



Sunday press conference

After a thrilling German Grand Prix it was the two front-row starters and the man from the back of the grid who lined up to face the press at the post-race press conference.

Present were Nico Rosberg (Mercedes), Valtteri Bottas (Williams), and Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes).

Q: Nico, how sweet is the taste of the home victory champagne?

Nico ROSBERG: It's fantastic. It's an amazing feeling for me to win here at home. A very, special day for me. Thank you for all your support here this weekend.

Q: Valtteri, three time on the podium now but how hot was the breath of this guy [Hamilton] on your neck?

Valtteri BOTTAS: Yeah, I feel really happy again being third time in a row on the podium. These guys were too quick today but really happy that we at least managed to keep one of them behind. It was not easy, it required all the info from the engineers, what to do with the engine modes, and from my side pushing hard but I really want to say thanks to all the fans. I also see many Finnish flags here so, thanks Finland.

Q: Lewis, lots of fans in for you here. King of overtaking, 17 places, fastest lap, damaged front wing, so how much racing fun was that for you as a racer?

Lewis HAMILTON: I had great fun. It was great to see how many fans we had here today, thank you so much for the support. I did as good as I could today. It was very hard to get through the pack safely. I had a little bit of a collision with Jenson. I honestly thought he was opening the door to let me past, he's been a bit like that in the past race for example, so my bad on judgment there. It's very hard to overtake at the end, they were so fast on the straights but I'm very happy I got some points today.

Q: Thanks Lewis. Coming back to you Nico. Lots of points for you but not much time to celebrate as the next race is coming up next week already.

NR: Yeah, well definitely we'll be celebrating a little bit tonight, I hope you [the fans] will as well, it would be great to continue the soccer world championship spirit today a little bit. I look forward to the next race in Hungary. With the car that we have at the moment... I'm very, very thankful to Mercedes for the car that they've built us, it's really a pleasure at the moment. Hungary will be good.

Q: So Nico, your fourth win this year, I think your first on home soil – and which of the great things that have happened to you this week has given you the best feeling?

NR: That's getting married. That's definitely the case. That was the best feeling. But of course everything has been special. Really fortunate, just had a great... many positive things happening in the two weeks, or week and a half. Been really enjoyable, and also this weekend with pole and the win. Just awesome. Very, very special day today.

Q: Valtteri, something of a defensive master class at the end, defending from Lewis in the final laps. Tell us a little bit about what was going through your mind, the way you positioned the car in those final laps, particularly given the state of the tyres after a very long stint.

VB: Yes, big enough the last stint. I was already close with Lewis but he stopped and at that point there was still twenty or so laps to go. I knew it was going to be really close in the end. With a new set of tyres, 20 laps to go, he can make up the pit loss, and he did and he was riding my tail the last few laps. For me it was just really, really important to always get a good exit for the DRS straights, so out of Turn One and out of Turns Two-Three, to get as good an exit as possible and brake always as late as possible for the hairpin at the end. Also from the team, we were communicating and I got all the support from the engineers to get the right engine modes for defending – so thanks for that.

Q: Lewis, from 20th on the grid to third at the end and so much to deal with, so many changes as well, you were on a change of strategy at the end there where you were going to do two very attacking stints on the super-soft of 13 laps. They obviously changed that after the Sutil spin, brought you in a bit earlier, so you had to do a bit longer final stint. I wonder though how much the damage of the front wing in the Jenson Button incident hurt your chances of doing more than third today.

LH: I couldn't tell you. The car was a little bit different but nonetheless to still get some points today, I'm grateful and very happy with the car today that Mercedes provided us with and congratulations to Nico. It's fantastic for him on his home soil and also for Mercedes-Benz. So I'm glad I could add some points today.

Q: (Leonid Novozhilov – Fl Life) Valtteri, is second place today the maximum for you, is second place the maximum for your team or can you do more?

VB: We always aim for more but for now we need to be happy with these points. Of course we were unlucky with Felipe again, we didn't get both cars in a good position but I think today was the maximum result. We did everything perfectly and managed to keep Lewis behind in the end which got us an extra few points but in the future, we are definitely aiming for more and this is not the maximum.

Q: (Heikki Kulita – Turun Sanomat) Valtteri, your target for this year was a podium; now you've got a hat-trick of them. How surprised are you with this success, because it's not so usual for Finnish drivers to get three podiums in a row?

VB: OK...

NR: I got three in a row.

VB: Yeah, of course I feel really lucky also to be part of this. Last year we could not have expected to be three times in a row on the podium but we now... This is the package we have and it's all down to hard work and we need to always keep aiming for more, like I said before. Of course, it feels really good to be (on the podium) for a third time in a row but I think we're aiming for more than that now. We know Budapest might be a bit difficult for us but hopefully we get some updates.

Q: (Paolo Ianieri – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Lewis, do you see the glass of your race more half full or half empty?

LH: Well, I don't really know how to answer that really. I came from last, so to get on the podium is quite an achievement, so perhaps half full.

Q: (Barna Zsoldos – Nemzeti Sport) Lewis, you've got an incredible record in Hungary – seven races, four wins. What is your secret there and what are your feelings in general about next week's race?

LH: I don't really have any secrets there, just been very... If I've ever had any... Just been fortunate in that race, great support there as usual with the fans and a circuit I really enjoy. It's a circuit where you can really attack, it works for an attacking driver like myself so perhaps it suits my driving style a little bit more than some others, maybe.

Q: (Udo Doering – Darmstaedter Echo) Nico, are you a little bit surprised to win so clearly and when you saw the car of Sutil standing on the track, did you fear another safety car?

NR: Yeah, definitely I'm a bit surprised because in qualifying the Williams were quite close so didn't really expect to have such a big advantage in the race. And yes, I definitely got a bit worried when I saw Sutil's car out there because I was sure there was going to be a safety car and that would have obviously made it a lot more difficult.

Race report

Nico Rosberg delivered a commanding performance to win his second home grand prix of the season at the Hockenheimring on Sunday afternoon, but the German's victory was outshined by teammate Lewis Hamilton, who carved his way from the back of the grid to a podium finish.

Following a qualifying crash and an unscheduled gearbox change Hamilton was the last of the men on the grid, and despite stopping once more than Rosberg and Valtteri Bottas – who led him to the chequered flag – the Briton spent the final laps of the German Grand Prix a scant half a second off the rear wing of the Williams.

