimistic.

Of the three races that are left, is there any one in particular, do you think, that will favour Ferrari?

FA: I think Brazil will be quite good for us and hopefully it's a happy Grand Prix.

Now that you have been a part of two editions of the Indian Grand Prix, is there one unique feature about this track, destination or venue, which you find distinctly different from the others that you race at around the world, fans included?

SV: I think every Grand Prix is special and has something special about it. Obviously it's the second time that we've run here. So far, all the quotes from the drivers regarding this circuit have been very positive. It's a lot of fun for us. It's not so easy to manage the tyres in one lap for qualifying, but also over the race (distance) so it's a big challenge and I think that's what we like. There are some corners, like turn 15, where you always think that something went wrong and you will try and do it better next time. You get challenged to the limit which is obviously what we like. We don't want to make mistakes but obviously we like those sort of places. On top of that, I think it's an impressive country. Obviously last year I had a bit of time to have a look, and I think coming back is quite a big difference. Obviously, in here (the paddock) it's something that we all know, the Formula One paddock but having a look at Delhi or a little bit the life outside the circuit is very different to other places. I think there's a couple of stations or a couple of stops on the calendar that are very impressive in that regard. India has a lot to offer. There are a lot of people here: 1.3 billion or more so quite incredible and just to see that, to see how people live here, to see the culture, I think is very very different. In life, I think a lot is always about expectations and in Europe expectations are very very high. Money plays a big role whereas here, I think, expectations are fairly low. Money is not that important. It doesn't matter how old you are. I think it's more important to have a healthy, happy life, to enjoy your life with your family, with your kids. Sometimes to compare the circumstances you live in, here in India compared to Europe – obviously I grew up in Germany – it's black and white, it's very different but it's nice to see that the people are so happy, warm-hearted. I think it would definitely be nice to spend a little bit more time to travel around and get more of an idea. As I said, in here, everything is more or less the same. It will be the same next week when we go to Abu Dhabi, even though it's a completely different place. As a country, this place has a lot to offer.

MW: Good question and a good answer.

Sebastian, in the latter part of the race, the front end of your floor seemed to touch the ground. You could see sparks coming off it. Did it cost you time; it seemed to have repaired itself later on?

SV: I noticed the problem. I think it was when I got the DRS of a backmarker, from Timo (Glock) actually, pretty close to the end of the race and obviously when you open DRS, you go much quicker down the straight and I saw some sparks. I think you've seen a couple of cars throwing out some sparks out of the back of the car this weekend. I don't think it was really a problem. I didn't feel anything regarding the balance (of the car). All the other laps it was no problem, but I saw it in the mirror, I saw Timo backing off and I think he was a bit afraid at the time. We obviously need to analyse what was the problem, but it didn't cost us anything or slow us down.

Sebastian, every time you make a point about the team members in the factory and those working behind the scenes. You seem to have a special bond with your pit crew which plays an important role in any driver's success, whether he is a World Champion contender or not. Can you share what kind of relationship you have with your pit crew members and the main members of the team?

SV: I think it's the same for Mark and myself. Obviously we work very closely with the guys. I think we have 20 races a year, a couple of pre-season tests and obviously we spend a lot of time in the factory, we spend time here at the track, working with the members of the team, every single one: mechanics, engineers, all sorts of staff. Obviously you know who you're talking to. If you're new to the environment it takes a bit of time to get to know everyone and to get to know how everyone ticks. I think the special thing at the moment and the special thing at the beginning of the year at any stage is the atmosphere in the garage is fantastic, the guys are really incredible. I don't know how they do it, they hardly sleep at night, only a couple of hours. They try to prepare the car as best as they can in order to give Mark and myself the best chance to have a solid race. Back in the factory, the people are pushing, obviously trying to improve the car. It's obviously difficult to say thank you to each and every one because quite a lot of people work behind the scenes in our team, but everyone plays their role, it's not a one man show. I think the result today or the result last week or whenever, the results in the last two years are not just thanks to me or thanks to Adrian (Newey), or thanks to any particular person in the team, I think it's thanks to all of us. Everyone is pushing hard, there are lots of bright guys with good ideas. Obviously some guys are really important but all in all, that's the spirit we share and it's just nice to be a big part of it.