Hamilton's long opening stint was a masterclass in making the most of a difficult situation, and by lap 7 the Mercedes driver was running in twelfth place. On lap 14, he past Sergio Perez for fifth, and two laps later Hamilton was running in second place behind teammate Rosberg, only 7.7s adrift from the race leader after the bulk of the grid had pitted.

Running long on the softs Hamilton pitted at the end of lap 26 for another set of softs, returning to the track in eighth before making short work of Daniel Ricciardo and Jenson Button. In getting past the McLaren Hamilton made contact with his former teammate, losing his left front-wing endplate in the process and suffering a loss of downforce as a consequence.

Ahead of the Briton, Sebastian Vettel and Fernando Alonso – who spent Sunday afternoon engaged in a two-man mini grand prix – pitted, promoting Hamilton to third place where he was gaining on Bottas, closing on the Finn at around two seconds a lap. But a spun Sutil stranded on the start straight – and the logical assumption that the Safety Car would be brought out – saw Mercedes call Hamilton into the pits for a third stop, costing the Briton precious time against rivals Bottas and Rosberg, both of whom were on a two-stop strategy.

While Hamilton was the undoubted star of the afternoon, the race was action-packed from the opening lap, when Kevin Magnussen and Felipe Massa collided with cars running four abreast. The Brazilian was launched into the air, flipped, and found himself uninjured but out of the race, while Magnussen was forced to pit and returned at the back of the pack behind the Safety Car as Massa's Williams was recovered. From there it was a hard slog for the Dane to recover, but he finished in an impressive ninth, just behind teammate Button.

Massa and Sutil were not the only dramatic retirements at the Hockenheimring: on lap 45 Daniil Kvyat was forced to leap from his burning Toro Rosso not long after having complained of a loss of power. Romain Grosjean had a much more peaceful retirement on lap 27, stopping due to loss of power, and making two Renault-powered retirements in Germany.

Behind the leading pack it was Alonso and Vettel who proved to be particularly entertaining, with the pair carrying on their battle from the British Grand Prix two weeks ago. For the bulk of the afternoon the pair were running together, each pit wall covering the other's stops so that the German and the Spaniard spent the 67 laps of the German Grand Prix passing and repassing each other on track and in the pits, with Vettel eventually emerging victorious as Alonso began to struggle on old rubber.

The final lap was a hairy one for the Ferrari driver, who was forced to fend off a charging Ricciardo once he had been passed by Vettel. Despite having had a healthy lead over the Australian with five laps to go, the pair took the chequered flag less than a tenth of a second apart.

German Grand Prix race result

1. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1h33m42.914s
2. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) + 20.789s
3. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) + 22.530s
4. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) + 44.014s
5. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) + 52.467s
6. Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull) + 52.549s
7. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) + 1m04.178s
8. Jenson Button (McLaren) + 1m24.711s
9. Kevin Magnussen (McLaren) + 1 lap
10. Sergio Perez (Force India) + 1 lap
11. Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari) + 1 lap
12. Pastor Maldonado (Lotus) + 1 lap
13. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) + 1 lap
14. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) + 1 lap
15. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) + 1 lap
16. Kamui Kobayashi (Caterham) + 2 laps
17. Max Chilton (Marussia) + 2 laps
18. Marcus Ericsson (Caterham) + 2 laps

Adrian Sutil (Sauber) RET
Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso) RET
Romain Grosjean (Lotus) RET
Felipe Massa (Williams) RET

Saturday press conference

After a chaotic qualifying session at the Hockenheimring it was a Mercedes-powered trio who attended the post-qualifying press conference.

Present were Nico Rosberg (Mercedes), Valtteri Bottas (Williams), and Felipe Massa (Williams).

Q: Nico, congratulations. Pole for your home grand prix and what a week it's been for you: Germany win the World Cup, you get a new contract, and you get married, and now you've got pole for your home grand prix?

Nico ROSBERG: Thank you very much, yes. For now it's been going really, really well. It's great, home race here and to be on pole is fantastic. Of course I would have preferred if it was an open fight with Lewis. A little bit less happy as a result because Lewis didn't have a shot at it in the end. But all in all, still a fantastic day up to now, but no points for today. [The] important [part] is just tomorrow, still a long way to go but it's still a good start.

Q: Very well done. Valtteri, it looked like quite a calm session; you worked your way through Q1 to Q2 to Q3 in a very methodical way. You looked fairly untroubled but do you think you could have got a bit closer to Nico or even challenged him?

Valtteri BOTTAS: Yeah, I must say we must again be really happy with the result we got today as a team, second and third, so well done to everyone, but I think Mercedes is still ahead. The lap I had in the end was no mistakes and a really nice, so I really I felt I got everything out of the car today.

Q: Very well done. Felipe, Williams once again up towards the front in qualifying. What do you put this performance down to and where do you feel you lost out to Valtteri today?

Felipe MASSA: Yeah, for sure I think I was struggling to put the lap together, so I had some movement from the tyres and I was not able to have a perfect car – just to put all the sectors together. I was able to do one sector better in one way, the other sector better in the other way. The car was not 100 per cent perfect in terms of set-up to put the perfect lap and Valtteri did really a very good lap. But anyway I'm still quite happy with the result and I'm quite happy with our car and for sure in the race the conditions are completely different, the feeling of the car as well is different, so let's try to a very good job tomorrow as well.

Q: Coming back to you Nico. What have you heard from the team about Lewis' situation and also what are your thoughts about the race tomorrow, particularly with these incredibly high temperatures we're experiencing here in Hockenheim?

NR: I don't any details about the other car. I just knew it didn't apply to my car, so from that point of view I was comfortable that I could keep on pushing. For tomorrow, it's supposed to be a bit colder, which will make it easier on the tyres, because the tyres are very, very soft so degradation is high. And of course the weather could play a role, so just need to take it as it comes.

Q: Nico, firstly in Q1, a bit of a scare at the start. You seemed to go off the road a couple of times and with about five minutes to go after the red flag stoppage you went out on a set of super-softs, which is very unusual for you. Obviously you were feeling the pressure at that point. And also could you clear up, you mentioned before Lewis' situation didn't apply to you – that's because I understand you run two different types of brakes between you. Maybe you could explain a little bit about that.

NR: Yeah, so quali one, I had problem with my brakes to start off in qualifying because we changed them for qualifying. It didn't feel good, the whole of qualifying really I was struggling with that. Sort of found my way then – but it was especially difficult in the beginning in quali one, really difficult. And then, yeah, brakes, we run two different brakes between us. So, the problem that he had didn't apply to my car as a result.

Q: It was a disc failure?

NR: I'm not sure of the details.

Q: Valtteri, a general question – just to sum up your feelings how it feels at this early stage of your career to be running at the front all of the time.

VB: I feel really happy to be part of this team as we are really on the right way and again, a strong result from us as a team and from me and Felipe. So, it's good to be part of this. We are really focussing to get better and better. The race is tomorrow, there's no points for today. We need to focus on that, again trying to do the perfect job if we can and get the maximum points available.

Q: Felipe, Nico was saying earlier he thinks it's going to be a little cooler tomorrow – which is obviously good news from the car and tyre point of view – but maybe you could put into words for us how you think these tyres are going to perform here tomorrow, what the challenges you think will be in tomorrow's grand prix given the relative temperatures.

FM: I think it will be a big challenge for everybody. So, we're running super-soft and soft, definitely is not 100 per cent easy to keep the tyres in the good shape all the time, every lap, so the consistency... it's not very easy to be there every lap, so maybe we will see more stops than at other races – I don't know. Definitely having a little bit less temperature in the track will help a little bit, especially our cars so I hope this can be a good help for us tomorrow to make these tyres a little bit more consistent and trying to make the strategy the best way as well. But it's always a big challenge tomorrow in the race.

Q: Nico, you're looking at the replay there of Lewis' accident. Your thoughts?

NR: I hadn't seen it yet – but it looks pretty bad but I hear he's OK and just a little bit bruised on the knees.

Q: (Graham Keilloh – F1 Plus) Nico, can you talk us through when you knew that Lewis was out of qualifying; do you then subsequently still push as much as you would have done if Lewis had been there or do you reign it back in to make sure you are getting laps in for the rest of the qualifying session?

NR: No, it doesn't change, it doesn't change the way I approach it. I'm still flat out and pushing all the way through, definitely.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – Universo On-Line) To both Williams drivers: yesterday you were struggling a lot with the car and suddenly today you appear almost fighting for pole position. What's the magic you did in the car from one day to the next?

FM: Well, I don't think we were struggling yesterday. Yesterday we were P6 in the session, so normally, even in the race, when we are starting at the front, we were top five, top six, so I don't think we were struggling yesterday. Maybe in the first session everything was new for everybody, because there was a little change on the suspension for everybody but it was just something that you needed to get used to with the set-up but we were not struggling yesterday.

VB: Yeah, I agree. We knew that after Friday there was nothing really to worry about it. We knew that we had work to do to improve the car which we managed to do, improve the balance, but I think maybe sometimes some other teams are more focusing on qualifying laps in practice rather than just testing.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Nico, I would love to say that this is the first time in F1 history that there is an all-Finnish front row. Do you agree?

NR: Yes, I agree!

Q: (Paolo Ianieri – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Nico, in the last two races, Lewis has always been starting quite behind you but he's always managed to catch up pretty quickly. This time he's starting 15th. Is this a track where you think he can catch up as quickly as he could in Zeltweg and Silverstone or could you have more advantage here, looking at how far he is behind or maybe allow you to drive another kind of race, not so full attack all the time?

NR: For sure, I still expect him to come through the field quickly. I don't know. It's difficult to predict. I need to do my own race, I need to push anyways from the front, I need to go for it and try and pull a gap and then see where I am with strategy and everything.

Saturday report

Mercedes continued their dominant streak on Saturday morning at the Hockenheimring, with Nico Rosberg topping the timesheets by a margin of six-tenths over teammate Lewis Hamilton. The scorching temperatures seen in the morning session carried over into the afternoon's qualifying, and tyre degradation was at levels last seen in 2013.

Of the favoured Mercedes pairing it was Hamilton who was first to head the timesheets in Q1: in trying to match his time Rosberg pushed too hard and found himself off track, ruining his rubber in the process. But Hamilton's time at the top was short-lived, as his initial 1m18.683s lap was bested by Valtteri Bottas, who was six-tenths faster.

Any chance of Hamilton on pole was scuppered when the Briton brought out a red flag with seven minutes left on the clock, spinning across the gravel and smashing into the barriers at the hairpin. Replays of the incident showed a front-right brake failure was to blame.

Rosberg was first out of the pits when the session restarted and went to the top of the timesheets with a 1m17.631s lap, the first to lap below 1m18s. Behind him were Daniel Ricciardo and Bottas, while local hero Sebastian Vettel languished at the bottom of the pack before deposing the Finn and popping up in P3.

In the dropout zone were the six now usual suspects: the driver pairings from Lotus, Marussia, and Caterham, with Marcus Ericsson stuck in the pits thanks to a hydraulic failure carried over from FP3. A late improvement from Grosjean saw Adrian Sutil out in Q3.

With Hamilton out by default there were only five places to fight to avoid in Q2, and the session got off to a slow start with only seven timed laps on the board by the mid-point. Rosberg led the pack from Bottas and Felipe Massa before Vettel and Kevin Magnussen pushed the Brazilian further down the order.

Despite occasional complaints about traffic, Q2 passed without incident. Fighting for survival in the closing minutes were Kimi Raikkonen, Jean-Eric Vergne, Grosjean, Esteban Gutierrez, and Sergio Perez. Perez managed to save himself with a single timed lap, pushing Jenson Button out of Q2 to create a session that claimed the scalps of three world champions.

Having been the last to set a time in Q2, Perez was the first in Q3, although his 1m19.389s effort was quickly bested by teammate Nico Hulkenberg. Nico Rosberg then crossed the line and blew them both away, going nearly three seconds faster with a 1m16.540s lap. Bottas and Massa were able to get within half a second and seven-tenths respectively, but Vettel in provisional P4 was over a second off Rosberg's pace.

While the Williams driver pairing got close, no one was able to oust Rosberg from the top spot, and what would have been a Mercedes front row lock-out had Hamilton not suffered brake failure became a Mercedes-powered lock-out of the first two rows on the grid.

Provisional grid

1. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1m16.540s
2. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) 1m16.759s
3. Felipe Massa (Williams) 1m17.078s
4. Kevin Magnussen (McLaren) 1m17.214s
5. Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull) 1m17.273s
6. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1m17.577s
7. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1m17.649s
8. Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso) 1m17.965s
9. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) 1m18.014s
10. Sergio Perez (Force India) 1m18.035s

11. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1m18.193s
12. Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari) 1m18.273s
13. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1m18.285s
14. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1m18.983s
15. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) NO TIME SET
16. Adrian Sutil (Sauber) 1m19.142s

17. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) 1m18.787s*
18. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) 1m19.676s
19. Pastor Maldonado (Lotus) 1m20.195s
20. Kamui Kobayashi (Caterham) 1m20.408s
21. Max Chilton (Marussia) 1m20.489s
22. Marcus Ericsson (Caterham) NO TIME SET

* Esteban Gutierrez qualified in P14, but will start Sunday's race from P17 thanks to a three-place grid penalty for causing a collision at the British Grand Prix.