Sebastian, you say there is no one element that makes the difference. Are you under-estimating your own part in this?

SV: No, that's the way I see it. Obviously on a Sunday afternoon or a Saturday afternoon, whenever, in qualifying, in the race, when I'm out in the circuit in the car, then I know that there is a lot depending on me. If I get it wrong there's no result, if I get it right it might be a good result. But I think there's far more work behind that than just one lap in the race, or one lap in qualifying, one result in a year, in the season. That's why I'm convinced of what I said and I think everyone is pushing very hard. Obviously it's easier to measure if I make a mistake, I lose half a second in the last corner, it's easy to say that instead of 1m 30.0s, I could have done 1m 29.5s but that's why it's difficult to measure the effort everyone brings in. The guys in the garage are working hard, preparing the car, preparing the pit stop etc. It's obviously difficult to measure if you're talking about performance or lap time, but then it becomes very easy to measure if you don't finish the race, compared to a race where you do finish and you collect a lot of points. Sometimes it's down to one guy who is obviously committed and does the right thing at the right moment, preventing a problem or sometimes his head is not right, he's not fully committed then small mistakes add up to maybe a big mistake costing a certain result on a Sunday. I think that's where it's fair to say that we win together and we lose together.

Fernando, looking at the performance that you had during the race, and the result that you had at the end, second place, may we say that this was the best race of your season, or the best performance in the car?

FA: I think it's difficult to say, I don't know, it's difficult to choose. I'm really proud and happy of the Valencia performance, or Malaysia or some other races where we fight all the race through, Monza etc, but definitely this one was one of the best, I think, pushing from lap one to the last lap, not risking or taking more risks than in previous races with overtakings etc, so quite happy .

Seb, there's been all the stories on the internet about you and Ferrari. Could you set the record straight please: is there any arrangement, agreement, talk between you and your people and Ferrari?

SV: This could be quite funny now, what I say... No, there's nothing, nothing to tell you, nothing I've signed. Nothing has changed. It's quite amusing. I don't know where it came from but... I don't read much, so it's quite a surprise when you get to the circuit and get all these questions. Nothing to report. As I said, I can't be happier at the moment, I'm very happy with... Actually, there's one thing I would like to say about this. As I said, there's no reason to write anything or report anything but obviously, as I said earlier, you don't know every single one in the team, and it's hard to speak to every single one, so if there's - sorry to say - some bullshit in the press, obviously there might be some concerns back in the factory, but I'm 100 percent behind them as I feel they're 100 percent behind me and therefore I want to get this straight: there's nothing to report and I'm very happy at Red Bull Racing.

Sebastian, during the last ten laps when Fernando passed Mark, did you fear that Fernando would come back after you and may be successful?

SV: You never feel too certain. Obviously it's important, as I said earlier, I tried to open a gap to - you know - later on, and no matter what happened, to have a little bit of a cushion, to have time to react to be able to control the race in the end. Obviously I was told that Fernando got into P2, Mark had the problem, so I think, as Mark said, obviously with a completely smooth race he could stay ahead. As we also said, on the hard tyres, McLaren and Ferrari were quite competitive. I think I had the same gap when he started to be second as I had in the end, so I was able to keep the gap and control the race.

Question to Fernando and to Seb: Seb, first, is there anything you want from Fernando at the moment; and Fernando is there anything you want to have from Seb at the moment?

SV: Could L...? Ah, no you have a cap. I was just about to say, his cap, but he hasn't... Where did you get that from?

FA: I can give it to you but... I didn't understand the...

SV: I think we are both happy with what we have.

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