Friday press conference

A mix of personalities at the senior team personnel press conference led to a disjointed session with questions on tyres, audience figures, and an attempt to get to the bottom of the new Caterham structures.

Present were Cyril Abiteboul (RenaultSportF1), Christijan Albers (Caterham), John Booth (Marussia), Federico Gastaldi (Lotus), Paul Hembery (Pirelli), and Toto Wolff (Mercedes).

Q: Cyril, if we could start with you. Perhaps you could tell us why the job change to Renault, was this unexpected and what have you seen so far?

Cyril ABITEBOUL: Well, what can I say about this to answer your question. Obviously there is an element of confidentiality, so I will not disclose everything. Let's put it this way: I have been doing 10 years with Renault before joining Caterham. Before joining Caterham I left on very good terms with Renault, we are, I hope, long-time friends and I hope this will remain the case. Obviously the situation with Caterham was not working – the

whole structure, from shareholder to the structure in place was just not delivering, so something had to change. Lots of things are changing. I think that's good. From my perspective also I had to change. There was some appetite at Renault to turn around what is happening on the track, not just the engine situation, it's wider than that, so there was an opportunity there and that's it.

Q: Tell me, how much of the effort that's going on is around trying to fix the problems that you've got in 2014 and how much is looking forward, because obviously 2015 offers you an opportunity to try to get a bit closer to the Mercedes engine for example with the new homologation that comes in in February.

CAb: Anyway the engine world is not exactly the same as the chassis world, in the sense that with the homologation you are not free to develop the engine and therefore what we can do this year is fairly limited. What we need to focus on right now is to get reliability sorted out, because clearly what we are delivering on track is not acceptable for some of our customers. We need to fix that, clearly; this is for this season and see what can be done from a performance perspective. Next year, we are quite well advanced actually, there was already the first fire up of next year's engine on the dyno this week, so there is a programme, it's going well, we need to improve performance but it's already interesting to see this weekend with all the changes chassis-wise and engine-wise that there is some progress so hopefully it will be confirmed tomorrow.

Q: Replacing Cyril as team principal at Caterham and joining us for his first press conference since 2007 when he was a grand prix driver is Christijan Albers. Christijan, you're now in your second race in charge, what's your verdict so far of the set-up, what's been going and what are the first areas on your priority list?

Christijan ALBERS: First I would to start [by saying] that the thoughts of myself and the team are with the tragedy of the Malaysian Airlines. I feel sorry for their loss. I think that's the most important thing today. Team-wise... yeah, it's not easy. You see people in a team fighting for four years to get a good car that delivers performance and it did not work so it's very important to motivate the people again and to get the right structure in place. I think we are a little bit in that direction. I have a lot of faith in the new technical director John Iley, also the chief designer Keith Barclay and also the new team manager Miodrag Kotur. So, you know, we are pushing. The only thing I can say about the team is that we need progress and stability.

Q: Can you tell us anything about your drive line-up? Do you plan on retaining the same two drivers for the remainder of the season?

CAI: I want to see results; that's very important for every Formula One team. To be honest today I think they did a good job. We had some bad luck in the second practice, but they are sharp and we know we need performance and also of course with a team as Caterham F1 we also always need a little bit of budget.

Q: John coming to you, on the face of it you're in quite a strong position. You've got two points on the board; you're ahead of Sauber and Caterham of course. How does it feel inside the team and what's the short and medium term plan?

John BOOTH: Well, we're obviously very comfortable with where we are at the moment. We were very happy to get the two points in Monaco but there are nine races still to go and obviously anything can happen. We've got to keep pushing and keep focused and try to defend as hard as we can from Caterham and Sauber.

Q: After the Barcelona you took a noticeable step forward in performance. Was the Silverstone test equally positive and do you feel you're closing in on Sauber now? How far behind do you think you are?

JB: One of our test days in Silverstone was a Pirelli test day which was very helpful for 2015 and the second day we spent a lot of time thinking about running without any sort of linked suspension, so we got a useful work done on the second day.

Q: Toto, obviously 326 points on the board in the Constructors' Championship with your nearest rivals on 168 but still a few alarm bells - Nico Rosberg's gearbox problem in Silverstone wasn't the first time you've had a problem with a gearbox. How's that being tackled?

TW: First of all it must be tackled. We are looking very solid in terms of pace. The guys are quick and the car was very reliable at the beginning of the season, if you look besides Melbourne. And since then we had a couple of issues and we must get on top of it. We are working hard and trying to understand how to improve mechanical reliability. This is one of our most important topics, obviously, because in order to win you need to finish first.

Q: Obviously we're at the half way stage in this championship and Lewis Hamilton is just four points away from Nico Rosberg. He calls this a reset moment. How do you see the battle between the two of them and how has your management of that evolved over the half-season so far?

TW: You see how quick it can go. The discussions we had before Silverstone were 'will it ever be possible for Lewis to catch up 29 points' and here we go, you have a DNF and your team-mate wins the race and it's all on reset. It doesn't need a lot of management actually. I think it's about clarity and transparency between the drivers and within the company. It needs communication. This is what we do and until now, knock on wood, we haven't had any issues. Also, both of the guys are so professional and on top of their game and know it's important to finish the races. So, until now, I'm really happy with how it goes.

Q: Federico, Lotus has been a little up and down on performance: strong in places like China and Austria but then fell back a little bit perhaps at Silverstone. What's behind that? Is it power-unit related or chassis related...?

FG: Well, I think we're still having problems understanding the engine - but we're also having problems in Enstone, matching chassis, aerodynamics and the engine so we're now trying new setups and also today we're testing a new front wing. So, we're trying to improve but it is a very, very slow process this year.

Q: You carried out the tyre test in Silverstone with Pirelli on the 18-inch rims. What did you think of that exercise?

FG: Paul? What do you think?

Q: We'll ask Paul in a minute!

FG: Obviously for us it was a good experience. We're very proud to be doing this work with Pirelli so it was positive.

Q: Paul, let's throw it to you. What was the verdict after that test at Silverstone? When do you think you could introduce that tyre technology if it was requested - and what are the technical limitations?

PH: Yeah, I spent a week talking about 18-inches and it's been quite an interesting time. It was an exercise that was born out of a discussion we had in the F1 Commission meetings when there was a discussion of, particularly in this case, tyres and what should happen with them in the future. We felt rather than discuss it, we ought to put some on a current car and people can actually decide and the F1 Commission can see real images of the car with that sort of tyre on them. These are 18, maybe 19 is probably more interesting going forward. Have to say that the feedback we've had generally has been very good. People have been forwarding us all sorts of surveys and fan surveys that they've had on their individual websites. Between 70 and 80 per cent, depending on the survey, have been very favourable. On a personal level, it looked quite good. I wasn't really sure if I was going to like it, if I'm honest, but I thought it looked very good and quite natural. If it's a route the sport wants to follow, we'd be keen to do. We, technically, could probably be ready in 2016 but the sport is talking about 2017 at the moment.

Q: Obviously this weekend you've come with the soft and supersoft tyres - some interesting results from FP2 here this afternoon - there's been a feeling perhaps sometimes at a few races, you've been a little bit conservative with the tyre choice. Are you becoming more aggressive again now?

PH: Well, it's one of those things. Today, we've got over 50°C on the track which you wouldn't normally expect here. I'm quite sure that that the local population will tell you that. That means something like the supersoft tyre in these conditions is pushing a bit. Equally if we'd come here with the other choice, which would have been a medium tyre and it had been 20°C, we'd have been talking about a one-stop race and your question would be conservative again. So, it's always a balance and I think you'll see that we'll still be looking – if we have a dry race – at a two- to three-stop race. Which is what we're asked to deliver for the sport. The supersoft being used primarily in qualifying and the soft tyre – which is the main race tyre – looks like it's working well, even in these conditions. So, overall, a good balance.

Q: (Luke Smith – NBC Sport) Paul, with these new tyres, if they do come in, it could obviously make the sport far more road relevant. If that opened up the possibility of another tyre supplier coming into the sport, is a tyre war something Pirelli would be interested in or up for doing or is it purely 'we're the only supplier or we're out.'

PH: It's obviously a question for the sport. Ultimately the sport should primarily be about drivers and then you have engines. If you throw in tyres as well, you can tend to lose your way. We'd be interested if the rules were in the right direction but there hasn't seemed to be much of an appetite for doing that. It's another element that's out of the control of the teams. We have enough controversy even when we're the sole supplier, so if you add in another supplier you could have another question mark. I don't know. It's one that you can only really answer when you know the context of what would be the conditions of competition.

Q: (Silvia Renee Arias – Parabrisas) Mr Albers, I would love to know if you can tell us if Carlos Sainz Jnr has any possibility this year to race for you?

CAI: I have seen a lot of rumours in the press as usual in Formula One. At this moment, of course, we have seen Carlos Junior and we have spoken to him also but at this moment there is nothing done.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Toto, when we drive in here, we can't miss the massive Mercedes grandstand. We are approximately 100 kilometers from Stuttgart, your team is leading the championship, your drivers are first and second yet on Sunday there are probably going to be less than 50,000 spectators, which is half of what they had in the Schumacher heydays. Is Germany switching off from Formula One, or what is this situation?

TW: Let's start with a positive question. It's not satisfying. If you compare Hockenheim Friday to Friday at Silverstone and Friday in Austria it's a different world and we have to understand why that is. I'm not sure whether we have an exact number for Sunday already – you know, there are lots of people probably deciding at short notice, depending on the weekend – and we have to analyse the phenomenon. If the weekend continues like it does now, we need to think about it.

Q: (Dominic Sharaf – motorsport-total.com) Christijan, you said you've spoken to Carlos Sainz Jnr for a race seat: what about other drivers? Did you talk to any other drivers?

CAI: I did not say that I spoke with him about a race seat. I said we spoke with each other, yes. But the drivers are performing now, I was happy today, that's the situation.

Q: (Craig Scarborough – ScarbsF1) Question to the technical directors: Lotus, Mercedes and Marussia are probably the first of the teams to adopt interconnected suspension in the sport. How have you found the first free practice sessions without the set-up and do you think it's going to have any impact on your pace over the rest of the season?

FG: We haven't used it today, so we cannot say anything about it.

TW: It's a decision of the FIA, no need to moan about it. You need to get on top of things and run the car quicker than before. We've run the car at Silverstone without the linked suspension and it ran pretty well today so I don't think it's going to make any difference in competitiveness.

JB: We developed – over the last two years – a very simple but very effective pitch control system and it took us a few sessions at Silverstone to start getting our heads round living without it but I think we're pretty much there in replacing the system performance.

Q: Paul, have you noticed any difference today?

PH: Yeah, the server went down so we don't have all the data. We've had problems all day! We'll be working very late tonight to try and analyse all the information so as yet we haven't got all the info and I can't really comment but I don't foresee... You saw the running order today, it didn't seem too different from previous races so I guess from that point of view, absolute performance isn't likely to be changed. Maybe over the duration of a long run there might be some impact.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Christijan, I read that Colin Kolles had made the approach to you suggesting that you became a team principal. As a former Formula One driver, what do you think... what qualities do you believe that you have as an individual, as a person, to lead a team from the very bottom of the championship forward? What made you accept the challenge?

CAI: First of all, a lot of people don't know that I was always a little bit of an entrepreneur and so beside racing, I was also starting businesses and it went very well to the moment it turned around in 2007 that I was making more money with my normal business than as a racing driver. So I hope I can combine both of them, you know, the technical side and also the business side and combine them and be successful to bring this team forward. It's all about performance. We're working very hard to get an upgrade for Spa-Francorchamps which of course is a race against the clock because we have a two week shut-down in the factory and we're looking for more steps. We're also working for the 2015 car which I started last week immediately and we are running now in the wind tunnel. So we are very much pushing forward and what I've said already is that the most important thing is to get the team to be a team again and that's not so easy. A lot of people are very motivated, but also some people of course, after four years with no performance, they were a little bit disappointed so we need to get everybody in the game again.

Friday report

On Friday morning at the Hockenheimring Nico Rosberg led a Mercedes 1-2 at the team's third home grand prix of the season, pipping teammate Lewis Hamilton to the post by 0.065s. In the afternoon it was the Briton's turn to top the timesheets by a margin of 0.024s.

Despite speculation that the loss of FRIC suspension would shake up the order, the distribution of times posted on Friday morning in Germany was not dissimilar to those seen at previous races, with Fernando Alonso proving to be 'best of the rest' for Ferrari before sliding down the order over the course of the weekend, and Daniel Ricciardo besting Sebastian Vettel yet again. McLaren saw both drivers in the top ten, where they were joined by Daniil Kvyat and – in the only surprise of the session – Adrian Sutil.

What was more surprising was the absence of any drivers from either Williams or Force India in the top ten, with both teams having demoted McLaren to the weakest of Mercedes' power unit customers over the course of the first half of the season. Williams had expected to benefit from the move away from FRIC, but instead slipped down the order.

There was some good news for the racers from Grove, however: despite being stuck in first gear during her installation lap, Susie Wolff was able to return to the track with a car in full working order and had a brief spell at the top of the timesheets, eventually ending the session only two-tenths down on Felipe Massa. Wolff had been given the target of finishing within half a second of the experienced Brazilian.

With Mercedes' dominance continuing into the afternoon despite the widespread loss of FRIC suspension it was Ricciardo who claimed the best of the rest crown, chased by Kimi Raikkonen.

A scorching afternoon – yet cooler than the predicted weather for qualifying – proved to be tough on the cars. Both Caterhams experienced issues, with Marcus Ericsson stopping on track before teammate Kamui Kobayashi saw the back end of his car engulfed in flames. With Budapest traditionally even hotter than Hockenheim – and Asia still to come – cooling solutions will be a priority for the team.

In the short-term, tyre degradation proved to be particularly challenging in the heat, and given the heavy rain forecast for Sunday it is highly likely teams will be a little more liberal than usual with their tyre use in qualifying.

FP1 times (unofficial)

1. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1m19.131s
2. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1m19.196s
3. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1m19.423s
4. Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull) 1m19.697s
5. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1m19.833s
6. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1m20.097s
7. Kevin Magnussen (McLaren) 1m20.105s
8. Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari) 1m20.210s
9. Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso) 1m20.337s
10. Adrian Sutil (Sauber) 1m20.505s
11. Felipe Massa (Williams) 1m20.542s
12. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1m20.586s
13. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) 1m20.592s
14. Sergio Perez (Force India) 1m20.598s
15. Susie Wolff (Williams) 1m20.769s
16. Giedo van der Garde (Sauber) 1m20.782s
17. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1m21.603s
18. Pastor Maldonado (Lotus) 1m21.854s
19. Kamui Kobayashi (Caterham) 1m22.572s
20. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) 1m22.982s
21. Marcus Ericsson (Caterham) 1m23.256s
22. Max Chilton (Marussia) 1m23.299s

FP2 times (unofficial)

1. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1m18.341s [38 laps]
2. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1m18.365s [39 laps]
3. Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull) 1m18.443s [35 laps]
4. Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari) 1m18.887s [38 laps]
5. Kevin Magnussen (McLaren) 1m18.960s [40 laps]
6. Felipe Massa (Williams) 1m19.024s [36 laps]
7. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1m19.221s [40 laps]
8. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1m19.248s [35 laps]
9. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1m19.329s [32 laps]
10. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) 1m19.385s [34 laps]
11. Adrian Sutil (Sauber) 1m19.417s [41 laps]
12. Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso) 1m19.452s [27 laps]
13. Sergio Perez (Force India) 1m19.581s [28 laps]
14. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) 1m19.593s [32 laps]
15. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1m19.760s [32 laps]
16. Pastor Maldonado (Lotus) 1m20.158s [35 laps]
17. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1m20.358s [35 laps]
18. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) 1m20.504s [40 laps]
19. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) 1m21.328s [31 laps]
20. Marcus Ericsson (Caterham) 1m21.870s [21 laps]
21. Max Chilton (Marussia) 1m21.898s [28 laps]
22. Kamui Kobayashi (Caterham) 1m23.728s [12 laps]

Thursday press conference

Kicking off the German Grand Prix weekend was a press conference dominated by World Cup chatter and the drama of Nico Rosberg's late helmet change.

Present were Nico Hulkenberg (Force India), Kevin Magnussen (McLaren), Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari), Nico Rosberg (Mercedes), Adrian Sutil (Sauber), and Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull).

Q: Nico Hulkenberg, if we could start with you. Points in every race so far this season, only you and [Fernando] Alonso have managed that so far and you're seven to two against your team-mate in qualifying. How positive is that for you and how do you think that is perceived within the Formula One paddock?

Nico HULKENBERG: I think it's very positive in general. I think it's a very good achievement to have scored points in every race – probably Nico and Lewis would have been the same without the technical failures. I think it has been a very positive start to the season, first half, many, many points, much better than we expected going into the season and I think that is also the perception of the paddock. However, we're only in the middle of the season and there's still a long way to go before the end and our aim is to get the fourth position in the Constructors' Championship. We have a big challenge on our hands there against Williams, McLaren and many others. I look forward to that.

Q: You've largely been fighting for fifth and sixth places in races this season but just recently, the last couple of races, it was more like eight and ninth. What brought about that change and where do you think you'll be fighting this weekend?

NH: I think Silverstone was overall a bit difficult for us. The track didn't suit us so well, plus the conditions made it even more difficult. Therefore, it was still a very good achievement to get points on the board there. In Austria we were a bit compromised by a few issues, which we found out after

the race, otherwise that could have been better. So hopefully here we'll be back to bigger points but it's difficult to know. Obviously it's very hot this weekend, so it will be interesting to see how the tyres behave and who will manage it the best.

Q: Kevin, coming to you, points in the last four grands prix for you, six points finishes in total this season with one podium but McLaren still seem to be quite up and down dependent on circuit, why is that?

Kevin MAGNUSSEN: It's difficult... it's a good question. It's something we don't really quite understand 100 per cent, but surely it has a lot to do with tyres, they behave quite differently race to race. I think we are improving, the car is improving, we're putting downforce on the car at nearly every race so I think we're moving in a positive direction.

Q: We're coming up to the summer break and there's a lot of talk about the driver market – as there always is at this point. Where do you think you stand with regard to staying at McLaren next season.

KM: I can only do my best and hope that is good enough. Anyone at McLaren should feel that you have to deliver to your best to deserve to be there and that goes for me and Jenson as well.

Q: Kimi, the first question has to be how are you feeling after your accident at Silverstone, any after-effects and what happened?

Kimi RAIKKONEN: Well, I crashed, I guess you saw it. No, I had some pain but it's all fine.

Q: Just in your leg?

KR: No actually it was in my ribs the most, that's why I didn't do the test, but it's all gone away now.

Q: You're 100 per cent now?

KR: Yeah.

Q: Many things have not gone the way you expected them to this season in your rejoining Ferrari, but can you tell us what has gone the way you've expected it and what positives you've drawn so far?

KR: We've been in every race at least. That's what you expect at least. It's been a difficult year, hopefully it will turn around at some point – it must, it cannot go much longer like this, it's not fun. But this kind of thing has happened to me before and we always managed to turn it around, so I have a strong belief it will turn around. We have to just fix issues and get things as I want and I'm sure we can be back where we should be.

Q: Nico, coming to you: a new contract extension with Mercedes, congratulations on that, you also got married since we last saw you, but you've never been on the podium in Germany, I see from your record, so I guess that's this weekend's first objective. You're still on top of the championship, just four points clear, but your team-mate Lewis Hamilton said that this is a 'reset moment' in the title race and that he's been on the back foot all season. How do you see it?

Nico ROSBERG: Yeah, it's been a very exciting week for sure. We also became world champions, which was awesome. In terms of the championship, how do I see it? I just see it as the next race, which is Hockenheim. It's our home race. I really look forward to driving here. I'm here to win, of course. I'm here to try to extend the championship leads. That's where it ends for me. I'm really just looking at the moment, taking it race by race.

Q: As you say it's been a great week for Germany on the sporting front. As a keen follower and friend of the national team is there a way you can harness some of that positivity into your challenge this weekend?

NR: The effort of the team as a whole, how they all played together and everything was really great to see and that's what won them the tournament I think, not any individual strength or anything. That's what we're trying to do as well, to really work well, everybody together, to really make the most of it. I think we're also on the right track with that, in that respect, because to dominate the sport as we are doing at the moment, I think that indicates we work pretty well together as a team and of course there's room for improvement but we're going in the right direction.

Q: Adrian, you qualified 13th at the first race in Australia at the start of the year and 13th at Silverstone. There seems to be some continuity there. If you look at the ultimate pace of all the cars, Sauber doesn't seem to be progressing. Is that the way it's seen internally and what's the plan?

Adrian SUTIL: Yes, more or less a consistent season but also a few changes and progress of course. I think the car is a better car compared to the first races but you can't really see it in results. Nevertheless Silverstone was a bit better. You could see already in the free practice the car was a bit more competitive and also I think in qualifying in the rain we were closer to the top 10, which was good. We are still struggling sometimes with the tyres, especially with the hard compound, in the race, which slowed us down a lot. I can't really say more. Of course we want to try to improve the situation. It's not where we want to be but everyone in the factory is trying the maximum to improve that. It's not an easy situation but we're going to get out of it pretty soon.

Q: You've said several times that stability is the problem, that the car lacks stability. Can you elaborate on that and what plans are in place to fix that?

AS: Well, the window is very small where the car operates and also the window when you are close to the limit, whether it stays on the line or is completely off – it's easy to make a mistake with this car. So you need to have a lot of confidence in the car, you need to drive and learn as much as possible about the car behaviour to feel well. It's getting better very race. But yeah, it's a little diva to control. It's just a situation like that so we try to make it more easy to drive. The stability is sometimes there, [then] you have a bit too much understeer in the other areas, so you are shifting the problem from one end to the other but it's very difficult to get rid of the problem completely so this is where we are struggling most at the moment.

Q: Sebastian, obviously winner of the German Grand Prix last year, your first F1 win on home soil. Tell us about the feeling of racing here at home, especially with the country on such a sporting high at the moment?

Sebastian VETTEL: Yeah, obviously last year was very special – I had been trying many times before, so it was definitely a good feeling to succeed. I think this year should be a very good weekend. Mostly good weather forecast and obviously the whole of Germany still has the German flags from the World Cup around, so it would be nice to see a lot of those on the track and get a little bit of that support as well here on the circuit.

Q: Obviously the battle with Fernando Alonso in Silverstone was one of the highlights of this season so far. There were quite a lot of radio messages from the pair of you at the time but looking back and thinking about it now, how much did you enjoy it?

SV: Yeah, I probably enjoyed it more than I probably said after the race. I still think it took a little bit too long because obviously I lost quite a lot of time fighting him and couldn't progress to probably finish higher up. But it was definitely very tight, it's always very tight when you fight with Fernando, he's very tough to overtake, he doesn't give you a lot of room, but eventually I squeezed past, so for sure I was happy to finally overtake him on the track.

Q: (Ian Parkes – PA) Question to Nico. First of all, congratulations on becoming a married man. Secondly, you've obviously had to change your helmet design this week. You showed it off on Twitter with the World Cup on top of the helmet. I've spoken to FIFA and they've expressed their reason why you're not allowed to have the World Cup: intellectual commercial property rights and all that. You're obviously disappointed I guess, but can you understand their reasoning behind it?

NR: All the things you have to think about, it's amazing that even a trophy has its trademark or whatever, just sticking it on a helmet you know. That was a surprise but of course I fully understand. It was a pity as it looked really cool, with the trophy on top. Anyways, replaced it now with a big star and no-one can take that away. The star is ours.

Q: (Graham Keilloh – FIPlus.com) A question for all the drivers. We all recall the incident at last year's German Grand Prix with Mark Webber where a wheel fell off after a pit stop. In recent days there have been moves afoot for there to be a little bit of rowing back on the tough sanctions that were put in place following the Webber incident. I just want to know what each driver feels about more leniency for unsafe releases that may be coming in?

NH: To be honest I didn't really understand the question. I'll pass it on to Kevin.

KM: It's good if us drivers don't get points or penalties [that are] that harsh, as it's not really our fault. Of course we are a team and we should be penalised somehow together but I think it's good if it doesn't just go to the drivers.

Q: Adrian, anything to add?

AS: No.

Q: Kimi?

KR: No.

Q: Sebastian, do you have a view?

SV: I think it's like going to prison for stealing a chocolate bar. I think it's too harsh for the drivers, it's more for the team. There's not much you can do as a driver, but it is what it is.

Q: Nico?

NR: Obviously it is one of the most dangerous situations for all of the people working in the pitlane you know. So definitely it should be harsh to try to avoid people doing that or things like that happening. We need to find the best way, what sort of penalties to do.

Q: (Paolo Ianieri – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Kimi there has been a lot of criticism around you in the past few months. Do you feel that your position in Ferrari could be threatened next year or do you feel confident that you will sort your problems and that everything is going to be OK for the future?

KR: Like I said, I'm sure we can fix them. How fast? I hope quickly but it depends on many things. I have a contract so I'm not worried about that for the future.

Q: (Abhishek Takle - Midday) A question for Sebastian. Hockenheim obviously hold some special memories for you because this is where you watched your first Friday practice session. You won the German Grand Prix at the Nurburgring. What would it mean for you to win here at Hockenheim, at some point in your career?

SV: Well, I hope I can turn things around and that we can have a good race on Sunday and a good weekend in general. But of course we are not the favourites going into the weekend but there's always a chance of winning. For sure, this circuit is very special to me because my home town is only 30 minutes from here, it's where I grew up. I also started go-karting not far from here, just around the corner, so a lot of memories. I know a lot of people that work here, so it always feels like a second home. In that regard it would be nice. So definitely a very special place for me, special memories. The first car race I did was here in 2003, so yeah, it's definitely one of the tracks I want to win at.

Q: (Luis Fernando Ramos – Racing Magazine) A question for all drivers. Many teams will race without the FRIC system. Is there a feeling that this might change the gap between the teams significantly or not; that it will stay more or less the same, like it was before?

NR: Everybody has it to some extent. It's impossible to predict. For sure it can have some influence but we just need to wait and see what happens.

Q: Sebastian?

SV: Well I said it is one of the things that obviously got banned now. I hope it brings the field closer to Mercedes but it's difficult to say. All of the teams have been playing with it to some extent. How much it has an impact? I think it has to be seen this weekend and also probably next week in Hungary. After those two races I think you can have another judgement.

Q: Kimi, your thoughts on the FRIC suspension?

KR: Yeah, I mean it's the rule and obviously that decides if we can use it or not. It's not in our car, I don't expect it's going to be a completely different world but until we run it, the cars, and see what the other teams do, it's hard to say. I guess we'll know a bit more after this weekend.

Q: Adrian?

AS: I think... we hope... it will be better for us, that we are closer – but very hard to say, for sure. Some, they rely more on it, some less. Let's see. After the weekend we'll be wiser.

Q: Kevin, your thoughts.

KM: Not much to say really. We'll try to get the best out of the car without it.

Q: Nico?

NH: It's pretty much how Nico said, it's really hard to predict if and how much people will lose due to it. It's just a case of wait and see how much it impacts on different cars.

Q: (Koen Verhelst - Media Group Limburg) A question for all the German drivers: where did you watch the World Cup soccer finals last Sunday and, in relation to that, how to you explain the success of Germany both in Formula One at the moment and football and perhaps also in the economy?

SV: I watched in on TV at home. I wasn't there! Thank God they showed it. At home, with a couple of friends. I think the reason, it has been 24 years since we last won the World Cup. I hope that the next one doesn't take 24 years again. I think we had a very strong team for the last World Cups as well and were very close to win. It's good that we succeeded now. For the Formula One drivers, I don't think there's a particular reason. Obviously, for us, to some extent we're the generation after Michael and Michael was a big inspiration, so for sure, when Michael made Formula One really a sport in Germany and made it big a lot of fathers with their sons went to the go-kart tracks and wanted to do like him. I think it's chances, in the end, if you have a thousand kids trying rather than ten, the chances that one or two end up in Formula One are obviously a lot greater. The economy... I'm not a specialist – but I think we like to work.

Q: Adrian?

AS: The same, I watched on TV at home. Very quiet. It was a great game, I think. Very exciting and both played very well. One minute the Germans were a bit better than the other ones and scored a goal. I think something to be very proud of. It's great to see Germany being very happy about it. So many festivals and parties after it, so really, really good. Good mood in the air, so, great also for this weekend here, for the German Grand Prix. The drivers? I think it all started back in the '90s, probably. When Michael went into Formula One there was a big boom of racing in Germany – but also a lot of car manufacturers are based in Germany, it's a very strong country for cars, for technology in general – and they're supporting young drivers from the early ages, especially BMW was involved for many years with the Formula BMW. That's where I started the racing, I think also Sebastian as well and Nico. Most of the drivers took the step and went into Formula 3. So there are clear categories where you can go. Still, I think it's very hard to

say it's a really good support because it's so expensive. When I see the number for young kids coming up into racing, in go-karts you have to spend so much money, not having a real... let's say you can't be sure that you're going to make it. So, even there. Football has a better structure behind. We could still improve it but Germany, for sure, it one of the leading countries and that's great. They're pushing it really hard.

Q: Nico Hülkenberg, anything to add?

NH: I also watched it at home with some friends. I think we won because we had the strongest team and a great team spirit, a very clever coach. I think I agree with what Sebastian says about the drivers and why we have it strong now and the economy, I think is just German mentality and appetite to be strong in the economy.

Q: Nico Rosberg, your thoughts?

NR: I watched it at my parents place, as is tradition in our family because my Mum is the biggest soccer fanatic in our family, so I watched it there with friends and went absolutely crazy when they scored. It was a great time. I agree with the others on the other parts.

Q: (Paolo Ianieri – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Nico, last week Lewis was putting in doubt your true nationality about being German, real German supporter – and your helmet problem proves the opposite. How big is this... the pressure that Lewis is putting on you? Are you feeling it? Is it also big the pressure to have a championship that is open now completely, and to race at home and try to win this race?

NR: On the media, I generally don't read the media, so most of the time I don't know what's going on – but this I did know about it. I really don't get into such things. Everybody's free to have his opinions, and I was there anyway and it was more or less a joke discussion, so for me it's not really relevant to discuss it in any way. Other than that, yeah, it's a great battle between us. Every race it's been us two fighting it out for the win. It's fantastic – a tough battle also – but good. I'm sure it's going to continue for a long time and it will be very close – and I look forward to the race here now in front of... it's my second home race, I have Monaco and here. I'm very fortunate in that sense, I have two home races, and look forward to all the support and I really hope to do a fantastic job. It would be a great end to already the great times I've been having recently if I could win here at the German Grand Prix.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Kimi, do you remember having any heavier shunt than you had in Silverstone?

KR: Yeah, probably I have had. Hopefully not too many more but it's just part of the thing. It hurt a little bit but quite often you can have a quite slow accident and get badly hurt, so it's not about that really, it was just an unfortunate thing. Nothing serious happened. It's part of the sport.
